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Saint Mary's Church - History of Catholicism in Cleveland - 1945, August (News Clipping)

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History Of Catholicism In Cleveland

BUILT CHURCH HERE IN 1937

Thirteen Confirmed In
Weldon Home Here
In 1935

By FATHER GREGORY, O. S. B.

Students of North Carolina history have been much taken with the several engravings appearing in Colonel John H. Wheeler's excellent "Historical Sketches of North Carolina." One of them is a "Chronological County Tree" tracing the origin of all the counties of North Carolina from the original three, Albemarle Bath and Clarendon.

Stem From Clarendon

Upon consulting this "tree" we find that the geographical ancestors of Cleveland County all stem from Clarendon County (founded in 1792) and arrange themselves in the following order: Bladen (1734); Anson (1749); Mecklenburg (1762); Tryon (1768). Tryon was suppressed in 1779 to make Rutherford and Lincoln counties—out of which Cleveland county was made in 1841.

Such information as the above would furnish a background against which the civil historian of Cleveland County would proceed to an arrangement of more meticulous and interesting facts concerning the real development of this very important section of the Old North State, of which the city of Shelby has the honor of being the County Seat.

In like manner it seems but reasonable that a history of Catholicity in Cleveland County should include a background showing the origin of organized Catholicity in this area.

Start In Cleveland

What of the Catholics of Cleveland County? Until the year 1884—when we discover the first efforts to organize Catholic worship—what few Catholics there were in this locality were obliged to go to Charlotte, Salisbury, or Asheville to attend services. There seems to be no record of a priest visiting this area after it became a County although the Rev. R. T. Cronin of South Carolina visited Morganton—just above what is now Cleveland County—in the year 1840. There are definite records stating the fact that priests from time to time came into North Carolina from Columbia, Augusta and



REV. FATHER GREGORY, O. S. B.

Divine Son. Their faith in prayer was rewarded in June 1936 when it was learned that the children of Mrs. Joseph Bliley of Richmond, Va., wished to donate \$5000.00 for the erection of a Church in Shelby as a memorial to their saintly mother, who had died a short time previously. The joy of the Pastor and his little flock can well be imagined and the enthusiasm thus created resulted in the subscription of several thousand dollars by the members of the church.

By a strange coincidence the lot which was purchased for the erection of the present St. Mary's Church was part of the original farm of the Ray family in whose home Mass and other Catholic Services had been held as mentioned elsewhere in this article. The deed was turned over to Father Alphonse on December 8, 1936.

Ground was broken and the building of St. Mary's was begun in April 1937. The laying of the corner-stone took place May 23, 1937. The architect was the famous Priest-Architect, the Rev. Michael McInerny, O. S. B. of Belmont Abbey. His gift of breathing a devout atmosphere into inanimate materials is beautifully exemplified in St. Mary's Church here in Shelby. There is an air of devotion, intimate warmth and serenity about its interior and an appealing dignity and stability to its exterior.

FOLLOWS WHITE FAIR IN COUNTY

Association Prepares For
Fifteenth Consecutive
Event

The Cleveland County Negro Fair Association, organized in the spring of 1925, annually sponsors the colored fair at the county fair grounds, usually a week or two after the county fair for white persons is held. The colored fair is outstanding among negro events in the South.

A number of negro leaders were called together in 1925 for the purpose of discussing a fair for colored folk, and the association was the result. The group was organized at first with the Rev. J. W. Roberts as president, Lester Borders, Sr., secretary, and the Rev. A. W. Foster treasurer. A short time later, there was a reorganization and the Rev. A. Hord became president, the Rev. A. W. Foster secretary, the Rev. N. J. Pass manager and Riley Cabiness treasurer.

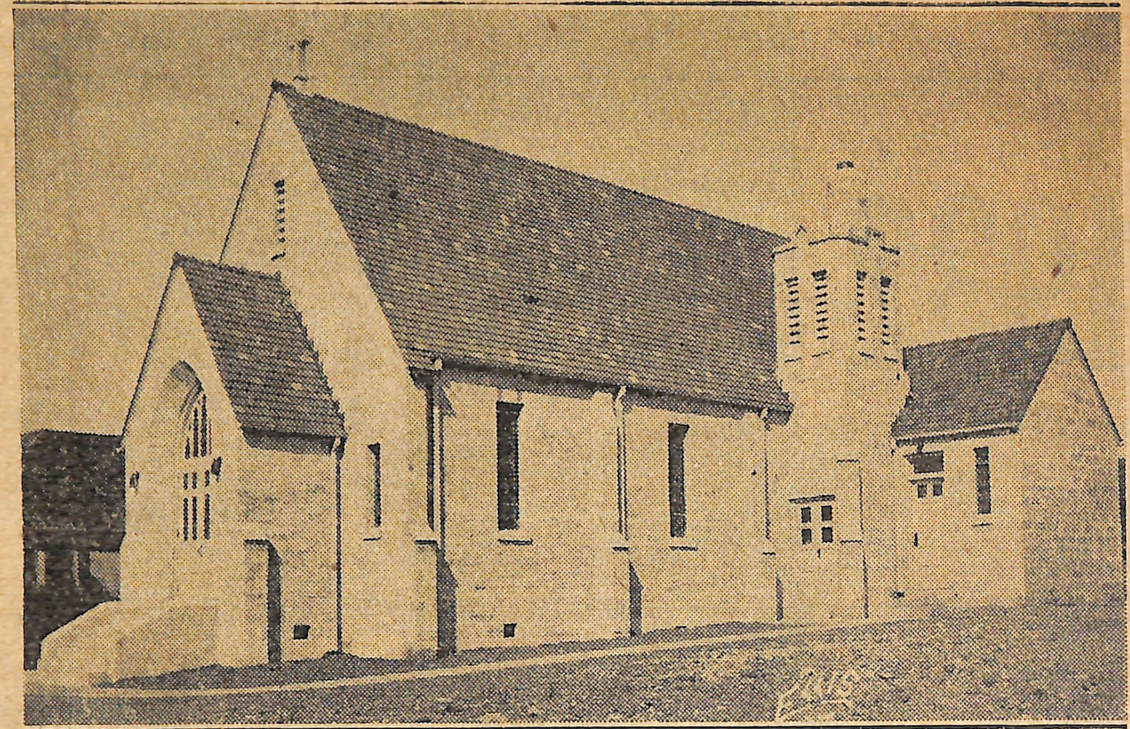
Served Long Time

In 1926, the Rev. Pass became president and general manager and the Rev. Foster was made secretary. The two have served continuously, and the fair has grown under their guidance.

Of all the colored fairs that have been organized the Cleveland County Negro Fair is said to be the only county negro fair that has been able to continue without interruption. From the beginning, the chief aim was "to give to the colored people of the Piedmont section a well-balanced fair for their development agriculturally, industrially and educationally." The negroes attribute a great deal of the success in achieving this aim to the Rev. Pass and other officials, and to J. S. Dorton, who is secretary of the Cleveland County Fair for white folk and has also contributed largely to the upbuilding of the negro exposition.

Advance Work Featured

A feature of the fair is the advance work. Every year, thirty days before the fair, group meetings are held over the county and adjoining counties to instruct the people how to plan and make their exhibits. Schools, always represented with outstanding booths, play big roles in this pre-fair program, competing with each other in bringing livestock, cattle, swine and products. The women of the county participate in home econo-



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH in Shelby radiates an air of devotion, warmth, and serenity.

Mooresboro Started In 1885; Tobacco Factory First Plant

By R. G. BURRUS, Mayor

The quiet little village of Mooresboro is advantageously located on U. S. Highway No. 74, about eight miles west of Shelby on the Southern and Seaboard railway lines. It has a picturesque history which begins back in 1878, when on Monday, February 18, Frank Bland came over from Surry county with the intention of starting a town. By 1879 there was a Post Office bearing the name of Mooresboro, and even before 1860 the stage coach left mail at Logan's store for those living around in the Mooresboro settlement.

First Tobacco Factory

The town was incorporated in 1885, with B. H. Bridges serving as mayor. The first industry the town knew was a tobacco factory which was founded by H. C. Burrus soon after he came to the town in 1882. The tobacco was raised on the surrounding farms and made into plug and pipe forms at the factory. It was then taken on wagons to various parts of the state for sale.

Mooresboro is proud of her cream-



last eleven years the town has been under the leadership of Mayor R. G. Burrus and his aldermen. The present board of aldermen consists of J. U. Rollins, mayor pro tem, C. Y. Harris, clerk and J. K. Smart, J. W. Lucas, and V. B. Lovelace, aldermen.

The Masonic Lodge No. 388, was chartered in Mooresboro in 1885 with B. H. Bridges, Master, Z. R. Walker, Senior Warden, and H. C. Burrus, Junior Warden. This Lodge is still living with about seventy-

and County in the year 1840. There are definite records stating the fact that priests from time to time came into North Carolina from Columbia, Augusta and Greenville but these documents give no specific evidence of their having visited Cleveland County.

However in 1884, Father Julius Phol, O. S. B., one of the Benedictine priests from Saint Mary's Priory—known from 1885 to 1910 as Maryhelp Abbey and since called by its present title, Belmont Abbey—held services and offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Goforth. The latter resided in the northeast section of Shelby. Present on this occasion, in addition to Mr. and Mrs. Goforth, were their two daughters, Mary and Maggie, Mrs. Emily Hall and her children, Warren, Harold, Elsie and Mary (all of Shelby) and Mrs. Aaron Beam (of Waco).

It was while Father Felix Hintermeyer was administering to the spiritual needs of this fervent little group that they began to plan for the erection of a church. A lot was purchased near the Hall residence (where the Cities Service Station near the Cleveland Hotel now stands), the small congregation was not in a position to finance a Church building.

Families Move Away

Around the turn of the Century the little congregation of the Shelby Missions ceased to exist owing to the fact that the Goforths removed to Belmont, the Halls and McGraths took up residence in Charlotte, and the Taylors returned to Norfolk. The few Catholics who remained attended services thereafter at Gastonia or Belmont, and it was not until 1935 that a sufficient number of Catholics had gathered in the Shelby area to warrant the services of a priest.

13 Confirmed

So it came about in 1935 that the present Abbot of Belmont, the Most Rev. Vincent George Taylor, O. S. B., D. D., LL. D. directed the then pastor of St. Michaels Church, Gastonia to conduct services in Shelby for the growing congregation. Father Cuthbert E. Allen, O. S. B. enthusiastically entered upon the work. He celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the first time in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Weldon who resided at 214 Belvidere Ave. The date was August 11, 1935. At that time services were held each second and fourth Sunday and on Holydays. A Sunday School was organized and presided over by the zealous Mrs. Weldon whose memory will always be held in veneration by the Shelby Catholics. A Woman's Sodality was established in December of that year.

It was a great joy to the rejuvenated Congregation when, on May 24, 1936, the Most Rev. Abbot Vincent Taylor administered Holy Communion to nine First Communicants at the morning Mass celebrated in the Weldon residence and that afternoon Confirmed thirteen.

Erect Church Here

Father Cuthbert and the little congregation meanwhile were storming heaven with prayer in the hope that Divine Providence would make it possible to erect a fitting place of worship for the Catholics of Shelby. They placed their seemingly hopeless cause in the hands of the Blessed Mother of Jesus and begged her to use her powers of intercession with her

here in Shelby. There is an air of devotion intimate warmth and serenity about its interior and an appealing dignity and stability to its exterior.

Dedication

Owing to the personal supervision of Father Michael the church was quickly completed and was solemnly dedicated to Mary, Help of Christians, on St. Benedicts Day, July 11, 1937. The Most Rev. Vincent G. Taylor, O. S. B., D. D. LL. D. Abbot Ordinary of Belmont officiated at the dedicatory ceremonies. The impressive Catholic ritual left no doubt in the minds of those present that this building had been solemnly dedicated to the worship of God and the Salvation of souls.

St. Marys, though a small Church, is a credit to the City of Shelby and is a positive boon to all Catholics residing in Cleveland County.

Reverend Father Alphonse, owing to the increasing demands made upon his time as pastor of the growing Gastonia Congregation had to relinquish his work in Shelby in October 1939. However his work was admirably carried on by the Rev. E. J. Callahan of the diocese of Nashville, until the appointment, in April, 1940, of the present Pastor, the Rev. Gergory Eichenlaub, O. S. B. of Belmont Abbey.

Enough salt underlies more than 7,000 square miles of Ohio's area to meet easily requirements of all the world.

play big roles in this pre-fair program, competing with each other in bringing livestock, cattle, swine and products. The women of the county participate in home economics, sewing and canning displays.

The negro fair has taught the colored people lessons in cooperation, according to negro leaders. The individuals and communities have worked together in order that the fair might be a success. The fair has served as a school for the negro farmers, training them to grow the best in agricultural products. They now strive throughout all the year to produce better crops, better swine and livestock. Keen competition is always in evidence. Vocational departments at Lincoln Academy, Compact and Douglas high schools are outstanding.

15th Fair Approaching

The negro fair for 1940 will be held on October 2, 3, 4 and 5. This will be the 15th annual fair, and the outlook has never been better. The Kaus shows will be on the midway. A splendid program of free attractions and fireworks is being arranged. Preparations are already under way by the various communities to have outstanding exhibits for the fair.

The following group of officers and directors has served for a number of years:

The Rev. N. J. Pass, president; Sherwood Enloe, vice-president; Rev. A. W. Foster, secretary and treasurer; the Rev. P. B. Falls, general superintendent of exhibits;

the surrounding farms and made into plug and pipe forms at the factory. It was then taken on wagons to various parts of the state for sale.

Mooresboro is proud of her creamery, which is the oldest and one of the largest in the state. It was promoted by the late J. B. Bridges in 1909, and its first president was the late Prof. J. B. Blanton, who served for eight years. E. B. Hamrick is now president, and J. U. Rollins is the capable manager.

Church Formed In 1772

Sandy Run Church was founded at Mooresboro in 1772, and some of her first deacons were William McKinney, David Beam, and J. Huckaby. The late Rev. Drury Dobbins served as pastor of this church for forty-four years. Sandy Run has an active Sunday School and Baptist Training Union, and has a membership of about 300. The present pastor is the Rev. W. G. Camp. Preaching services are held four times each month.

Although her most brilliant days were probably in the "Gay Nineties" and shortly thereafter, Mooresboro is a modern village today. A majori-

Miss Lyda Sue Galbraith, superintendent of the women's department; Professor W. E. Ricks, assistant secretary; E. S. Beam, Sherwood Enloe, the Rev. P. B. Falls, James Camp, S. S. Pheemster, Charles Roberts, Caldwell Hamilton, E. C. Gill, Professor W. E. Ricks, the Rev. N. J. Pass and the Rev. A. W. Foster, board of directors.

MAYOR E. G. BURRUS of Mooresboro, the town that levies no taxes.

ty of her homes have private water and sewer systems, and they are nearly all occupied by their owners. The school system is adequately equipped to care for present needs, with six high school teachers and vocational courses in home economics and agriculture.

Power Sub-Station

The sub-station of the Duke Power Company, and the branch office which serves Lattimore, Boiling Springs, Ellenboro, Hollis, New House and the surrounding countryside, is located at Mooresboro, with A. H. Greene as manager.

No Town Tax

For the last eleven years the town has not levied any taxes, but has had sufficient funds to carry on from the cash received when the town power plant was sold to Duke Power Company. On July 1, 1940, the town had to its credit approximately \$900.00 plus the town farm, which contains 72 1-2 acres free from all debt and valued at \$3000.

The first doctor, who was practicing in 1882, was Dr. W. G. Palmer, and the present one is Dr. C. Y. Warburn.

Mooresboro's population is around 300, and so far there has been no evidence of need for police. For the