

# Heritage Happenings



Lest We Forget...

September 15, 1875

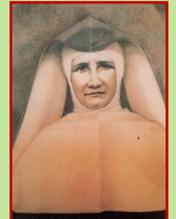
— Wednesday —

On this day in Germany, Mother Augustine wrote: "We will leave ... this Wednesday via Munster to Rotterdam, and on the 18th we will board a ship to cross the wide sea."

It is good to know that by 1875 laws enacted in 1855 made travel by steamship much less hazardous. Space / steerage passenger was designated as 18 square feet / person...not much but better than no space at all. Even ventilation was required to reduce "foul air" from cramped steerage. Water was rationed out and used sparingly. Meals depended on their cook and they had to bring their own food. Cooking was a challenge when seas were rough and rolling. The law also required one bathroom / 100 passengers! Think about it!!

## WHERE TO GO...?

In May of 1875 Mother Augustine asked the advice of their extraordinary confessor, the Superior of the Augustinians at Germershausen. He contacted Mother Caroline, an acquaintance of his and Superior of the Notre Dame Sisters in Milwaukee, if she knew of a place where 27 Sisters would be welcome. She in turn, contacted Archbishop Henni, and, with his approval, an invitation was sent to the Silver Lake Franciscans. As soon as contact was made between the two groups, and the answer YES was given, plans forged ahead in preparation for their departure on September 18 by steamship out of Rotterdam, arriving early October. They had just four months to get ready.



Sister Cecelia, when still deciding about migrating said: "If nobody else goes, we go!" She had determined in advance how much good she could do for the little children in America and what she could teach them. Little children were her darlings and she hoped soon again to be surrounded by them since she had been so unmercifully robbed of them in Germany.

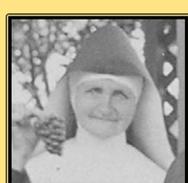
It was finally decided that 17 Sisters would make the first trip and the other 11 come the following year after business transactions had been completed. Packing was now the issue. Each of the 17 could bring essential clothing, items that they valued such as writing materials, sewing items (thimbles, thread) rosary, prayer book, Bible, crucifix,

church items, etc. along with items they would need for cooking such as pots, cooking pan, tea kettle, eating utensils, cup, linens, blankets for warmth etc. Food for 17 of them for about two weeks would have included: flour—a must for flatbread; salted pork or beef; cheese, potatoes, oats for porridge, wheat, rice, dried lentils, dried fruits and vegetables.



As the date to leave drew closer, more and more relatives and friends came to say their good byes. Mothers, fathers, siblings came in tears, sobs, knowing they might never see each other again, some even trying to convince them not to go. (We have photos of 8 of these 17)

Bonaventure, Euphrosine, Bernarda, Laurentia, Gonzaga, Scholastica, Bernwarda, and Seraphica.



## ON BOARD THE SHIP

On the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis, the immense hayrack waited for its load at the convent door. First to Gottingen where they would catch the train taking them from home to Muenster. Arrangements had been made for them to stay at two different convents overnight. The next day, the 18th, they arrived at Rotterdam where they heard Holy Mass and received Holy Communion.



Finally they were allowed to enter the steamer by "means of a long board." Sister Angeline, with her music ability was probably the song leader and led them often in singing the German songs. One in particular they sang as they left: "Geleite durch die Welle" (Accompany through the waves, - this little ship - faithful and gentle.) as tears rolled down their faces. At 2:00 PM the voyage began. Once on board, guidelines were given: 1) Rising time was 7:00 AM, and bedtime at 10:00 PM

2) Breakfast 8-9 AM; dinner 1:00 PM; supper at 6:00 PM. 3) The ship's cook would light fires at 7:00 AM and keep them lit til 7:00 PM. Then a safety light would burn all night. 4) Before breakfast, bed rolls to be rolled up against the wall, floors swept and dirt thrown overboard. 5) Mondays and Tuesdays were wash days. 6) At 10:00 AM on Sundays they were expected to appear in clean and decent apparel as the day was observed as religiously as circumstances provided.

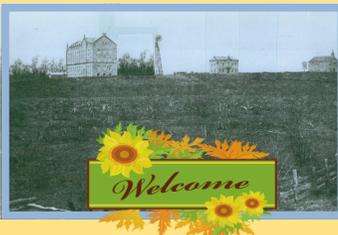


**TRAVELING: Sr. Scholastica:** "We were seated on deck. It was Saturday, at 3:00 P.M. The ship seemed restless and we held on to the heavy rope in front of us. The captain came to us saying, "Go down, quick. A storm is coming." We went down, one by one. Sr. Eugene was the youngest, and so came last. She was drenched from head to foot. They took her dripping habit - we wore brown heavy habits - into the kitchen to dry. **Sr. Bernarda:** When we were driven away (from Germany), I was so glad that

I was allowed to go with the first group. I was even happier when we arrived in Hoboken, for it was there we received the first Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in America. We were on board the steamer for three weeks. **Sr. Scholastica:** Nearly everyone was sea sick. One night a heavy storm came up and in the morning Bernarda called me, "Scholastica, did you hear that storm?" I said, "No, I did not hear anything. I slept nice." Then she said, "I prayed with outstretched arms for protection." The men had to sweep the water from the ship all night. **Sr. Euphrosine:** The Bishop of Hildesheim, William, visited us before we left. I said "If the ship goes down we will not need to fear. We will go straight to Heaven because we've received our second Baptism." **Sr. Gonzaga:** She suffered from sea sickness during the voyage and was seldom on deck, but when the Sisters called "Mother - come - we are nearing land", seasickness vanished from the entire group. They laughed in chorus and even Sr. Vincentia came hastily forward." "We had coffee and potatoes for breakfast before leaving the steamer. Our bread had all been eaten." They had been on the ocean three Sundays, arriving in Hoboken, New York on October 3. A dispatch was sent to Father Joseph who would meet us in Milwaukee.



## LAST JOURNEY



We stayed overnight with the Franciscan Sisters and then left Oct. 4th. Though it was the Feast of St. Francis we had nothing more to eat that day except pears bought by Mother Augustine on the train. Got nourishment in Pittsburg. We reached Chicago in

the evening of October 5th and then Manitowoc on October 7, 1875. The next day the Sisters helped load up the wagon to take us out to the Motherhouse. Seeing the convent, Mother Augustine said: "That is the house that our Mother Seraphica helped build for us." Before her death, she had a vision of St. Francis who said: "Do not separate. When you are obliged to go elsewhere, I will help to build a house for you." This was that house!! They wept in her memory and the words she spoke. They now had a place to stay. Next year—altogether!!

The first group included:

1. Mother Augustine, Superior, age 33;
2. Stanislaus Dinkelman (24);
3. Bonaventure Engelke (26);
4. Eugene Engelhard (22);
5. Bernarda Ernst (44);
6. Euphrosine Ernst (23);
7. Gonzaga Leineweber (20);
8. Angeline Machtens (27);
9. Crescentia Meister (32),
10. Vincentia Otto (30);
11. Laurentia Peepinbrink (32),
12. Seraphica Oyen (30);
13. Elizabeth Schmalstig (23);
14. Scholastica Schrader (26);
15. Bernwarda Schwetge (29);
16. Cecelia Windolf (25);
17. Ambrosia Hegemann (30).