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McGahan, Liberator of Bulgaria

THE FAMILY OF JANUARIUS MCGAHAN

by Donald M. Schlegel

Last year the Ohio University Press published a long-needed biography of Januarius Aloysius McGahan (1844-1878), the Perry County, Ohio farm boy who became the "Liberator of Bulgaria."⁽¹⁾ The book, written by Dale L. Walker of El Paso, Texas, is truly described as "marvelous...fascinating...scholarly..." While giving glimpses of McGahan as a person, the book concentrates on his seven-year career as a newspaper correspondent. During this relatively short span of time, McGahan reported on the Franco-Prussian War; the Communards in Paris; the Russian army's campaign in Central Asia; the Carlist movement and war in Spain; the search for a lost exploration party in the Arctic; the atrocities committed by the Turks in the Balkans; and the Russo-Turkish War. As Mr. Walker wrote in his foreword, "Januarius MacGahan is the finest American exemplar of that dimly remembered time...that era when bold young correspondents, in Archibald Forbes's phrase, 'rode on the cannon thunder' in the most savage corners of the world, hazarding life and limb to get the story their editors decided would sell newspapers."

Unfortunately, the book falls short in one respect. It provides precious little sympathy for or understanding of McGahan's Catholic Faith (2) or credit

to the Church and family which nurtured this remarkable man, those which provided the framework for his growth and development. There was something in McGahan which made him recognize in the Turkish atrocities, more clearly than any other correspondent had recognized, "certain things too horrible to allow anything like calm inquiry; things, the vileness of which the eye refuses to look upon, and which the mind refuses to contemplate." This something, which boils down to a fine conception of civility and rectitude, must have been planted and formed in his early years. It was his response to these atrocities which earned for him the title of "Liberator." It is the intention here to throw a little additional light upon the forces which formed the man who so responded. Details concerning McGahan's parents and siblings have been gathered from Church and county records to flesh out their story and to correct a few inaccuracies as presented by Mr. Walker.

Like many another immigrant from Ireland, James McGahan, the father of Januarius, undoubtedly chose Perry County as his home because of the presence there of St. Joseph's Church near Somerset, the first Catholic church opened and blessed in the State of Ohio. His first marriage, to Frances or Fanna Brown, was blessed by Rev. Nicholas D. Young, O.P. of St. Joseph's on February 20, 1820. The couple made their home on a farm of 124.56 acres in the southwest quarter of section 19, on the western edge of Pike Township. It was on Pigeon Roost Ridge, about three miles southwest of New Lexington. Inhabitants of that area began meeting at Catholic homes, where Mass was offered as early as 1820 by priests from St. Joseph's. In the 1820's, according to a local tradition, a log church was built on or near the James Gordon farm, immediately southwest of the McGahans', for the Catholics of that vicinity. This chapel was replaced by the first brick church of St. Patrick, on land donated by the Clark family at Clarksville, three miles northwest of the McGahan home, which was dedicated in January of 1834. It likewise was regularly attended by the Dominican priests from St. Joseph's, on the first Sunday of every month. The second church on that site is the present St. Patrick Church, now designated Junction City.

James and Fanna McGahan had four daughters and three sons:

1) Mary McGahan, born on December 1, 1822, baptized on December 29; the sponsors were William McGarrigle and Rose McDonnell. Mary remembered that in her childhood on the old farm, the deer were plentiful and the wolves would chase the dogs around the house at night. She married Daniel Dimond on May 24, 1842 before Rev. A. P. Anderson, O.P. They lived in Jackson Township, Perry County, and had eleven children. Daniel, a native of Cambria County, Pennsylvania, was a farmer and stone mason. In practicing the latter trade, he was employed in constructing Catholic churches in Zanesville, Clarksville, McLuney, and Somerset and St. Joseph's College near Somerset. (3)

2) Ann McGahan, born Feb. 19, 1825, baptized on April 3, 1825 at St. Joseph's (sponsors James McKenzer and Ann Connely). She married Patrick Dimond on August 8, 1843 before Rev. E. H. Pozzo, O.P. at St. Patrick's; they had eight children. She died on March 20, 1865; her remains await the resurrection in the graveyard at St. Patrick's.

3) Sarah McGahan, baptized at St. Joseph's by Rev. F. X. Marshall on June 4, 1827 (sponsors Patrick and Mary Connelly). Sarah was mute. In 1870 she was living with the family of her deceased sister Ann.

4) Elizabeth McGahan, baptized at St. Joseph's on December 3, 1829 by Rev. D. J. O'Leary, O.P. (sponsors Owen Doherty and Elizabeth McGreavy). She apparently died in childhood.

5) William McGahan, baptized at St. Joseph's on April 1, 1832 by Rev. J. V. Bullock, O.P. (sponsors James and Elizabeth Higgins). William attended St. Joseph's College near Somerset, at least in the 1852/53 academic year. At the 1853 commencement exercises he delivered an oration entitled "Beauties of History." On June 28, 1855 he married Catherine, daughter of Patrick and Elizabeth (Fink) McDonald of Somerset at Holy Trinity Church in that town, before Rev. James Whelan, O.P. (witnesses Ignatius Milligan and Sarah Fink). They lived in Indiana for a short time and by 1859 were living in St. Louis, Missouri (where Catherine's uncle had lived since 1839). William was a policeman there, later a clerk, and still later a telegraph repairman. He died on December 8, 1908 and his remains lie in Sts. Peter and Paul Cemetery. He and Catherine had several children, including Wilfred, Genevieve, Mrs. Fannie Dougherty, Mrs. Maud Lehleitner, and Edward.

6) Chrysostom McGahan, born around 1834. His baptismal record and those of the next three children have not been found. In 1859 he was living in St. Louis. (4)

7) James McGahan, born around 1836. On April 30, 1861 he married Elizabeth Dimond at St. Patrick Church before Rev. J. D. Sheehy, O.P. (witnesses were James Gordon and Margaret Minnaugh).

Fanna Brown McGahan died in July of 1840 at the age of 37 years. The record at St. Joseph's is dated July 13, but it is not clear whether that is the date of death or of interment. On September 19, 1841 James McGahan married Esther Dempsey before Rev. J. H. Clarkson, O.P. (witnesses William Beaver and Margaret Hare).

Esther Dempsey was one of the younger daughters of Patrick Dempsey, an Irish immigrant, and his wife Elizabeth. This couple lived in Maryland for several years and then settled in Conemaugh (later Shade) Township, Somerset County, Pennsylvania. They were members of Prince Gallitzin's Catholic congregation at Loretto, nearby in Cambria County, where Esther was baptized in 1807. (5) The first of the family to come to Ohio appears to have been Esther's older brother William Dempsey, who settled in Thorn Township, Perry County in the 1820's. He was County Assessor in 1831 and he ran a blacksmith shop in New Lexington for a time in the 1830's. (6) His children were baptized at Somerset Holy Trinity church. (7) Another of Esther's older siblings was Elizabeth Dempsey (ca 1793-1859) who in 1818 married John Dimond of Conemaugh Township, Cambria County, Pa. John and Elizabeth Dimond with their numerous children migrated to Ohio in April of 1834 and settled in Jackson Township, Perry County.

The Dempseys were quite clannish. Within two years of Esther's marriage to James McGahan, her nephews Daniel and Patrick Dimond had married her step-daughters Mary and Ann McGahan. After William Dempsey and his wife and John Dimond had all died in the 1840's, Elizabeth (Dempsey) Dimond and her younger children moved to Thorn Township to live with her brother William's young orphans, Lucy, Patrick, and Ann Dempsey. After this Mrs. Dimond died, the three young Dempseys moved to Huntington, Indiana, where they apparently had

another aunt, Mrs. John (Catherine) Sees. (8) In 1861 James McGahan jr. married Elizabeth Dimond, the youngest daughter of his step-mother's sister, and by 1869 they also were in Huntington. It was this strong, close-knit Dempsey/Dimond/McGahan family which nurtured Januarius McGahan after his father's death.

James and Esther (Dempsey) McGahan had three sons:

8) Januarius Aloysius McGahan, born June 12, 1844. (9) Regarding this name, Mr. Walker remarks in a footnote, "The family was Roman Catholic and 'Januarius' may have derived from Saint Januarius, a bishop of the church martyred in the third century A.D. who became the patron saint of Naples, Italy." That Januarius or "Jan" was named for this saint there can be absolutely no doubt. St. Januarius, Bishop of Benevento in Italy, died for his Faith about the year 305. His feast is celebrated by the Church on September 19, on which date in 1841 the McGahans were married. To their first son the couple gave the name of the saint who was, in a sense, the patron of their marriage. By Barbara Nicholavna Elaguine, the Liberator of Bulgaria had one son named Paul.

9) Patrick A. McGahan, born in August, 1846. His early education took place in the log schoolhouse of the Pigeon Roost district, under the instruction of Arthur McCourtney and Thomas R. Gordon, both members of St. Patrick Parish. (10) (To these men, no doubt, should also go the credit for the early education of Jan McGahan.) As a young man, for several years Patrick taught school in the winter and studied law in the summer; he completed his education in Europe. He had moved with his mother to Huntington, Indiana around 1864 and in 1872 settled in Toledo, Ohio. (11) In the 1880s he served Toledo as City Auditor, City Clerk, and Judge of the Police Court. (12) He died of a sudden heart ailment on June 3, 1904 at his home in Toledo. After a High Mass at St. Francis de Sales Church in Toledo and services at New Lexington St. Rose, his remains were laid to rest with his brother's in Maplewood Cemetery, New Lexington. He had not been known generally as a charitable man, but his intimate friends had some idea of the charities he favored in a quiet way. He was always known as a particular friend of the Little Sisters of the Poor. He had remained a bachelor and his closest heir was his nephew Paul McGahan.

10) John McGahan, born October 23, 1849, baptized at St. Patrick's on November 15 by Rev. E. H. Pozzo, O.P. (sponsors Hugh Scally and Elizabeth McGravey).

James McGahan died on November 12, 1850 and his remains were laid to rest in the old cemetery at St. Joseph's. Daniel Dimond, husband of Mary McGahan, was appointed legal guardian of James, Januarius, Patrick, and John McGahan until each of them would reach legal age. He carried out this responsibility for twenty-two years, the last account not being closed until October of 1872. (13) John McGahan lived with Daniel Dimond, while the three younger boys lived with their mother. The widow Esther McGahan was to receive as her dower the northeastern 32 acres of the farm, but it was found to be impractical to divide the land and so it was all sold in August, 1854 to Patrick and Ann (McGahan) Dimond. Esther was to receive about one-fourth of the proceeds and each of the children was to receive an equal part of the remainder. The payments still had not been completed by 1861, when young Jan left Pigeon Roost Ridge for Huntington, Indiana, where his Dempsey cousins lived.

In his book, Mr. Walker mentions Jan McGahan's fine elocution. He also relates an incident which occurred in Huntington, when McGahan, no more than a teenager, boldly rose to speak in defense of the Faith, as one of a few Catholics who attended an anti-Catholic lecture. One cannot doubt that both his speaking ability and his boldness were due in no small part to his years of exposure to the words of the white-robed fathers of the Order of Preachers. McGahan saw his mother and his younger brothers settled in Huntington before he left for St. Louis in 1864. Esther later lived in Toledo with her son Patrick.

One final and fitting incident in McGahan's biography is worthy of remark to the the reader who knows the background of his religious experience in Ohio, testifying to the universality of the Church: his funeral Mass, on June 11, 1878 in Constantinople, was offered by a priest of a local Dominican convent.

NOTES

1. Walker, Dale L., Januarius MacGahan: The Life and Campaigns of an American War Correspondent; Athens: Ohio University Press, 1988. While Mr. Walker consistently uses the prefix "Mac", as Januarius himself probably did in Europe, all of the local records except Patrick's in Toledo consistently use the abbreviation "Mc" which thus is the form used here.
2. As one example, the Mr. Walker understood but would not sympathize with McGahan's affinity for the Carlists in Spain. This movement, named for its devotion to one branch of the royal house, lineal descendants of Ferdinand and Isabella, was deeply Catholic and struck harmonious chords within McGahan. Though often defeated, the movement survived and in the 1930s it provided a large portion of the strength which thwarted the attempted Communist takeover of Spain.
As another example, Mr. Walker could only call "cryptic" the words of McGahan's friend, the Russian General Michael Skobelev regarding his white banner, white clothing, and white horse: "We must all be prepared for death, and go to meet is as we are when going to take Holy Communion." For one who believes that he receives in Holy Communion the same One who will be his final Judge, there can be no mystery in this statement. (On the other hand, the statement may be a mystery to some of today's "Catholics" who teach that one may dare to receive their Lord with serious sins not sacramentally forgiven.)
3. Graham, A. A., History of Fairfield and Perry Counties, Ohio; Chicago: W. H. Beers & Co., 1883; Perry Co. portion, page 385.
4. Perry County Deed Record, 10/513.
5. History of Bedford, Somerset, and Fulton, Counties, Pennsylvania; Chicago: Waterman, Watkins, & Co., 1884; p. 531. Souvenir of Loretto by Rev. Kittell. Census of 1810, Conemaugh Twp, p. 446.
6. Graham, op. cit., pages 49 and 244.
7. See the Bulletin , XIII/84 and XIV/131 for the older children.
8. This point is not yet proved but seems very likely. The Seese family were early Lutheran settlers in Paint Township, adjoining Shade Township, Somerset County, Pa., where the Dempseys lived. John and Catherine Sees's children William, Mary, Rose Ann, Sarah, and Patrick Augustine were baptized at Loretto between 1818 and 1830. John and Catherine and their children were in Huntington, Indiana in 1860 and their children Rose Ann and Patrick Sees show up in conjunction with the Dempseys and McGahans in the records of Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church there. It would appear that Patrick Dimond, Patrick H. Dempsey, Patrick A. McGahan, and Patrick Augustine Sees were all named for their grandfather Dempsey.
9. In the 1930s, Rev. Eugene Owens, pastor of St. Patrick's, wrote a note in the baptismal register there, saying that he had been told that the record of McGahan's baptism was at St. Joseph's. However, it is not in that parish's own baptismal register, as indeed are hardly

any names from St. Patrick's in that era. It seems that after the erection of St. Patrick Church, there may have been a separate register for that church which has been lost. The earliest extant register for St. Patrick's was begun in 1849.

10. New Lexington Tribune, June 9, 1904, page 1. Thomas R. Gordon (1837-1911) and Arthur McCourtney (1792-1882) are interred at St. Patrick's. McCourtney, a native of County Fermanagh, Ireland, was a school teacher most of his life. (See Graham, op. cit., page 469)
11. The Toledo Blade, June 3, 1904, page 1.
12. Waggoner, Clark, ed., History of the City of Toledo and Lucas County; N.Y. & Toledo: Munsell & Company Publishers, 1888; pp. 390 and 522.
13. Perry County Probate Court, Guardian's Docket I/133-134 (cases 4177 through 4180).

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, SOMERSET, OHIO
REGISTER OF BAPTISMS AND MARRIAGES, 1827-1851
(Continued from Vol. XIV, No. 4)

[Note: In the April issue, page 131, was a baptism from this series dated Feb. 6, 1834 for a child named John "Wach." Using a little imagination, one can see that the name might be "Wade." The record would then read: John Wade, son of John and Mary Wade; spons. Martin Stafford and Mary Runion (?). NDY. Father Young's hand is extremely hard to interpret in some places.]

1836, continued

- Apr. 4 John, son of Joseph Meir and Teresa Haffery; spons. Sophia Guyon. F. J. T. Jarboe
- Apr. 15 Allen Deward (?), son of Robert Mitchell [sic, but see Aug. 14, below] and Livina Wathin; spons. Walter Cornelius Mitchell and Henrietta Mitchell. J. G. A. Alleman
- Apr. 17 Jesse Anthony, son of Jesse Kuhn and Mary German; spons. Anthony Murphey and Mary Frances Gongloff. Alleman
same Caroline, daughter of Jesse Kuhn and Mary German; spons. Nicholas Gongloff and Mary Ann Gongloff. Alleman
(page 34)
- Apr. 17 Louis Henry, son of William Musselman and Elizabeth Bourgoon; spons. John Fink and Elizabeth Fink. Alleman
- Apr. 24 Magdalena, daughter of Wendelin Doll and Mary Ann Studer; spons. Anthony Doll and Barbara Studer. Alleman
- Apr. 26 Thomas Edward, son of James Slevin and Mary Edwards; spons. Edward and Margaret Slevin. Anthony D. Fahy
- May 15 Elizabeth Ann, daughter of Alexander Bond and Sarah Brady; spons. Dom. McGonigal and Mary McGonigal. Alleman
same Fridolin, son of Fridolin Rohrer and Ursula Musulman; spons. Adolph Keem and Jane Musulman. Alleman
- May 22 Mary Ann, daughter of John Wiley and Nancy Farrell; spons. Joseph Litzinger and wife. F. J. T. Jarboe
- June 12 Mary Jane, daughter of John and Bridget (Cull) Roby; spons. John Minor and Mary Carbell. ADF
- July 3 Frances, daughter of Daniel McKinney and ---- Parr; spons. William McKinney and Rosella McKinney. R. P. Miles.
same Joseph Sylvester, son of William May and Catherine Guisinger; spons. James Guisinger and Catherine May. R. P. Miles
(page 35)
- July 10 Angeline, daughter of Jacob Gangloff and Eleanor McDonald; spons. Nicholas and Angeline Gangloff. RPM

July 17 James, son of Enos Bradly and Elizabeth Shultz; spons. Patrick and Mary Footman. RPM
 July 24 Emily, daughter of Joseph Hodge and Rachael Dittoe; spons. George and Christina Smith. RPM
 Aug. 7? Eleanor Crossing, daughter of Thomas and Judy Chrosson (?); spons. Frances Crossing. NDY
 Aug. 14 Margaret, daughter of Valentine Mitchell [sic, but see Apr. 15, above] and Lavina Wathen (?); spons. Ann Devers. RPM
 Aug. 21 Esther Buchanan, daughter of Joseph and Rosanna Buckman (?); spons. Esther Dempsy. NDY
 Sept. 4 Helen Ann, daughter of Jesse McGowan and Mary Finck; spons. David Finck and Elizabeth Finck. RPM
 -- Mary, daughter of Christian Congler and Mary Studer; spons. Bernard Congler and Mary Stork. RPM
 Sept. 25 Mary Eleanor, daughter of John Clark and Elleanor Robertson; spons. Mary Curne. RPM
 -- Joshua Francis, son of Benj. Joshua Dyer and Bridget Forker; spons. Susanna Dyer. RPM
 Sept. 26 Magdalena Agnes, daughter of John Carr and Magdalena Beard; spons. James Brown and Elizab. Higgins. RPM
 (page 36)
 Sept. 30 without ceremonies, Em--- Helen, daughter of John Fink and Elizabeth Walker; ceremonies October 2, sponsors Sylvester Walker and Mary Walker. RPM
 Oct. 16 Mary, daughter of Charles Elder and Elizabeth Lynch; spons. Edward C. Cusack and Catharine Cusack. RPM
 Oct. 30 Levi, son of Levi Powel and Mary Ann Ramsy; spons. Massum Dean and Margaret Ramsy. RPM
 Nov. 1 George James, son of David Finck and Elizabeth Gongloff; spons. James Finck and Mary Frances Gongloff. RPM
 Nov. 13 Margaret, daughter of William Jackson and Mary Hodge; spons. Patrick and Elizabeth McDonnell. NDY
 Nov. 27 John, son of Edward Kenan and Catharine McShane; spons. John McLaughlin and Ann McLaughlin. RPM
 Dec. 4 Abraham, son of John Lambing and Margaret Wolf; spons. John and ---- Wiseman. RPM
 -- [same?] Andrew, son of Enoch Fowler and Teresa Troutman; spons. Andrew and Mary Troutman. RPM
 -- William Nicholas, son of John Doneghy and Susan Colbert; spons. Nicholas and Mary Ann Gongloff. RPM
 Dec. 11 Mary Ann, daughter of Paul Bagly and Ann Kunckler; spons. Frederick Kunckler and Mary Ann Stalen. RPM
 (page 37)
 Dec. 19 Eleanor Elizabeth, daughter of John Wade and Mary Ivory; spons. Mary Dittoe. RPM
 Dec. 28 John David, son of Jacob Perung and Sarah Rayan; spons. Margaret Perung. RPM

1837

Jan. 1 Bridget, daughter of Henry McDivit and Allicia Donly; spons. Henry Hughs and Rosanna McCan. RPM
 Jan. 28 ceremonies for James Francis, son of Miles Clark and Appolonia Litzinger; spons. Hugh Sharky and Rosanna Clark. RPM

Feb. 26 Marcellus John Jacob, son of Lewis J. Moeller and Elleleanor Dittoe; spon. Henry Dittoe and Elizabeth Dittoe his wife. RPM
 Mar. 20 Mary, daughter of Michael Cull and Mary Morgan; spon. Patrick Cull and Elizabeth McLaughlin. RPM
 Mar. 25 Leonard, son of Charles Dowlin and Catharine Crew; spon. George and Eleanor Sligar. RPM
 Mar. 27 Sara Catharine, daughter of Joseph Stitt and Elizabeth Smith; spon. Sarah Smith. RPM
 -- [same?] James, son of Daniel Carvel and Margaret McCaffrey; spon. Thomas Carvel and Mary Kelly. RPM
 -- Teresa, [daughter] of Joseph Uacter(?) and Teresa Ucker; spon. John Ucker and Angelina Winegardner. RPM
 (page 38)
 Apr. 2 John, son of John Sheridan and Mary Moyneagh; spon. Alexander Bond and Sarah Bond. RPM

(To be continued)

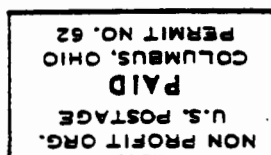
DOUGHERTY'S SETTLEMENT REVISITED

Mr. Ed Dougherty of Parkersburg, West Virginia has written a letter to the Society regarding the church of Sts. Peter and Paul, which was erected by his ancestors in Washington Township, Monroe County, Ohio. Regarding the log church itself, he reports that his uncle, David Dougherty of Antioch, Ohio (born in 1906 and now deceased) had been told since he was a boy that the church was washed away in a flood in the later part of the last century. He also reports that the Dougherty-Daugherty Reunion and Perpetual Care Cemetery associations now take care of the old graveyard and the suspension foot bridge which must be used to reach it. They read the tombstones there in 1983 and found a few which we missed in our recent reading. (We also found a few not on their list!) Those which we missed or which no longer exist are as follows:

- Ernest, aged 0y 11m, died July 18, 1878, son of Jeremiah and Sarah A. Daugherty. John, July 18, 1878, son of Jeremiah & Sarah Daugherty. Clarisa, daughter of Jeremiah & Sarah Daugherty.
- Dennis, son of William and Margaret Dougherty jr., died Nov. 6, 1861, aged 8m. 21d. Happy infant early blest, best in peaceful slumber rest.
- Thomas A., son of J.F. & S. Leak, died Jan. 11, 1850, aged 11m.
- William, son of J.F. & S. Leak, died Mar. 11, 1844, aged 2m.
- Sarah A., daughter of J.F. & S. Leak, died Oct. 10, 1858 aged 11d.

The list of tombstones put together by the associations includes the ancestry of each Dougherty back to the immigrants.

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 197 E. Gay Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 Donald M. Schlegel, editor



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