

Sunday, September 27th, 2020 should have been the 42nd anniversary of the Maryhill Historical Society's Heritage Day. But because of the pandemic there was no celebration like former years. However, they did have a virtual tour. This can be seen on the [Maryhill Roots webpage](#).

The visual tour took place on Thursday, September 24th . Thank you to Tim Vegh for putting this awesome video together. Fran Vegh was our narrator, Tom Schell gave the history and Father Grayson Hope read prayers at each of the monuments. Perhaps next year we will all meet and enjoy this tour together.

The video began at the Blessed Virgin Grotto. With the help of his uncle, Mr. Missere and his father Louis Diemert, both experienced stone masons, Father Joseph Diemert designed a grotto to be placed on the rectory lawn to accommodate a statue of the Virgin Mary. Mary Magdalena Weber, daughter of Anton X. Weiler and Theresia (Weiler) Weiler and the mother of Sister Tarcisia, a teacher at St. Boniface, had willed a sum of money to be used for a statue and for construction materials. The grotto was built and dedicated in 1944 to stand as a landmark overlooking the village.

In the early days of New Germany Mass was celebrated in the settlers' homes. The first Mass was said at the home of Christian & Barbara (Allgeier) Rich in 1832. In 1997 a special stone was erected at the end of the land which is the home now of Fred Drexler.

Next stop was the Klein cross just outside of Maryhill which was erected in 1844 by Andrew Klein and his brothers. In 2018 a new cross had been erected. Thank you to Carl Zettel who had donated the wood from a hydro pole for the new cross and to Doug Keller who worked on the cross and varnished the wood and a special thank you to Ken Kurtz who donated the Corpus. The very first cross was made of peeled cedar and was about 14 feet high.

The second cross was erected by Robert McNanny and his brothers who were of Irish descent and lived on this farm until 1860. It was thought they may have erected the cross in about 1832 again in gratitude for a safe arrival after a stormy Atlantic crossing. The original cross was also made of cedar and was about 15 feet high. The original cross was donated to Doon Heritage Village, now the Waterloo Region Museum in Kitchener, The Sebastian Drexler family purchased the farm in 1876 and took the responsibility for the care and maintenance of this cross for several generations. This new cross has been constructed as closely as possible to the original. In 2010 the cross was reconstructed and repaired with the wood from a hydro pole.

The third cross was erected by James Keleher in 1908 as a memorial to his parents in thanksgiving for the prosperity the family enjoyed in the new land. The farm was purchased in 1869.

All the plots of land that the crosses are located on are owned and cared for by the Maryhill Historical Society. Thank you to Doug Keller who through out the season has done grass cutting, trimming and maintenance and decorated the areas around the crosses as a reminder of our pioneers.

By Diane Strickler

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