## Starke County 19a

"Tidbits of Starke County History".....

Last week, I talked a little about San Pierre, Indiana. This week, a new book was donated to the Starke County Historical Society's Museum, called *Women of Hope, The Story of the Little Company of Mary Sisters in America*, by Merrie Ann Nall. It is a fascinating book about the life of Mary Potter of England (probably not related to Harry) and how the Little Company of Mary Sisters was started and then expanded to America.

In the Foreword of the book, it says, "Mary Potter was a woman of conviction, purpose, and vision. She overcame countless obstacles as she responded to the Holy Spirit in founding a religious congregation devoted to praying for the sick and dying, which became known as the Little Company of Mary Sisters."

One of the Little Company of Mary Sisters' facilities was located just south of San Pierre. When it closed recently, the The Starke County Museum was given several items from the building, including a portrait of John Tierney, the man who donated the Sisters the land on which the hospital and care unit was built.

John Tierney was a teacher and farmer living south of San Pierre and was moved by the care that the Sisters had given his cousin in 1918. This was during the devastating influenza outbreak that killed an estimated 675,000 Americans. According to the book, Mr. Tierney "was a scholarly man and had mastered to fluency......French, Latin, German, and Greek. When he retired from teaching, with his sister Matilda, he settled down to a life of ease." In 1940, Mr. Tierney, now elderly, informed the Little Company that he wished to give his home and land to their congregation.

The Sisters came to visit Mr. Tierney and realized that he needed care. He was living alone - his sister had died earlier. While repairing a fence, a nail had struck him in the eye and the whole side of his face had become malignant because of the injury. He had not been caring for himself or his home. The Sisters, seeing these conditions, moved in and became caregivers for John Tierney until his death on July 4, 1941. An in-depth account was recorded in a diary kept by one of the Sisters. It is a fascinating story.

A paragraph in the book says, "Through the generosity of Mr. Tierney, the San Pierre Church of All Saints was rebuilt. He took keen delight in visits of the Nuns to his home and always implored them to prolong their visit. It was his wish that at his demise all of his belongings revert to the Little Company of Mary as a memorial to his late sister, Matilda. Mr. Tierney was prompted by a twofold desire --- that of assisting the Sisters in a most worthy cause and at the same time utilizing a substantial portion of his worldly belongings toward the betterment of the community in which he made his home for...sixty-five years."

Harold Weitgenant from North Judson tells me that he was raised on the Little Company of Mary farm. He says, "My parents arrived in San Pierre in 1941 to manage the Tierney farm which was given to the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary. I was 3 at the time. The original house on the property was torn down when my parents arrived because it was not habitable by that time. Mr Tierney was living in a house on the property next to the Alva Eckert house on the San Pierre road almost opposite the cemetery. That was where the two sisters took care of him until his death. My father met him and talked with him several times but he would not meet with my mother or me because of his condition by that time. The house that Alice and Ralph Dolezal live in was built for my family by the Rozhon brothers and paid for by the LCM during 1941-42. My parents and all three of us kids lived in the house until 1975 when my Dad retired".

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http://www.starkehistory.com http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/

(If you do not wish to receive "Tidbits of Starke County History" in the future, please let me know.)