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“THE MISSIONS OF TAMPA”: EXCERPTS FROM THE DIARY OF FATHER CLAVREUL, 1866-1873

Edited and Annotated by Julius J. Gordon

The Catholic Church in Florida dates from the sixteenth century, but it had little permanent influence on the Tampa Bay area until three centuries later. In 1858, the arrival of Bishop Augustin Verot in St. Augustine marked a turning point in the modern history of the Catholic Church in Florida. At the time Bishop Verot took up his duties in St. Augustine, his vicariate covered all of Florida east of the Apalachicola River. In this area from the Georgia border to Key West, the entire Catholic Church consisted of six churches and chapels, four schools, three priests, and some 3,000 adherents. Bishop Verot soon initiated a movement that by 1870 increased the Church’s presence to nineteen churches and chapels, seven schools, twelve priests, and about 10,000 parishioners. In recognition of the bishop’s accomplishment, the Vatican in 1870 created the Diocese of St. Augustine, which encompassed the entire peninsula east of the Apalachicola River.1

The results of Verot’s success were felt in the Tampa Bay area. In 1859 the Church of St. Louis was built in Tampa, and the following year, Father Charles A. Mailley, a twenty-seven-year-old priest recently arrived from France, became Tampa’s first resident priest. As a French native himself, Bishop Verot had personally recruited seven priests in his homeland. In addition to Mailley, they included Father Henri Pierre Clavreul, who ultimately spent most of the next sixty years in Florida.2

Father Clavreul was born on January 4, 1835, at Le Bourg d’Ire, a rural parish in the Diocese of Angers, France. He studied at the ecclesiastical seminary of Angers. In 1853 he became a deacon, and on March 19, 1859, he was ordained a priest. Recruited by Bishop Verot, Father Clavreul arrived in St. Augustine in October 1860 and remained there for a year. He then went to nearby Fernandina, where he stayed until February 1862, when he was forced to flee by invading Union troops. Clavreul sought refuge in the Diocese of Savannah, Georgia, which had recently come under the leadership of Bishop Verot. During the remaining war years, Father Clavreul ministered to Catholics in Georgia, including Union prisoners of war at the infamous camp located in Andersonville, Georgia.

Following the Civil War, Father Clavreul returned to Florida. From 1866 to 1877, he traveled to various missions around the state, including Tampa. In 1877 he was assigned to the Catholic mission at Mandarin, Florida. He remained there until 1902, when he was called to St. Augustine by the new bishop, William J. Kenny. Father Clavreul died in Jacksonville on May 19, 1923, and he was buried in St. Augustine’s San Lorenzo cemetery.3

Father Clavreul assured a place in history by keeping a diary, which includes reflections on his activities in the mission field from 1860 to 1875. The original diary appears to be lost, but large fragments of it were published by St. Leo’s Abbey Press in the 1920s.4
The following excerpts cover his visits to Hillsborough County between 1866 and 1873. At the time Tampa had a small population of well under one thousand residents, and few records survive to document life in the Tampa Bay area following the Civil War. Thus, Father Clavreul’s diary is an important source for local history. Except for the addition of explanatory notes, the diary remains as it was printed in the 1920s.

* * * * *

May 7, 1866: St. Marks. See Mrs. Hance and daughter. Same day leave for Tampa by Steamer, Governor Marvin. Captain McKay of Tampa anent, “My first visit to Tampa.” I here insert what I wrote later for another purpose. It follows: “My first visit to Tampa was from May 8 to June 11, 1866. I slept in room next to Sacristy; taking my meals at Mrs. Jackson. The latter was born Quigly, related to priests of that name. One of them visiting Tampa once or twice. I do not remember the time she told me Father Quigly came to Tampa. She was married to John Jackson, State or County Surveyor; the latter a convert, I think. It was at their house the first resident priest of Tampa resided. It was Rev. C.A. Maille, a French priest, who accompanied Bishop Verot on a visit the latter made to France in 1859, where he had gone with a view of recruiting priests. It was through the efforts of Father Maille that the first church was built at Tampa. An Irishman of the name of Waldon, at the time residing in Cuba, made the acquaintance of Bishop Verot, whom he met in Tampa and donated the sum of $1,000 for the new church. The people contributed also, even the protestants; so that within less than a year the edifice was opened for divine services. It remained as it had been originally built till about 1883, when Father Peterman added to the nave wings, and, so that the Church after the addition could seat from 120 to 200 people. About one third more than the original church. It was Father Peterman also who built the belfry.

“Shortly after the opening of the hostilities, 1862-1863 the Jackson family moved to the country, some 10 or 15 miles from town. Father Maille had ceased to reside at Tampa on account of ill health, but attended missions elsewhere; though he came to Tampa twice in 1864 and 1865. I have no means to ascertain how many catholics were in Tampa when Father Maille arrived in 1860.
“Six years later, 1866, I visited Tampa, for the first time, and I think the number of catholics in 1860 was about as in 1866. It consisted of some twenty families in Tampa itself and perhaps as many in the missions attended from Tampa; not a few of those catholics by name. Apart of the Jackson family, the great number were families from St. Augustine; The Andrews, Masters, Leonardy, Haskins. Several of them intermarried with outsiders; the Browns, Canepa, Bells. In the Country on the Manatee, we had the Fergusons, several of them have apostatized. Those I met in 1866, and later in 1873, whose parents had been baptized in St. Augustine some 70 years before. There were also 3 or 4 French families; the Laurenti’s, who lived on a farm three miles from town; the Bourguardez, one of them married to a Canova from St. Augustine, who lived 10 or 12 miles from Tampa. Some Italians, among them: Dominic Ghira, who had married one Masters, a native of St. Augustine. In five, some natives of Tampa: the Colliers, one who had married William Haskins, whose mother was a Leonardy of St. Augustine. Then some vagrants and tramps.”...

From May 14-30 1866, visited the Missions of Tampa, then remained in Tampa till June 11, when I went to Key West. The notes are now resumed.

May 8, 1866. Whilst at Tampa, occupy a room next to the Sacristy, take my meals at Mrs. Jacksons.

May 14, 1866. Say Mass at Laurenti’s farm, four miles from town; wife and two grown sons not practical Catholics. Go in conveyance to Bourguardez, married to Miss Canova, 12 miles from Tampa, my driver is Mr. Jackson’s son, Thomas, 14 years old, and the horse and buggy are Mr. Jackson’s.

May 19, 1866. On the Alafia River, visit Mrs. William Haskins’ family and sister-in-law, Mrs. Collier.

May 21, 1866. Go by water to Manatee with Captain Dominic Ghira. By night stop at an Island where lived a Frenchman, a sort of misanthrope, educated, who at one time did clerical duties at the Libraire of Cosnier Lachaise at Angers, France. He lived alone, and the Island is in the bay some 18 miles from Tampa. The following day stop at another Island not far from there where a Spaniard, Guerro, married to a Dutch woman, with six children; baptize the three youngest. All
the children, even the oldest, aging 15 years, unable to utter intelligibly a single word, the father and mother being ignorant of each other’s language never spoke, it seems.

At Manatee on the same visit see Capt. Frescot, a Frenchman, Catholic by name, from Dunkirk, France; also the husband of Mrs. Atzeroth, the latter a Lutheran, who was more interested in the spiritual welfare of the husband than he was himself and she brought him to me that I might hear his confession. Say Mass at Mrs. Atzeroth’s, 12 miles from Tampa, six receive communion.

May 28, 1866. See Mrs. Worth, whose husband is Lutheran. Later, on my landing from Key West was told of an urgent sick call from the Worth family. I arrived in time to receive Capt. Worth, then on his dying bed, into the church. Mrs. Worth was Irish.

May 30, 1866. Back to Tampa.

June 11, 1866. From Tampa go to Key West aboard the United States Gunboat, the Mascotte, 200 marines on board, quite a number of them Catholics, hear some confessions.
June 13 to July 26, 1866. In and around Key West. Father O’Hara,\textsuperscript{18} stationed before at Augusta, Georgia, but then in charge of Key West, had left May 29, 1866 for parts unknown.

In the beginning of July, go to Dry Tortugas, where convicts and others for political offences were kept, on board of a U.S. Revenue Cutter, under the command of Capt. Reynolds, whose kindness, I still remember. During my stay of over a week, I say mass every day, hear some 60 or 70 confessions; all who confessed received Communion; among the convicts was Dr. Mudd\textsuperscript{19} who was implicated in Mrs. Surrat’s case\textsuperscript{20} for the murder of President Lincoln.

Jeanette Coller Haskins.  
Photograph courtesy of Joanne Cimino.  

William Thomas Haskins.  
Photograph courtesy of Joanne Cimino.
February 12, 1873. Mother Julia, Sister Mary Bernard, Sister Vincent, Miss Glenn and two orphan girls: Mary Ellen 4 years and elder sister Lizzie Parson, 10 years old, go to Mandarin to start anew the school suspended since June 1868. This journey performed in carts, through the woods, from early morning till late at night, with a colored man, Uncle Jack Mungeon, accompanying them. Part of the way through the woods three miles across from King Road to Church, the woods were burning fiercely, the flames licking the carts.

August 12, 1873. Leave St. Augustine for Palatka; stop at Dr. Rields.

August 14, 1873. Leave Palatka by boat for Okahumpka.

August 17, 1873. Sunday, after a drive of five miles, for which I had to pay $5.00, reach Sumterville. Go afoot with my paraphenalia the same afternoon to Caruthers, a non-catholic married to a catholic, Mrs. Stanley’s daughter. Not even asked to take a seat. Spend the night there, however, tired and sick. Go following morning to Mrs. Caruther’s mother, Mrs. Stanley (widow Goff), see two of her sons, Michael Goff and Augustus Goff, young men, the eldest had left the house one mile and farther, see another son of Mrs. Stanley by former husband Columbus Goff, married and epileptic. Leave for Tampa, which I reach, August 19, 1873:

August 19, 1873, arrive Tampa.

August 21, to August 24, 1873. See M. Griffin, wife of a convert, and son William, 11 years. See Miss Coyle and sister Mrs. Patten husband non-catholic. Bartholomew Fogarty, wife and four children John 11 years, Bartholomew 9, Eliza 6, and Mary Loetitia 4 years. John Fogarty, Bartholomew’s brother, married to a non-catholic, a free-mason; another brother, William Fogarty, married to Mrs. Dickens, whose husband still living. See also an Irish laborer, Smyth, who went to his duties; and another, A. Reilly who kept away. At Terra Ceia, a small island a few miles from Manatee, see an Irish Catholic woman, who stayed with old Mrs. Joe Atzeroth.
July 1871. From Tampa we visit all the Mission around: Point Pinellas, Manatee, Clearwater Harbor, Cedar Keys. The two latter places were visited upon landing the Schooner the Undine, we had taken at Tampa. At Clearwater Harbor, I gave extreme unction to a veteran of the War of 1812 with England, Mr. Manning,31 said to be 100 years old, dying of old age. I could not but admire the tender care given the old man by people who were strangers to him.

Note:32 the following excerpt from Captain James McKay’s letter, anent Father Clavreul will prove of interest to the reader. signed: Father Benedict.

My dear Father:

The notation referred to in Rev. H. P. Clavreul’s Diary mentioned in your letter was the Steamship Governor Marvin, owned by my father, and of which I was master. At that time she was chartered by the United States Government and was used as a transport flying along the Florida coast from New Orleans to Key West and the Tortugas. She was named after the Provisional Governor of Florida who was and had been a true friend of my father long before the Civil War.

My father purchased her in New York after the War in 1865, and I lost her in the hurricane of 1872, but got her into the harbor of Key West before she sank.
She was built to carry cattle from Honduras to Cuba just at the beginning of the war, but was taken by the United States Government, was named Honduras; but when my father purchased her he changed her name to Governor Marvin.

signed: James McKay, Jr.

Father Clavreul.

Photograph from The Cross in the Sand by Michael V. Gannon

2 Ibid., 167.

3 Benedict Roth, *Brief History of the Churches of the Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida*, 10 parts (St. Leo, Florida: Abbey Press, 1923-34), part 3, pp. 53-76.

4 Ibid.

5 The steamship *Governor Marvin*, owned by James McKay of Tampa was named in honor of Florida's Governor William Marvin, appointed by President Andrew Johnson in 1865. See the letter from James McKay, Jr., which can be found in the last diary entry excerpted here.


7 The spelling of Father Maille's name was anglicized to “Mailley.” Ibid., 167.

8 Father Charles Peterman, a German-born priest, was pastor of St. Louis Catholic Church in Tampa from 1863 until he died in October 1887 during the yellow fever epidemic. *Florida Peninsular*, November 1887.

9 The “Fergusons” remained unidentified, but they were possibly descendants of Thomas Henrique Ferguson, who was a resident of St. Augustine in 1799-1813. Spanish Land Grants in Florida, vol. III, 1813.

10 The name “Laurenti” has not been identified. However, Thomas Llorente (Lorente) and Jose Lorente were recipients of land in St. Augustine. Spanish Land Grants in Florida, Vol. IV, K-9, p. 9 for 1813. The family’s relocation in Hillsborough County has not been documented.

11 Constant Bourguardez, who was born March 3, 1824, in Alsace, France, and died September 18, 1884, was married to Jane Canova (1825-1903) in Duval County, Florida, on January 3, 1844. Julius J. Gordon, “Biographical Census of Hillsborough County, Florida – 1850” (typescript, 1989), 45.

12 Dominic Ghira was born in Rovenio, Austria, on March 19, 1816, and came from Italy to the United States, arriving in Tampa in 1849. He married Domenica Masters of St. Augustine, in Tampa, in 1850. He died May 22, 1897. C. E. Harrison, *Genealogical Records of the Pioneers of Tampa*, (Tampa, 1915), 134.

13 “Colliers” refers to the Celler family. Mary Jeanette Coller, who was born September 25, 1841, and died July 29, 1935, married William T. Haskins, November 16, 1858, with Bishop Augustin Verot officiating. She was the daughter of Levi Coller and Nancy Dixon. Gordon, “Biographical Census of Hillsborough County - 1850,” 105.

14 Miguel Gerroro, born in 1810 on the island of Minorca, was a Spanish fisherman, living on Miguel Island in Manatee County. In 1856, he had married Frederica Kramer, a niece of Madam Joe Atzeroth from Germany. A short time following Father Clavreul’s visit, the Gerrero family died from a yellow fever epidemic. Marriage Records, Manatee County, 1856-1881.

15 “Capt. Frescot” refers to Captain Frederick Tresca, who was born in 1805 in Dunkirk, France, and who in 1853 married Louise Ellen (Wyatt Ware) widow of Elbridge Ware and daughter of William H. Wyatt. Gordon, “Biographical Census of Hillsborough County - 1850,” 592.

16 Joe Atzeroth was born in Germany in 1804, and he homesteaded in Terra Ceia in 1843. His wife Julia Hunt was born December 25, 1807, in Germany. Ollie Z. Fogarty, *They Called It Fogartyville* (New York: Theo Gaus’ Sons,
The six receiving communion were probably: Mrs. Atzeroth; Eliza Atzeroth; Mary Ellen Fogarty; and daughters Eliza, Letitia and Kayte Fogarty.

Mrs. Frederick (Jeanette Carroll) Worth was born in Ireland in 1829; her husband was born in Germany in 1832. The identity of “Capt. Worth” is uncertain. United States Census, 1860, Manuscript Roll, Hillsborough County, Florida; Worth Cemetery Records.

Father James O’Hara was pastor of St. Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Key West from 1863 to 1866. Gannon, The Cross in the Sand, 185.

Dr. Samuel Mudd was convicted of conspiring in the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. Born December 20, 1833 in Charles County, Maryland, he died June 10, 1883. Sentenced by a military court to life at hard labor, he entered Ft. Jefferson, Dry Tortugas, on July 24, 1865. He was pardoned by President Andrew Johnson on March 8, 1869.

Mrs. Mary E. (Jenkins) Surratt, of Baltimore, Maryland, was hanged July 9, 1865, for her part in the assassination of President Lincoln.

“Jack Mungeon” probably referred to Jack Nungin, a black who was born in 1825 in South Carolina. United States Census, 1870, Manuscript Roll, Putnam County, Florida, 515.

Okahumpka, located in Sumter County in 1873, was near Sumterville.

Mrs. William W. (Rebecca) Carruthers was born 1839. Her mother was Mrs. W. Stanley who was born in Georgia and was the widow of Columbus Gough (or Goff). United States Census, 1860, Manuscript Roll, Sumter County, Florida, 811.

The husband was Joseph (Job) Griffin of Manatee County, Florida, who was born in 1834 in Ohio. United States Census, 1860, Manuscript Roll, Manatee County, Florida.

Miss Rosa Coyle was born in 1851 in Ireland; her sister, Mrs. William (Kate) Patton, was born in 1845 in Ireland. United States Census, 1870, Manuscript Roll, Manatee County, Florida, 158.

Bartholomew Fogarty, born June 21, 1839, was the son of Patrick and Elizabeth (Hoolihan) Fogarty of County Cork, Ireland; nicknamed “Tole,” he arrived in Manatee County in 1865, and he was later joined by his brothers. John Fogarty was married to Mary Ann Bethel, of Indian Key, Florida, on December 5, 1867, in St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. She was the daughter of William H. Bethel and Caroline Mott, of Nassau, Bahamas. Bartholomew opened the Fogarty Brother’s Shipyard, and founded the village of Fogartyville. Ollie Z. Fogarty, They Called It Fogartyville (New York: Theo Gaus’ Sons, 1972), 12, 30; United States Census 1870, Manuscript Roll, Manatee County, Florida.

Elizabeth Margaret Atzeroth, born 13 April 1840, in Alsace Lorraine, Germany, was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Atzeroth. She married Michael H. Dickens, on July 4, 1861, and divorced him in 1867 in Hillsborough County. She married William Henry Fogarty on March 26, 1870. Gordon, “Biographical Census of Hillsborough County -1850,” 20-21; Chancery Records, Hillsborough County, Florida, 1867.

“Smyth” possibly refers to James M. Smith who was born in 1828 in Ireland. United States Census, 1850, Manuscript Roll, Hillsborough County, Manatee Section.

Thomas O’Reilly, was born in 1828 in Ireland. Ibid.

“Irish Catholic woman” is unidentified, but she is also mentioned in Cathy Bayless Slusser, “The Joseph Atzeroth Family: Manatee County Pioneers,” Tampa Bay History (1982): 20-44.
William Manning, a fisherman born in Ireland in 1769, was 101 years old and resided at the home of Mashielda Sheffield, born in 1828 in Georgia. United States Census, 1870, Manuscript Roll, Hillsborough County, Florida, household 582, p. 148.

This “Note” was appended to Father Clavreul’s original diary and signed by James McKay, Jr., at an unknown date.