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Hardships Endured By Klem Family For Faith In Early Days Recalled

By GEORGE E. SCHANTZ

Realizing that the Centennial celebration of Rochester is not far off, and that the Redemptorists Centennial in Rochester is but two years away and knowing that information relative to early settlers is therefore timely, I herewith present the following information in reference to the activities of the late Bernard Klem, who was my maternal grandfather.

Mr. Klem was born at Kittersburg near Strasburg, Germany, November 8, 1809. In the year 1816 the family numbering six persons came to America. They sailed from Havre, France, late in the Spring with New York City as their destination and were fourteen weeks on the ocean voyage. Having traveled over a period of ten weeks and not sighting land, and suffering shortage of food supplies, each person being allowed one "Zweibach" as his ration per day, the passengers became mutinous and threatened to throw the Captain into the sea.

Trouble on Sea

The Captain remonstrated with the infuriated passengers promising to sight land within two weeks, if favorabl winds prevailed. Instead of continuing a due westwardly course toward New York, he immediately turned his ship taking a Northwesterly course. It took however a full month before they sighted land finally anchoring their boat at Newfoundland.

On complaint of the passengers the captain was arrested and tried before a justice, convicted and sentenced to imprisonment. The cross-examination diclosed that the captain was affiliated with a group, trafficking in slavery and, it was his intention to anchor his boat, somewhere along the Atlantic Seaboard, probably at South Carolina intending to sell the passengers for slaves.

The family landed at Newfoundland in the Fall of the year, took a boat to Quebec, and bought a pair of oxen and a covered immigrant wagon. They drove to Montreal a distance of two hundred miles to spend the winter. Early in Spring, they crossed the St. Lawrence River, driving their team of oxen on the ice. They crossed the Adirondack Mountains with great difficulty due to the rough country.

Their destination was (Western New York) in search of the golden wheat and due to their determined efforts, they finally reached their objective, in the Spring of the year 1816 halting on Exchange Street in the middle of the roadway where they spent the first night after their arrival.

Cause of Curiosity

On awakening the following morning they found themselves surrounded by a curious crowd of villagers, anxious to see the new race that arrived in the village overnight.

Members of the Klem family spoke French, German and Polish, fluently but could not converse with any of the onlookers. After considerable scouting it was learned that the mother of Nathaniel Rochester was able to speak German, having graduated from Oxford University, England. The villagers brought Mr. Rochester's mother to the scene. She immediately began conversing with them and, they became close, intimate friends, the rest of their lives.

In the year 1818 at the age of nine, Mr. Klem accompanied by his pious mother and, an infant sister undertook the hazardous journey on foot to Albany following the toe path of the old Erie Canal then under construction, for the purpose of having the infant sister baptised by a Catholic priest. On arriving at Albany they were informed to their sad disappointment that there was likewise no priest in Albany.

Prompted by their strong faith although in a weakened and fatigued condition, they continued their journey on foot to New York City. After encountering many hardships, privation and untold sufferings they finally reached their destination. It took them forty days to cover the distance of three hundred and ninety miles on foot, from Rochester to New York.

Reach New York

Upon arriving at New York, they immediately asked to be directed to the nearest Catholic Church. The church to which they were directed was in lower New York in the vicinity of the Battery. Arriving at the church, the good pastor upon hearing their story, was filled with compassion saying: "My dear people, this is truly a most remarkable coincidence to come on foot carrying an infant all the way from Rochester, N. Y., to receive the Holy Sacrament of Baptism." The Pastor shaking his head, apparently in amazement, directed them to an adjoining room saying: "Have you made this hazardous trip as a manifestation of your holy faith and, in the teachings of our Holy Religion?" The good mother answered the pastor in the affirmative.

Praised by Bishop

The good pastor departed leaving the trio in the room to which they were directed. He at once reported the incident to the Bishop and returned after a brief period accompanied by his Bishop (Bishop Du Boise).

The pious Bishop marvelled when the good pastor related the story to him and saw the good mother, caressing the unbaptized infant to her bosom and the nine year old son. The Bishop in addressing them said: "This event shall be immortalized, this act of faith is an edification to the whole Catholic world." The Bishop baptized the infant, baptizing it Anna Catherine. The mother offered the Bishop a stipend but he gratefully declined. The Bishop took a great interest in the family exchanging visits frequently showing a peculiar fondness and admiration for them.

The trio remained in New York for two years, the mother attended Holy Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral daily, while the son remained at home preparing his studies, and caring for his infant sister. He attended the Cathedral grammar school. His spare time was devoted to the buying of vegetables and other garden products, going from house to house to sell the same. In this way within two years he earned enough money to pay the fare by boat to Albany and stage coach to Rochester besides having a balance on hand in excess of $600.00.

During the trio's absence the father, John B. Klem, remaining in Rochester ventured into the wheat growing business. He purchased the farm on South Avenue where the County Buildings now stand, for the ridiculous price of 10c per acre. The land was in an extremely sterile condition containing huge boulders and hundreds of stumps of trees. With determined perseverance the land was cleared and he entered the wheat growing business. His efforts as a wheat grower were a sad failure. Inability to fertilize the soil resulted in the wheat growing to a great height with little or no production of wheat. Risgusted, he abandoned the idea of growing wheat and returned to his trade of custom tailor. In the year 1822 Mr. John B. Klem (Father) purchased the ten acre tract, bounded by what is now known as East Ave., Meigs, Goodman and Park Ave. The purchase price was $100.00 per acre. The land was likewise in an extremely neglected and sterile condition, the soil being clay, containing huge boulders and many stumps of trees. With a renewed and determined effort Mr. Klem and his young son, who previously returned from New York, cleared and drained the land making a farm of more than ordinary productiveness, from which they supplied the tables for the principal homes of the city. They were the first market gardeners in Rochester.

First Mass in House

The father, John B. Klem, died in 1852. The son Bernard Klem, a devout Catholic, was firmly attached to his religion. It may be mentioned, incidentally, that the first Mass ever celebrated in Rochester was solemnized in his father's house. He was mainly instrumental in establishing the Redemptorist Fathers here at St. Joseph's Church, going so far as to mortgage his property to raise funds to erect a house of worship. He was also a great benefactor of the late Mother Hieronymo, a member of the Community of the Sisters of St. Joseph, in making the purchase of the Howell homestead on South Ave. possible, as a home for wayward and homeless girls, teaching them useful trades and fancy needle work of every description. The institution was known as "The Home of Industry". In 1850 he purchased a thirty acre tract at the corner of Main and Goodman Streets and donated the use of it as a suitable burial place for deceased Catholics. He was a great benefactor to the orphans of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, making a substantial bequest to them at the time of his death. He made it possible through furnishing funds to the late Bishop McQuaid, to establish the Catholic Young Men's Association. For many year prior to his death, he was a daily attendant at Holy Mass in St. Joseph's Church. The late Rev. Joseph Schantz, C. SS. R., was a grandson and the Rev. Eugene B. Hudson is a great-grandson of the late Bernard Klem. His brother Rev. John B. Klem, (a Jesuit priest) and a professor of Theology, died at Georgetown University in 1844. Mr. Bernard Klem died January 21st, 1878.

Father Finn Learns of Mother's Death As He Directs Choir

Richmond. — (NCWC) — Although he had just received word of the death in New York City of his mother, Mrs. Anna Hussey Finn, the Rev. William J. Finn, C.S.P., directed the singing of a group of his famous Paulist Choristers here Wednesday of last week during a Catholic Hour Night held under the auspices of the National Council of Catholic Men, sponsor of the "Catholic Hour" of radio broadcasting.

Father Finn also directed his singers earlier in the day, when they sang before a joint session of the Virginia Legislature at the State Capitol.

Mrs Finn will be buried Saturday in Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Boston. She was the widow of the late Dr. James A. Finn, formerly of Roxbury, Mass.

Fr. Florack Talks To Holy Name Men On Purity in Life

Elmira.—Appealing to a large congregation of Holy Name men assembled in St. Patrick's Church, Sunday night for a moral life, fully and completely realized in a deliberate and generous imitation of Jesus Christ, the Rev Arthur A. Florack, assistant director of the Holy Name Societies in the Diocese of Rochester addressed the society upon the occasion of the first anniversray of its founding.

Urging that they use practical means to do this by having courage to live purely, to take a stand against slander to the tenets of their faith, to suppress suggestive films, books and stage productions and to organize their strength in these causes as "lay apostles of Christ" in response to the invitation of the Holy Father, Pope Pius, the speaker concluded his address with a stirring appeal to his listeners' love of fair play. He pointed out the essential meanness of those who cheat in life, declaring that a man who is true to his God will be true to his wife, his children and his home.

Services closed with Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Father Florack officiating, assisted by the Rev. Daniel McCarthy of SS. Peter and Paul's Church and the Rev. Francis Harding of St. Cecilia's Church. The Rev. William J. Brien, spiritual director, was in the sanctuary.

Catholic Daughters District Deputies Meet at Seneca Falls

Seneca Falls. — District Deputies of the Catholic Daughters of America held their annual convention on Saturday and Sunday with headquarters at the Gould Hotel.

Mrs. Margaret Tynan of Poughkeepsie, State Regent, and eight District Deputies were present. On Saturday evening a conference was held and on Sunday morning in St. Patrick's Church at 10 o'clock High Mass was solemnized, at which the State Regent, District Deputies, and all members of Court Seneca Falls attended in a body.

On Sunday noon a dinner was held at the Hotel Gould at which Mrs. Tynan and other visiting officials were present.

The convention was concluded Sunday afternoon when Mrs. Tynan and the District Deputies left for Penn Yan where a Junior Court is being organized.

The *Catholic* World Over

When the Holy Father recently sent felicitations to Dr. Lauri Ikelander, President of Finland, on the occasion of that official's seventieth anniversary, so deep was the gratitude of the Government and the people that a delegation headed by two federal officials, went to Rome and, in a special audience at the Vatican, formally thanked the Pontiff for His congratulations to the nation's Chief Executive. The delegation expressed gratitude for His Holiness' interest in the Finnish people and He in turn spoke of his love for that country and its people.

A sentence of excommunication against Georges Lamontagne, former warden of the parish of St. Maxine de Scott in Quebec has just been lifted by His Eminence Jean Marie Rodrigue, Cardinal Villeneuve, Archbishop of Quebec, who had previously imposed the sentence because Lamontagne had instituted civil action against his pastor, the Rev. Emilien Berard, to have the latter make his accounts public. Lamontagne has submitted to ecclesiastical authority.

ST. PATRICK'S LENTEN SERVICES AGAIN INCLUDE DAILY NOON MASS

Elmira—Noon-day Mass is again being celebrated in St. Patrick's Church here during the Lenten season starting each day at 12:15 o'clock. Extraordinary attendance last year when the practice was inaugurated by the Rev. William J. Brien, pastor, prompted him to arrange for the noon-day Mass again this year. A brief instruction is given at the Mass.

Other daily Masses at St. Patrick's Church during the Lenten season are being offered at 7, 7:30 and 8 o'clock. Services will be held regularly each Wednesday and Friday evening at 7:30 o'clock. Wednesday's service consists of recitation of the Rosary and a Litany, a sermon and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Friday evening's service consists of the highly indulgenced recitation of the Stations of the Cross, wherein the priest and the congregation unite in following by meditation and common prayers the journey made by Christ from the night of His condemnation to death to the day of His burial in the tomb of Joseph Arimathea.

Special interest is attached to announcement that Father Brien is delivering the series of Lenten sermons on Wednesday evenings, his subjects being the "Seven Capital Sins." Each night, one of these sins, which the Church regards as fundamental causes of failure to apply fully the Christian spirit to life and the purpose of life, which is the salvation of the immortal soul, will be expounded by the speaker; and practical means for the avoidance of such sins and the cultivation of opposite qualities of virtue will be pointed out in the manner taught by the Church since the time of Christ. The unchanging moral law, based on these fundamental doctrines, will be explained.

The Lenten season will reach a climax in Holy Week and the Eastertide with the usual special services for that period. Father Brien announces that the Rev. Stephen Sweeney, a member of the religious Order of Passionist Fathers, will be speaker for Holy Week and Easter Sunday. Further details regarding these services will be announced later.

St. Patrick's Parish Has Successful Party

Seneca Falls.—A successful card party was held on Wednesday evening, Feb. 7, in St. Patrick's School Hall. The party which was the last before Lent was well attended and a goodly sum was added to the church building fund. As a part of the entertainment program John DeVries of Geneva sang several songs and an interesting talk was given by William Waters of Waterloo.

The committee in charge of the party was as follows: Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Esmack, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Byrne, Mr. and Mrs. R. Preston Mills, George Farrell, Helen Durnin, Mary Rogers, Patrick S. Clary, Mrs. Jane Holland and family, Mr. and Mrs. Frank DeRoamer, Mr. and Mrs. George Kennedy, Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Murphy and family, Joseph M. Casey, Elizabeth Casey, Michael Ferguson, Mr. and Mrs. Harrison Mills, Mr. and Mrs. John Bellardino, Albert McNaney and family, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Flynn, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Covert, Peter M. Doran and Mrs. Eugene Sullivan.

St. Mary's Young Ladies Sodality Has Enjoyable Silver Tea

Auburn.—The Young Ladies Sodality of St. Mary's Church of which Rev. Robert M. Fennessy is the Director helda silver tea Sunday afternoon in Lycount Hall, over 200 attended. The hall was artistically decorated, the color scheme being red and white in keeping with Valentine's Day. Several paintings by Veronica Manion, a member of the Sodality were displayed. An enjoyable musical program was rendered by Adolph Huss, violinist, accompanied by Elizabeth Scollan at the piano. The Iacovino sisters Madeline and Christina played several selections.

Miss Mary Scollan was general chairman assisted by the following committee: the Misses, Lucy Bolster, Helen Begley, Jane Cummings, Elizabeth Scollan, Betty Quill, Anne Kenny, Margaret Corcoran, Joan Mullally, Mary Ryan, May Rose Barron, Gertrude Cora, Helen Maloney, Gertrude Failey, Laura Failey, Sarah Hynes, Josephine Mullaney, Mary Nolan, Marian Cowmey, Louise DePalma, Catherine Coffey, Veronica Manion, Edna Edwards, Jane Lewis, Alice Toole, Dorothy Walsh, Dorothy Fitzgerald, and Ann Stapleton.

SACRED NUMBERS PRODUCED

Vatican City.—(NCWC)—Monsignor Lorenzo Perosi, maestro of the Pontifical Musical Cappella, has composed a Mass for eight voices and two choruses, in honor of the jubilee of the Redemption, and an impressive Te Deum.

It is hoped that these two new compositions will be rendered for the first time in St. Peter's as a part of the closing ceremonies of the jubilee.

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