



Heritage Happenings

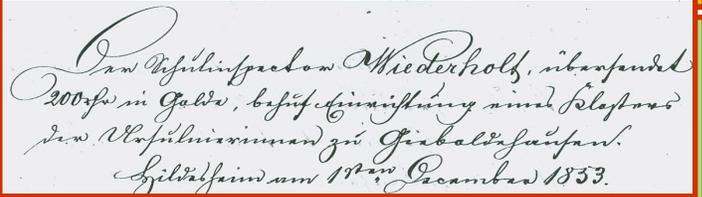
Archives Office
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Lest We Forget...

Cataloguing continues in the Archives and now centers on the History of our German Sisters. Recently translated German documents from the Diocese of Hildesheim Archives reveals the German Sisters might not have made it to Gieboldehausen. This issue of Heritage Happenings will shed interesting history beginning in 1853 up to 1857 that led up to their foundation in Gieboldehausen. There are more documents to be translated that hopefully will shed more light on their early years of their Community growth. Entire texts of the documents in both German and English will be available for you reading in the Heritage Display Room.

Doc. #86-87: Letter December 1, 1853:

To the Rev. Ordinariate from C. Wiederholt: "The school inspector Wiederholt sends 200 thalers in gold for the establishment of a convent of the Ursuline Sisters in Gieboldehausen. The number of children has increased to such an extent that the existing teachers are not sufficient to educate them and the existing school rooms are far too small for the children... In order to give relief to the community from whence my relatives on my mother's side come from,...I am prepared to give away 200 thalers in gold under the condition that two teachers from the convent of St. Ursula in Duderstadt are called to Gieboldehausen and entrusted with the education of the female youth."



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Rose of Hildesheim outside the cathedral. In Archives, Cross made from Rose dated year 1000:



Dec. 16 Doc. #88 To Pastor Peters in Gieboldehausen from Hildesheim Bishop Wedekin: "We now instruct you to inform the municipality of Gieboldehausen about this donation and the conditions attached to it and to consider the most feasible execution of the desired facility." The villagers now know...a convent needs to be built for the Sisters coming. ...but are they Ursulines??? The history continues...

In 1835 two infants who would one day become Foundresses of the Poor School Sisters of St. Francis were born four days apart. *Catherine Engel* was born January 14th, 1835, daughter of the mill owner Joachim Engelke of Hasede and his wife Catherine and Magdalen Bohrman was born January 18, 1835, the daughter of Christoff Bohrman of Einum and his wife, Catherine. Einum is a small village east of Hildesheim and Hasede, just north of Hildesheim, the Diocesan seat. Some time between 1854—1855 the two young ladies met. Through Divine Providence the two became great friends and resolved to dedicate their lives and all their strength to God in the Religious Life. They hoped to become School Sisters in the Order of St. Francis. Their resolution was firm. (SOURCE: The Founding of Our Community in Germany) In the year 1856 they..."Came to Bishop Edward Jacob Wedekin with their request: to become School Sisters." He was adverse as he already had Ursulines and Sisters of Mercy.

The two young women, now age 21 and well educated, persisted. The Chronicles of the Daughters of Maria Hueber: "The faithful Bishop Wedekin of Hildesheim, who did not find a single monastery in his diocese in 1849, made special efforts to find sisters for the poor and sick. At his request, two virgins from the kingdom of Hanover came to the monastery of Brixen to be trained as Sisters of the Third Order."



He sent them on March 27, 1856. They arrived at the Motherhouse on April 4, 1856.



Photo: Brixen Novitiate "They manifested extraordinary zeal and an openness for everything good and completed their novitiate to the complete satisfaction of everyone." - Chronicles. Below is the announcement in the Catholic Tirol newspaper April 1857 confirming their religious profession. It reads:

"On the 16th of this month, two young women from near Hildesheim, made religious profession in the chapel of the convent of the Tertiary Sisters, taking the religious names of BERNWARDA and SERAPHICA."

Having pronounced their perpetual vows, they were now School Sisters of St. Francis (just as they dreamed of becoming!) They left Brixen on **June 15th, 1857** and arrived at the Bishop's residence at Hildesheim on June 19th. Since the Bishop had not yet provided a residence for them they found a home with the Sisters of Mercy for the time being. (see above) they received daily instructions from their former teachers,

the Reverend Director Schwethelm and the Reverend Seminary teacher Eikenhoter until **September 24th** when they took the teachers examination by the

King's Consistorium in the presence of the Right Reverend Bishop, the Reverend School Inspector Wiederholt and the Reverend Consistorial Advisor Werner.



Beilage

zu Nr. 16 der kathol. Blätter aus Tirol 1857.

Brigen, 19. April. (Corresp.) Am 16. d. Mts. haben in der Klosterkapelle der Tertiärinnen dahier zwei Jungfrauen aus der Nähe von Hildesheim unter Annahme der Ordensnamen Bernarda und Seraphika die hl. Ordensprofession abgelegt. Dieselben wurden

Knowledge of the approaching completion of their program must have reached Pastor Peters in Gieboldehausen. He writes the Bishop on **March 16, 1857**: "The local girls school used to be headed by female teachers until 1807, then the first male teacher for the girls was employed for the time being until a capable female teacher could be found. ...This opportunity has now occurred because the present teacher Saenger has become too old and too weak to continue to serve his ministry with benefit. ...I can give Your Episcopal Grace the most sincere assurance that this would be the happiest day of my life, on which the School Sisters would be introduced here, because I expect salvation for our female youth only from this Order!" ...the Poor School Sisters of St. Francis." Document #90-93

While with the Sisters of Mercy, Mother Theodora gave them no rest. She wanted them in her congregation. One wavered: "Maybe this is the will of God that we should join them..." The other remained adamant. They prayed. "While at Mass one day, after Holy Communion, Sister Seraphica had a vision: St. Francis shook his finger at her and spoke. Immediately they informed the Bishop what they saw and heard. He then hastened to find means and ways about establishing the Franciscan Order in his diocese."

Source: "Origins of Our Community in Germany"

Doc. 95-96 Letter **July 11, 1857** Pastor Peters to Bishop Wedekin: "I received with the greatest joy the news that the School Sisters have arrived in Hildesheim and are already so near Gieboldehausen. I wish nothing more than they were already here. The Beloved School Sisters have written to me, which has given me a very special joy."

Document # 95—96

Description: "As for the schoolhouse, it would be very useful for a convent. It is a large two-story building with stables, wooden sheds, a vegetable garden and orchard. The lower floor consists of the school room which runs through the whole house, along with a large living room with a chamber, behind it a kitchen, pantry and a room for domestic. The second floor consists of the second classroom, two rooms, three to four chambers, a nice attic room, a good cellar, a tree in the yard." **July 11, 1857**



1840
1929 - Mansionsasse 449, von 1867 bis 1875 Gebäude der Schulschwesteren

On October 13th, 1857 Sister Seraphica and Sister Bernwarda traveled from Hildesheim to Gieboldehausen and took possession of the school building... Next Issue: Early Beginnings in Gieboldehausen