

CLAY COUNTY ARCHIVES

MIDDLEBURG CATHOLIC MISSION CEMETERY

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

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MIDDLEBURG

CLAY COUNTY,

FLORIDA

Middleburg a town in Clay County, was settled about the year 1835 by Americans from many States, and during the Seminole war it was the military headquarters for the United States Army. In 1839 the population was one thousand. The building of the Transit Railway in 1857 took many away and the War between States nearly completed the depopulation. In 1885 it had a population of 200. The latest census gives it 350. A church was built in 1857. It was a small church attended monthly from Jacksonville. During the War between the States the church was neglected and when in 1867 Bishop Verot visited Middleburg he found the church fallen to the ground and he was unable to find a carpenter to repair the church. However, later the church was repaired as again we find Bishop Verot in Middleburg in 1872, after Easter, when he preached in the little chapel, but as he says in his *Record*; to outsiders, there being no Catholics then.

Father Clavreul had charge of this mission for several years. In his Diary he mentions that "in the beginning of January 1866, among other missions assigned to myself, with headquarters at Jacksonville, are Palatka and Middleburg." His first visit recorded is on January 28, the same year, when he said Mass at the widow Fagan's, both mother and daughter received Holy Communion, and the same day he returned to Jacksonville. Another visit is recorded on October 25th 1871. No further details are given. He merely says: "Visit October 25, 1871, Middleburg." The last visit of Father Clavreul was the following March, when he accompanied Bishop Verot. "Out early in March I am riding my horse, accompanying the Bishop in a buggy to Green Cove Spring, MIDDLEBURG, Starke. I fall sick on the way between Middleburg and Starke, where we stop with the Pace family for the night." The Catholics here either moved away, or as is unfortunately only too often the case, through lack of school and regular church services, they fell away. In 1923 Mrs. Henry J. Leek died in Mayport. She was a Kennedy and born in Middleburg in 1872.

To revive Catholicity in Middleburg, the Reverend P. J.

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DIOCEBAN HISTORY

Bresnahan gave a four days Mission in February 1908. In his memoir of his missions he mentions that in this place where in the early fifties and sixties a goodly number of pioneer Catholics heard Mass and were confirmed in the wooden chapel, no trace of Catholicity exists. The Knights of Pythias obliged the missionary with the use of their hall at a nominal rental cost. He found that one of their leaders bore the Catholic name of Masters, who pleaded guilty to being a renegade. He was very hospitable to the priest. His wife was the first convert at this mission in that historic and romantic spot. Some of the lapsed Catholics turned up for the mission including Mr. Bardin and his family. Some of the non-Catholics showed a great deal of interest and were very kind to the missionary. While no prejudice or bigotry was evinced, still there was great timidity and indifference in this once thriving mission of such Apostolic men as, Bishop Verot and Father Clavreul.

Census Data

Fagans, listed together in the census, were Irish, living in the Black Creek census district in 1850 and / or 1860, but not 1870:

Catharine	1860	Census	page 16 line 22 dwelling 111 family 111 age 11 sex F race w born at Florida. post office Middleburg
Catherine	1850	Census	Black Creek District pg108b ln 33 age 2 sex F race W birthpl Florida
Ruth		Defendant in Clay	Court: Chancery Case: 1691 James Fagan VS Fagan, Ruth
Sarah	1850	Census	Black Creek District pg108b ln 31 age 33 sex F race W birthpl Ireland
Sarah	1860	Census	page 16 line 21 dwelling 111 family 111 age 51 sex F race w real est val 1500 persnl est val 1500 born at Ireland post office Middleburg
Sarah	1861	Confederate Census	No. of children: 1
James	1845	Voter	
James	1850	Census	Black Creek District pg108b ln 30 age 40 sex M race W occ Saddler birthpl Ireland spelled Haas on 1850 census
James	1850	Census	Black Creek District pg108b ln 32 age 14 sex M race W birthpl Maine spelled Haas on 1850 census
James		Plaintiff in Clay	Court: Chancery Case: 1691 Fagan VS Fagan, Ruth