

GERMAN AMERICAN MUSEUM, LIBRARY AND FAMILY HISTORY CENTER ST. LUCAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PRESERVING THE PAST
CELEBRATING THE PRESENT
EMBRACING THE FUTURE



Newsletter # 9
Summer 2020

POSTPONEMENT OF WORKSHOP ON PRESERVING AND CELEBRATING GERMAN CULTURAL HERITAGES UNTIL JUNE 2021

On April 22, 2020, the board of directors of the St. Lucas Historical Society announced after much deliberation and thought, the decision to cancel the **Annual Workshop on Preserving and Celebrating German Cultural Heritages in the Midwest**. The workshop was scheduled to take place on Wednesday, June 17, 2020, but is now scheduled for June 23, 2021.

This action was taken in consideration of everyone's health and safety during this period of the COVID 19 virus and possible re-occurrences, and the many uncertainties of planning and holding a large public meeting in mid-June.

The St. Lucas Historical Society had invited speakers from these organizations to participate:

- *The German language and culture department, St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN;
- *the German language and history program, the University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA;
- *the Amana Colonies Heritage Society Amana, IA;
- *the Kauffman Museum, Bethel College, North, Newton, KS;
- *the Luxembourg American Cultural Society, Belgium, WI;
- *the TRACES Center for History and Culture, Mason City, IA;
- *the German American Heritage Center and Museum, Davenport, IA;
- *the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, Lincoln, NE;
- *the Max Kade Institute, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI;
- *the Kolona Historical Society, Kolona, IA;
- *the Mennonite Historical Society of Iowa, Kolona, IA;
- *the Old Order Amish Community, Elgin, IA;
- *the Scenic View Mennonite Church, Hawkeye, IA; and
- *the Polish Cultural Institute and Museum, Winona, MN.



German American Museum, April 2020

Carl Most, the secretary of the Society, stated “Many of these speakers had already accepted the invitation to participate in the Workshop. The Society also had scheduled three speakers on family history and genealogy from German lands. Included in the many exhibits planned was a display of the TRACES mobile museum with exhibits of German American historic themes, and ironically a display on the 1918 flu pandemic was scheduled.”

Clair Blong, president of the Society stated, “The next annual Workshop is scheduled for June 23, 2021, and will focus on the theme of preserving and celebrating German cultural heritage. We will invite the same organizations to participate and the workshop will highlight the importance of these German cultural and historical organizations, groups, and museums in the Midwest cultural mosaic.”

RESTORING THE MUSEUM WINDOWS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AWARDS

Clair Blong

In mid-March, the Fayette County Community Foundation awarded funds to restore the 10 window frames on the annex portion of the German American Museum, and to install 8 new exterior storm windows on the north side of the museum. The purpose of this window restoration project is to protect the building from severe wind and moisture. This Fayette County Community Foundation grant is a great vote of confidence in our restoration efforts of the very handsome, historic, and architecturally significant museum building.

The Board of Directors extends a big thank you to the Fayette County Community Foundation for this generous grant, and to the State of Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs for their large matching grant of 3 years ago. We also warmly thank our many supporters for their continued moral and financial support as we accomplish these sometimes daunting, but vital historic preservation tasks.

The Board thanks Wadsworth Construction of Decorah, especially for Dave Wadsworth’s keen knowledge and understanding of historic preservation work, and for his very skilled professionals who have done outstanding window restoration work on the museum building over the past 3 years.

We look forward to working with Jordan Jirak, owner of Life Time Construction of St. Lucas, to restore the very worn and rotted window frames on the annex portion of the building. Jordan indicates that the restoration work on the 10 window frames will begin soon and will be finished by the end of October 2020.



Damaged window frame to be restored



Damaged window frame to be restored

Meaning of Window Restoration to Supporters

"The window restoration project has been even more successful than anticipated," states Mary Lee Johns of Hereford, Arizona, a long-time supporter of the Museum and daughter of Lee Stammeyer. "The fund-raising events and workshops have resulted in a camaraderie unseen."

Wadsworth Construction, contracted to do the restoration work, has demonstrated their professional skill and dedication to high-quality work throughout. The final products, the restored double hung windows, the storm windows and window frames are a work of art and beauty.

Ruth Boeding Huffman of New Hampton, daughter of the late Joe and Anna (Best) Boeding of St. Lucas and a Founding Member of the Society notes, "I am happy to participate in the fund raising for this vital historic preservation project. My great uncle, Father F.X. (Francis Xavier) Boeding was an avid student of architecture and was instrumental in the design and building of the school. He would be most pleased with this effort to preserve and re-purpose this building that played such a vital role in educating the children of the community.



Newly restored frames of double hung windows

After hearing of the Fayette County Community Foundation grant to the St. Lucas Historical Society, Russ Baldner, a German linguist and historian from Spillville, exclaimed, "Outstanding. Congratulations to the German American Museum for the generous affirmation of hard work and many successful events and workshops. Thanks for sharing the good news. Given the current Corona virus pandemic, we can all use some."

Significance of the Museum in Community Development

"The St. Lucas Historical Society archives items of historical significance in the museum," says Carl Most, recording secretary of the Society. Carl states, "The museum building is under historic preservation status with the National Park Service and must be protected and preserved in accordance with State and Federal guidelines. This funding from the Fayette County Community Foundation allows the Society board of directors to restore the building while maintaining the integrity of its historic significance."

Carl notes, "In recent years the museum has attained regional and multi-state significance through its symposia and lecture series with persons of scholarship in the arts and sciences. The museum has also been a gathering place for class reunions, family reunions, civic and professional meetings. Funding from the Fayette County Community Foundation and the State of Iowa have been essential for the preservation and restoration of this fine building."

Mel Bodensteiner, adjutant of the American Legion Post in St. Lucas, Founding Member of the Society, and community development proponent, says, "These Fayette County Community Foundation grants are absolutely critical for stimulating the development of our smaller towns and communities."

"What a wonderful opportunity and investment in our local community to preserve a meaningful place of historical value to the people from St. Lucas as well as to their families, friends, and neighboring communities. Allowing this former building of scholarship to shine as a beacon for others to enjoy through continuing education adds exponential value to the region," says Diane McCarty, treasurer of the Society and professor emeritus of education at Wartburg College.

WILL FUTURE GENERATIONS ENJOY OUR ARBOR HERITAGE?

Clair Blong
Rosmary KuennenMost
Joyce Schaufenbuel

On the western edge of the Driftless Region of the upper Mississippi River valley, nestled between hill tops with two gentle creeks running through the valley, lies the village of St. Lucas. In the mid-19th century on these bountiful hills and slopes where St. Luke's Church now stands, the first European settlers came upon a lush forest of sturdy burr oaks, red oaks, white oaks, hickory, American elm, cottonwood, box elder and red cedar trees.

Native American Presence

In the woodlands east and southeast of St. Lucas, these trees were maturing when the prehistoric peoples and their ancestors, the Ioway, the Lakota, and the Ho-Chunk lived in this fertile Turkey River watershed of the Mississippi River that is some 50 miles east of this expanse. Interspersed in these woodlands and on their edges were gooseberry, ironwoods and thorn bushes. The open prairie stretching to the south, west and north, was covered with buffalo grass, milk weed, and a variety of flowering plants.

Early European Settlement

When European settlers first arrived in this area there was an essential need for lumber to build log cabins, animal sheds, mercantile stores, churches, and schools; firewood was also needed for cooking and heating. These lush woods with their abundance of trees were soon harvested to provide the lumber needed. The demand increased rapidly as more immigrants settled in the area.

In 1855, forty acres of partially cleared woodland was donated by Anton Stathel and Mathias Duclos with the intended purpose of the land for a church, cemetery, school, convent and rectory. St. Luke's Catholic Church was built on the highest hill of the 40 acres, with the expansive cemetery situated just south of the church. Later, St. Luke's School, rectory and convent were built.

Native Americans and European Cultures Value Nature

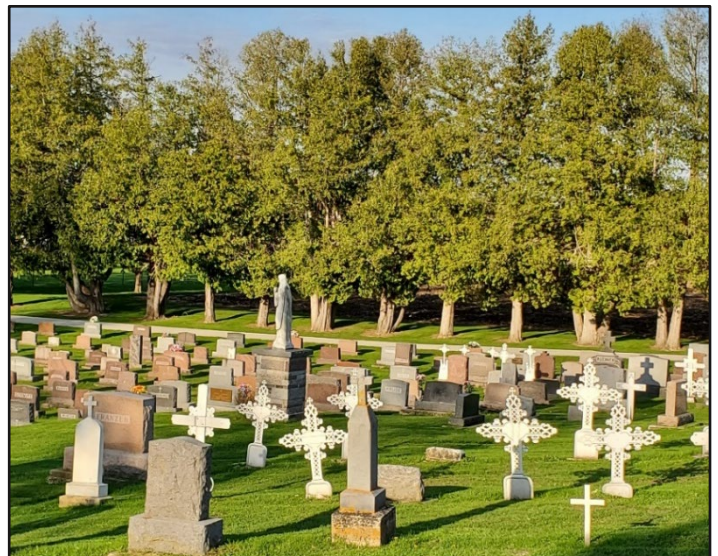
Native Americans were in touch with nature; its wildlife, its open plains and forests, and especially its magnificent variety of trees, plants and shrubs. This was the essence of the Native American way of life. Black Elk, the great Oglala Lakota spiritual man, grounded his spirituality in nature and later in Christianity. Black Elk's amalgamation of his natural spiritual world with Christianity is covered in *Black Elk Speaks*, a 1932 book written by the American writer, John Neihardt. Recently, Myron Pourier, Black Elk's great-great grandson, prayed Black Elk's famous 1917 prayer for the healing of the universe on Black Elk Peak in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

In 2017 the Diocese of Rapid City, South Dakota, began the process of nominating Black Elk for sainthood based on his deep understanding of man's spiritual relationship to Nature and the Almighty. A central concept in Black Elk's vision questing is the 'tree of life.'

Father F.X. (Francis Xavier) Boeding

Father F.X. Boeding, a native of Germany, fresh from seminary training in Germany and Canada, arrived in St. Lucas in 1882. He was likely influenced by the destruction of much of the nearby woodland forest that was being used for immediate building needs of the settlers.

The attitude of Father Boeding and of many German settlers toward nature reflected the German passion for respecting and preserving nature. He had been influenced by the beauty of the churchyards in his native Germany. These churchyards and cemeteries, then and today, contain many stately evergreen trees, hedges and bushes.



Arborvitae trees lining the east side of the cemetery

The Germans had a long history of reverence for woods and forests in art and literature. Their passion and vigilant emphasis on preserving nature and woodland for soil conservation became one of the important voices in the environmental movement in America. Aldo Leopold, a conservationist, forester, and educator, is best known for his “land ethic,” which calls for an ethical, caring relationship between people and nature. Leopold’s legacy continues to inform and inspire us to see the natural world “as a community to which we belong.”

In effect, Father Boeding’s love of the natural world was embracing Aldo Leopold’s understanding that we do not own, but are part of, the natural environment, as published in Leopold’s *Sand County Almanac* in 1947. Father Boeding’s thinking and actions for the espousal and advocacy of nature were well ahead of the times. He was embracing an idea that was stated in the Aldo Leopold principle of “A thing is right when it preserves the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community,” in his *Sand County Almanac*. Leopold also stated, “There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery store, and the other that heat comes from the furnace.”

This innate love of nature and trees in our lives is also captured in the famous *The Man Who Planted Trees*, a short story published in 1953 by French author Jean Giono. An allegorical tale, it tells the story of one shepherd’s long and successful single-handed effort to re-forest a desolate valley in the foothills of the Alps in France throughout the first half of the 20th century. This small volume has had an enormous impact on global environmental awareness.

Father Boeding Loved the Arborvitae Tree



Arborvitae trees remaining along the east side facing the cemetery. The sturdy, healthy trunks of the trees after decades of existence are evidence that the arborvitae tree is aptly called the ‘tree of life.’

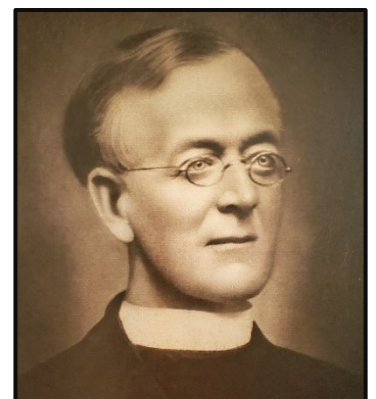
Why did Father Boeding love the Arborvitae tree? It was the first tree from North America to be introduced to Europe when French explorers brought the tree to Paris. In 1558, the tree appropriately received the name “arborvitae,” meaning ‘tree of life’ in Latin.

Fine examples of the German and Czech passion for evergreens are the historic, stately evergreen groves around the pioneer cemeteries in Festina and Spillville. In the Spillville area there are three cemeteries graced with tall, majestic evergreens: St. Wenceslaus cemetery on the grounds of St. Wenceslaus Czech Catholic Church in Spillville, the cemetery at St. Clements, an early German church south of Spillville built by German citizens of Spillville, and the Haug family cemetery west of Spillville.

In rural Nebraska, the Czech cemeteries are demarcated by the placement of evergreens in two distinct styles: borderline and/or placement at burial plots. The Czech wanted their final resting place to be surrounded by graceful evergreens that create gentle, peaceful sounds of the wind passing through their branches.

Father Boeding’s endless passion for landscaping the church, cemetery and school grounds with beautiful arborvitae and maple trees is still visible. His fostering of stately farmyard groves and fruit orchards was well known. He led by example with his robust vegetable and berry gardens. Ruth Boeding Huffman recalls that her father, Joe Boeding, had great admiration for Father Boeding’s principles for a good life: “Your life is to serve others, treat others well, and live a life of integrity.” Ruth states, “Joe shared Father Boeding’s love of nature and often helped plant the trees, gardens and orchards. Father Boeding worked closely with Iowa State University agronomists to plan his selection of trees and bushes.”

Father Arnold Boeding, nephew of Father F.X. wrote in the Boeding family history, “I have always felt that during his best years he was a leading horticulturalist of Iowa.”



Father F.X. Boeding

His apple orchards and grapes were his best testimonials for this. He raised seedlings of trees suitable for shelters around farm buildings, mostly evergreens. When the seedlings were large enough to transplant, he distributed them 'free' to the farmers. Reputedly he was the developer of a strain of Concord grapes that could be grown in the cold Iowa climate."

Important to note, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, have embraced ecospirituality as a major element of their spiritual consciousness. Ecospirituality means offering opportunities to care for creation, sharing the practice of integral ecology, and restoring the dignity of all creation. Father Boeding would be very happy to see this belief promoted today.

Arbor Action Defines the Community

How did Father Boeding accomplish such a multitude of tasks? He did not 'talk the talk' but rather he 'walked the walk.' As the contemporary cliché says, "Just do it." He did it every year, most notably during the four decades of his pastorship in St. Lucas. He plunged into this historic effort with the completion of the beautiful new and larger St. Luke's Church in 1914.

Father Boeding would mobilize the parish farmers with horses and wagons and head to the Linden Hill nursery, owned by William Arthur Anderson of Scotland. This caravan journeyed to the nursery located at that time on the Great River Road between West Union and Ossian. These expeditions were undertaken in the early spring and again after harvest in the late autumn.

Terry Landsgaard, whose parents knew Mr. Anderson quite well, states, "On their arrival, Mr. Anderson would serve the St. Lucas farmers and Father Boeding a hearty breakfast. Then the hard work of digging the trees, binding them and loading would begin. Once the wagons were fully loaded with the trees, Mr. Anderson gathered his customers around a large outdoor summer table for sandwiches and beer before their long trek back to St. Lucas before dark. A convoy of farmers would bring back beautiful, but very sturdy Norway spruce to begin planting their farmyard groves, fruit trees for their orchards, and bridal wreaths for decorating and surrounding their farmhouse."

Joseph Schaufenbuel, Arborist

Who was the parish arborist? Oral historians point to Joseph Schaufenbuel, with assistance from Heinrich Hermann (H.H.) Kuennen and other parishioners. In a March 2020 interview, Leander Stammeyer 99 years old and of very clear mind, recalls, "Joe Schaufenbuel was not only a farmer, but also an arborist. Joe was a leader in planting the arborvitae and hardwood trees on the church grounds and cemetery. He enlisted the young and old, his sons Henry, Tony, Ben, Leo, Bill and his elderly father, Sigismund, to help plant the hundreds of trees and bushes. With the help of others, he planted the orchards of pear and apple trees south of the rectory and near the convent."



Joseph (Joe) Schaufenbuel

One Better Joe Schaufenbuel Transplants Lady Slippers To Yard

Joe Schaufenbuel, two miles west of Eldorado, went The Union one better on their lady slipper story, as he transplanted plants from the north fork woods and now has blooms on his farm at the north side of the house.

Jesse Ostrander found the blossoms described in last week's Union in the same woods, and brought them into the office where they stayed fresh for about a week.

Mr. Schaufenbuel reports his plants are thriving so well that he even has two blossoms on one stalk from one of them.

Leander recalls having to pick pears and apples in these orchards during school recess in the 1920s and 1930s.

Leander Stammeyer states, "Joe Schaufenbuel was also involved in planting the bridal wreaths in the church yard and around the rectory."

Joe was widely known for his grafting skills, often producing new varieties of fruit trees, and for the beautiful flowers and plentiful orchards on his farm.

This article in the *Fayette County Union*, May 25, 1939, is one of many written accounts about Joe's gardening successes.

Joyce Schaufenbuel notes that her dad, Ben Schaufenbuel, one of Joe's sons, spoke highly of Joe often. She recalls, "Grandpa Joe was remembered as a gifted farmer who was well-known for his love of nature, his orchards with a wide variety of fruit trees, his cultivation of prize-winning flowers, fruits and vegetables."



Heinrich H Kuennen

Heinrich H. Kuennen, Teacher, Parish and Community Caretaker

Father Boeding had solid support from the parishioners of St. Luke's parish. Louis Kuennen says, "Our great-grandfather H. H. Kuennen, one of the strong supporters, took part in the planting, care, and trimming the new trees, hedges, bushes and orchards.

As a young man when St. Lucas was just getting started, H. H. Kuennen was its first schoolteacher. For decades he walked the 1/2 mile from his son John H. Kuennen's farm west of town to St. Luke's church to ring the mammoth bronze Angelus bells each day at noon. H. H. wanted to contribute in old age as he was able to the parish community."

Many hundreds of his descendants live in St. Lucas and the surrounding towns and carry on his civic mindedness.

Father Boeding's Green Thumb

Father Boeding encouraged every farmer to have a grove, an orchard and a garden. Some of these 120-year-old stately trees, hedges and bridal wreaths are still standing on many farms around St. Lucas.

There is no doubt that Father Boeding and his devoted parishioners served as the "agriculture extension service" during those decades of his stewardship (1872-1928) at St. Luke's Parish. Father Boeding was known for helping farmers acquire land, diversify crops (from wheat and sugar cane to corn and oats) and livestock, and encouraging them to plant sturdy groves to protect their farmyards from the severe winter winds and cold temperatures.

Father Arnold Boeding remarked, "For a number of years each summer a 'team' of teachers and instructors from the (Iowa State) University at Ames, Iowa, came for one week, Monday through Saturday, to work with uncle F.X. on horticultural matters. Their principle interests were pest control and crop disinfectants. These men had a genuine respect for the professional competence of uncle F.X. Boeding. Once as a teenager, I was in St. Lucas and met several of these teachers."

In those last decades of the 19th century and first decades of the 20th century, farmers would frequently seek advice from Father Boeding. Later Father Schuh, pastor from 1928 to 1967, also advised farmers and occasionally adjudicated farmer disputes.

These multiple community roles of the pastors were documented from oral interviews in a Des Moines Register article on the uniqueness of the St. Lucas German community in the 1980s. A University of Illinois publication on agricultural land ownership patterns in Iowa noted that St. Lucas represented a unique area in that land was never for public sale. The Germans sold it amongst themselves.

Empowering Arbor Heritage in Our Community

This century-old tree planting reflects a very close-knit community among parish members. To understand our arbor heritage, it may be helpful to informally survey these heritage tree stands around the church, the cemetery, and the many farmyards. We as church and civic communities can learn from our ancestors and can revitalize these magnificent groves with new plantings for future generations as Father Boeding did for ours.

In April 2020, the Parish Council ably led by Ben Kuennen, a professional forester and conservationist by education and training, planted 2 rows of 28 red oaks along the walkway to the cemetery, and 3 flowering trees on the north side of the cemetery chapel. Ben was instrumental in obtaining a grant from *Trees Forever*, a nonprofit environmental organization in Iowa. Goals of this group are to plant and care for more trees, shrubs, and native grasses and plants in Iowa, and to promote the value and importance of our natural areas so that they are protected and can continue to grow and thrive for future generations.

Ben and his council are exploring other ideas to revive and strengthen the arbor heritage on the parish grounds. We appreciate the effort of this team and that of the farmers who are revitalizing their farmyard wind groves. Folks may even consider establishing farmyard orchards again.

Why Care About Our Arbor Heritage?

In a May 12, 2020 email, Kathleen Schaufenbuel Hadley, a descendent of two prominent St. Lucas families, the Schaufenbuels and the Bodensteiners very eloquently stated, “I grew up with this community as family! I am so very proud of my heritage! The St. Luke’s Cemetery contains the burial sites of many of my cousins, uncles, aunts, grandparents and great grandparents! My DNA lies in these hallowed grounds!”

“Think of the many funeral processions from the church to the sacred grounds as they slowly processed by these majestic trees. Think of the families who felt the caress of the trees as they walked slowly along the path. The trees serve as a gentle guard to protect this revered place from the outside world. Such a beautiful barrier conceived by my ancestors. What grace and foresight for the spiritual needs of grieving families. Let history continue to bless this holy place!” states Kathleen Schaufenbuel Bodensteiner Hadley.

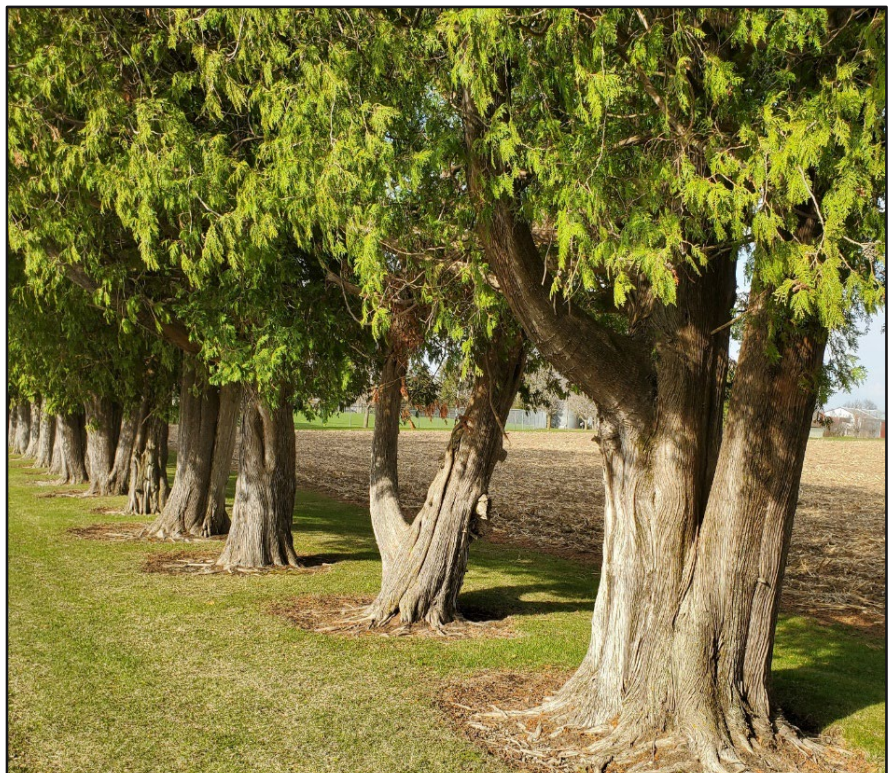
Consider the remarks of Jane Keating, a strong enthusiast of the St. Lucas family heritage and community spirit, “I have visited many cemeteries in the last few years for genealogy research. Standing among these mighty trees with a slight wind blowing, I must say, listen to what the spirits are saying; be still, be calm. Oh, I truly love each moment spent among the majestic arborvitae, oaks and pines. I get goose bumps just thinking about this subject. It is an awesome feeling that I get... a good feeling. Indeed, these mighty trees do speak, they speak to our soul.”

“There are things of the past that are irreplaceable. The trees in the cemetery and churchyard are not merely ordinary trees. They are part of what has made this cemetery special and comforting to families mourning the loss of loved ones. I am certain that Fr. Boeding, H. H. Kuennen, Joe Schaufenbuel and the many members of their extended families would be saddened by this potential loss,” states Joyce Schaufenbuel.

Joyce continues, “If anyone who has loved ones buried in this cemetery had an opportunity to save these trees, they would make it possible. These trees are healthy, strong and are indicative of the people that built this community and of those buried there. The families and the trees that so graciously surround the graves year after year deserve honor and respect. Families should be able to trust that when it is time for them or their descendants to go to a resting place, this beautiful cemetery will still be this special place.”

Lois Boeding Fure of Rochester, Minnesota, writes, “It would be fitting that the Arnold and Hermina Boeding family purchase trees to continue Father Boeding’s legacy. Mom and Dad had the same love of trees and nature and passed it along to us. With this in mind, our family would like to embrace, preserve and celebrate our heritage.”

We need to ponder ways to honor this community’s great arbor heritage by nourishing and planting native trees and bushes on our church grounds, our farmyard groves, and in our family orchards and gardens. Arbor heritage in our community and parish is a topic for further reflection and consideration. These groves and woodlands are a heritage worth preserving.



Arborvitae trees lining the adjacent cornfield on the east side of the cemetery, April 2020



New Red Oak trees lining the walkway to cemetery, May 2020.



Arborvitae lining the walkway to the cemetery, December 2007.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES ON STONE FOUNDATIONS

Clair Blong

The Winneshiek County Historic Preservation Commission's interest in a reconnaissance survey of limestone structures in the county is a great challenge for the public to discover this unique history in our midst.

This official prompt about our hidden history stirred me enough to do a partial field survey of the hidden-in-plain-sight and other hidden limestone structures in the Festina, Fort Atkinson and St. Lucas areas. These limestone structures date from the 1840s stone buildings of Fort Atkinson to the massive foundation stone walls of the school (1911) and church (1914) in St. Lucas.

Limestone and glacial stones found on the prairie fields were the only durable materials available and at little or no cost. The limestone was a big improvement over the use of logs and lumber for structures, especially for military buildings and churches. After the coming of the railroads in the area by the 1870s, brick could be shipped into the area at fairly reasonable cost. For example, the first permanent church in St. Lucas was constructed of brick in the early 1870s. The previous church had been a large log cabin. An initial survey of the limestone structures in the Festina, Fort Atkinson, and St. Lucas areas reveal some magnificent treasures of our early American and European settlement history.

Fort Atkinson Area



Limestone blockhouse, Fort Atkinson

Near Fort Atkinson, the most well-known stone structures are the barracks building and blockhouse of the 1840s Neutral Territory fortification in Fort Atkinson State Park. Other stone structures near the Fort Atkinson State Park are: the ruins of St. John's Lutheran Church located north of the Fort; the First Congregational Church, still in pristine condition, located below the hill southeast of the Fort; and the weathered stone house located just west of the Fort. It's quite likely these structures obtained their limestone from the Fort buildings that were torn down in the 1850s.

In downtown Fort Atkinson the handsome limestone St. John Nepomuce Catholic Church, built by early Bohemian and German settlers, dominates the skyline.



St. John's Lutheran Church, Fort Atkinson



St. John Nepomuce Catholic Church,
Fort Atkinson



Presbyterian Church, Fort Atkinson



Riha Family limestone farmhouse southeast of Fort Atkinson

Festina Area

The Festina area is blessed with a number of significant examples of early stone construction. These stone structures include the St. Anthony de Padua Chapel (Smallest Church) located 2 miles southwest of Festina along the banks of the Turkey River. On this site in 1849, the first Catholic Mission north of Dubuque was built of logs. In 1885 nearby landowners quarried stone and built the little chapel. Construction resulted from a vow by Johann Gaertner's mother to build a chapel should her son, who was drafted into the French army and served under Napoleon, return safely from the Russian campaign. To this day, descendants of Frank Huber maintain the chapel and grounds, which includes the grave of Johann Gaertner (per signage of Winneshiek County Historical Society).

The steeple of Our Lady of Seven Dolors Catholic Church rules the Festina skyline. This historic landmark was constructed between 1861 and 1863 by its German parishioners. The stonework is superb. The church steeple was recently repaired after damage from a storm.

The famous Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes, constructed in 1892, is located on the grounds of Our Lady of Seven Dolors Cemetery. It was destroyed in the windstorm of 2017 when large evergreen trees toppled on it. The parish had the grotto completely rebuilt by professional stone masons in 2018. "This stonework jewel contains eroded limestone carefully hand collected from nearby river and creek beds," says Ken Ehler, longtime parishioner.

One-half mile west of Festina is the stunning Buchheit family limestone farmhouse. This is a must-see farmstead from the gravel road as the limestone farmhouse and red barn are immaculately maintained. This is a visual delight for anyone interested in photographing a real icon from that limestone building period.

Further along the road at the family farmstead of Clarence and Geneva Kuennen, stands a sturdy, well-constructed limestone foundation ten feet in height that is in amazingly good condition due to the skilled stone masons of a more than a century ago.

About 2 miles northeast of Festina is the Gerleman family farm which has a beautiful limestone farmhouse from the 1860s. Roger Gerleman recalls growing up in this stone house and has always admired its simplicity, ruggedness and beauty.



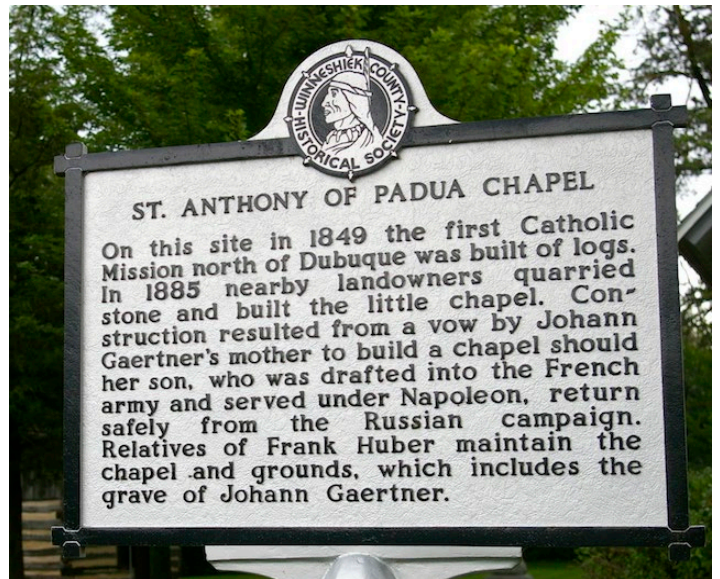
Buchheit family farmhouse west of Festina



Our Lady of Seven Dolors Church, Festina

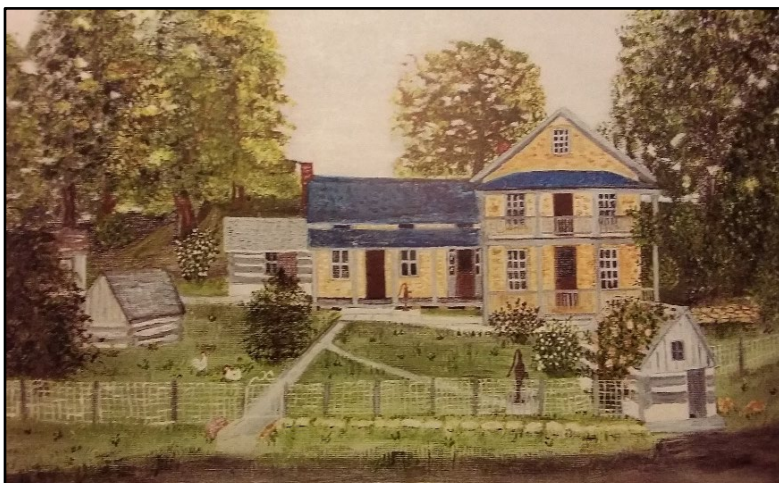


St. Anthony de Padua Chapel, Smallest Church



St. Anthony de Padua Chapel

St. Lucas Area



Painting of the Huber limestone house by Ruth Huber Pavlovec

The famous Old Mission limestone house was located near St. Lucas. It served the Winnebago Indian Sub-agency in the 1840s and then became the Huber family farm from 1849 to 1969. The house was built in 1868 with limestone from a nearby quarry. Three generations of the Huber family occupied the limestone house for 120 years before it was taken down in the 1980s due to safety concerns.

It may be gone but not forgotten. The limestone home lives on in photographs and especially so in the exceptional painting by Ruth Huber Pavlovec. Ruth cherishes memories of her childhood years growing up in this historic structure. This earliest structure in Winneshiek County touches many hearts and souls

even today. Mention this Old Mission limestone house to a member of the Huber family and it evokes a wellspring of emotion and a flood of memories.



Stone wall in the basement of the German American Museum, St. Lucas

An outstanding example of stone used for basement walls is in the former St. Luke’s School building in St. Lucas. It was built in 1911 and is now the German American Museum. The basement load-bearing walls are constructed of massive stones chiseled and precisely placed, making a very sturdy and long-lasting structure. Even though cement was available, stone was used as a cheaper local material. Virginia Manderfield of St. Lucas remarked, “I am amazed every time I look at these very old sturdy walls. I often think about the skill and hard labor of the workers in constructing these enormous stone walls.”

Three years later in 1914, the basement foundation walls of St. Luke’s church were built of stone and the interior stone walls were covered in mortar. Lee Stammeyer states, “The church was designed by the prominent Dubuque architect Guido Beck, and built by Anton Zwack of Dubuque, a well-known contractor of commercial and religious buildings. His firm used local carpenters and masons to build the church. Joe Backes and his sons

were masons and laid the church foundation walls.

Lee continues, “The stone mason work was excellent. It would be hard for anyone to beat the quality of their workmanship. Pete Klemmer, a carpenter trained in Luxembourg, led the carpentry team. His leadership was vital as a highly trained carpenter trained to read the complex architectural blueprints. Pete’s carpentry work was of the highest quality.”

On the three-generation Gerleman family farm east of St Lucas, the remains of a large stone root cellar are visible in the farmstead hillside. These structures were considered to be the best way to preserve vegetables during the long, cold winter months.



Large stone root cellar on the hillside of the Glenn Gerleman farm, east of St. Lucas.



Glenn Gerleman, the current owner of this property says, "This stone storage cellar is 15 feet in length and 8 feet high. The cellar interior is in great shape and could hold vast amounts of potatoes, onions, carrots and other root vegetables. My parents, Virgil and Grace (Lensing) Gerleman and my grandparents, Alois and Rose (Tillman) Gerleman used this cellar for preserving their foodstuffs."

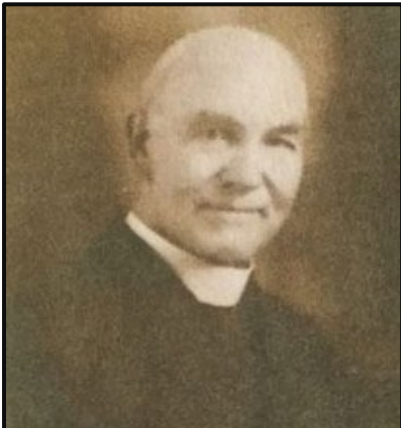
Other interesting stone works are the rugged limestone cellar walls in many of the older farmhouses in the area. An example is the Luke and Agnes (Dietzenbach) Blong family farmhouse, 2 miles east of St. Lucas. The basement has very thick stone walls and underground areas for preserving potatoes, carrots, beets, and home-made wine.

This stonework, possibly 150 years old, was quarried from a limestone outcropping in a nearby hillside that was owned by the earliest settler, Richard M. Carson. In the early 1850s Carson received title to a significant portion of the Winnebago Indian Sub-agency land from the Federal Government. These examples of stonework highlight the importance and value of a comprehensive survey of stone structures for creating an inventory of buildings and cellars built from native stone in the early decades of settlement in this area.

The historic societies and like-minded preservationist volunteers in Winneshiek and Fayette Counties need to undertake such an inventory to help preserve and celebrate the skills and craftsmanship of the early generations in the northeast Iowa area.

L. W. MIHM, PROFESSOR, BEGINNINGS IN ST. LUCAS, IOWA

Rosemary Kuennen Most



Professor Louis Mihm

While growing up in St. Lucas during the 1940s and 1950s, I often heard of Professor Mihm and had only a vague memory of this name. But a letter that arrived at the St. Lucas Historical Society at the end of 2019, dated February 17, 1925, had a return address of St. John's Institute, St. Francis, Wisconsin, and was written in the German script of the time. The letter was addressed to Lieber Neffe John, (Dear Nephew John,) and signed Mit herzlichem Gruss, (With warm greetings,) L.W. Mihm. The letter triggered my interest to learn about this man.

The subject in the letter is mortgages. In the letter, L.W. Mihm asks John to make financial arrangements for several mortgages in St. Lucas. Interestingly, L.W. uses English financial words in an otherwise German letter (i.e., mortgages, recorded, assigned, and notary public). It appears that L.W. is unable to acquire the proper forms to accomplish this himself.

The letter mentions two \$3,000 mortgage notes, one of them involving L.W.'s brother, Henry Mihm. L.W. asks John to take care of making these mortgages legal. L.W. also suggests setting a lower interest rate of 5% instead of 5.4% for another St. Lucas individual. L.W. tells his nephew John that the local Notary Public, Mr. Perry, can likely help him get this done and suggests that he accomplish this as soon as possible.

What behind-the-scenes financial help or advice is L.W. Mihm in St. Francis, Wisconsin (near Milwaukee) exercising in St. Lucas in 1925? Who is L.W. Mihm? His superior, Father (later Monsignor) Gerend, refers to him as Professor Mihm. A bit of research revealed that Louis Wendelin (L.W.) Mihm was born August 8, 1848, to Wendelin and Susanna Babiana (Zentkraft) Mihm in Simmershausen, Germany (4 miles from the city of Fulda, in Hesse). Louis emigrated to America in 1854 when he was just six years old.

Coming to America

Their 50-day trip by sailing ship took the family first to Baltimore, Maryland, then on to Brady's Bend, Pennsylvania where Wendelin's brothers Peter and John, who had emigrated earlier, were living. Brady's Bend, northeast of Pittsburgh on the Allegheny River, was famous from 1844 to 1873 for Brady's Bend Iron Company and Foundry. Louis attended the town's Catholic school for 5 years, receiving the sacraments of First Communion and Confirmation in 1858. Louis began working at Brady's Bend Iron when he was 15 years old for 50 cents a day and later earned 75 cents a day. By the time his family left the city when he was 19, he earned \$1 a day. In addition to his job at the foundry, he attended school 3 nights a week.

The Wendelin Mihm family moved to St. Lucas, IA, and Louis says, "My father's brother, John, bought us a farm. Soon afterward, Louis went to St. Francis, Wisconsin to study at the Catholic Normal School and Pio Nono College. He later returned to teach at the newly established Catholic Deaf and Dumb Asylum. This school changed its name several times during Louis' tenure. At the time of his letter to his nephew John in St. Lucas, its name was 'St. John's Institute.' In a handwritten biography of Louis in German in 1950, Wolfgang Proessl, whose sister was married to Louis' brother Henry, says he lived some 30 months with Louis Wendelin Mihm during summer vacations.

Brady's Bend, Pennsylvania, and Hot Liquid Iron

Wolfgang Proessl, who knew Louis well, related the following story, translated here from the original German: One day the young Louis went early to work and came home the same way late at night and it was very dark. During the day, the workmen dug deep round holes along the top of a hill. These holes served as molds in which they poured hot melted iron. After the metal had hardened, they would pull the heavy iron rolls out of the holes and roll them down the hill to the foundry. Louis stepped into one of these holes of hot liquid iron and the melted liquid ran into his boot. Luckily, a pal was with him and pulled him out or he might have lost his life or been crippled for life. When the boot was removed a good part of flesh and skin stayed in the boot. The doctors gave him no hope of recovery. For 14 months, Louis was bedridden. It was then that Louis realized that he would never be able to do manual or heavy work again. At a time when many farm sons would themselves farm, Louis pointed to this experience as determining that he would instead become a student and then a teacher.

The original letter is missing, but a 1965 translation by a Franciscan nun, Sister Philippa exists. According to Proessl, Louis went to Milwaukee to further his education by studying hard. He was now a grown man and studied day and night. He taught night school courses in order to continue his education. Proessl writes that Louis' very first job teaching was at the parochial school in St. Lucas, Iowa, from Nov. 21, 1870 to June 21, 1872. Louis told Proessl that St. Luke's enrollment at the time was 48 boys and 51 girls.

In 1872, Louis replaced a deceased teacher at St. Mary's School, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. From there he was called to St. Joseph's School on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. After teaching there for 3 years, he became bed-ridden for some time and had to stop teaching at St. Joseph's. It must have been during this illness that Louis had a dream guiding him to teach the deaf. As Proessl heard it from Louis, "Louis was sitting in front of a huge white house whose roof was covered with white pigeons. All the white pigeons were looking attentively and expectantly at Louis. The very next day Louis received a letter offering him a position teaching deaf children at the Catholic Deaf and Dumb Asylum in St. Francis, Wisconsin. The vivid dream of the white pigeons who needed care and training was taken as a clear sign from His Master and Louis accepted at once."

It was 1878 and Louis was 30 years old. There were 17 deaf pupils the first year. A *History of St. John's* from the Milwaukee Archdiocese's archive states that there were three teachers from the opening year mentioned by name. Mr. L.W. Mihm was one of the three. Louis told Proessl, "I worked on a small scale, worked day and night with these timid, unschooled pupils, many of them grown up and had little or no religious knowledge of their precious Faith. One wonders, how would I begin to teach a deaf child? Where would I start?" In 1878 there were no tried-and-true practices to consult, no 'how-to' handbook.

Dedicated Teacher



Professor Mihm in the classroom 1916

Monsignor Matthias Gerend, who met L.W. Mihm while a fellow student at the Catholic Normal School, was Rector of St. John's Institute for 40 of the years that L.W. Mihm taught there. Monsignor Gerend wrote in the school's newsletter *Our Young People* after Louis' death, "Indeed, had it not been for his sterling loyalty to the cause and his unselfish, untiring love for the poor silent sheep of His Master, St. John's would have closed its doors many years ago." Louis remained at St. John's teaching the oldest deaf boys for 51 years. In addition to teaching, he also did the bookkeeping for Pio Nono College. This bookkeeping experience may have motivated the business topic of Louis' 1925 letter to his nephew John in St. Lucas.

Young deaf girls who boarded at the school were taught by Franciscan nuns. Records do not tell whether they were taught the same academic subjects as the boys, but as the years went on, the nuns taught them sewing, cooking, baking, how to keep house and do laundry.

Louis, in later editions of *Our Young People*, is referred to as Professor Mihm. He taught reading, writing, math, geography and religion. Speech and lip-reading were taught and used in the classroom. In the beginning years at least, sign language was not used in the classroom, but was allowed in the dormitories and on the playground.

Raising Funds in St. Lucas to Support St. John's Institute

In the 1880s a deaf man joined the staff and added the teaching of shoe repair to the boys in order to have them learn a trade and to help support the school. Tuition was not high, and many deaf children were accepted on a 'pay-what-you-can' basis. Seeking financial support seems to have been a constant concern for the school. The year 1913 finds Father Eugene Gehl of St. John's raising funds on tours that included St. Lucas and other parishes. In 1921 there were names of 50 St. Lucas parishioners published in *Our Young People* as contributors to St. John's Institute. Father Gehl traveled on 'tours' to seek support for the school. At the end of this tour, Father Gehl's notes were published in the St. John's Institute newsletter, *Our Young People*. After visiting Calmar, Festina and then St. Lucas in 1913, he wrote the following notes from his stop in St. Lucas.

- May 30 Very shortly after supper I was in St. Lucas.
- May 31 Strolled over the beautiful church grounds with Father Boeding, listening attentively to an expert gardener describing to me all the trees and their peculiarities.
- June 1 This was my last day on this tour and it was made the best by the good, charitable people of St. Lucas. "All is well that ends well," as the saying has it. The morning collection consisted of \$160. We then announced that the lecture would be given free in the afternoon. All were welcome. A large crowd gathered and at the close, voluntary donations from the children and the young people raised the sum to near the \$200 mark, and when I left Sunday night the round sum had been realized. The deaf mutes were truly grateful to their kind friends at St. Lucas. They have given us our great teacher, Mr. Mihm, and they have stood loyally by us in our time of need.

Recognition for Excellence

As the years went on, in addition to the subjects taught by Professor Mihm, the boys learned skills such as carpentry, cabinet making, painting, decorating, gilding, drawing and designing. They made altars, communion rails, confessionals, statues and church pews that were sold to parishes to help support the school.

By all accounts Professor Mihm was an excellent, exemplary teacher. Wolfgang Proessl refers to Louis as, "A guiding star of virtue for all in every rank of Life." Sister Philippa, who wrote about L.W. Mihm in the 1960s said, "His boys revered him." She said the nuns lived in close proximity with L.W. Mihm but knew little about him. Sister Georgina, whom Sister Philippa said knew Louis better than any other Sister in the house, wrote "He was one of God's hidden saints, never wanting to be in the limelight but always doing all he possibly could for everyone else. He gave honor and glory to God, never seeking acclaim for himself." The Sisters spoke of him as a "saintly man."

In another edition of *Our Young People*, Monsignor Gerend tells us that Minor Orders were conferred on Louis in 1917 by Archbishop Messmer, in recognition of the priestly work he had been doing in the hearts of the deaf. This happened after 40 years of service and 12 years before his death. In 1927, on the occasion of Venerable Mihm's 50-year Jubilee, Monsignor Gerend invited the hundreds of deaf boys who were fortunate enough to have had Professor Mihm as their teacher to come to personally express their appreciation, and to allow him to behold the fruits of his labor in the happiness and the success of his pupils.

Louis remained on duty until the last day of his life. Sister Georgina left this written account: "On the morning he died he had assisted at Mass as usual but got around with great difficulty. His leg bothered him very much. After Mass one of the nuns insisted that he remain in his room. It was hard for Mr. Mihm to give in, but he finally consented and one of the boys took a breakfast tray to him. After a little while the boy went back to get the tray but found Mr. Mihm lying on the floor, his cup of coffee overturned. On December 12, 1929, the sisters arrived on the scene within minutes after Mass. Our good, saintly Mr. Mihm died faithful to his duty to the very end of his life." Louis was 81. Because he received Minor Orders, Louis' gravestone has the title 'Venerable' before his name. He is buried in the St. Francis Seminary cemetery in Wisconsin, next to Monsignor Gerend, who died in 1939.

LIVING BY THE RULES OF LIFE, F.X. BOEDING

Translated by Rosemary Kuennen Most

A Sermon on Living Modestly by Father Boeding, 1926, copied by his assistant pastor, P. W. Kirchhoff.

Sparsamkeitspredigt (Father Boeding) 1926.

1) Die Sparsamkeit ist gut,
Wenn man sie üben tut.
Behalte, was ist dein,
Bring täglich mehr herein!

1. The practice of saving money is good
Keep what you've got and
each day see that you
bring in a little more!

2) Bäckst selber euer Brot.
Es hilft euch aus der Not.
Wer Brot kauft, -der ist dumm.
Der Kaufmann lacht sich krumm.

2. Baking your own bread
eases one's need
Buying bread is silly,
the salesperson makes good money off you.

3) Bring nicht dein Geld zur Bank!
Doch ist dein Nachbar krank,
Gib's ihm für 4 %
Und mach der Sorg' ein Ende.

3. Don't bring your money to the bank!
However if your neighbor is sick,
loan it to him for 4%.
Take away his worries.

4) Der Banker nimmt das Geld,
Lebt herrlich in der Welt.
Nimmt 8 % und mehr,
Als Kämi's vom Himmel her.

4. The banker takes your money.
He lives well,
takes 8% and even more
as if it came from heaven.

5) Das kleine Wort: "Verzicht",
Verhehl's den Kindern nicht.
Die brauchen nicht so viel
Für Freude, Spass und Spiel

5. The little words:
"You don't need it,"
don't keep them from your children.
They don't need all that much for happiness
and fun.

6) Wir waren alle arm
auf unserer kleinen Farm,
Doch munter wie ein Fisch.
Wir tanzten auf dem Tisch.

6. We were all poor
on our small farm,
but there were always
lively things to do.

7) Wir zählten damals vier
Kein Spielzeug hatten wir,
Noch Freud' und Heiterkeit
Und Tanz und Zeitvertreib.
8) Kein Auto treib mit Maass,
Sonst schluckt es zu viel Gas,
Zur Kirche und zurück
Das bringt euch Himmel's Glück.

7. There were four of us at the time
We didn't have any toys,
But our times were happiness, dancing
and joy.

8. Drive your car carefully.
Otherwise it takes too much gas.
But to church and back,
heaven smiles on you.

9) Doch gib's dem Sohne nicht.
Du kennst ja die Geschichte
Vom Munkeln, wenn allein,
Im stillen, dunkeln Hain.

9. But don't give it to your son, you
know the ol' story,
When he's out of your earshot he'll
complain about it to whomever will
listen.

10) Kein Radio im Haus!
Lebt nicht in Saus und Braus.
Lebt einfach und lebt schlicht!
Verschwend' die Dollars nicht!

10. No radio in the house! Don't live
with noise and clamor.
Live simply and with less! Don't
throw away your money!

P. W. Kirchhoff.

P. W. Kirchhoff

What a life to live!

What a life to live!

QUEDLINBURG, GERMANY WITCHES, KINGS, AND ARCHITECTURAL CHARM

Russell P. Baldner

Introduction

Part of the personal appeal and sheer joy of visiting Germany is, admittedly, the opportunity to converse in German with anyone willing to speak with me—which thus far is everyone. But the even greater attraction accompanying that pleasurable linguistic treat is Germany's rich irresistible diversity. Ancestral Germany offers a compelling conjunction of captivating history, sharply contrasting natural landscapes, distinctive regional cultures and ancient traditions. Enchanting folklore and storybook architecture evoke the fanciful tales of Brothers Grimm. To these, no less, is added Germany's beautiful delectable food, satisfying drink and attentive hospitality. All of which is complemented by fresh clean sheets, a peaceful night's rest and an abundant *reichhaltiges* breakfast enjoyed from a window seat overlooking a half-timbered *Fachwerk*-lined street at a charming, comfy, seventeenth-century inn. What is not to like! I would go to Germany just for breakfast—not only one, of course.

Since a summer-long residence in my great-great-grandfather's birthplace on my first visit to Germany fifty years ago, of the many locations and attractions experienced during eight separate sojourns in the land of my forebears, none is perhaps personally more charming and enticing than Quedlinburg. This city of some twenty-thousand inhabitants is located in northern central Germany just beyond the foot of the Harz mountains in the federal state (*Bundesstaat*) of Saxony-Anhalt (*Sachsen-Anhalt*). Prior to German reunification in 1990, Quedlinburg lay about twenty-five miles east of the East-West German border. Due to its location for several decades in the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Quedlinburg was, and largely remains yet today, a relative unknown to most Americans.

Although the Harz region had long attracted our attention, it was not until September 2019, that my wife, Cathryn, and I decided, once again, to travel independently in Germany. Following our morning arrival at Frankfurt International Airport, customary passport *Kontrolle* and picking up our shiny black rental Zafira hatchback, we immediately headed north and made a 230-mile *Autobahn* beeline for Quedlinburg. A cautionary word of advice: The renowned German *Autobahn* is excellent but is decidedly not for the faint of heart—or inattentive!

Following our safe and timely mid-afternoon arrival in Quedlinburg, check-in with the gracious host and initial occupation of our spacious, squeaky-clean room—including reading niche with easy chairs, coffee table, and attractive corner windows on two sides—a short pleasant walk toward the *Markt* (town square) quickly led to a small inviting plaza and café. Perfect! After a marathon two days of airports, international travel and *autobahns*, one finally had an opportunity to sit back and leisurely savor a good cup of rich coffee and relaxing pause in a peaceful beflowered alcove pleasantly tucked next to the St. Benediktii Marktkirche (town square church). Life is good!

Once refreshed and following a congenial chat and photograph with a pleasant young German couple, also travelers, on a lovely September afternoon, it was time to explore. As planned, we spent several days in Quedlinburg and gladly could have spent as many more. Not only were our days in Quedlinburg perfect, they were magical. Splendid Quedlinburg is either at the very top of the all-time favorites list or is one of two or three very close competitors. The well-deserved rank is due to the city's extraordinary combination of distinctive outstanding features and multifaceted appeal. Among these are its singular history, rich architectural heritage, adjacent mountains and traditional folklore, as well as, no less, its hospitable amiable people.

Royal Might



Legendary Finkenherd of Henry Fame

From the summit and periphery of the Harz Mountains, northern Germany's Saxon heartland is steeped in early royal and medieval history, enchanting half-timbered *Fachwerk* and elusive mountaintop spirits. Dominated by St. Servatii, the *Stiftskirche*—abbey church—and final resting place of Henry I, Germany's founding monarch, the city of Quedlinburg once stood at the very center of early German history and royal might. In 2019 Quedlinburg commemorated the 1,100th Anniversary of Henry's ascension to the German throne as well as the 30th Anniversary of the Peaceful Revolution which brought down the Berlin Wall and led to the reunification of Germany.

According to tradition, Henry I (Heinrich I.)—also known as Henry the Fowler (Heinrich der Vogler/Vogelsteller)—learned of his royal election and was offered the German crown at Finkenherd, a street lying amidst a jumble of alleys and narrow side streets at the foot of St. Servatii, standing high above atop the Burgberg or Schlossberg (castle hill, rock). Ascending the German royal throne in 919, Henry proceeded to secure ducal allegiance and consolidate royal power, strengthened the German realm and successfully defended it from invaders and provided welcome effective rule. As the *Lieblingssitz*,

favorite residence of Henry and his royal family, Quedlinburg and its royal palace—*Königspfalz*—became a medieval locus of kingly power and influence, as well as a dynastic homeland to which, especially on Easter, family members often returned.

Indeed, the royal city—*Königsstadt*—of Quedlinburg is itself first mentioned by name in a document issued by Henry in 922 at that same location. Thus, in two years, Quedlinburg will celebrate its own 1,100th *Geburtstag*—birthday anniversary—following by only three years the corresponding commemoration of Henry's ascension to the throne.

Although Quedlinburg is sometimes referred to as the first capital of Germany, such a designation is overstated and suggests considerably more than was the case. The medieval German *Reisekönigtum*—travelling kingdom, itinerant kingship—had no single, permanent, centralized capital in the modern sense of the word, as does, for example, the present-day United States or Germany. The king and his retinue, consisting of officials, clergy and servants, numbering in the hundreds, periodically traveled to various regional locations in the exercise of royal authority and administration of the realm. While doing so, they resided at royal palaces and courts located throughout the country or perhaps at cloisters or the seat of a bishopric. Within that transient context, however, is ample evidence of the prominence enjoyed by medieval Quedlinburg, namely, sixty-nine sojourns by kings and emperors documented at that location from 922 to 1207.

Henry died in 936 and according to his wishes was buried in the existing church at the top of the Burgberg. Following his death, his widow, Mathilde, and son, Otto, established a *Frauen-* or *Damenstift*, a free secular ladies' foundation. The primary purpose of the *Stift* was to provide ongoing Christian liturgical commemoration of the dead on behalf of Henry, initially, also in time his ancestors, descendants and persons other than family. Ritual remembrance included Liturgy of the Hours, Celebration of the Mass and charity in the name of the deceased, praise to Almighty God and prayers for divine aid, forgiveness of sins and salvation. After Henry's death, the small original church on the Burgberg underwent several stages of expansion and reconstruction, eventually resulting in the present Romanesque style *Stiftskirche* St. Servatii.

The Damenstift was under the “immediate” imperial—*reichsunmittelbar*—secular authority of the Emperor only, was not subject to any lesser local lord and was therefore largely self-governing. Headed first by Mathilde and subsequently superintended by a centuries-long succession of abbesses, the Stift also accommodated unmarried girls and women of high noble birth and provided them education. For nearly two-hundred years the abbesses of the Damenstift were chosen from royal houses, thereby ensuring continued familial commemoration of the dead. Quedlinburg abbesses enjoyed great prestige and wielded considerable political influence, including a seat and right to speak at the *Reichstag*, the Imperial Diet (assembly) of the Holy Roman Empire. Theirs, alone, is a remarkable story.



Stiftskirche St. Servatii and Castle on Schlossberg

Henry I was not only the founding monarch of Germany but also the founder of the Ottonian dynasty, a succession of German emperors descended from Henry, three of whom consecutively bore the same name. It is after them, his son Otto I, grandson Otto II, and great-grandson Otto III, that the Ottonian dynasty is named. The Ottonians reigned for an entire century, Otto I—also known as Otto The Great—being in 962 the first of a centuries-long line of the German kings to be crowned Holy Roman Emperor, an imperial title that continued for nearly nine-hundred years until dissolution of the Empire in 1806.

The cathedral treasure—*Domschatz*—housed and on display in St. Servatii is stunning. It is also one of the most important, precious, medieval church treasures remaining at its original location and one of the most significant treasures in Germany. For several decades, however, viewing many of its sumptuous pieces was not an option. In 1945, at the end of World War II, an American serviceman made away with twelve objects from the cathedral treasure and sent them to Texas. Many of the pieces, but not all, were eventually returned to St. Servatii, their rightful home, but not until 1993.

Architectural Charm

Surely the most distinctive feature contributing to the character and irresistible charm of Quedlinburg is its extraordinary wealth of historic architecture, consisting of some 2,000 half-timbered Fachwerk structures in the city's *Altstadt* historic district and the imposing Stiftskirche St. Servatii and adjacent *Schloss* (castle) standing high above on the crest of the Schlossberg. The storybook half-timbered cityscape of Quedlinburg represents no fewer than six centuries, dating from the fourteenth to the nineteenth, and includes one of Germany's very oldest structures, the *Ständerbau*, now a museum devoted, perhaps not surprisingly, to the interpretation of Fachwerk. In recognition of its historical and cultural significance, Quedlinburg in 1994 earned designation and is honored as a UNESCO World Heritage City (*Welterbestadt*), the 25th Anniversary of which was also cause for celebration in 2019.

A much-favored activity in Quedlinburg is simply leisurely walking its narrow, picturesque, Fachwerk-lined streets or enjoying afternoon *Kaffee und Kuchen*—or maybe a good brew and conversation—at a charming sidewalk café on its attractive bustling Marktplatz. Although there is no such thing as a bad seat on the Markt, a small table for two—or more—beneath a flowered half-timbered gable next to the iconic vine-bedecked Rathaus is highly recommended. But regardless of choice of seating, one simply cannot go wrong. A profusion of visual delights awaits the visitor who chooses to casually stroll about town or happily wanders off, perhaps to discover yet another Fachwerk treasure in a yet unexplored corner of the city or winding Quedlinburg *Gasse* (lane, alley, or narrow street).

Bustling Quedlinburg Marktplatz



Founded in 2002, the German Half-timbered Center of Quedlinburg (Deutsches Fachwerkzentrum Quedlinburg) promotes traditional craftsmanship, the preservation and reuse of existing building materials, as well as the use and research of materials that are environmentally friendly. On occasion, while enjoying a walk about town, one may happen upon a structure undergoing or still in need of restoration.

Not far from Quedlinburg on the treeless windswept summit of Mount Brocken, the highest point in the Harz mountains, witches and spirits gather on *Walpurgisnacht* (the eve of April 30/May 1). By contrast, more conventional visitors, such as this writer, may do so by means of handsome, black, vintage steam locomotive trimmed in red and narrow-gauge railway.

The hour-and-a-half trip chugging up to the summit is a very

popular outing, especially on sunny days, whose number on Mount Brocken is often limited. The Saxon weather gods were with us, however—clear blue skies, beautiful light and a few puffy white clouds greeted us at the peak. What a spectacular view is to be had across the rare alpine vegetation carpeting the crest of Brocken and reaching out as far as the human eye can see to neighboring mountain tops and plains lying far away in the distance! Even with plentiful sunshine, however, Brocken can be chilly and windy, if not just plain cold. One may wish to plan accordingly—a wool sweater or more perhaps—and then enjoy.

Above timberline and just beyond the hiking path circling the Brocken summit, two bare craggy rock formations invoke the traditional folklore of the Harz: the *Teufelskanzel*—Devil’s Pulpit and the *Hexenaltar*—Witches’ Altar. However, neither spirit did we see. It was, of course, September and not *Walpurgisnacht*! Yet, more than two-hundred years ago, even the master of German literature, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, summoned the folklore of the Harz in what is considered his magnum opus, “Faust” (here given in translation):

*To the Brocken, the witches draw;
The stubble is yellow, the young plants green.
There together the wild horde gathers,
Lord Urian [the Devil] seated above them.*

The Faustian Brocken scene rhymes nicely in German, not so much in English—a frequent cost of translation. Meanwhile back in Quedlinburg, local witches, perhaps in the form of hand-painted folk art, each one individually styled, make frequent appearance. Despite the generally unfavorable reputation of their kind, the local Brocken witches really do not strike one as such a bad lot. They reputedly banish winter by sweeping with their brooms the last remaining snow from the mountain top, thus ushering in spring.

Reflections

Over the years, I have enjoyed a wide range of natural landscapes in Germany from the ancestral sparsely populated Lüneburg Heath on the north German plain and the North and Baltic Seas which wash Germany’s shores to the ancient fortresses standing watch over the romantic middle Rhine valley and its bright green—also ancestral—sun-drenched vineyards and the dark coniferous slopes of the Black Forest and bare jagged summits of the Bavarian Alps in the far south. Counted also among the many attractions so often enjoyed in Germany, equal in size to Montana, are its historic cities and cultural centers, both large and small, such as vibrant Berlin, after more than a four-decade hiatus again the capital of Germany, and festive Munich with its own brand of warmth and distinctive cultural flair. Quickly joining these are medieval walled Rothenburg ob der Tauber, another bejeweled treasure that easily beckons, ancient Mainz and Johann Gutenberg’s Bible, printed with moveable type. Of distinct historical significance are Martin Luther’s Wittenberg, Eisenach and Wartburg Castle of the Protestant Reformation, where during protective seclusion he translated the New Testament from original Greek into a form of German which had great influence on the development of the modern standard. Also having distinctive charm and import of their own are lovely Celle,

romantic Heidelberg, Spangenberg Castle, and the magnificent Cologne cathedral, an iconic Gothic expression of German Catholicism and also the most visited landmark in Germany. Surely not to be neglected is congenial Freiburg, a community and venerable university town on the very cutting edge of conservation and environmental consciousness, where during the very popular Advent *Weihnachtsmarkt*—Christmas Market—savory grilled *Bratwurst* sausages in *Brötchen* hard rolls, hot mulled *Glühwein*, and festive conviviality are plentiful and quickly banish the near-winter evening chill. The list goes on...

Yet amidst these many, Quedlinburg remains special.



A short walk from the 17th-Century Inn



Afternoon pause beneath a flowered gable next to the Rathaus

A Final Note

To the St. Lucas Historical Society and German American Museum, so ably led and generously supported by its tireless President Clair Blong, Board of Directors, and loyal corps of dedicated colleagues, I extend great thanks and appreciation for the invitation to contribute this paper. It is with great pleasure that I was given occasion to review again, critically contemplate, and synthesize multiple historical resources recently acquired in Germany, as well as supplemental sources collected since, and to compose, often rethink and commit to paper the much-deliberated consequence of that undertaking. You have not only provided a welcome opportunity to revisit a much-favored Quedlinburg but also the fondest of experiences and memories.

Herzlichen Dank!

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May 2020

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SERVING THE LORD IN AMARILLO, TEXAS: MSGR. JOHN A. STEINLAGE

Melvin Bodensteiner

John Anthony Steinlage born March 5, 1901 on a farm 2 miles southeast of St. Lucas, Iowa, was the sixth child of eleven children born to the union of Gerhard Steinlage and Anna Hemkendreis. His father Gerhard came to America in 1890 with his sister Gertrude and his brothers, Ferdinand and William from Druffel, Germany.



John's ordination picture taken in Dubuque, 1927. His attendants were Melita Steinlage, 4 years old in the center, Anastasia Schwamman on Father's right, Theresa Langreck on his left.

John attended parochial school at St. Luke's from 1908-1915 where Father Francis Boeding was pastor. He completed his high school and studies for the priesthood at the Pontifical College Josephinum at Columbus, Ohio, from 1915-1927. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 11, 1927 by Archbishop James D. Keane for service in the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa.

That same year the newly formed Diocese of Amarillo, Texas, received its first bishop, Reverend Rudolph A. Gerken, who was a native Iowan. Father Steinlage heard of the shortage of priests in the Amarillo diocese and requested permission to work there. After three years of parish work in Iowa, he moved to Amarillo in 1930 and was assigned to Price College. From his headquarters at Price he was the treasurer, a teacher, spiritual advisor and missionary at large. He served as administrator for the parishes in Borger, Dumas and Panhandle until 1932.

The next year he was appointed Rector of the school by Bishop Gerken and was also in charge of St. Francis Parish east of Amarillo. During the Depression, Father John was boss of the school's farmland and also Professor at St. Anthony's School of Nursing from 1937-1938 and became chaplain of the school. In 1938 he was officially appointed pastor of St. Francis Parish. He had the old church torn down and a new one built in 3 months.

The title of Right Reverend Monsignor was bestowed upon him on January 17, 1939 by Pope Pius XI. In 1940 Father John was made head of the Amarillo deanery of the diocese. In 1954 he was named Vicar General as the bishop's representative and administrative authority on the absence of the bishop.

He served as pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Amarillo from 1945 - 1959 when he moved to Panhandle as pastor of St. Theresa Parish and director of the Catholic Children's Home. In the spring of 1961, a new St. Therese Church was built under the supervision of Father John. Also, under Father John's direction, St. Anne's Home for the Aged in Panhandle was completed and dedicated in 1963.

On September 25, 1966, Monsignor John Steinlage was honored for his dedicated work with Catholic Charities. He was presented a watch by Bishop DeFalco. Over 1500 people attended the ceremony at Panhandle.



Reverend Monsignor Steinlage

On Sunday, August 13, 1967, Father John failed to show up for the 7 o'clock Mass. Sisters who went to look for him found him unconscious in his home. He was rushed to St. Anthony's Hospital in Amarillo where he died. He was 66 years old. Death was attributed to a cerebral hemorrhage.

He was loved by all and was dearly missed. Father John had many friends. His rectory was a favorite gathering place for visiting clergy. Father John's good judgement, his expert advice and his sound common sense made him a much sought-after person.

Survivors were 4 brothers; Ferdinand and Bill of Corning, Kansas, Rt. Rev. Carl of Petersburg, Iowa, and Al of St. Lucas, Iowa, (all deceased now), many nephews and nieces, great-nephews and great-nieces. Father John's younger brother Charles also became a priest.

We were always warned to use our best manners when he came to our house for dinner. To me and my siblings, he was known as Father John.

Father John was my mother Melita's uncle. Not only did she have the privilege and honor to be a bride at Father's ordination, but she also had the opportunity to work for Father John in Amarillo before she married my dad, Irvin in 1945. Melita Steinlage Bodensteiner served as housekeeper for Father John in Amarillo, Texas from 1941-1943.



Sacred Heart Cathedral in Amarillo



Father John Steinlage
Melita Steinlage Bodensteiner,
Mel Bodensteiner's Mother

In 1952 the West Texas Register newspaper ran a series entitled "Know Your Pastor." The following article was about Monsignor John A. Steinlage, then pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Amarillo.

MSGR. JOHN A. STEINLAGE

Amarillo Pastor Revisited

(Editor's note: In 1952 the West Texas Register ran a series entitled "Know Your Pastor." The following was on Monsignor John A. Steinlage, then pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Amarillo.)

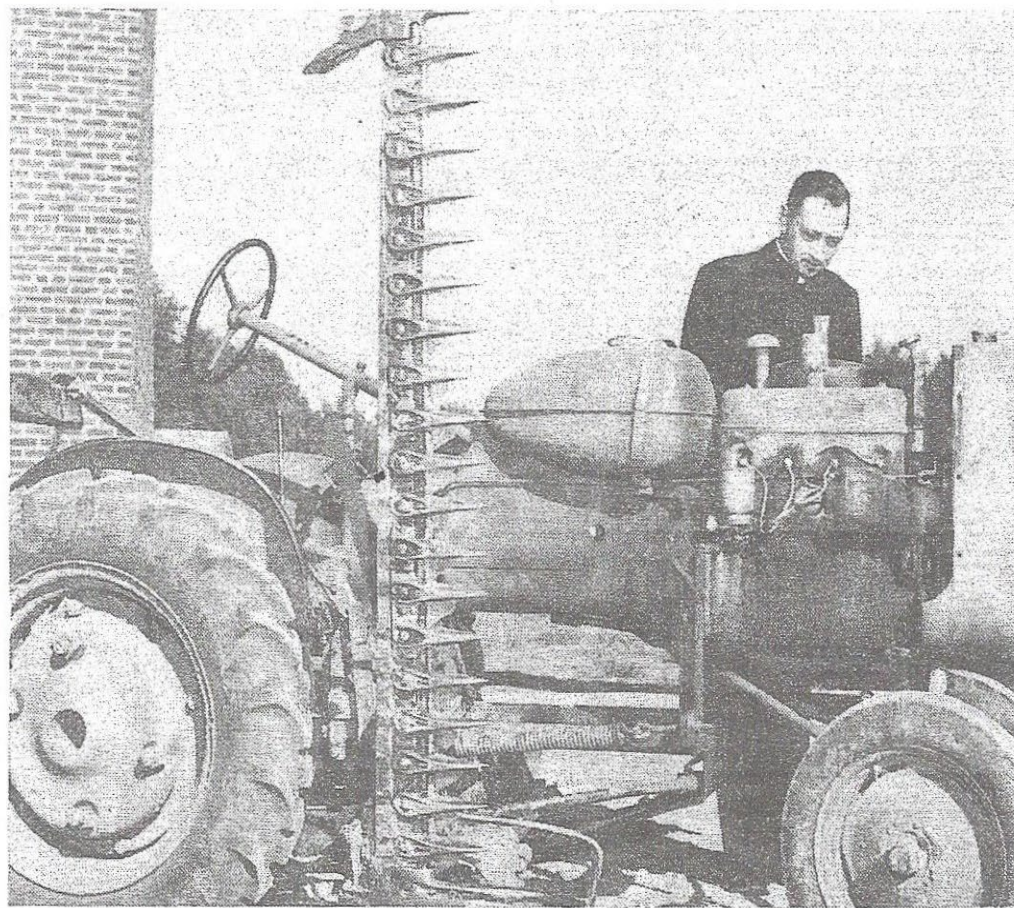
"The priest who always prays for rain," Monsignor John Anthony Steinlage, pastor of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Amarillo, attracts the attention of every tourist or visitor. "Let us pray for rain," says Father John — after every Mass, every Benediction, every Rosary.

Home folks are used to it after years and years, but newcomers notice it right away. "Let us pray for rain."

Father John, as everyone calls the king-size Monsignor, always prays for rain because "the plains need rain" — and because he always will be a farmer at heart.

The pastor of all Amarillo, whose charge includes city chapels, St. Mary's academy, and everything urban, is a native of Iowa, where the tall corn grows and where even priests grow as tall as Father John, who is six feet, two inches. He was ordained in 1927 for the Diocese of Dubuque, Ia., and came to the Panhandle in 1930 at the request of Bishop Rudolph A. Gerken.

His first assignment in Texas was as "treasurer, teacher, and missionary at large." He was stationed at Price college. From that headquarters he was administrator in Borger, Dumas, and Panhandle



Still in Use

Father John checks tractor (in 1952) which he had bought for the Price college, Amarillo, in 1940. The tractor is still used occasionally at the school, now known as Alamo Catholic high school.

until 1932. In 1933 he became rector at Price and had charge of St. Francis' parish 29 miles eastward.

During the depression Father John was boss of the school's farm lands as well as the campus. In those years, Price had a little old windmill for some of its water. "Some of the time we carried it by hand in buckets."

Father John developed the farm next door to the Missionary Sisters of St.

Francis, whose convent and farm adjoin Price college. An extra job was that of professor at St. Anthony's school of nursing in 1937-38. In 1939 he was made a Monsignor.

In 1938 the Christian Brothers came to the Panhandle to staff Price college. In 1942 Father John moved to Panhandle, and in 1945 he was transferred to the see city.

The new pastor of Amarillo, where he was

still pastor of St. Francis, surveyed the pavement at Ninth and Taylor, the downtown Cathedral corner. A wisp of dust blew in the gutter. A little bird hopped gingerly across the street to the cool shade of the Cathedral tower. A Texas breeze rippled the dry leaves of a Cathedral elm.

"Let us pray for rain," said Father John. "Always let us pray for rain." He has been doing it ever since.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends of the Museum,

Many thanks to all the writers who have contributed to our Newsletter and to Joyce Schaufenbuel, our editor, for publishing our Newsletter during this time of the COVID 19 pandemic. We hope that you will enjoy reading the variety of articles that tell the stories of individuals, families, and events that add to the patchwork that makes the history of our community unique. It is a learning experience for us because we discover information that is interesting and perhaps has never been told. It also gives us a better understanding of how each individual story contributes to an appreciation of the greater picture of our combined heritage. We hope you will have a similar experience and find the information interesting and inspiring.

As restrictions on Museum closures are gradually being lifted, we will begin to schedule our popular speaker series for late Summer and Autumn. Meanwhile, window restoration work proceeds on the attic windows and the installation of the 8 north side storm windows occurs this month.

Beginning in mid-June the Museum will be open on Wednesday from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Saturday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, and Sunday from 12:00 Noon to 3:00 PM. We are excited about the many new exhibits throughout the museum and the 8 new display cases on the first floor. We are in the process of identifying themes and materials that will be placed in these new cases. This will increase our ability to visually highlight and display historical materials.

The aim of the Newsletter is to inform our readers of the many aspects of local and regional history. If you have stories about your family or about local history that you would like to share, please let us know. If you have information that you think is interesting, chances are that others will appreciate it too.

To view this Newsletter electronically and read past issues go to "stlucasmuseum.org."

Many thanks for your kind interest.

Clair Blong

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New Display Case



Wadsworth Construction working on attic windows



Stately Pine trees behind the gym



Dan Kuennen refinishing window frame



Large Burr Oak tree behind the convent



Dan Smith refinishing window frame