



Meet the Founding Families of the Church of the Immaculate Conception

The Catholic immigrant families who helped Fr. James O'Reilly to build the Church of the Immaculate Conception in the late 19th century were a hard-working and colorful group. They were pioneers who exhibited the courage, perseverance, and faith to create new lives for themselves and their children in a small, but growing, village in a young country. Two noteworthy founding families are the Gaynors and the Huebers.



The Gaynor Monument
at IC Cemetery

Edward and Catherine Gaynor: Edward Gaynor, born in Ireland in 1848, came to the U.S. to work on the construction of the Erie Canal. He worked his way up in the lime burning business and co-founded Bangs and Gaynor, a leading manufacturer of hydraulic cement and land plaster. Fr. O'Reilly eulogized him as "suspicious of enemies, generous to friends, aggressive in advancing his interests." Time and again, I.C. Church was the beneficiary of his generosity. When Fr. O'Reilly was unable to secure a mortgage on the church property from local banks and investors, Mr. Gaynor stepped up. "Meeting me in the street on the next day, he put into my hand \$2,500 without even having my name written on a scrap of paper as an acknowledgement," Fr. O'Reilly said at Mr. Gaynor's funeral. There was no Catholic cemetery in Fayetteville when Mrs. Gaynor passed away in July 1870, so Edward bought a 4.83-acre wheat field from his business partner, Myron Bangs, to be the church's cemetery. The crop was ripening in the field so Mr. Gaynor and others used scythes to cut paths through the wheat in order to reach the burial site, located front and center of the lot.

Louis and Agnes Hueber: Louis Hueber was born in 1832 in Alsace-Lorraine, on the border of France and Germany, and immigrated to the United States in 1852. In 1854, Louis moved to Fayetteville and pursued a career in building. It was said of Mr. Hueber that, "He was a man whose word was his bond." He and Agnes had eight children: Aloysius, Francis, Louis, Jr., Charles, Stephen Paul, Mary, Louise Agnes and Gertrude. Stephen Paul became an influential Vincentian priest. Louise was the parish organist and Gertrude sang in the choir. Louis Jr. and Francis formed the Hueber Brothers Construction Company, a family business that continues to operate to this day as Hueber-Breuer Construction. The Hueber Brothers built the rectory and the two-story barn behind the church in 1870. Louis and Agnes's great-great-grandson Murray Hueber was an architect who worked closely with Monsignor Dwyer in the 1950s to select the location for our new church and designed our school, convent, church, and rectory buildings.



The Hueber Family

Members of other founding families include several business owners, the priest who raised public recognition of the ministry of Fr. Simon Le Moyne, a former mayor of Fayetteville, a hot-tempered sextant, and a popular minor league baseball player. Their stories and many more will be told in the parish history book, available later this year.