



Dickeyville Grotto

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To: Inquiring Party
From: Rev. Father Francis J. Steffen, Pastor
Judy Riniker & Marge Timmerman, Co-managers

March, 1987

Thank you for your inquiry about the Dickeyville Grotto.

This Grotto is made up of several shrines, gardens, and fences. It stands today as it was built by Father Mathias Wernerus, 1925-1929. The dedication took place on September 14, 1930.

This Grotto is dedicated to the unity of two great American ideals - love of God and love of country. It is a creation in stone, mortar and bright colored objects-collected materials from all over the world. These include colored glass, gems, antique herilooms of pottery or porcelain, stalagmites and stalactities, sea shells of all kinds, star-fish, petrified sea urchins and fossils, and a variety of corals plus amber glass, agate, quartz, ores such as iron, copper and lead, fool's gold, rock crystals, onyx, amethyst, and coal. Many items are antiques. You will even find petrified wood and moss. And there are many of those round balls which used to be found on the top of a stick-shift in old cars. The priest never used blueprints but worked all the many designs our of his head.

This work has been classified as "environmental folk/art" by an organization in Los Angeles, California known as SPACES (Saving and Preserving Arts and Cultural Environment). People interested in this type of art have made inquiries from the western and eastern parts of the United States.

The village of Dickeyville has a population of 1176 people. There are two motels and two restaurants within the village. 60,000 tourists stop at the Grotto each year. Dickeyville is near Dubuque, Iowa and Galena, Illinois.

There is a very fine gift shop on the Grotto grounds which houses the usual tourist attractions plus a very fine selection of good religious articles. It is open daily 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., May through October. Tour guides are available during June, July, and August.

Holy Ghost church was built in 1913 and the present rectory in 1930. Weekend Masses are celebrated on Saturday (4:00 & 8:00 p.m.) and on Sunday (8:00 & 10:00 a.m.). The parochial school is active with 99 children and an all lay staff. This parish began in 1873. The community of Dickeyville is a German settlement, named after a Mr. Dickey who owned the General Store in 1842.