



**Correspondence and Conferences with Donald Didier on
His Family Roots in France, Besancon, Indiana, and Fort Wayne, 1993-2017**

Edited, with further notes by Michael Roy Morow

Early in my Besancon researches I found an important source regarding the French American Society and the French community in Fort Wayne, the late Donald Didier. Don's own source was second hand—his father Clem Didier (1890-1985)—but the fact is, there were no firsthand witnesses left regarding the Society, an important crossroads of French history in Allen County.



Clem Didier was also the source on the Society for Father Charles Henry Banet, C.P.P.S., who led me to believe that (1) his associate Alfred Rondot, not himself, had interviewed Clem; (2) another associate, Father Edward Habrowski, had then followed up and conducted more interviews regarding the Society, plus gathered documents from the Didiers. Most importantly, this research had turned up an important photograph of many early French patriarchs at a 1915 Society picnic. Early issues of *Besancon Historical Society Chronicles* had reported that this fine, priceless panoramic picture was lost (see, e.g., issue no.4, June 1997 at p. 3).

I eventually met Don—it turned out his family was one visited by my own long ago, from Hammond, including my mother when young. We had important common ancestors, the Roussey and Luc families. Yet my conferences with Don and his letters were perplexing, because they contradicted some basic, essential facts I thought I had from Father Banet. Most significantly, Father Banet's photograph had to have come from the Didiers. In short, these discussions with Donald highlight both the importance, and the perils, of oral history research.

Don's witness is also significant in its own right. His family is represented on 5 early Besancon tombstones in the old cemetery (including a progenitor, Victor Didier, 1819-1908, and James Didier 1857-1903), plus 4 unmarked graves. But the Didier family had long before Don's time left the Besancon area. He was raised as a boy at 3254 Parnell Avenue, Fort Wayne, of which he wrote and published a rich and detailed memoir, *The Parnell Years* (1993). Don also had important information regarding his family's roots in France, plus a seasoned feel for the French community in Fort Wayne, particularly in the Spy Run area. For these reasons, I now present his witness, *in his own words*, edited by me from his letters, memoir, and my notes of discussions with him. His ancestors' dates are supplied from the studies of my mother Alyce Jane Morow. *Continued on Pages 3-7*

President's Message ... Barbara Gorney

When the Besancon Historical Society began, the project Album in the Attic was started. This was a collection of pictures of families associated with St. Louis Besancon Church. Also some pictures were towns, railroads and other scenes in the county. Many persons donated pictures of their families and other scenes that were then copied in sepia color. The copies were 5x7 with negatives. These pictures were taken mainly in the late 1800's and early 1900's. The pictures that make up the Album in the Attic collection of the Besancon Historical Society number about 1200. The majority of the pictures have names and dates that genealogists are delighted to discover. The pictures are of individuals, weddings, families, farmsteads, towns, cars and even animals.

Several years ago we thought to digitalize the collection. Two members worked on starting this huge operation. There was no large space to work, time was an issue and lugging equipment up and down stairs was not satisfactory. Recently several members were contacted and the suggestion of letting the Allen County library do this work was the consensus.

Curt Witcher who is in charge of the genealogy section of the Allen County Public Library (ACPL) was contacted in December 2017. He definitely was interested in the pictures. The library personnel would box and take the pictures for digitalizing. Each picture would have names, dates, and comments that we have in the files at Besancon. The Besancon Historical Society could have this on the web page and the library would also make use of them. This is a project that the library does for their collections. BHS will have a permanent file at no charge and many will have access to them. The main theme is that these pictures will be preserved for all.

BARBARA

“My recollection from what Dad mentioned was that either the Didiers or the Rousseys came from the Jura Mountain area of France. I believe this area is close to the Germany/Swiss border. Father always said that our family came from that area and I’m enclosing the picture of the village in France where my great grandmother made her first communion, the village church to the right. It is “Pomoy”—Rue Centrale. Luc was the maiden name of my great-grandmother Felicia (1842-1918) who married a Rousseys (August, 1832-1912) and resided in the Besancon area [where both are buried in the old cemetery]. Felicia was the mother of my grandmother Mary Jane Didier (1866-1951).



“My grandfather was Francis X. Didier (1862-1940) and his family came to Fort Wayne from the Russia, Ohio community, and the entry point (so Dad stated) for the Didiers coming to the States from France was New Orleans. My grandmother Mary Jane Didier’s maiden name was Rousseys, and her family came through the port of New York City to the Besancon area.

“My first cousin’s son, Daniel White, has done research on the Didier clan, and called to take me on an afternoon trip with him. We went to east Allen County and he showed me the homestead of William Rousseys (1873-1952), son of F. Luc Rousseys, down Paulding Road (it intersects at U.S. 30 East)(Zulu). Here was born F. Luc’s Rousseys’s sons and daughters including my grandmother Mary Jane, the second child. Thence he took me to Ohio around the old settlement of Junction (Ohio Road 111 and Ohio 637, northeast of Paulding) and Tate’s Landing. A member of my family had a boat there, on the Erie Canal.

“The Rousseys lived east of Besancon. Dad told me as a youngster he would ride the old Nickel Plate Railroad to a junction close to Besancon and the Rousseys would meet him and take him to the Rousseys farm. Dad said at this time, which would be I would assume the late 1800’s or turn of the century, there were still bears in the woods. The family had five girls and three boys. The boys as men were farmers.

“By the time of my Dad’s birth our family lived on Columbus Street, Fort Wayne. Grandfather had a saloon on this street and the family lived above. Their next house was on Wagner Street. That house still stands; it is a small one story. We then moved to Parnell Street—“our home.”

“I don’t know what year, but it had to be before 1913 (when Fort Wayne had a really BIG flood) that grandfather had a large two story home built at 1418 Spy Run Avenue. Grandfather’s grocery was a block away, 1518 Spy Run Avenue. Even though grandfather’s given name was Francis Xavier everyone called him Frank. There was, as you say, a large contingent of French at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. The Germans had St. Mary’s, St. Peter’s and St. Paul’s, and the Irish, St. Patrick’s. St. Paul’s has long ago been disbanded, and the property sold to Trinity English Lutheran Church.

"There were times when all of us would get in the car for just a ride in the country, such as Uncle Bill and Aunt Ellie Roussey's farm near Zulu. Going to Uncle Bill's was the most fun because this was a real working farm with horses, cows, pigs, and chickens. But to our greatest delight, there was a player piano in the parlor. Nothing would do before we left for home than the chance to run a few rolls, and I think all of us would agree our favorite song was Ka KaKa Katy:

'K-K-K-Katy, beautiful Katy,
You're the only g-g-g-girl that I adore;
When the m-m-m-moon shines,
Over the cowshed,
I'll be waiting at the k-k-k-kitchen door....'

"One summer as we grew older, Gus Roussey, Dad's first cousin, asked if my older brother Jack and I could stay a week at the farm to work the pickle fields. Uncle Louis, Grandmother Didier's brother and Gus' father had been dead for some years. Gus and his younger brothers, Johnny and Raymond, lived with their mother, Aunt Lidy, on a farm near the Hunteartown area. Uncle Louis' brother Emil lived with them. That particular summer they had put out a large number of acres in pickles, and they needed help hoeing and picking the crop; so Jack and I went out to stay for a week. As a city boy I found the work real labor and monotonous. To lighten the day, Jack and I would get Uncle Emil to entertain us by cussing in French while he was busy hoeing weeds. He'd raise his hoe and bring it down with an intense fierceness, chopping the weeds, and as he did so, he would let fly with French expletives. We thought his comical antics were hysterical, and we would coil in laughter." [from *The Parnell Years*]

"The old drug store on Spy Run Avenue I believe was Wilkens' located at the corner with Fourth Street. Why do I recall it? When my parents would stop for a Sunday evening visit with Dad's parents, Dad would always stop at Wilkens' and get a hand-packed quart of vanilla ice cream which we shared as a family prior to bedtime. My grandfather Frank's grocery was located across the street from Wilkens'.



About Father Banet, one day prior to my father's demise I came home and was introduced to the man; he was sitting in our living room conversing with Dad. I gained little from the conversation, but did learn that he had done a measurable amount of research on Fort Wayne and Allen County French families. Yes, it was Father Banet, not any Alfred Rondot, who sat in our living room discussing family and French people in the Fort Wayne area. I do especially recall Father Banet mentioning to Dad that in his search for the history of the French in this area, he had trouble with the name of White.

He finally decided they changed their name when arriving in the USA, changing White from the French 'blanche' word. And Dad told us the White family at our parish church, St. Jude's, was related to us—they had one son.

"For what reason that Father Banet especially came to see my Dad, I don't know, but another remark he made was about the high cost of the coal that it required to take care of St. Joseph's College. He told Dad how difficult it was to collect money to pay the heating bills at St. Joseph's. I was not in the room during their entire discourse, but enough to recall the above. Funny, how some things stick with you.

"So there is no question in my mind that it was Father Charles Henry Banet who came to see my Dad. Regarding Alfred Rondot—I never heard of this man. I know the surname as a Fort Wayne family, that is all. I vividly recall coming home from work that day and being introduced to Father Banet. He sat on the sofa directly across from Dad. Father Banet had a relative who worked in the Fort Wayne-South Bend Diocese office. I only knew her to speak to as I would often see her at the lunch hour being picked up by her husband (a blood relative to Father—whether a brother or cousin I do not know).

"Regarding the French-American Society, Dad had a large picture of the members; I believe taken at a picnic for just male members. My grandfather Francis Xavier Didier is in a seated position and to the left is a man resting on the ground, and to the right a young man holding his dog—this from what my father told me. My father gave this picture to the local historical society, along with all his cigar making equipment. This was the trade my father worked following his graduation from the old Cathedral Boy's School.



I would love to have a copy of this old photo and I don't know if the historical society would give it to me to make a reproduction, but at some future date I may ask them.

"As to your Reuille family background, Bernard Reuille's grade school was St. Peter's, and I met him when we were classmates for four years at Central Catholic. The men of the class of 1941 still have lunch together the last Friday of the month with the exception of November and December (because of holidays).

"I do recall the visiting of your mother's family, when she was young. I have a vague recollection of them stopping at my grandparent's home, 1418 Spy Run Avenue, in the 1930's and grandmother Mary Jane said she had visitors from the Chicago area—I'm sure it was your great-grandmother Clara Roy Farrell and family." *[End of Donald Didier's recall]*

* * *

Note that the photo was not given to an historical society, but to Father Banet. Father Banet never told me he had personally conducted *any* interviews, and, rather, was quite emphatic about Alfred Rondot working under himself--"as a supplement to *my* work".

But Don's recall regarding Saint Joseph College heating and coal is decisive. It turns out the prime source regarding the Society is Don's dad Clem, and the key researcher Banet himself. The photograph could never have been considered "lost" if some historical society had it. Father Banet had it in his possession in good faith from Clem, I am certain, but his silence on so many points concerning his research is a real riddle, especially given his discussion of Rondot and another "associate" researcher, Brother Edward P. Habrowski, C.P.P.S. (whose notes I have, an occasion for a future follow-up article). I can only surmise that these French studies were such a passion for Father Banet, that he held his key cards close to his chest like a riverboat gambler.

Don admitted sketchy memory on some things told by his dad. Don once said, "I have no knowledge where the French-American Society picnic was held." Yet another time he wrote, "The park where the French-American Society met is still a city park, Lawton Park." While the picnic site may have occasionally--or even often--been Lawton Park, the fact was the 1915 panoramic was taken somewhere else--Centlivre Park--per both Father Banet and other researchers. So we settled the matter: Donald took me there--site of an abandoned urban housing project. My family also has a fine, old cabinet card photo of young Reuille women in French garb at a Society picnic, and it was gratifying to finally see, and *be*, where all this happened, however radically altered.

Another key point, from our talks, is the persistent Catholic upbringing of his household. Donald spoke--via both family & community reputation, plus personal contact--of his grandmother Mary Jane Roussey Didier as a Catholic saint. This sort of witness and belief speak significantly both to the fact of the piety of early Besancon generations, and its nature. Don's memoir *The Parnell Years* also documents the rigorous grade school education received from nuns, and the typical Catholic lifestyle of those days including fasting and Stations of the Cross during Lent, parish involvement with organizations for all family members, and parents routinely sticking up for the nuns if there were disciplinary problems reported. For all that, Don's mother, who had been raised Methodist, found Catholic lifestyle "a great contrast" to the "rigidity of the Methodist religion," in Don's words. The Didiers "though adhering to the demands of their Catholicity, lived in a more relaxed manner." *Parnell Years*, all in all, is a unique social document of Depression era America at ground level. [I will make copies for local collections].

Donald F. Didier, 93, died on June 13, 2017. Born November 18, 1923, in Fort Wayne, he was the son of Clem and Edith Didier and a graduate of Central Catholic High School. Enlisting in the U.S. Air Force in World War 2 in 1942, Don served his country at Baer Field, Fort Wayne. But what he "flew" were typewriters--repairing those durable 1918 Underwood no. 5s, still then all the services' standard issue worldwide--and still often in use (including, obviously, all my correspondence from Don). Shortly afterwards Don began a 50+ year career in interior design in Houston, Texas, graduating from the Feather School of Interior Design, class of 1952. Returning to Fort Wayne in 1957 to become a designer for Adams and Walda Furniture, in 1961, he began a 15 year partnership at



Cameron Interiors where he created a design studio in downtown Fort Wayne, and designed home interiors for some of Fort Wayne's most prestigious families on Forest Park Boulevard, Old Mill Road, and throughout the city. Don then built and ran his own business for the next 40 years until retirement in 2016 at age 92. Along the way, he helped establish his nephew Tim's successful and popular Tim Didier Meats in Fort Wayne, by giving him financial assistance at a critical time. Active in the American Society of Interior Designers, Don served as President of the Indiana Chapter in 1981 and 1982; the following year he served on its national board and as the organization's liaison to the School of Design at Purdue. A lifelong bachelor, Don was survived by siblings Marshall (Charlene) Didier, David (Judy) Didier of Fort Wayne, Edythe Mary Sands of Silver Lake, Ind., Helen (John) Herber of Webster Groves, Mo, and sister-in-law, Carol Didier of Fort Wayne. He was also a loving uncle to sixty nieces and nephews and many more grand nieces and nephews. Don was preceded in death by his parents; his brothers, Jack, Jim and Thomas; and sisters, Phyllis Nolan, Margann Hampton and Margaret Chandler. His funeral Mass was at his beloved parish, Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Fort Wayne.

Donald was a fine Catholic gentleman, whose concerned friendship, and engaged interest, constituted its own important commentary on the nature of our French forebears. He conveyed integrity and character, and candid views on Catholic issues. He was an invaluable informant into century 20 French Catholic culture in Fort Wayne, of which he was one of the last of living memory. He will be missed; *Requiesce in pace.*

MISSION OF
THE BESANCON HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

ARTICLE 11 - SECTION 2

The mission of the Besancon Historical Society of East Allen County, IN is to preserve, interpret and foster a deeper understanding of the history, heritage, and other culture of the rural community known as Besancon, Indiana, generally located in Jefferson Township, Allen County, Indiana, and which has as its central focus Saint Louis Catholic Church.

Established 1994

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LOOK FOR BHS ON INTERNET

www.Besanconhistory.org

Priests & their Pastoral Dates to Saint Louis Parish, Besancon

According to the Records of the Ft. Wayne/South Bend Diocese Archives

Submitted by Gene Yoquelet

Rev. A. Bessonies-(No actual recorded date) Builder of 1st church, log.

Rev. Julian Benoit Date of arrival in Ft. Wayne, April 16, 1840. Administered to the spiritual needs of the rural pioneer communities from St. Augustine, Ft. Wayne.

Rev. Louis Grevin 1861-April 1866 (First resident pastor)

Rev. J.C. Carrier April 1866-Nov. 1866.

Rev. A. de Montaubricq April to Dec. 1867.

Rev. A. Vandevannet Dec. 1867-Oct. 1868.

Rev. A. Mignault Oct. 1868-Jan. 1870 (started gathering funds for present church).

Rev. A. Adam Jan. 1, 1870-1875 (Builder of present church).

Rev. W. Demers 1875-1876.

Two years without a pastor

Rev. P.F. Veniard 1880-1893.

Rev. Charles Guendling/Rev. William Quinlan Jun. 1893-Jun. 1894

Both served the parish from the Cathedral. (Rev. Quinlan built the present rectory).

Rev. F.X. LaBonte Jun. 1894-1902 (Built the 1st. School, Saint Joseph).

Rev. John F. Noll Jun. 1902-1906

Rev. Charles Dhe 1906-1908.

Rev. Michael Louen 1908-1916 (Built the 2nd School, Saint Louis Academy)

Rev. Geo.J. Moorman 1916-1921 (Served as chaplain during WW1).

Rev. Wm. Gelsforf/Rev. E.A. Davies (Administered to the parish during Rev. Moorman's absence).

Rev. J.Nicholas Allgeier Jun. 15, 1921-Jul. 25, 1935.

Rev. Joseph A. Hession Jul. 25, 1935-1948.

Rev. Carl Holsinger 1948-1956.

Rev. Andrew C. Mathieu 1956-1962.

Rev. Fred J. Cardinali 1962-1968.

Rev. Robert L. Traub 1968-1970.

Rev. Louis Zenz Jul. 1970-1971.

Rev. Edward T. Keever 1971-1978.

Rev. Andrew J. Kopcsa 1978-1986.

Rev. Thomas C. Lombardi 1986-1997 (Restoration of Church's stain glass windows).

Rev. Stephen E. Colchin 1997-2014 (Complete restoration of Church, built in 1870).

Rev. Ben Muhenkamp 2015-present. (Restoration of old Convent building)
MJN added.

Saint Monica Study Club—St. Louis, Besancon 1955-1956

Submitted by Gene Yoquelet

Officers: Nora Gremaux and Anna Bowers

Members: Anna Bowers

Mary Brames

Marie Frecker

Vera Frecker

Mary Girard

Nora Gremaux

Marcella Kline

Emma Lomont

Gertrude Reuille

Bernadette Rorick

Gertrude Rorick

Lucetta Voirol

Friends of Besancon.....

Thank you to Michael Morow for the article about Don Didier about French family history of Besancon and Fort Wayne, IN. This emphasizes the importance of personal interviews with older friends, family members to gain knowledge of the past. Michael hopes to give a one hour talk on the history of the parish of St. Louis Besancon, and the part of France from which the immigrants came, sometime in the Spring-Summer at St. Louis.

Father Thomas Lombardi, 68, Life-time member of BHS, died Thursday, Dec. 28, 2017 after a two-month battle with cancer. Born in Ft. Wayne, he was the son of the late Anthony and Dorothy(nee Cambray) Lombardi. His father immigrated from Apricena, Italy in 1920 and worked as a tailor. Ordained in 1975, he served at St. Mary, Huntington, while also assigned as chaplain/faculty of Huntington Catholic High School, and later as principal. After a year at St. Joseph Parish, Mishawaka and a time of study in Europe, he was **appointed pastor of St. Louis Besancon in 1986**. Fr. Lombardi also served as pastor of St. Joseph church, Garrett, and St. Joseph church, Hessen Cassel. Noted for his sense of humor, exquisite cooking and hospitality, he also enjoyed raising, breeding and rescuing cocker spaniels. Mass of Christian Burial was Jan. 2, 2018 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Burial in Highland Park Cemetery, Ft. Wayne.

Michael Thomas Johnson Jr., 90 of Ft. Wayne, died on Sept. 23, 2016, Served in the US Air Force and was manager of ITT Manufacturing Aerospace. Survived by his wife of 68 yr. Joan Gladieux-Johnson member of BHS (Sorry this notice is so late).

Yester-year. . . . copied and submitted by Jane Morow

FORTY HOURS AT BESANCON

Rev. V. Krull to Conduct Devotion at St. Louis' Catholic Church

Ft. Wayne News Sentinel Nov. 6, 1909

Rev. Virgilus Krull, C. PP. S., a widely known missionary of the Precious Blood Order from Collegeville, Ind., who since yesterday has been the guest of Rev. C. Hummer, C. PP. S., at the local residence of the Sanguinist Fathers, left at noon for Besancon. Tomorrow morning he will open the forty hours devotion at St. Louis' church there, of which Rev. M.P. Louen is pastor.

Rev. John F. Noll, formerly pastor at Besancon will have the opening of the forty hours devotion at his parish, in Hartford City, tomorrow morning. In Fort Wayne the devotion will be opened in the morning at St. Paul's church, of which Rev. H. F. Jos. Kroll is pastor. The services will be conducted by Rev. George Heldman, C. PP. S., a missionary and writer of the Precious Blood Order. Solemn high mass will be celebrated tomorrow morning at St. Paul's, Rev. Thomas Eisenring, C. PP. S., of St. Joseph's hospital, assisting.

Yester-Year.. . . .copied and submitted by Jane Morow

One of City's Oldest Women Dead

Was Mrs. Mary Beuret, Who Died This Morning.

Ft. Wayne Journal Gazette, March 18, 1907

Mrs. Mary Beuret, aged seventy-five years, and a member of one of Fort Wayne's pioneer families, died of old age early this morning at her home, 215 East Second street. Her maiden name was Becquette and her parents settled here nearly a century ago. Mrs. Beuret was born in Fort Wayne in April, 1832. Her husband, John Beuret, has been dead some years. She was a member of the Catholic church.

Adele Clare Urbine

Ft. Wayne Sentinel, Feb. 15, 1908

Mrs. Adele Clare Urbine, widow of the late John B. Urbine, and a resident of Allen county since 1846, died this morning on the farm which had been her home continuously for the last fifty years. Death was due to the infirmities incidental to her advanced years. She had made her home for a number of years with Joseph H. Urbine, on the Auburn road, north of Hometown, since the death of her husband, which took place eight years ago last month. She was 86 years of age.

The deceased was among the early French settlers of the county and was widely known and highly esteemed by the great number of people with whom she came in contact during a life that was unusually active until advanced years practically confined her to her home. She was a member of the Catholic church and in the organization of the first congregation of her

neighborhood she was a faithful worker and was a most devout and consistent member during her entire life.

Mrs. Urbine was, prior to her marriage, Adele Clare Litot, and with her parents came to the United States in 1846 and the family moved immediately to Allen county and took up residence in the vicinity of the home she occupied until her death. Her marriage took place in 1848 and the surviving family consists of five children, thirty-six grand children and thirteen great grandchildren.

Funeral Monday morning at 9 o'clock from the residence and at 10 o'clock from St. Vincent's church at Academie.

Surviving children of Mrs. Urbine are Joseph Urbine, Mrs. Mary Morrell, Mrs. Clara Bobay, and Mrs. Louise Martin. Mrs. Urbine's marriage occurred at the Cathedral in this city and was performed by the pioneer missionary priest, Very Rev. Father Benoit.

KLINE (submitted by Barb Gorney)

Fort Wayne sentinel, Sat. Nov. 26, 1910

Mrs. Mary Kline, who had reached the advanced age of 96 years, died Thursday at her home near Maples, this county, surrounded by four generations of descendants. Death was due to the infirmities of age. Mrs. Kline was a native of France born November 19, 1814, and came with her parents to America at the age of 19 years. She was the mother of nine children, five of whom survive. They are James, John, Charles and Peter Kline, who reside at home, and Mrs. Josephine Castleman, of Baldwin, Ind. There are also 23 grandchildren, 57 great-grandchildren and 6 great-great-grandchildren.

Yester-year continued. . .

Grosjean

Ft. Wayne Journal Gazette April 3, 1912

Mrs. Martha Grosjean, wife of Edward Grosjean, the brick and cement contractor, died at 9:45 o'clock yesterday morning at the family residence, 1815 Wells street, at the age of sixty-two years, three months and four days. Death was due to cancer and followed an illness of eighteen months. For ten months Mrs. Grosjean had been confined to her bed.

Mrs. Grosjean was born in St. Joe township, December 28, 1849, and was a lifelong resident of Allen county. The family moved to this city several years ago and during her stay here Mrs. Grosjean made a host of friends. She was married to Mr. Grosjean in 1881. Surviving besides the husband are two children, Olive and Roy Grosjean. A half-sister, Mrs. Joseph Beiterom, of Milan township, also survives. One child preceded the mother in death.

Funeral services will be held Thursday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock at the residence, and at two o'clock at the Trinity Methodist Episcopal church. Interment will be made at Parker cemetery.

SORROW IN THE HOME

Ft. Wayne News, Monday, June 30, 1902

DEATH'S GLOOM COMES TO MANY FAMILIES.

The Silent Winger Messenger Enters and Summons Loved Ones.

The remains of Henry Didier, whose death, as announced in the News Saturday, occurred at Little Rock, Ark., arrived in the city this morning,

accompanied by a brother-in-law, D.J. McKendry, who went to Chicago to take charge of them. And were taken to the home of his step-mother, Mrs. C. Didier, 1306 East Wayne street. The funeral will occur to-morrow morning at 8:30 o'clock from the residence and at 9 o'clock from the Cathedral. Death was due to pneumonia and occurred at the St. Vincent hospital at Little Rock. The brothers and sisters of the deceased are: Mrs. D.J. McKendry, Mrs. Lou McDonald, Joseph Didier, Frank Didier, Mrs. Frederick Wiegmann, George Didier and Stephen Didier.

McKENDRY

Ft. Wayne Sentinel Friday, April 7, 1905

Mrs. Ellen McKendry, wife of D.J. McKendry, jr., died at 8 o'clock Thursday evening at her home in Chicago, at the age of thirty-five years. Mrs. McKendry was a daughter of the late Francis Didier, and was born and reared in Fort Wayne, removing to Chicago after her marriage some years ago.

She is survived by the husband and six children, in addition to her mother and several brothers and sisters. The remains will arrive in the city this evening and will be removed to the home of Daniel McKendry, at 210 Masterson avenue. Mrs. McKendry was a most estimable woman and leaves many friends in Fort Wayne.

Mrs. McKendry had been in poor health for some time, suffering from heart trouble. Announcement of the funeral service from St. Patrick's Catholic church will be made later.

REV. FATHER ADAM

Impressive Ceremonies Mark Funeral of Aged Priest.

Ft. Wayne News April 2, 1917

Submitted by Gene Yoquelet

With a large representation of the clergy of the Fort Wayne diocese, including the Rt. Rev. Bishop Herman Joseph Alerding, as well as other Catholic clergymen, and many friends in attendance, the funeral services of the Rev. Augustine Adam, Fort Wayne's oldest priest, the first resident pastor of St. Vincent's church, Academie Station, and builder of the Sacred Heart academy, were solemnized at 9 o'clock this morning. A solemn requiem high mass, Coram Episcopo, and other most impressive ceremonies, marked the last sad rites paid the aged divine. Rev. Michael P. Louen, rector of S.S. Peter and Paul's church, Huntington, and a *former pastor of St. Louis church, at Besancon, a parish, of which Father Adam had charge from 1879 to 1885*, delivered the funeral sermon, in which he paid glowing tribute to the devotion and services of Father Adam. The final absolution was imparted by Bishop Alerding.

Solemn chanting of the Office of the Dead by the assembled clergy was followed by the requiem mass, at which the Rt. Rev. Msgr. John H. Oechtering, V.G., rector of St. Mary's church, and vicar of the Fort Wayne diocese, was celebrant. Many Fort Wayne friends of the deceased priest, made the trip to Academie in automobiles this morning.

Story of French Immigrant Jean Begue

Find-a-Grave Web-site

Submitted by A. Jane Morow

Birth: April 11, 1827, France

Death: October 2, 1880, Ft. Wayne, IN Burial: Catholic Cemetery, Ft. Wayne, IN

Jean Begue arrived in America from France in 1844 through the port of New Orleans. He was one of the few French settlers who came to the Besancon area in eastern Allen County who did not establish himself as a farmer. He quickly saw the opportunity to make money by harvesting and processing the lumber products from the Great Black Swamp. He started a cooperage (barrel-making shop) in the New Haven area in the 1850's. In 1862 this business had grown large enough that he took in the Beugnot brothers (his wife's brothers) as partners. At this time they added a stave manufacturing factory. Begue's name is on the 1868 list of members at St. Louis Catholic Church at Besancon near New Haven. His name is on a window in the sanctuary there. By 1879, he had three factories in New Haven and one in Fort Wayne and had added two members of the Schnelker family to the partnership. During this time, he also formed a partnership with L.M. Rogers and Levi Hartzell to start up the Maumee Valley Flouring Mill in New Haven. He was also active in community affairs. He served on the school board of the district school in New Haven in 1856. He was one of those chosen to present the incorporation petition to the Allen County commissioners. From 1868 to 1873, he served as an Allen County Commissioner.

After living in the New Haven area for many years, in the 1870's, the Begues moved to the new fashionable neighborhood of Ft. Wayne on East Wayne Street. Begue Street in this area is named for Jean Begue.

Jean and wife Marie Beugnot (1830-1902) had four daughters:

Alice b. ca. 1857, m. William Schoenbein

Pelagia and Clementia b. Jan. 6 1858, died as infants

Emmaline b. ca. 1859, m. John G. Baker

PIONEER FRENCH CITIZEN CALLED

**John B. Corneille, Resident
Here Nearly Seventy-Five
Years, Dies at 79.**

Ft. Wayne Sentinel, April 1917

Submitted by Barb Gorney

John Baptiste Corneille, aged 79 years and 8 months, a well-known French citizen, who has resided in Fort Wayne for nearly three-quarters of a century, died at 12:05 Sunday noon at St. Joseph's hospital. Death was due to dropsical complications from which he had suffered for the past seven months.

A strange coincidence in the death of the pioneer is this, that he passed away in the same room at the hospital in which occurred the demise of Rev. Augustine Adam, Saturday March 31. The two were warm personal friends and in 1861 Mr. Corneille had served Father Adam as acolyte when the latter was pastor of the old St. Vincent's church, Academie, Ind.

Born in the village of St. Jaun, department Doubs, France, August 18, 1837, John Baptiste Corneille at the age of five years, accompanied his parents who emigrated to America, crossing the Atlantic on the sailboat "Albany," sixty days being consumed in the voyage. The little party reached Toledo and embarked for Fort Wayne on the first canal boat that made the trip between Toledo and Fort Wayne, landing at what is now the site of the Clark Fruit company. Land was purchased in St. Joe township. It was virgin timber land and as soon as he was old enough to swing an axe, young Corneille did his part in clearing the land for cultivation.

In 1862 he entered the dry goods, establishment of Abbot & Co., located on East Columbia street and was successively associated with Orff & Co., Shard & Corneille, Root & Co., (now Rurode's) and The Boston Store. In later life Mr. Corneille devoted his time to notary public work and as French correspondent. In 1869 he joined the Alert Hook and Ladder company and for many years rendered faithful service in this pioneer, volunteer organization of fire fighters.

In 1863 Mr. Corneille was united in marriage to Miss Rosalie Mathie, who preceded him in death six years ago. To this union thirteen children were born, seven surviving. They are Mrs. Joseph Chavane, Mrs. Gustave Lindemann, Mrs. Edward Graffe, Mrs. Al Papa, Mrs. Charles Dodane, Charles L. Corneille of this city, and Mrs. W.F. Bohling of Pontiac, Ill. Seventeen grandchildren and four great grandchildren also survive.

The death of Mr. Corneille removes an interesting figure who distinctly belonged to the old school. Coming to Fort Wayne in May, 1843, when the Indians were still in evidence, he had seen the city grow from a collection of shambles to the metropolis of northern Indiana. He was a man of lofty character and kindly disposition and those that know him will deeply regret his demise. For fifty-four years Mr. Corneille has resided at 209 East Superior street. Funeral arrangements have not yet been completed. Friends are requested to kindly omit flowers.

The remains will be removed to-day to the home of a daughter, Mrs. Gustave Lindemann, 1428 Summit street.

Editor's note: newspaper articles, obits are copied exactly as printed. Any errors in spelling or grammar occurred in newspaper.

THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN.....

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