

Barquilla de la Santa María

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July 3: St. Thomas the Apostle

July, A.D. 2004

Rarig: Employer for the People of St. Thomas Parish

The early congregation of St. Thomas Parish, East Columbus (founded in 1900), was an amalgamation of two distinct groups. The earlier group were farmers of German and Irish descent, led by Anton Ruhl, Isadore Frey, and Thomas Cassady, all of whom owned land on the east side of Alum Creek. Several attempts to found a parish for them and others to their east failed in the nineteenth century. The second and later group were immigrants from Eastern Europe (Poles, Slavs, Bohemians, and Hungarians), who were employed at the famous Ralston Steel Car Company, south of Fifth Avenue and east of Alum Creek. By 1920 this second group made up half of St. Thomas Parish's 700 members.

The Ralston company, owner of the plant that provided employment for hundreds and made the parish viable, though incorporated in Ohio was in reality founded and owned by Chicagoans. It was organized in 1905 to build steel railroad cars to replace the wooden ones that had been used since the railroads began in the nineteenth century. The reason for its location in East Columbus was the availability of the huge, ten year old plant of the Rarig Engineering Company. The Rarig plant was the crowning of the career of Alexander King Rarig, a member of St. Joseph Cathedral Parish.



A. K. Rarig (1848-1924). *Redrawn for the Society by Lynn Brown-VanSickle, member of the Cathedral Parish, from a photograph in the Columbus Citizen of January 30, 1903.*

Although A. K. Rarig dealt in numbers and machinery, not literature or theology or philosophy, and so has left no writings of his own (at least none we have found), we thought at least a short narrative of his career and history of his business would be of interest to our readers.

A. K. Rarig was one of several children, but apparently the only son, of Valentine and Susan (Kriegbaum) Rarig. His father and grandfather had immigrated from Hesse-Darmstadt to Maryland and settled in Cumberland by 1831. Valentine and Susan were married in the Catholic church

there in 1840 and in the same church Alexander, born on May 10, 1848 was baptized on June 22.

It is not known how much formal education Rarig received, but he clearly gained a complete practical education in the machine shops of the 1860s. He began his career by learning the machinist trade in the Blandy shops at Zanesville, starting in 1861, and continued in that line back home in Cumberland and later in the B&O shops in Zanesville and Indianapolis. By 1870 he had returned to Zanesville, where his father also lived for a time, and there on October 20 he and Mary Mullen were married before Father J. V. Edelen, O.P., at St. Thomas

Aquinas Church. Mary was a daughter of Patrick and Mary (Montague) Mullen. The young couple moved to Columbus, where all of their six children were born. Mr. Rarig was hired to take charge of construction of the Columbus Iron Company's furnace, at West

Goodale and the Olentangy River, and the family home was up the street at 328 W. Goodale.

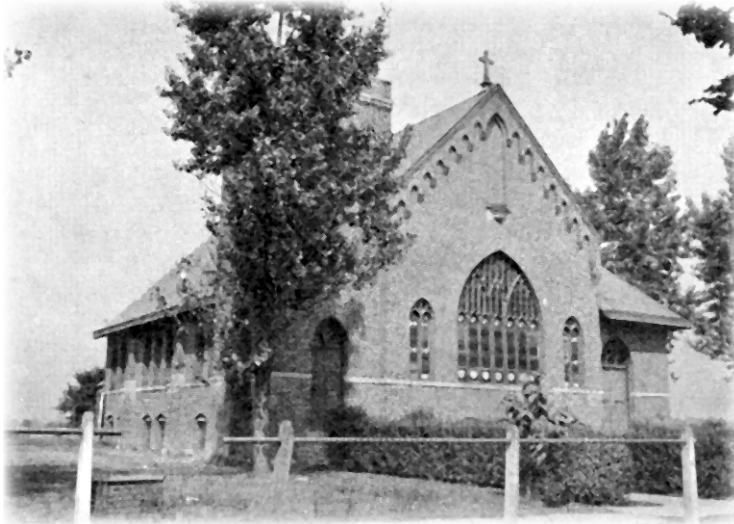
From 1873 until 1883 Rarig was a foreman at the Columbus Machine Company, located on West Broad St. beyond the bridge, where Veterans' Memorial now stands. In 1883 he went into business for himself and leased the Vulcan Iron Works, which he bought three years later. The history of this business is shadowy and involves the Franklin Machine Company and the foundry of J. Greenwood & Sons. Rarig later claimed that his business was founded in 1858 and in doing so he no doubt counted the predecessors of Vulcan. In the large shops on the east side of Water St. (now Marconi Blvd.) north of the railroad, he

made blast engines, rolling mill machinery, Corliss engines, and architectural and other heavy metal.

As the business prospered, the family moved to a more up-scale neighborhood, first leasing and then buying a "Brown Stone Front" residence at 42 Cleveland Avenue, standing immediately north of the Broad St. mansion of William Platt. In these years the family were members of St. Joseph Cathedral Parish and the oldest son, Walter, attended the Columbus Catholic College and later the University of Notre Dame.

In 1890 Rarig heard of an opportunity that took

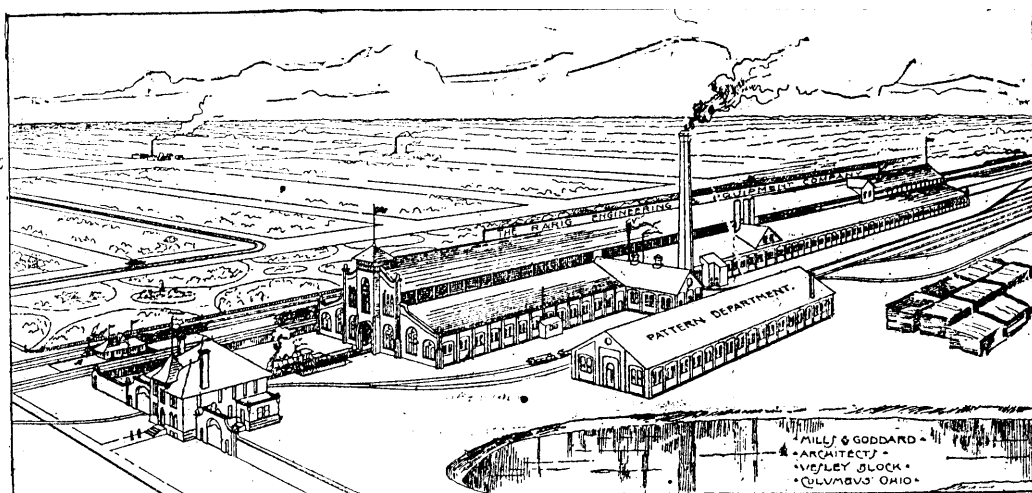
him away from Columbus for five years. About that time "boom fever" was spreading like an epidemic in the Valley of Virginia. Developers sprang up overnight, announcing intentions to transform old towns into hives of industry. Finely printed prospectuses were broadcast, lot sales were held, bonuses



St. Thomas the Apostle Church as built in 1902

were given to industrial plants, and speculation ran riot. Rarig caught this fever and moved his business to Buena Vista, in Rockbridge County, Va. As might be expected, all was not as advertised. It is suspected that the town never even had the five thousand residents required to incorporate. As early as 1891 a reaction came and Buena Vista was at a standstill. The town had a furnace with a long history, which seems to have given Rarig some hope, but by 1895 he was on the move back to Ohio.

The Ohio State Journal of March 10, 1895 announced the proposed A. K. Rarig Manufacturing Plant, to be located at Rarig Station on the Columbus, Sandusky and Hocking railroad, in a



THE PROPOSED A. K. RARIG MANUFACTURING PLANT.

The Rarig plant, as designed by Columbus architects Mills & Goddard, for a site on the north side, and as built in East Columbus (from the Ohio State Journal, March 10, 1895)

northern suburb of Columbus. The scheme was heartily approved by the manufacturing committee of the Columbus Board of Trade. Included was a drawing of the plant by architects Mills & Goddard of Columbus, which clearly is the design that soon was built, though in a different location. In November Rarig purchased just over six acres from Thomas and Phoebe Cassady for some \$2,400, lying south of East Fifth Avenue, north of the P.C.C. & St.L. Railroad, and east of Cassady Avenue as the site of his plant. The site was expanded as time went on.

Rarig's main building, of brick and steel, measured 650 by 130 feet and was 38 feet high in the center. It contained a boiler and general steel department, foundry, smithing department, and machine and erecting department. Self-contained water and power plants provided water, heat, light, and power, while overhead traveling cranes and a railroad siding ran the length of the building. A separate pattern building on the north measured 257 by 52 feet. An office building, styled like a two story residence, faced Rarig Avenue. In 1901 a 60 foot wide, 65 foot tall addition was built on the east end of the main building to house an erecting department. Rarig took charge of the building in December of 1895 and completed its construction. He then moved in 72 railroad cars full of machinery from his former plant in Buena Vista. The plant made mortar carriages for the

U.S. Army, blast furnace equipment, boilers, water towers, bridge girders (including those for the St. Clair Avenue viaduct), smoke stacks, and other industrial steel, as well as many styles of engines, boilers, and tanks.

Rarig Engineering Company was incorporated in 1896. Officers were Alexander K. Rarig President and Treasurer, C. E. Morris Vice President, Waldo T. Guy Secretary, and Rarig's son Walter A. Rarig Manager. The Rarigs continued to live in the house on Cleveland Avenue, but were not completely disconnected from East Columbus and St. Thomas community. Mr. Rarig's nephew, Thomas F. Shannon, married Mary, daughter of Thomas and Phoebe Cassady, before the pastor of St. Thomas Parish in 1901.

It is not clear how many employees worked at Rarig's plant. A 1903 article described the workforce as "a small army of mechanics and workingmen." Nor is it clear where the workforce lived. The first subdivisions in East Columbus, by C. E. Morris and Cassady, were laid out in 1895, running from Cassady Avenue east to Gould and from the Rarig property north to Seventh and Eighth Avenues. It does not seem, however, that many houses or other residences were built on these 560 tiny lots. An analysis of the 1900 census for that vicinity found only some twenty-eight men who definitely or probably worked at the plant and

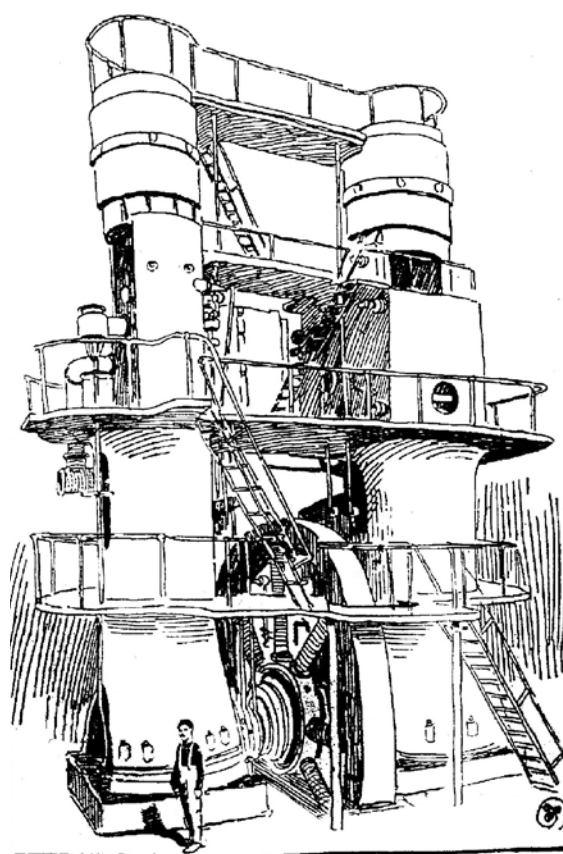
another seventeen day-laborers. The majority of these were native Ohioans, the only immigrants being a very few from Germany or Ireland. Nor is it clear that laborers could have commuted from Columbus. As late as 1913, Ralston Steel Car Company officials were complaining that they could not expand their workforce at the plant; they could not house laborers locally because there was no sewage system; the city streetcar company would not expand its line from its current end, five blocks away in Bexley; the Columbus and New Albany Traction line, built about 1901, provided inadequate service; and the roads in the vicinity at times were impassable. It might be, however, that in Rarig's time the steam railroads provided service from Union Station in Columbus, and the plant must have employed hundreds when times were booming.

The year 1904 was fateful for Rarig. On January 1, as the economy headed into a severe slump, Rarig Engineering mortgaged its plant for \$250,000. In February, a certificate to increase its capital stock was filed with Ohio's Secretary of State. Whatever efforts these facts represent, they were fruitless, for the company was taken over by its bondholders and the plant apparently was shuttered. Were that not enough, on June 20 Mrs. Mary Rarig died of "exhaustion" at the home on Cleveland Avenue, aged just 57 years.

We can only imagine Mr. Rarig's discouragement at this time. He and his entire family soon sought better days by moving to Oakland, California. (Possibly he knew the area from visits made during installation there of mortar carriages he had manufactured in East Columbus.) He and his son Walter were said to have constructed the first successful automobiles in Columbus, and in California they intended to manufacture pleasure cars.

In California, Mr. Rarig married Genevieve Gleason and with her had one daughter.

A. K. Rarig died in San Francisco on November 22, 1924, at the age of 76, of heart troubles. Burial was in Holy Cross Cemetery. Survivors



A twin-engine blower built at the Rarig plant (from the Columbus Dispatch, July 21, 1901)

were his daughters Clara, who had become Sister M. Alexandrine, O.S.F. (of the Bronx and later of Newark, N.J.), Mrs. Stella Gleason, and Helen P. Rarig, and sons Walter, Harry, and Clarence. The oldest daughter, Gertrude, had died in 1911.

Mr. Rarig clearly was a fine mechanic and engineer, but apparently was not the "consummate" man of business. It is unfortunate that, as mentioned above, nothing written by him has been located. However, we know from the pattern of his life that he was not easily discouraged. He appears to have been a man of hope.

Chapel Hill, Perry County

Baptismal Records 1840-1850

(Continued, from Vol. XXIX, No. 6)

Nov. 11 [SC], Margaret, daughter of Thomas Skinen and Catharine McNally; spons. Mary Ann McDonnell TOF

Nov. 13 [D or SC], Mary, daughter of Joseph Perl and Mary Hiles; spons. John Patten and Mary Ward TOF

Nov. 27 [D], Felix Geiger, son of John and Temperance Burgoon; spons. Solomon Gosman and Priscilla Burgoon TOF

same day, John, son of James Cunningham and Margaret Longstreth; spons. Morris O Conner and Catharine Collins TOF

Dec. 3 [A], Gertrude, daughter of Jacobs Oolrich [Ulrich] and Philippine Oolrich; spons. Catharine Schmith TOF

Dec. 4, Augustine, son of Peter Gallagher and Bridget Farry; spons. John O'Neil and Mary Moat TOF

Dec. 6 [SC], Ann, daughter of Patrick Walpole and Rose Reily; spons. Michael Cunningham and Elizabeth Cunningham TOF

Dec. 24 [D], James, son of Joseph Roberts and Agatha Gosman; sons. Charles Weiner and Catharine Perl TOF

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1847

Jan. 8 [SC], Michael, son of Michael Kenny and Ann Reily; spons. Catharine Dew TOF

[Jan. 12, Felix, son of John Geiger etc. is repeated as under Nov. 27, above, as well as the Cunningham baptism the same day. Then the baptism of Gertrude Oolrich is repeated, with date of December 2 instead of Dec. 3.]

Jan. 16, Theresa, daughter of Samuel McKenzy and Margaret McKenzy; spons. Margaret McKenzy TOF

same day, James, son of Andrew Stanton and Rachael McKenzy; spons. Elizabeth and John McKenzy TOF

Feb. 6, William, son of Harmon Whitcraft prot[estant] and Elizabeth Bradley; spons. John

and Margaret Keenan TOF

Apr. 1 [SC], Susanna, daughter of Isaac Wise and Catharine Reehart; spons. Andrew Sanders and Ann Rhy TOF

same day, James, son of [blank]; spons. John Wise and Beatrice Rhy TOF

Apr. 16 [C], Frances, daughter of Michael McCullagh and Alice Hafey; spons. Charles Gibbon and Ann Curren TOF

same day, Mary, daughter of William Edwards and Phunioia [Phronia] Finly; spons. Levi Anderson and Sarah Ann Toel TOF

Apr. 25 [D], Mary, daughter of John Jonson prot[estant] and Catharine O Leary; spons. Pius Braddock and Frances Geiger TOF

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Apr. 25 [D], Stephan, son of Stephan Brosmer and Ann Geiger; spons. Philip Longstreth and Catharine Geiger TOF

Apr. 30 [SC], John, son of William Golden and Lydda Golden; spons. Patrick Fagan and Mary Mitchel TOF

May 9 [MC], Margaret, daughter of Michael Gilligan and Ann Durcy prot[estant]; spons. Philip Little and Julia Bean TOF

same day, Margaret, daughter of Philip Little and Ann Leonard; spons. Mary McGary and John McCabe TOF

June 13 [A], Ann, daughter of Martin Carlos and Sarah Moler; spons. William Edwards and Bridget Beitz? TOF

same day, Sarah Moler, convert, age 26 years; spons. Peter Timony and Julia Ward TOF

June 13 [A], George, son of John Hoffman and Elizabeth Sponagle; spons. Martin Schuler and Phoebe Sponagle TOF

June 21, John, son of John Lynch and Ann McCarthy; spons. James Fagan and Mary Mitchel TOF

July 16 [C], Susanna, daughter of Samuel Denman and Susanna Denman; spons. Timothy Farrell and Elenor Ewing TOF

May 12 [SC], Catharine, daughter of Thomas Monahan and Margaret Healy?; spons. Thomas Duffy and Mary Donnelly TOF [note in another hand: born May 6]

same day, John, son of Thomas Haughran and Bridget Mitchel; spons. Thomas Monahan and Ann Hosey TOF

June 13 [A], Sarah Moler, convert, age 25 years; spons. Peter Timony and Catharine Ward TOF [repeat of record above]

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July 25 [SC], James Leo, son of Hugh Donnelly and Elinor Duffy; spons. John Hosey and Bridget Fagan TOF

Aug. 29 [MC], Mary, daughter of Thomas Hocy [Hoey?], protestant, and Jane Hazelton, protestant; spons. States? Hocy [Hoey?] and Margaret Gorden. TOF

Aug. 29, Patrick, son of Alexander McCain and Mary Hoey; spons. Basil Gorden and Elizabeth Keenan TOF

Sept. 5 [MC], William, son of Nathaniel Dixon and Judith Donowho; spons. Patrick Keenan TOF

Aug. 5, John, son of James McGravy and Elizabeth Ross; spons. Timothy McGravy and Mary Foley TOF

Sept. 8, William, son of John Spencer protestant and Mary Toel; spons. Elizabeth Toel and James Rheynolds TOF

Aug. 16, Ann, daughter of Benjamin Sours and Mary George; spons. Michael Cunningham TOF

Sept. 26 [MC], Frederick, son of Patrick Miskel and Elizabeth Miskel; spons. George Cook and Mary Caecil TOF

Oct. 4 [MC or SC], Johanna, daughter of Thomas Bean and Catharine Kenrick; spons. Edward Mooney and Bridget McShane TOF

Oct. 10 [D], Philip, son of James Longstreth and Elenore Perl; spons. Catharine Perl TOF

Oct. 16 [SC], John, son of Michael Hays and Martha Devour protestant; spons. Patrick Fagan and Ann Fagan TOF

Oct. 17 [D], John Francis, son of Amos Coffman and Sarah Godloun protestant; spons. Andrew Gosman and Ruth Perl TOF

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Dec. 25 [SC], Patrick, son of Nicholas Kily and Mary Barnett; spons. Patrick Skinen and Mary Quinn TOF

same day, John, son of David Petia and Sophia McCoy; spons. Thomas Skinen and Elenor Duffy TOF

same day, Emily, daughter of David Petia and Sophia McCoy; spons. Thomas Skinen TOF

Nov. 13, Rev. Mr. O'Brien baptized Elizabeth, daughter of John Hauregan and Rachael Flanagan; spons. Robert Bennet and Margaret Conlon

1848

Jan. 23 [MC], Sarah, daughter of William Gordon and Catharine Keenan; spons. William Gordon and Elizabeth Keenan TOF

Jan. 24 [MC], Susanna, daughter of Basil Gordon and Sarah Ann McConnick protestant; spons. John Hoey and Margaret Gordon TOF

Jan. 27, Mary, daughter of John Donohow and Mary McGrady; spons. Susanna Fox TOF

Jan. 30 [D], Elizabeth, daughter of Daniel Dicas and Mary Perone; spons. Solomon Gosman and Elizabeth Perone TOF

Jan. 24 [MC], Margaret, daughter of Laurence Gillooly and Catharine Kelly; spons. Patrick Keenan TOF

Feb. 1 [SC], Edward, son of James Duffy and Bridget Flanery; spons. Michael McDonnell and Ann O'Rorke TOF

Feb. 4 [SC], John Schott, convert to the faith, age 27 years; spons. Hugh Mooney TOF

Feb. 13 [A], James, son of Burgot Sise and Christina Walder; spons. James Oolrich and Margaret Rice TOF

Feb. 15, Julia, daughter of Isaac Mote protestant and Ann Carroll; spons. Laurence Hays and Ann [page 35] Finly TOF

Mar. 14 [C?], Joseph, son of James Divanny and Ellen McMullen; spons. James McGrady TOF

Mar. 16 [SC], Ann, daughter of Thomas Duffy and Mary Donnelly; spons. Patrick Haughran and Mary Hosey TOF

Mar. 17 [SC], Thomas, son of John Skinen and Mary Wapole; spons. Ann Skinnin and Thomas Skinen TOF

Apr. 10 [MC], Margaret, daughter of Thomas Windle and Catharine Timony; spons. Elizabeth Ward TOF

Apr. 16 [MC], Elizabeth Ann, daughter of James Edington and Catharine Hoadlory; spons. Edward Grogan and Elizabeth Riffle TOF

Apr. 16 [MC], Mary, daughter of Edward Grogan and Juila Ann Keenan; spons. Elizabeth Grogan TOF

Apr. 18 [D], Phoebe Catharine, daughter of John Weiner and Abigail Longstreth; spons. Margaret O'Hara TOF

Apr. 23 [D], Susan Elizabeth, daughter of John Gosman and Susan Perl; spons. Anthony Gosman and Elizabeth Perl TOF

Apr. 23, Margaret, daughter of Philip Longstreth and Ann Geiger; spons. Stephan Brosmore and Catharine Geiger TOF

Apr. 23, Catharine, daughter of Cornelius Klager and Agatha Young; spons. Florian Schreder and Agatha Cacke TOF

Apr. 29 [SC], George, son of George Thompson and Catharine Skinnen; spons. Thomas Gibney and Ann Liddy TOF

May 2 [D or SC], James, son of Andrew Souders and Ann Strauben; spons. Isaac Wise and Catharine Reehart TOF

same day, Joseph Andrew, son of Joseph Rhy and Mary Ann Reehart; spons. Andrew Soude[r]s and Ann Strauben TOF

May 10 [SC], Charles [page 36], son of Michael Mulligan and Elizabeth Walpole; spons. Mary McKeron? and John Cunningham TOF

May 16 [SC], Thomas, son of Thomas Sweeny and Bridget McCabe; spons. Catharine Walpole and John Cunningham TOF

June 5 [SC], Bridget, daughter of John Cunningham and Bridget O'Reily; spons. John Cunningham and Ann Skinen TOF

June 6 [SC], Bridget, daughter of John Curren and Ann Mallen; spons. Bartholomew McDonnell and Catharine Mallen TOF

June 25 [or 26] [D], George, son of Stephan Johnson and Catharine O'Leary; spons. Andrew Gosman and Johanna Curren TOF

May 14 [MC], Johanna, daughter of George Griffin and Margaret Griffin; spons. Patrick Keenan TOF

June 16 [SC], Mary Ann, daughter of Henry Hofer and Ann Freel?; spons. Hugh Donnelly and Honora? Duffy TOF

July 9 [C], Timothy, son of Timothy McGravy and Catharine Foley; spons. John Swift and Elizabeth Piquet TOF

same day, Elizabeth, daughter of John Swift and Elizabeth Piquet; spons. Peter Galaher and Catharine Rogan TOF

Aug. 6 [D], Theresa, daughter of Pius Braddock and Frances Geiger; spons. Stephan Brosmore and Catharine Geiger TOF

May 10 [SC], Elizabeth, daughter of Patrick Fagan and Mary Mitchel; spons. Michael Hays and Elizabeth Wilson? TOF

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May 10, Catharine, daughter of Michael Mallen and Alice Murtagh; spons. Thomas Gibney and Elleanor Murtagh TOF

Sept. 17 [D], Daniel, son of Peter Smith and Margaret Miller; spons. Daniel Dickas and Catharine Schwab TOF

Sept. 17 [D], Susan, daughter of Joseph Reehart and Agatha Gosman; spons. John and Rose Bous [or Bores?] TOF

same day, Sarah Elizabeth, daughter of Amos Caughman and Sarah Ann Woods; spons. John and Agatha Gosman. TOF

1849

Jan. 23 [D], Matthew, son of Joseph Pearl and Mary Ann Hills, born October 18; spons. John and Mary McCarthy Albert Bokel O.P.

same day [SC], Rose, daughter of James Martin and Ann Masterson, born Dec. 25; spons. Andrew and Catharine Masterson AB

same day [SC], William, son of Thomas Skinnen and Catharine McNally, born Jan 18; spons. Owen Smith and Bridget Mitchel AB

Feb. 20, Margaret, daughter of Peter Galleher and Bridget Farry, born Jan. 3; spons. Dominic Galleher and Bridget Mally C. Daly

Mar. 13 [MC], Mary, daughter of Joseph Staley and Elizabeth Harden, born Feb. 20; spons. Patrick Keenan CD

Mar. 17 [SC], Thomas, son of Thomas Duffy and

Mary Donnelly, born Far. 15; spon. John and Honora Hoso CD
 Mar. 26 [MC], Catharine, daughter of Sebastian Geble and Crescentia Rathgeber, born Feb. 25; spon. Silverius Smelzer and Catharine O'Donnell CD
 Mar. 28, Thomas, son of Thomas --llian? and Mary Sculy, born Mar. 8; spon. Daniel Galleher and Mary McAvoi? CD
 page 38
 Mar. 28 [MC], Mary E., daughter of Peter Lee and Bridget Fenie, born Mar. 4; spon. Daniel Sullivan and Catherine Dacanin? CD
 Mar. 30 [D], Mary A., daughter of James Cunningham and Margaret Longstret, born Nov. 6; spon. Michael Cunningham and Mary A. Sowers CD
 Apr. 1, John P., son of Hugh Friel and Sarah Delong, born Feb. 20; spon. John and Ann H. Shiley? CD
 same day [SC], Martha E., daughter of Philip Clipstein and Emeline Ward, born Feb. 23; spon. Andrew and Catharine Masterson CD

same day [SC], Michael, son of Michael Currin and Jane Mitchel, born Mar. 19; spon. Philip Clipstein and Joane Currin CD
 Apr. 8 [D], Francis, son of James Longstret and Ellen Pearl; spon. Benedict and Mary Pearl CD
 Apr. 11 [SC], Catharine, daughter of Patrick Walpole and Rose Riley, born Jan. 19; spon. Simon Cumiskey and Ann Gibny CD
 Apr. 12 [SC], Jane, daughter of Michael Hayse and Martha Devore:, born the 10th; spon. John McCabe CD
 Apr. 15 [MC], Patrick, son of Philip Little and Ann Lenard, born Mar. 25; spon. Patrick and Mary Keenan CD
 May 1 [A], Patrick and James, sons of John Brown and Ellen McLaughlin, born Apr. 9; spon. Peter Fagan and Bridget Brown and for James Peter and Ellen Fagan CD
 May 13, Caroline E. Yaky?, daughter of Peter Yaky? and Jane Heinz?, born Feb. 2; spon. Mary Ann Tool CD

(to be continued...)

Please Note:

Correction On page 143, the date of purchase of St. Mary Cemetery in Delaware was 1898, not 1989. This consecrated cemetery is the one now in use.