



# Heritage Happenings

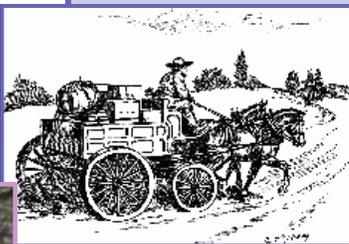
Archives Office  
December 2018

Lest We Forget...

Correction: Last issue commented on the confirmation Mary Graff had attended November 7, 1869. It really was 1868...and she was going back and forth from Clarks Mills. With that correction done, it is now December 1868 and they are preparing to move to Manitowoc in January. They recite the Office (Lauds, Matins, Vespers and the Angelus) in German. Spiritual reading, meditation, the rosary are probably part of their day.



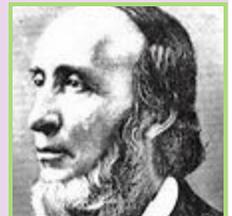
Theresa now writes in her history: *After confirmation in 1868 Father Fessler and the Bishop left for St. Nazianz. After Father Joseph came back, he had the congregation buy another house for a parsonage for it was a great necessity to be able to enlarge the church. The old parsonage was then moved to the river while the addition of it Father Fessler bought for us as we were too many for lodging elsewhere. This was winter of 1868. ....Until New Year's, Josephine Thoenie and Mary Doyle stayed at Clarks Mills. They stayed after Christmas until all things belonging to us were brought to Manitowoc. This would be their first Christmas together in their little "Shanty."*



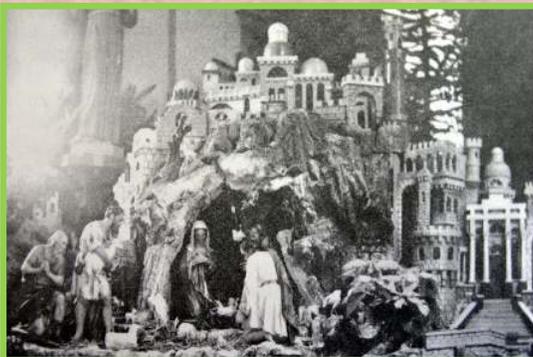
## Archive Christmas Treasures

Mother Alexia had a book titled "Calm on the Listening Ear of Night", a song written by Edmund H. Sears, D. D. Inside the cover is written "Sister M. Alexia ... 1891" The book pages are bound together in the center with a gold filament thread tied through three small holes.

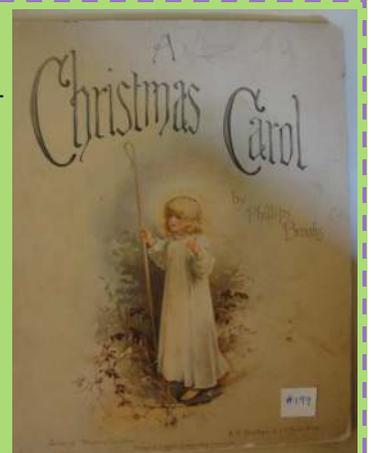
Edmund Hamilton Sears was born in Berkshire, Massachusetts, in 1810. He graduated from Theological School of Harvard University, in 1837. Due to ill health, he was forced to retire in 1847. He devoted himself to literature. He published several works including: **Calm on the listening ear of night**, a hymn published in its original form in 1834.



Original Nativity in St. Mary's Chapel



This is another book of Christmas poems that belonged to Mother Alexia. Inside the cover is written: Mother *Sister M. Alexia Christmas—1890.* The title is: "A Christmas Carol" by Phillips Brooks. Colored lithographs grace the pages of the poem. It is printed on heavy paper and bound the same way as the other book.





It's almost Christmas! You can see these arpilleras and retablos on display in the Heritage Room. They are really very beautiful and deserve a bit of history for your appreciation.



## Peruvian Arpilleras and Retablos

These pictures show two of the Peruvian Arpilleras that are in the Archives Christmas collection.

Arpilleras or cuadros are exquisitely detailed hand-sewn three dimensional textile pictures that illustrate the stories of the lives of the women of the shantytowns (pueblo jovenes) of Lima, Peru and provide essential income for their families.



Arpilleras originated in Chile, where women political prisoners who were held during the Pinochet regime used them to camouflage notes sent to helpers outside. Even the most suspicious guards did not think to check the appliquéd pictures for messages, since sewing was seen as inconsequential 'women's work'.

The arpilleras tell the stories of life: stories of planting and harvesting potatoes, tomatoes, cabbages, grapes, corn; stories of spinning and weaving wool; stories of country life, of tending llamas, sheep and goats; stories of weddings and fiestas. These two arpilleras are nativity stories. The one above is sewn like a stocking showing sheep, Joseph, Jesus and Mary, and then a dove with the three Kings following the star. The square one shows the Bethlehem star in a bright blue sky. Below is the cave with Mary, Jesus and Joseph. A village house with a woman is nearby. The three kings are coming and have met up with the shepherds tending cattle and holding their sheep.



**Retablos** are a sophisticated Peruvian folk art in the form of portable boxes which depict religious, historical, or everyday events that are important to the Indigenous people of the highlands. The Spanish word *retablo* comes from the Latin *retro-tabulum* ("behind the table or altar"). The first *retablos* were placed on or behind the altars of Catholic churches in Spain and Latin America. They were three-dimensional statues or images inside a decorated frame. History notes that early Christian



Knights of the Crusades frequently found themselves far from their home churches, so they carried small portable box-altars for worship and protection against their enemies. *Retablos* came to the New World as small portable altars, Nativity scenes and other religious topics used by the early priests to evangelize the Indigenous.

Figures of individual saints are carved or sculpted from a mix of plaster and cooked potato and set in a shadow box. They take the form of a three dimensional painting of a scene, consisting of many figures in very complex environments. The boxes form miniature houses or shrines, often with opening doors and a gable above the opening. Typically both the doors and the sides of the box are covered with an ornate, polychrome floral decoration.



is a two story retablo showing the Naples gathered below. Everyone has a gourds that hinge shut.

There is even a *retablos sanmarcos* ("boxes of St. Mark"). Since mammals, his spirit was used to invoke pro-Sorry, but not one of our pieces.

The retablos in the archives Peru collection show a variety of nativity settings. One shows the towns people, another the musicians, another the Nativity. The largest in the collection is a two story retablo showing the Nativity at the top and numerous townspeople to tell. Some retablos are fitted into



named after St. Mark, known as *cajones* St. Mark is the patron saint of farm animal protection of cattle from disease and theft. Enjoy them when you see them.