

# Heritage Happenings

Archives Office  
September 2022

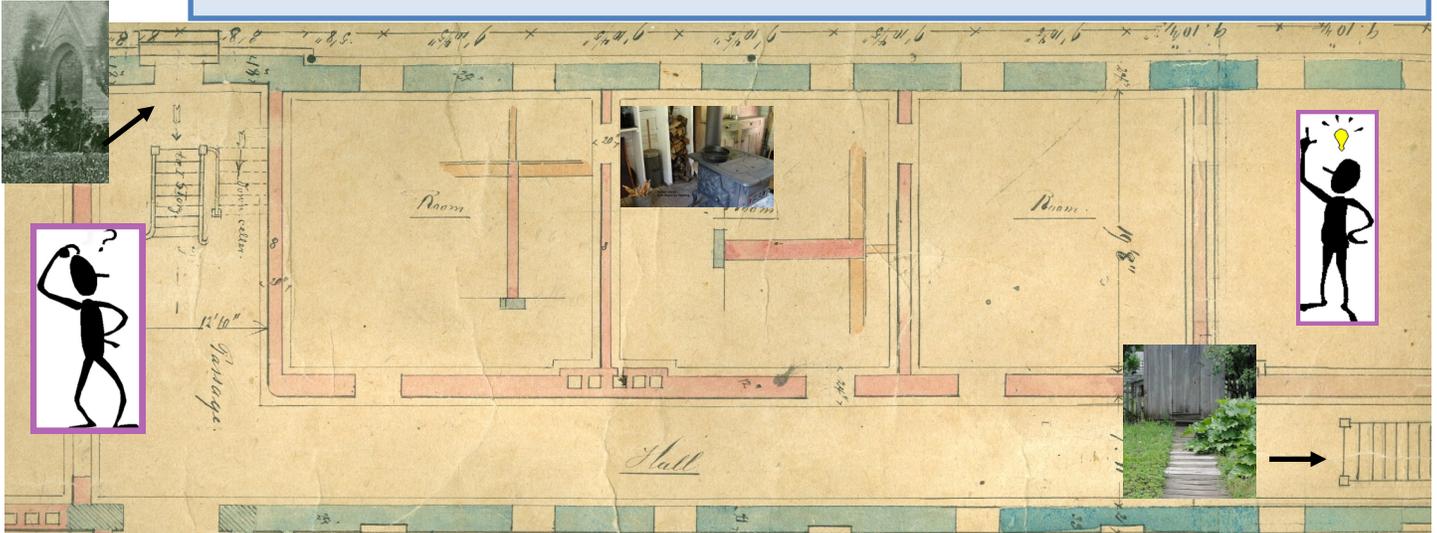
Lest We Forget...



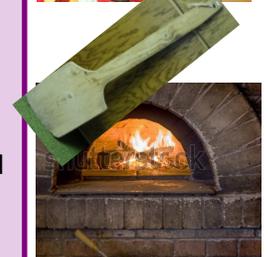
## 1874—1875 was a very, very busy year!

Mother Odelia was the Mother Superior in 1874. The dedication of the new Motherhouse was long over with and now it's September. The inside of the new building is not yet complete but planning and organizing the big move fills every moment of her day. How will they ever get it all done...

**Organize, Organize, Organize** This was a five-story brick building. According to the architectural plans that Alfred Druiding designed, each floor was divided into five basic rooms with a long hall connecting each on the west side. Staircase at the north end led to an East-Main Entrance. Steps at the far south end led to the Outhouse. Imagine moving into this building and deciding where to put everything. Let's begin...



The basement section at the north end was the dairy area...closest to the outside door. Here they could easily bring the milk in for processing into butter, cheese, milk, for storage and bring eggs from the chickens. Next was a kitchen for cooking and storing supplies especially from their garden. *Sister Gratia Fessler had charge of our motherhouse kitchen. Sr. Zita Franken had the bakery. The oven was built of stone, brick and mortar. It was heated by burning wood and then raking it out and putting loaves in.* The dining room would need to be close by so possibly it was at the far north end of the hall (Lunch Room) A laundry room probably came next. Probably another storage room??? The next floor up was their Chapel in the corner. Now she needed a community room, space for the Novices, for the Candidates, and for administration business. The next floor (Second Floor) could be space for a library, instructions, a Novitiate, a music room, and a room for crafts such as painting and needlework, all things she had been taught by the Notre Dame Sisters and Mother Caroline. Third floor was easy to decide on: dorms and bedrooms. The fourth floor was probably not originally needed except come summer when everyone would be home. And then they needed a sewing room. Where was she going to put that? Maybe on Second floor along with all those other tasks....Did they make their own candles, their own hosts, their own cords? Probably! Their own blankets for winter, mattresses for sleeping...and the tasks go on and on. So many decisions to be made...and she had also decided to teach school at St. Joseph's. What was she thinking when they decided to add two new missions that year!



## How many Sisters could help with the move?

During the year 1873—1974 Sisters helped Mother Odelia begin planning and packing. Ten Candidates were received in Fall bringing their total up to 23 Sisters. Novices went out teaching during these early years. Sisters/Novices were sent to six missions in fall of 1873 and two more missions were added Fall of 1874—when the move was in process. In 1873 17 were on mission, leaving six to help with teaching at St. Boniface and to help in Spring to plant gardens out at the new convent. Food would be needed in Fall. Some Sisters were close enough to come help move. Others were not. Missions in 1873:

1. Downtown St. Boniface: Mother Gabriel, Sr. Patricia Doyle, Sr. Armella Rupp, plus ?
2. Potosi: St. Andrew's—225 miles: Srs. Agnes Roemer, Francisca Gerhardt, Felicitas Davey
3. Milwaukee : St. Theresa's: Unknown—at least two
4. Hollandtown: St. Francis: about 35 miles Maybe....Srs. Benedicta Stitch, Charitas Riordan, Coletta Thoenie.
5. Chillicothe, Ohio: St. Peter's: 546 miles!! No help! Srs. Seraphica Fessler, Johanna Bleser, Constantia Engrisch. and one unknown.
6. Cleveland, WI: St. Wendel's: 16 miles Unknown—at least two
7. Alverno: St Joseph's: Mother Odelia, Sr. Hilaria Schaefer. They definitely could help.
8. Cross Plains, WI: St. Francis Xavier: 156 miles No help!: Unknown.

Three of these missions had no names recorded. Some of the names were guessed at but most are correct. Most missions had at least three: two teachers, one home-maker.

Live the Gospel and Serve God's  
People as Consecrated Women

## Meanwhile over in Germany...one year to pack up...



While the American Sisters were anticipating their move to a new convent, the Poor School Sisters of St. Francis in Gieboldehausen, Germany were receiving THEIR "walking papers". In 1872 their total number was 31 Sisters, teaching in seven places: two in Rollshausen, three in Nesselroden and Lindau, two in Blumenthal, Dingelbe, Dinklar and 17 in Gieboldehausen convent/school. A letter dated Sept. 9, 1874 states: "...the Sisters...were unfortunately recently deprived of their schools and thus forced to vacate the buildings they previously occupied. Hoping for better times soon, they bought another house, moved into it and turned a hall into a chapel." In one year they would move again. Packing began. Baskets were woven for packing their possessions: linens, church items, personal mementos etc.



On September 13, 1875 Mother Augustine wrote: "For the last time on this native soil, but with a courageous trust in Divine Providence, we must bid farewell to the Bishop's graces. We will leave here this Wednesday via Munster to Rotterdam, and on the 18th we will board a ship to cross the wide sea." A total of 44 girls had been received into the new community between 1860 and 1875, 15 died and 2 left the community. Of these 44, 27 came to Wisconsin where, eventually four would leave.



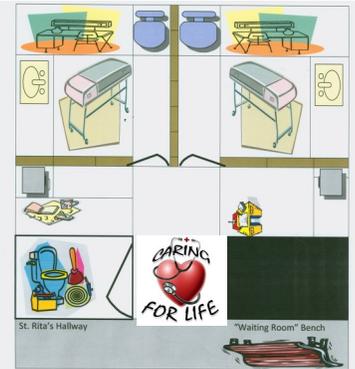
Some time in Spring of 1875 Mother Odelia received word of the coming of the Sisters from Germany...facing exile from their families, friends, homeland. In just a few months, their new home would find them re-arranging for the accommodation of 17 Sisters. Imagine the decisions they now need to make...again...as to where they could live especially with the adjustments to be faced. Ten more Sisters would come the following year bringing the rest of their materials! Where would it all go!!



## MORE...ON THE MOVE...Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Community Health Clinic!!



On August 22, 1982 Holy Family Health Clinic opened on first floor of St. Rita's. Here you see Sr. Caritas checking Sister Bernilda's weight. This drawing shows the original clinic with two exam rooms, a bathroom, a reception desk, and a bench in the hallway that served as "The Waiting Room". This area once was the Mother Superior's Office and is now the left half of the Physical Therapy room!!! Just put up a wall between the two sections and use a bit of your imagination!! Eon May 1, 1989, this space moved to present St. Rita's Offices area; May 4, 1998 moved across the Court to the "Old Clinic Area" replacing the Sewing Room and Sisters Shop. In February 2019 the clinic moved to Second Floor St. Rita's. Pix: Waiting Room-old clinic; Sr. Anne; New Clinic.



## Celebrating: St. Rita's Infirmary: September 1922



Shortly after the election of Mother Genesee Cahill, it was decided that St. Francis Chapel was no longer adequate for the increasing number of Sisters. Digging began in September of 1922 and was completed in February 1923. Initially only the first two floors were finished for patients leaving the entire third floor as one large dormitory – called St.

Rita's – for the use of the young sisters during the summer vacation. The fourth floor was attic space. The Hutter Construction Company of Fond du Lac erected the building, and E. Brielmaier & Sons of Milwaukee were the architects.



## On the Move: OZANAM HOME CUPOLA!! Were

YOU ever missioned at Ozanam? In 1966 our Community purchased Ozanam Home which was a nursing home where our Sisters served until 1970. In 1970 it was converted to a retirement center just for our Sisters. In 1988 it closed and 31 of our Sisters moved up to the new St. Frances Retirement Center. Eventually the building was demolished except for the cupola. It was saved!!! August 14 Wes Grueninger of the historical society was searching for pictures. *The cupola tower sits in our Historic Park . I am creating several panels of information about the cupola which will be displayed to visitors. More to come...*





## Archive Newspapers...on the MOVE...

While she worked in archives, Sr. Catherine Gilles spent hours researching newspaper articles information: publishing paper, date, of publication, names of Sisters, Mission, etc. Then she cut out the article and taped it down preparing for scanning.



Next Sr. Paula Vanden Hogen typed article information into the Newspaper Database watching for duplications. Once done, Sr. Catherine scanned all the articles. The database entries she completed totaled 4,320 newspaper articles. This did not include all the obituaries of deceased Sisters that she researched and printed. We are grateful to both of them.



During the past two summers, Sr. Helen Marie Paul worked on separating the ever increasing piles of articles into separate categories: Missions, Personal -Sister, Other: Chapter, Profession, Jubilees, College, Hospital , Academy, Sports, etc.



Sister Sue Ann Hall has now been missioned to the archives. Guess what her first job was? Yes, newspaper articles which needed to be put into their appropriate locations: Mission Box, Sister's Folder, etc. Now she's learning cutting out, taping, database entrée. Next comes scanning!! She's presently "on a roll" learning computer tech.



## ON THE MOVE...WORKS BY OUR SISTERS...not just a thesis!

In 1964 Sister Mary Ellen Harlow did her Master's Thesis on "A Subject Bibliography of the Writings of the FSCC..." She updated the listings in 1984. Sisters Miriam Genevieve, Xaveria and Carmen Marie did subsequent additional updates. This summer Sister Patricia Linssen took

the four manuscripts that they did and combined them into one complete listing of writings by our Sisters. The database has **993** entries. Archivists are now collecting any type of creative works done by members. You are encouraged to send in any such writings that you do: books, book reviews, plays, pamphlets, songs, poems, magazine articles, newspaper entries, whatever reflects your contributions to the community and the people you serve. You probably didn't realize all of these are important, no matter if published or unpublished!! Sister Patricia, hopefully will return next summer to continue this project.



## Handwritten moves to typed!!!



Sister Alexandra Bettinardi is a volunteer typist for the archives. Numerous hand written papers, some on scrapes, some with hard to read writing, have piled up and this summer she tackled the growing pile. Now we have "readable" copies of:

- 1) Tertians II by Sr. Clarine Mergin
  - 2) The Meaning of Love by Sr. Dolora Deem
  - 3) History of the Conservatory of Music by Sr. Eligius Hoolihan
  - 4) Advice to Missionaries
  - 5) Brides of Heaven by Sr. Richard Fitzpatrick
  - 6) Entry Notes and Memories by Sr. Joseph Marie Pinion—on Mother Superiors
- Many more....yet to be done.

