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## Record of a Journey: Mother Benedicta Riepp and Companions Travel to North America: Part I

Helen Herbstritt

Ephrem Hollermann OSB

*College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University*, ehollermann@csbsju.edu

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# RECORD OF A JOURNEY: MOTHER BENEDICTA RIEPP AND COMPANIONS TRAVEL TO NORTH AMERICA: PART I

Helen Herbstritt, O.S.B. and Ephrem Hollermann, O.S.B.

## INTRODUCTION

Benedictine women of the Bavarian tradition in the United States have long cherished their founding story, recorded by early chroniclers who had known at least one of the three foundresses directly.<sup>1</sup> They have also puzzled over the circumstances of Mother Benedicta Riepp's arrival in North America from Eichstätt, Bavaria, accompanied by her two companions, Sisters Walburga Dietrich and Maura Flieger. In fact, it would not be an exaggeration to say that generations of Benedictine women who trace their origin to Saint Walburg Abbey in Eichstätt have recounted their founding story with considerable empathy toward the three women who landed in New York harbor in July of 1852 without

Sister Helen is a member of St. Joseph Monastery, St. Marys, Pennsylvania. In addition to the many services she offers in her community, she is currently the monastery's archivist. Sister Helen first discovered the diary of Maximilian Gärtner, O. Praem., a text written in old German script, which in English translation forms the major content of this article. Sister Marianne Burkhard, O.S.B., a member of Saint Mary Monastery, Rock Island, Illinois, first read the handwritten German text and identified sections that related to the journey of Mother Benedicta Riepp and her companions. She translated pertinent excerpts and summarized others. Mr. Christian Schmidt, a German-born resident of St. Marys, Pennsylvania, then read and translated the handwritten diary in its entirety. In preparing this article, Sister Helen collaborated with Sister Ephrem Hollermann, O.S.B., a member of Saint Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, Minnesota, currently serving as an Associate Professor of Theology at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University in Minnesota. Sister Helen was the primary researcher. Sister Ephrem assisted with the writing, and edited and annotated the English translation of the German sources.

<sup>1</sup> Early chronicles housed in the archives of St. Joseph Monastery, St. Marys, Pennsylvania, comprise a collection entitled, "Six Manuscripts." Only two writers are identified: Sister Nepomucene Ludwig, who entered the monastery in St. Marys in 1854 (while all three founding Sisters lived there), and Sister Baptista Jelly who entered the monastery in 1871 (while Sister Walburga Dietrich who remained in St. Marys was still living).

anyone there to meet them as had been promised.<sup>2</sup>

Historians up to the present day have sought to learn more about this founding story and to answer questions emerging from the first accounts. While their research has shed light on certain aspects of the story, puzzling questions still remain. The search to answer one particularly puzzling question led to the remarkable discovery of a diary in 2008: Why had no preparations been made to receive the three Eichstätt Sisters upon their arrival in New York harbor? This author's<sup>3</sup> search for answers began at least thirty years ago while reading the early chronicles of St. Joseph Monastery in St. Marys, Pennsylvania. There she discovered that the founding Sisters had been accompanied on their journey by a priest whose plans took him in another direction after the group reached New York.<sup>4</sup> Some years later, she discovered that the priest was a Premonstratensian from Tyrol, Austria, who had been a missionary to America, serving in the Mississippi River region.<sup>5</sup> And many years later she discovered that Rev. Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B., had sailed to America with Rev. Maximilian Gärtner, O.

<sup>2</sup> The first published account of this circumstance in English appears in a work by Regina Baska, O.S.B., *The Benedictine Congregation of St. Scholastica: Its Foundation and Development, 1852-1930* (Washington, DC: Catholic U 1935). An earlier English publication entitled, "A Sketch of the Benedictine Sisters in America," in the *Catalogue of the Nuns and Convents of the Order of St. Benedict in the United States* (St. Marys, PA: privately printed, 1903) makes no mention of this circumstance. In reference to their landing in New York, this text simply says: "After a few days' delay in the great metropolis. . . ." An earlier chronicler at St. Joseph Monastery, St. Marys, Pennsylvania, expands on this circumstance in this way: "Three forlorn Sisters in a vast and populous city—with no one to welcome them, with no one to offer them a kind greeting, with no one to give them a benevolent smile or a compassionate look. And what made it very difficult for them was they did not understand one word of English. It seems singular that Rev. Fr. Boniface Wimmer did not meet them, nor did he send someone to do so, as it was through his persuasion that they came to America." *Chronicles*, Manuscript #2, Baptista Jelly, O.S.B., 1875, St. Joseph Monastery, St. Marys, Pennsylvania (SJMA).

<sup>3</sup> It is most fitting that the discovery of the diary was made by a current member (Helen Herbstritt, O.S.B.) of St. Joseph Monastery, St. Marys, Pennsylvania—the North American destination of Mother Benedicta Riepp and her companions and the site of the first female monastery of Benedictine women in the United States.

<sup>4</sup> *Chronicles*, Manuscript #1, author and date unknown, and Manuscript #2 by Baptista Jelly, O.S.B., 1875 (SJMA).

<sup>5</sup> The historian, Grace McDonald, O.S.B., reported: "The gang plank was drawn up and the ship pulled out of port. The three valiant women bravely choked back a sob; and better to gain control of the feelings, they started to pray the rosary. The presence of two Premonstratensian priests from Tyrol and two Servite priests from Innsbruck cheered those on board and made bearable the days that followed, for Mass was said and devotions were held in common every day when the weather permitted. One of the priests was Father Max Gardiner [sic], a noted Indian missionary who was returning to his work in the Mississippi River region. He delighted his listeners with stories of Indian life." *With Lamps Burning* (St. Paul, MN: North Central Publishing Company for the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota), p. 9. McDonald's source was *Annalen der Verbreitung des Glaubens*, 20 (Munich, 1852) 470.

Praem., in 1846.<sup>6</sup> Further re-reading of archival sources and secondary accounts compelled this author to continue the search for answers to some of the puzzling questions in the founding story.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Discovery*<sup>8</sup>

These initial discoveries resulted in a more focused search to locate what more could be learned about that historic trip in 1852. Wilten Abbey, Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria, founded in 1128, is an active Premonstratensian monastery up to the present day with a branch house in the United States. Upon making a contact with the Prior at Saint Norbert's Abbey in DePere, Wisconsin, James Herring, O. Praem., contact information was obtained for Klemens Halder, O. Praem., Archivist at Wilten Abbey in Austria. A first contact with Halder yielded a surprising and exciting discovery. Not only had Johann Stephan Maximilian Gärtner been a member of Wilten Abbey, but he had also left a legacy in the form of a multi-volume diary of the Premonstratensian mission to North America.<sup>9</sup> Halder indicated that the Wilten archives had only typed sections of the diary and that the original diary was housed at Saint Norbert Abbey in DePere, Wisconsin.

<sup>6</sup> Jerome Oetgen, *An American Abbot: Boniface Wimmer, OSB, 1809-1887* (Washington, DC: Catholic U 1997) 65: "Accompanying Wimmer and the Benedictine candidates on the Iowa was a party of Premonstratensian monks on their way to the new Norbertine monastery in Wisconsin. The leader of this group was Father Maximilian Gärtner. He and Wimmer shared a cabin while the Benedictine and Premonstratensian candidates traveled in steerage."

<sup>7</sup> For instance, see Oetgen, 124-29, for another founding story of Dominican sisters who came to North America upon the invitation of Abbot Boniface Wimmer. Also to be noted in Oetgen (134) is the death of Wimmer's "second-in-command," Placidus Döttl, O.S.B., on July 5, 1852, a date coinciding with the arrival of Mother Benedicta Riepp and her companions—a circumstance which adds to the complexity of the arrival story (See also p. 102 in the 1976 edition of Oetgen's biography of Wimmer.) Also, in a letter to Abbot Thomas Mitterndorfer of Kremsmünster, President of the Austrian Congregation, dated October 19, 1852, Wimmer wrote: "My [monastery] has unfortunately lost this year through death the following members: 2 brothers, 1 cleric, and the prior, P. Placidus Döttl, whose loss has affected me very deeply since he was a very exceptional religious. He died on July 5th of consumption." (Unpublished, Archives of Saint Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania [ASVA]). We may ask, might the death of Wimmer's Prior have prevented him from being in New York to meet the Sisters from Elchstät? "

<sup>8</sup> A sincere debt of gratitude is owing to the following people for their expert assistance throughout the research stage of this project. From Wilten Abbey, Austria: Klemens Halder, O. Praem., Archivist. From St. Norbert Abbey, DePere, Wisconsin: James Herring, O. Praem., Prior, and Mr. Don Pieters, Archivist. From Daylesford Abbey, Paoili, Pennsylvania: Theodore J. Antry, O. Praem. From Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Archdiocesan Archives.

<sup>9</sup> Halder supplied the following information in a communication to this author dated December 14, 2008. He spoke of the existence of two versions of Gärtner's diaries. The first account was entitled *Missionsreise Nordamerika*, covering the period from June 29, 1846, to March 24, 1854 (372 pages, 12 x 17, 5 cm in size), a single volume. After Gärtner returned to Wilten in 1858 he wrote the final set of diaries (7 volumes), using the former version and expanding upon the content. Halder indicated that volume 3 of this set, from February 1 to July 12, 1852 (370 pages, 13 x 200, 5 cm) would have relevance for this research project.

A further contact with Prior James Herring, O.Praem., resulted in the permission to create an electronic copy of the diary to be sent to this author from Mr. Donald L. Pieters, Archivist at Saint Norbert Abbey. The extent of the diary is quite astonishing. The diary pages, written in old German script, are approximately 5 by 7 ¾ inches, and total more than 2, 922 pages. Additionally, the electronic file included 1,138 pages of a typewritten transcription of the German script done by Stephen Klopfer, O. Praem., in 1951-52.<sup>10</sup>

### *Scope of the Diary, Volume 3*

Volume 3 of the diary is dated 1852, the seventh year of Wilten's mission to America, and spans the time period from February 1 to July 12, 1852. In this volume Gärtner wrote about his second transatlantic voyage bound for Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In it he described his trip through Bavaria, and then on to New York. It was during this voyage that Gärtner accompanied Mother Benedicta Riepp and her two companions from Eichstätt, Bavaria, to North America.

Approximately 100 pages of Volume 3 of Gärtner's diary describe the journey of Benedicta Riepp and her companions from Bavaria to New York. The relevant section for this article begins on June 11, 1852, the day Gärtner went to Munich and received the necessary travel funds for the Sisters. On the next day he and the Sisters met at the train station in Pleinfeld, where the Sisters bade farewell to their Prioress, Edwarda Schnitzer, and her traveling companions. From there they boarded another train bound for Bremen. Six days later, on June 18, they set sail from Bremen, via Southampton, on the steamer, *Washington*, bound for New York. This section of the diary ends on July 12, when the Sisters bade farewell to Gärtner in New York and boarded a train for Youngstown, Pennsylvania.

### *Early Connections*

Exactly how and when Johann Stephan Maximilian Gärtner, O. Praem., (1801-77) and Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B. (1809-87), founder of Benedictine men in North America, first met is not known. It is possible that the two men were put in touch with one another through their separate requests for funds from the *Ludwig Missionsverein*.

<sup>10</sup> Information about this transcription was obtained from Klemens Halder in a letter to this author dated December 14, 2008. The transcription was first housed at the Salzmann Library at St. Francis Seminary in Wisconsin, and later transferred to the archives of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Writing to his Abbot in Metten on March 16, 1846, Wimmer reported that he had received his authorization to go to America from the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, and went on to say:

I am also to recruit and take along twelve brothers for the monastery in Wisconsin which three Premonstratensians from Wiltau [sic] have recently established. Their abbot cannot find any candidates in Tyrol because emigration is taking a heavy toll there. He accordingly notified Father Müller,<sup>11</sup> who in turn asked me to hire the necessary men, farm hands, gardeners, masons, etc. The only requirement is that the men be good.<sup>12</sup>

In a letter to the Ludwig Missionsverein nearly four months later, Wimmer comments on the already established Premonstratensian mission in America.

In comparison, the two Norbertines from Wiltau [sic] are better off than I, although they received only 3,000 florin<sup>13</sup> at the beginning. They already possess 420 acres of land, all but 300 acres of which are paid for. . . . In addition, they have a house and a small church. Father Max will bring only 5 or 6 lay brothers along, for whom he will receive money for passage, while he himself will receive money for traveling expenses from the Leopoldine Foundation.<sup>14</sup>

Extant evidence that Wimmer and Gärtner were in direct communication with one another during the period from June to August of 1846 has yet to be found. What is known, however, is that Gärtner left Wilten Abbey on July 12, 1846, bound for Munich, where he received his funding from the Ludwig Missionsverein. From there he and his companions traveled to Augsburg where he bade farewell to a nephew and two nieces, and met with two missionaries who were taking the same ship across the Atlantic—one of whom was Boniface Wimmer.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Ferdinand Müller (1803-64), Court Chaplain to King Ludwig I and General Manager of the *Ludwig Missionsverein*, a Bavarian mission society founded by King Ludwig I in Munich in 1839.

<sup>12</sup> Wimmer to Scherr, March 16, 1846, in Jerome Oetgen, ed. *Boniface Wimmer: Letters of An American Abbot* (Latrobe, PA: Saint Vincent Archabbey Publications, 2008) 34. Henceforth referred to as *Letters*.

<sup>13</sup> The florin or gulden was a coin used in various European countries, and at this time was worth about 40-50 cents in American money. Later Gärtner uses "f" as an abbreviation.

<sup>14</sup> Wimmer to the Ludwig Missionsverein, Munich, July 2, 1846 (ASVA).

<sup>15</sup> Klemens Halder, O. Praem., "The Wilten Mission in the USA in the 19th Century," a thesis completed at the Leopold-Franzens University of Innsbruck, 1996, translated by David N. Coury (2002) 61. Archives of Daylesford Abbey, Paoli, Pennsylvania.

From Augsburg the group traveled to Mainz and then down the Rhine to Rotterdam. It was on August 10, 1846, that Gärtner and his four companions, and Wimmer and his party of eighteen, boarded the packet boat, *Iowa*, bound for the United States. According to one secondary account, Gärtner and Wimmer shared a cabin while the Benedictine and Premonstratensian candidates traveled in the steerage.<sup>16</sup> The *Iowa*'s voyage lasted thirty-eight days and reached New York harbor on September 15, 1846.<sup>17</sup> Little is known to date about the contacts which transpired between Gärtner and Wimmer from July 12, 1846, to July 12, 1852. However, a contemporary Wilten scholar confirms that after they parted ways in 1846, Gärtner "wrote letters to Wimmer and visited him at St. Vincent's when he finally returned to Austria in 1858."<sup>18</sup>

#### *Author of the Diary*

Johann Stephan Maximilian Gärtner (1801-77)<sup>19</sup> was born in the Tyrolean region of Austria on December 27, 1801. In his youth he worked in a family trade business and later studied at the Innsbruck Gymnasium and the Lyceum Scientiarum. At age twenty-five, he became a novice at the Premonstratensian Abbey of Wilten. After his profession he studied theology at Brixen and Trent, and was ordained to the priesthood in 1830. Nine years later, Gärtner became a parish priest in a high mountain village, St. Sigmund in Sellraintal. In the succeeding years, he traveled extensively, and at one point stopped in Rome where he had an audience with Pope Gregory XVI. It was here that he was inspired to become a missionary.

<sup>16</sup> Oetgen, p. 65, based on the passenger list of the *Iowa*, National Archives of the United States, microfilm M-237, roll 64. A packet boat or ship was originally a vessel employed to carry post office mail packets to and from British embassies, colonies and outposts. In sea transport, packet boats carried both freight and passengers. Packet boats were extensively used in the nineteenth century and featured regularly scheduled service.

<sup>17</sup> Both Wimmer and Gärtner recorded their experience of the voyage: Wimmer in a letter to the Abbot of Metten, Gregory Scherr, dated September 1-11 (Oetgen, ed. *Letters*, 42-49); excerpt from Gärtner's diary published in *Annalen der Verbreitung des Glaubens* (Munich, 1847) 76-82 and 404-09.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from Klemens Halder, O. Praem, to Helen Herbstritt, O.S.B., April 15, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> The information that follows is summarized from Halder, 22-26. See footnote #16.

Gärtner was intellectually gifted, artistically talented, and enjoyed writing poetry.<sup>20</sup> It is not surprising, given his many talents and personality, that "in the long run he was not satisfied with his tasks in the small mountain village of St. Sigmund."<sup>21</sup> Following the election of a new abbot at Wilten, difficulties arose among the members of the community about the sustainability of their mission in the United States. Gärtner advocated for its continuance. In October of 1851, Gärtner embarked on an extended trip during which he solicited money and donations for the American mission. He visited with people who would in time be instrumental in his return to the United States. Among them were Joseph Ferdinand Müller, Chaplain to the Court of King Ludwig I; Carl August von Reisach, coadjutor Archbishop of Munich; and King Ludwig I, who had abdicated in 1848.

During the two months after his return to the Abbey on April 5, 1852, Gärtner's stories about support of his missionary work found interest among the young members of the community and, in due time, within the community as a whole. Following the community's Chapter meeting on April 27, 1852, Gärtner received authorization to return to the Wisconsin mission in the United States. Within weeks, volunteers surfaced from within and outside the Abbey.<sup>22</sup> These were the men that Mother Benedicta Riepp, and Sisters Walburga Dietrich and Maura Flieger, were destined to meet at the train station in Pleinfeld, Bavaria, on June 12, 1852.

Gärtner served in Wilten's American mission from 1852 to 1858 when he returned to the Austrian abbey permanently. From then until his death on May 22, 1877, he served as a librarian, guest master, archivist and subprior at the Abbey, along with a period of pastoral work outside the Abbey. It was during this period of pastoral work that he wrote the seven-volume diary detailing his missionary work in North America. It has been said that "during the last nineteen years of his life, his heart stayed turned to Wisconsin" and "he maintained regular contact throughout his life with the USA."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> A handwritten notebook of poetry from his youth has been preserved under the title, "Aglaiä, Thalia, Euphrosyne," and numerous poems from the years 1816 to 1871 were collected in a volume entitled, "Celebration—Hours." Halder, translated by Coury, p. 25.

<sup>21</sup> Halder, 26.

<sup>22</sup> Halder, 93.

<sup>23</sup> Halder, 157-158.

VOLUME THREE AND RELEVANT SECTIONS FROM  
*MISSIONSREISE NORDAMERICA*<sup>24</sup> (translated by Christian Schmidt)

June 8, 1852, Fair [Weather]<sup>25</sup>

*From Wilten to Munich*

At 2:00 a.m. in the morning, we left Wilten in a Geisenhof carriage—without breakfast and with our passports to cross the border. We ate breakfast at 5:00 a.m. in Füssen<sup>26</sup>—beer and sausage. We visited St. Magnus Church there, and picked up a letter from the custodian and his family for his son, Father Franz Xavier Seelos, Superior of the Redemptorists in Pittsburgh. Then we tipped the carriage driver. At 5:30 a.m. we took a stable carriage to Oberstdorf and then to Biesenhofen where there is a new station. We got there by 10:30 a.m. and departed at 11:00 a.m. in the third-class section of the train. We were low on steam near Grossaitingen. We arrived in Augsburg at 2:30 p.m. We had lunch at Casella's,<sup>27</sup> where Carl<sup>28</sup> met up with us. Then we went to St. Ulrich Church and visited the tomb of the sainted Bishop Ulrich and kissed a relic. We had a snack in the chaplain's garden, and received f. 2.20. Then we visited St. Moritz Church and the Cathedral, and met von Brentano.<sup>29</sup> At 7:00

<sup>24</sup> The following translation is a composite of 1) the two versions of Gärtner's diary as mentioned in footnote #10 and 2) the combined work of two translators and an editor. Marianne Burkhard, O.S.B., a Swiss-born Benedictine from Saint Mary Monastery, Rock Island, Illinois, read the third volume of Gärtner's diary written in German script, translated excerpts pertinent to Mother Benedicta Riepp and her two companions, and summarized other portions of the diary. Volume 3 and the relevant section from Gärtner's earlier diary, *Missionsreise Nordamerica*, were painstakingly read in old German script, and translated in their entirety by Mr. Christian Schmidt, a German-born resident of St. Marys, Pennsylvania. It should be noted that he sometimes omitted brief sections in his English translation which were not readable for him, sometimes without signaling the omissions to the reader. Ephrem Hollermann, O.S.B., edited the following version, merging the English translations of Gärtner's two diary versions, and comparing the translations done by Schmidt and Burkhard, in order to achieve the best possible English rendering of the diary texts. Hollermann has retained a coded version of merged diary texts and translations by Schmidt and Burkhard. Sister Angela Woodworth, O.S.B., from St. Walburg Abbey, Eichstätt, Bavaria, and Christian Schmidt read the merged and edited English version and offered important clarifications. Permission to publish the diary texts in English translation was granted by Abbot Raimund Schreier, O.Praem., of Wilten Abbey, Austria (March 2011), Abbot Gary Neville, O.Praem., St. Norbert Abbey, Wisconsin (April 2011), and Prioress Jacinta Conklin, OSB, St. Joseph Monastery, St. Marys, Pennsylvania (April 2011).

<sup>25</sup> The German word *hell* in reference to weather is best translated "fine" or "fair."

<sup>26</sup> Füssen, Bavaria, is situated about 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the Austrian border.

<sup>27</sup> The home of a benefactor.

<sup>28</sup> Gärtner's nephew.

<sup>29</sup> An Augsburg businessman who later, in Bremen, decided to journey with Gärtner's group to America.

p.m. we went to Steppach with Carl and Xavier to greet the nieces, who enjoyed our visit. We stayed there until 12:00 midnight.

*June 9, 1852, Cloudy*

At 7:00 a.m. we went to Holy Mass with Carl. Later we visited Father Heinzelmann in Stadtbergen and the pastor in Pfersee, who showed us their churches. We then went to the Sternkloster,<sup>30</sup> where we had lunch in the guest house. We were quite hungry and then well satisfied. At 2:00 p.m. we visited with Canon Stadler and Carl Heinzelmann, the cathedral preacher. We went back to Casella's home and at 5:00 p.m. boarded the third-class section of the train. We had beer and cheese, and left for Munich at 5:55 p.m. We arrived in Munich at 8:00 p.m. and then went to St. Boniface where Prior Alphonse welcomed us. We sat and drank beer until bedtime at 11:00 p.m.

*June 10, 1852, Raining, Corpus Christi Day in Munich*

I woke up at 5:00 a.m., full of lively anticipation when the first light came through the high windows of the comfortable guest room at the Boniface House.<sup>31</sup> I greeted the morning sun that was especially desirable for the celebration of this day. But dark gray clouds became visible across most of the sky. Unfortunately, the great and religiously edifying display of the public procession to the four gospel altars in the Residence had to be cut short. But in the meantime we went to the splendid Basilica for 6:00 a.m. Mass < >.<sup>32</sup>

Soon the sky showed itself more favorable for the festivities. So we went to see Fr. Müller<sup>33</sup> at Maaburg and asked him for advice about where the best place would be to see the festive procession. He himself took the lead and walked us to the Cathedral of our Lady for the High Mass. There were great numbers of people at the altar, including the Archbishop of Munich-Freising, his Eminence Count von Reischach.<sup>34</sup> Naturally it was important to get a glimpse of [him] and to admire how majestically he represented his high honor. His

<sup>30</sup> The Kloster Maria Stern in Augsburg is an old convent which was first built in the 1570s.

<sup>31</sup> Possibly the guest house of St. Boniface Abbey.

<sup>32</sup> These arrows will be used in this text to indicate the places in the German handwritten text that are illegible, and where small portions are omitted due to unclear meanings—a few words to a sentence or two.

<sup>33</sup> See ft #12.

<sup>34</sup> Carl August von Reischach, Bishop of Eichstätt 1836-46, and Archbishop of Munich-Freising 1846-55.

external, very commanding person corresponded entirely and naturally to his elevated position and immediately won for him all the hearts [of the people] < >

In the meantime the procession had started and tradesmen's guilds were walking in line wearing their distinctive colorful clothing and bearing their standards with religious images. Of course, there was vocal prayer and singing. < > There were ladies in traditional dress, many pilgrims from outlying areas, rich and not so rich people, school children, boys as well as girls with silk shawls on their shoulders and flower wreaths weaved into their curls. Private homes were decorated with altars and religious pictures in the windows < >

To be mentioned also is His Majesty King Maximilian II<sup>35</sup> in his great uniform, with his mighty gilded crown, walking behind the baldachin under which the Holy Sacrament is carried by the Archbishop. Behind him were all of the ladies and other people of his court. How ostentatious of him to dare to follow the Most High, eternal King, wearing his earthly king's finery and oblivious to the necessities for attaining eternal life. < > Because of the rain the procession had to be broken up at 10:00 a.m. < > From there we went to the museum of King Ludwig I, which he had asked to be made in his honor, with all his monuments and frescos collected from Southern Europe < > At 12:00 noon we went to the Royal Gymnasium<sup>36</sup> for dinner, where the Benedictines gave us the special honor to be served by them. At the end there was even a special toast to Saint Vincent Abbey in America, since Father Boniface Wimmer was a Benedictine—the founder and a man of deed and foresight, who went out from here with me in the year 1846.<sup>37</sup> < >

After lunch we visited the Court Chaplain, where two candidates [for the trip] were refused. Vitus Deindl, [a layman from Nussdorf near Rosenheim],<sup>38</sup> was accepted along with two other Servites<sup>39</sup> who were already there. < > The Court Chaplain handed me a note for 2600<sup>40</sup> florin to deposit, a draft for \$395.00 dated for two months ahead, and \$22.00 in silver for my bank accounts—more money for Fritz and

<sup>35</sup> The son of King Ludwig I, born in 1811, who ruled in Bavaria from 1848 until his death in 1864

<sup>36</sup> A residence for Benedictine teachers.

<sup>37</sup> See p. 72 and the 1846 account of departure.

<sup>38</sup> Full and formal names for Gärtner's companions are verified in an unpublished work by Heinrich Klemens Halder, O. Praem, *The Wilten Mission in the USA in the 19th Century*, 1996, translated by David N. Coury (2002). Daylesford Abbey Archives, Daylesford, Pennsylvania, p. 93

<sup>39</sup> Bruno Kaufmann and Franz Paulsteiner from Innsbruck

<sup>40</sup> Approximately \$1,040-\$1,092.U.S.

Franz.<sup>41</sup> The boys' deficit had to be paid in north German money in order to be enough until Bremen. < >

At 5:00 p.m. we visited the Gymnasium gardens near St. Boniface where the professors had invited us to have beer and a snack. As proof of their friendship, they even proposed that we come to stay as their guests instead of in the uncomfortable quarters at St. Boniface. Therefore, it came about that after viewing the gardens we departed St. Boniface with all of our worldly goods and moved over to the Gymnasium. At St. Boniface they are not so royally endowed that they can afford to have frequent guests for any length of time. In contrast, the Gymnasium is in good shape. We sat here happily until 10:00 p.m.

*June 11, 1852, Fair*

At 6:00 a.m. [we were] called for Mass in the attached church of the Gymnasium which is located right here and we said Holy Mass. After that we received breakfast in the dining hall. That morning I wrote to the Prefect in Wilten about the arrangements with the Court Chaplain. [I also wrote to] my nephew, George, from Reutte, and a niece, Nikola, from Vienna, to put the business with the accounts in order. During my visit with the Court Chaplain the money matters were settled as follows:

1. f.1200.00 in cash, as agreed for the traveling expenses for the three Benedictine Nuns from Eichstätt who will join our group
2. f.250.00 for Veit as dowry
3. f.220.00 for Fritz, remuneration
4. f.90.00 for Fritz and Franz, remuneration
5. f.580.00 lump sum for mission use < >

The man of God personally gave me a vestment for Mass, some silk cloth, one new missal bound in red satin, a small mission chalice in a box, one altar missal and some prayer books. A very nice missal-songbook was included for the nuns. < > All that had to be packed into my box. Finally, the Court Chaplain gave me, from the Ludwig Missionsverein, an exchange for \$277.00 for a New York bank. *Videbimus.*<sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> It is uncertain to whom he was referring here.

<sup>42</sup> Latin for "We shall see."

Lunch was in the Gymnasium and we said "Good-bye" and "Thank You." < > At 3:00 p.m. we rushed to the train station, in order to be in Augsburg by 5:30 to find my nephew Carl, who was ordered to the Casella house. We got there for a friendly family "Good-bye." For a fond remembrance I received a beautiful Mass vestment from the house chapel at the Cathedral square and a well packed crate, all labeled with my address. I asked them to have my baggage brought to the station since all my other baggage was stored there. Mr. Casella, dear as always, assured me that he would personally take care of it. In order to avoid a "Good-bye" in the crowds of people, we said our "Good-Byes" now—very intimate, as only dear friends could be. From Hanni I received an Italian onion flower, palmonarial. "See you again," she said, with a warm handshake in the lower hallway, looking sadly, as if a dark image came to mind. "God's will be done," I said. "I will pray for all each and every day, as strongly as never before." She understood the meaning of this promise. A slight redness covered her cheeks, and her face cleared up. Again, I told her "God be with us" and she answered, "Yes, with us in life and death." Yes, these were her last bittersweet words. I left the house with a heavy heart. It was high time to meet nephew Carl, who walked ahead to avoid a long wait. We found each other there and again walked by foot to spend the last evening in nice company. < >

*June 12, 1852*

*Trip from Augsburg to Bremen*

The morning started with rain. At 4:30 a.m. we said Holy Mass in Carl's small chapel, enjoyed a short breakfast afterwards, exchanged souvenirs (some things of mine from Vienna) and left. Maybe the rain was luck, to shorten the "Good-bye." It rained hard. I had only a short time with the two nieces. Fanny and Marie accompanied me in a carriage to the station. Mr. Casella had taken care of our suitcases and paid the freight until Hof. We bought third-class tickets to Hof (f. 32.30). At the train station we met the two emigrants from Vils (13 miles south of Landshut), Joseph Fischer and [Franz] Xavier Erd. I gave thanks again for the Mass vestment that was given to Bruno until better packaging could be attained. Nephew Carl and Hanni went home without awaiting the arrival of the train from Munich, but friend Casella stayed until all passengers in my group were standing beside

me. Amidst dear embraces and "Good-Bye" greetings, the Iron Horse sounded its whinny, and black steam came from its nostrils. < >

In the train from Munich [bound for Bremen] were Xavier,<sup>43</sup> the two Servites, [Vitus] Deindl, three suitcases, and two crates. The Rev. Court Chaplain had paid the freight until Leipzig. He also had handed me a letter to Bishop [John Martin] Henni [of Milwaukee], as well as one to the superior of the School Sisters, Caroline Freiss,<sup>44</sup> in Milwaukee, and a third one to the leader of the nuns from Eichstätt, Benedicta Riepp.

With the help of Fr. Schmidt,<sup>45</sup> these nuns joined us at the way station of Pleinfeld (near Nurnberg), with St. Vincent and Fr. Boniface Wimmer as their destination. Since they had tickets for second class, he [Fr. Schmidt] arranged that they should remain there first without my presence until a different arrangement could be made in Nurnberg. This was done by exchanging my third-class ticket for a second-class one at the expense of the nuns, and thus I could become their guardian, while my confrere Fr. Xavier stayed with the rest of the group in third class. Of course, he outdid me at each main station by caring also for this group [of nuns] so that no one would be left behind, as it is easy to be late for the train, even by a few minutes. For this reason I sternly enjoined them not to loiter anywhere, nor to go aside when there was no necessity. At any rate, they are always to go in twos and watch the time so as not to arrive too late.

At lunch in Nurnberg I ordered the caravan to assemble in the third-class waiting room and provided them with a handsome meal for f. 3.0, while the nuns in second class had to pay f. 1.50. Sr. Benedicta was very upset about this and asked me, in the future, to also arrange the meals for her and her two Sisters (Sr. Walburga [Dietrich] and Sr. Maura [Flieger]). Departure [from Nurnberg] was at 2:00 p.m. We arrived in Bamberg at 4:00 p.m. where an elegant station welcomes the travelers and also offers attractive waiting rooms. Outside the station one can buy all kinds of things for a light lunch at cheaper prices. Therefore, I made purchases of bread, butter and oranges which satisfied everyone. At the beginning I told my people to take note, after half an hour, of the famous pilgrimage church of the Fourteen Saints to the right on a beautiful mountain slope, and to allow a pious thought to enter their minds.

<sup>43</sup> Franz Xavier Sailer, Gärtner's companion priest from Wilten.

<sup>44</sup> Mother Caroline Freiss led the School Sisters of Notre Dame in North America for 42 years, from 1850 until her death in 1892.

<sup>45</sup> Anton Schmidt, S.J., Chaplain at St. Walburg Convent in Eichstätt at this time.



After Neuenmarkt, situated on the narrow bottom along the River Main, the railway continuously follows the ascending hill and the Iron Horse had great difficulty dragging 20 to 30 cars upwards. It was already night when we reached Hof, the Bavarian border station, at 10:00 p.m. Here there was a wagon change, and thus caution was necessary in order to keep our people together. When I took note of the team everything was fine and my team was in good hands. We had to buy tickets for our group: three second-class tickets for 88.00 each, totaling 264 and seven third-class tickets for 68.00 each, totaling 476. There was lots of running for the suitcases of the nuns. My people ran back and forth and lost the package with the Mass vestment from Augsburg. Everybody tried to blame somebody else, and I had no choice but to go myself to the third-class waiting room to find the box. But it was not there. Where was the packet from Augsburg with the vestment? < > They said: "Probably back in the car they just came from." < > I had a great urge to grab the thoughtless people by the scruffs of their necks, < > [then] ran to the travel office and reported it, with the request that it be sent to Bremen. Was it in the hands of our people? But it was not found. For me it was a big disappointment. I experienced the pain of missing such a valuable souvenir due to the fault of these irresponsible people!

The whistle sounded for departure, and I had barely a minute left to get into the wagon of the nuns. Soon they could see my ill humor, and asked about its cause. Sr. Benedicta said that probably my efforts for her suitcase had prevented me from first taking care of my own things. Thus, a humble apology, and some consolation that in time, over in America, she would make restitution to me with a vestment made by herself. Then I had to make the best of it. A little snooze which took me by surprise buried my ill humor in the River Lethe.<sup>46</sup>

*June 13, 1852, Fair*

We arrived in Leipzig at 3:00 a.m. Since it was Sunday, the plan was to rest here and to continue by night train. Therefore it was best to go to an inn across the street from the beautiful station. But the people, not being tired, went right to the bar for a beer. I and the nuns continued to fast so that later we might go to the Catholic Church for Mass at 7:00 a.m. When arriving at the Church, the pastor, knowing me from past times, invited me to celebrate Mass at a side altar, since

<sup>46</sup> The Greek word *lethe* means forgetfulness. In Greek mythology, Lethe is a river in Hades, the land of the dead. People who drink its water will forget everything.

he was just preparing to have the Holy Mass at the main altar. At that Mass the nuns received Holy Communion. At 8:00 a.m. a second Mass began for which the rest of the group also arrived. But Sr. Walburga, an older person,<sup>47</sup> felt sick to her stomach and asked to be escorted to the inn by means of a hackney coach, some of which were always on the square. After that I rushed back to the Church to pick up the other two Sisters and to get them some breakfast which they really needed after the unusual hardship of the trip.

After that we<sup>48</sup> went to the north station to check our baggage. We searched for the lost crate but without success. When we returned to the inn, the rest of the group was sitting at the tables drinking beer and eating breakfast, even though it was already after twelve noon. It seemed as if the men had to get rid of all their good German money. At 1:00 p.m. we got a table in the restaurant but ate only small portions. At 2:00 p.m. I went to the station again for the baggage. I could see only the small crate of the Baron. One lock was broken open and the second one was also damaged. It seemed that I got there just in time to interrupt a robbery. For hours I waited, until at 6:00 p.m. I weighed and marked the pieces. I had to pay for overweight baggage, but the office told me that emigrants get a special tariff. After I showed them our passports, I received good reductions.

By 7:00 p.m. that task was completed, and upon returning to the restaurant the remainder of the group members were drinking more beer and eating sausage, as if it were snowing money. At 9:00 p.m. we left for the north station. A young man was hired by the inn to give directions. The nuns and I went by hackney coach. According to the wish of the nuns I exchanged my third-class ticket to a second-class one. I found a willing person from Bamberg, named Fleischmann, who was willing to do the exchange. During the afternoon I had exchanged some money from the two men from Vils at the "Hotel de Baviere." Finally, at 11:00 p.m. we departed.

*June 14, 1852, Cloudy*

The nuns were very relieved to have me close by, especially in case wagons would have to be exchanged or if other problems would arise.

<sup>47</sup> Walburga Dietrich was born in 1804, professed in 1841, and died in St. Marys, Pennsylvania in 1877. At the time of this journey she was forty-eight years old, while Maura Flieger was twenty-nine (born in 1822, professed a lay sister in 1848, and died in Erie, Pennsylvania, in 1865), and Benedicta Riepp turned twenty-seven on day #11 of this ocean voyage (born in 1825, professed in 1846, and died in St. Cloud, Minnesota on March 15, 1862).

<sup>48</sup> Gärtner, Benedicta and Maura.

There was a young man beside me, a stranger. I quickly succeeded in communicating with him. I tried it slowly—a sentence in English, a couple minutes later in French, and at last in Italian. He answered the last one: *C'è una miseria*, “This is a misery!” From his answer I thought he was Welsh. We started to converse and I found out that his name was Antonio Rufso, a sailor from Corfu<sup>49</sup> on his way to London, to collect his money from some trip as a sailor. His behavior was very decent and he showed interest in the nuns, regretting that he was not able to converse with them directly. At 3:00 a.m. we arrived in Braunschweig, where we had to change trains. Our hand baggage got checked. The larger pieces went cargo. Our third-class group was fine and the train continued in a half hour. At 10:00 a.m. we changed trains again in Hanover, and drove through a desolate area, compared to the countryside south of the Main River. At 1:30 p.m. we reached Bremen, the end of our trip through five states.<sup>50</sup> We followed Mr. Kondlack, the owner of the Hotel du Nord, because he offered us cheap and good services in the vicinity of the train station.

The beer lifted our spirits and was just fine. Later we visited with the agent who informed us that the Court Chaplain from Munich had arranged everything with Mr. Unkraut<sup>51</sup> in the historic old-fashioned Hansa city, and that he had just the right place for us to stay in the Hotel Victoria. It was close to the Catholic Church and so better for us priests and nuns. So we moved from the first hotel to this one, much to the chagrin of the first hotel manager. The baggage was still at the station, and Mr. Unkraut arranged to have it brought to his house. We had the three big crates for the nuns and the two crates from Vienna for me. But to my disappointment, the large crate from the monastery was not here yet, according to the agent. Mr. Unkraut used all his diplomacy to calm me down, because I was too upset. But we still had two to three days before our ocean departure. In the meantime, our people took a walk to town and got lost in the beer hall for an hour. They kept their word to meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Church of St. John for a small service. Father Probst gave us a very nice reception and invited me to celebrate Mass in his Church at another time. We had dessert at 8:00 p.m. and retired at 11:00 p.m.

<sup>49</sup> A Greek island.

<sup>50</sup> From Eichstätt in Bavaria, the group travelled by train to Leipzig in Saxony, then to Braunschweig in the duchy of Braunschweig-Lüneburg, then to Hanover, the capital of Lower Saxony, and finally to Bremen which was the Free Hanseatic City state.

<sup>51</sup> Court Chaplain Müller's (see ft.#12) contact in Bremen.

*June 15, 1852 In Bremen, Cloudy*

At 6:00 a.m. I walked to the church, which the sacristan had opened. The altar at which I said Holy Mass was decorated with natural flowers. The nuns and other people from our group and townspeople were there. Later in the morning I went to Mr. Unkraut to talk about our New York exchange. In the meantime a French student, Weinhart<sup>52</sup> from Hall, arrived here in the morning to join us on our trip. He gave me his cash of 225 florin. Erd<sup>53</sup> and Fischer<sup>54</sup> joined us here also. All the money was handed to Mr. Unkraut for expenses for the passage to New York: three plus two for second class, and six centerdeck places in steerage. The detailed invoice was to be given to me before departure.

Before lunch Father Probst called me to marry two couples who were German emigrants. I had the authority to do so as an American missionary, but the local magistrate [of Bremen] had imposed a strict prohibition to marry Catholics, with whom the good Protestant city of Bremen would be saddled in the event that they would not be accepted in America. If they did not have enough financial means, they would be seen as paupers in America and returned to their homeland. To circumvent such a problem<sup>55</sup> the pastor asked me to do the marriages. If I did the marriages, the local American Consul could sign the papers of civil marriages. I was sufficiently familiar with its form, and thus there was no danger that the newlyweds would be torn apart and punished as illegally married. The pastor led me to the altar of his Church where the two couples were waiting. I called them, accepted their oaths, and followed the Church formula for the wedding out of the manual I had brought with me. Since the pastor had forgotten the written documents in his room, I was not able to speak their names, even though I had filled out the certificates. The two couples served as witnesses for each other, even though there was only one male witness.<sup>56</sup> According to American law, female persons are also able to serve as witnesses.

<sup>52</sup> Franz Xavier Weinhart, a student destined for missionary work.

<sup>53</sup> Franz Xavier Erd, a layman from Vils.

<sup>54</sup> Joseph Fischer, another layman from Vils.

<sup>55</sup> It seems that the local pastor saw the presence of Gärtner as the best way to prevent these Catholics from marrying civilly before the American Consul in Bremen.

<sup>56</sup> This is an interesting detail. Apparently, at that time in Germany, only men were allowed to serve as witnesses in marriages.

In the afternoon I went back to Mr. Unkraut and greeted Mr. von Brentano from Augsburg, who now wanted to join us on our big trip across the ocean as I had encouraged him to do. As a business man, he wanted to know about the old Hansa practices. Mr. Unkraut suggested that we go to the city "Wall"<sup>57</sup> where there is the best view of the inner city. We ran along and enjoyed the view of the water canal that divides the city in half. On our walk back we visited the priest's house where the pastor invited us for an evening party. We accepted and ate our fill of ham, fish, wine, and a lot of sweets. We returned to the hotel at 11:00 p.m. where my people were already in bed, most surely after visiting some saloons to spend all their money. *Sint ista per tempora pauca.*<sup>58</sup>

June 16, 1852, Cloudy

Early in the morning at 4:30, I "took my quill"<sup>59</sup> to report to Father Probst and then to give my superior the bad news that my main crate still had not arrived. It worries me that it takes so long and that I may have to go on the long trip without it. There is only one more day. Tomorrow is the last possible date. Holy Mass with Communion was at 6:00 a.m. for the three nuns and other people. Father Xavier had permission to hear Confession. After that Xavier said his Holy Mass and I heard the confessions for two local people. In the morning I did more business with the travel agency and ordered four bottles of Margaux, two bottles of Cognac, and two of Madeira as a remedy against the fateful sea sickness for our entire team of men and women. Undoubtedly, the majority of them would have to pay their first tribute to the merciless Canal de La Manche.<sup>60</sup> I asked again at the station about the missing crate, but without luck. Xavier and I went to the rectory again at 9:00 p.m. where the two argued as usual until I fell asleep.

<sup>57</sup> An old fortification in the city of Bremen.

<sup>58</sup> "May such incidents be infrequent!"

<sup>59</sup> In German, this is a frequent expression for beginning to write, even up to the twentieth century.

<sup>60</sup> French for the English Channel.

June 17, 1852, Cloudy

Departure from Bremen to America

I was drunk, not with wine but with sleep, when Xavier brought me home from the parish house to the Hotel Victoria. I was silently wondering how a human being fifty years old, during an evening with glass in hand and against all manners, could fall into a deep sleep at the table of the host. But today I was more lively and suggested at the 5:00 a.m. signal that we go to church. Xavier asked to have his confession heard. Then he heard mine and that of the two [Servite] brothers, Bruno und Franz.<sup>61</sup> At 6:00 a.m. Xavier went to the altar, while I heard confessions from our group. At the Mass every one of our group received Holy Communion. Naturally, the holy sacrifice of the Mass was offered especially with prayer for a good ocean crossing and a happy landing on American soil. May our purpose be richly blessed by our holy Father in heaven! After the service we said a last good-bye in the rectory and learned with pleasure that the Pastor would be at the riverboat that takes us from the city of Bremen to Bremerhaven to board the ocean-faring *Washington*.

Immediately I went to Agent Unkraut to clear the invoice with him, but according to my notes there was a major difference in his favor. I asked the businessman, von Brentano, to mediate since it should be easy for a businessman. But the problems only got worse. To resolve the "Gordian Knot"<sup>62</sup> I asked for all of the information, and without talking to either one of them I went to a desk. Within thirty minutes I had it written up and approved by Mr. Unkraut. He returned the balance he owed and we paid the hotel. Of course, I had a separate written record for the nuns in order to settle with them at the end of the journey.

We had lunch together in the hotel. Then I asked the men to transport all our things to the riverboat, while I made some smaller purchases like a compass and three woolen undergarments in order to get rid of the local coins. They would have no value upon my return. Returning to the agents, I found that our wine bottles had not yet been packed and put them into my baggage to speed things up. In the meantime, a hackney coach picked up the three nuns from the Hotel Victoria and brought them here to say good-bye to Mr. Unkraut and

<sup>61</sup> Bruno Kaufmann and Franz Paulsteiner.

<sup>62</sup> From the legend of Phrygian Gordium and associated with Alexander the Great. It is often used as a metaphor for an intractable problem solved by a bold stroke.

Pastor Probst. There was not much time because we had to be at the river boat before 1:30 p.m. The trip takes four hours, including all the stops in between at certain stations.

A terrible rain broke out as the steamer left at 1:30 p.m. Bremerhaven<sup>63</sup> is a pretty little city on the mouth of the Weser River, but our boat did not dock in the city when it arrived. The old colossus of the *Washington* was anchored further down the river. From its deck came lively "Hurrahs," and by 5:15 our freight was brought on board and we started to set foot on the vessel by way of a ladder. Individual by individual had to climb the ladder with fear and dizziness, but the crowd pushed forward and there was not much time to dwell on those feelings.

Within an hour everything was loaded. It was time to wave good-bye and many heartbreaking thoughts followed the disappearing riverboat. What might we never see again? Immediately, I went to the first steward for the numbers of our future cabins. I found them at the center of the ship as we had hoped, where there is less danger of seasickness since the rocking is not as violent there. The three nuns were assigned to the ladies quarters, that is, the first second-class cabin, numbers 24-27, where there were three places for sleeping. The men were in the second-class cabin, and the third-class people were in the middle decks, number 52/53, which were separate from the other cots. Arranging the people did not take too much effort. At 8:00 p.m. the bell sounded for tea, which was not very tasty, but the coffee, even without milk, was good. Slowly we got used to the new environment. After telling everybody to report any sickness immediately, I left my people with the Holy Spirit and went to the north deck until 3:00 a.m.

*June 18, 1852, Day 1, Fair*

#### *Departure from Bremen*

The cannon woke us at 7:00 a.m. for breakfast. All were up and excited. There was much life in the harbor with all the ships. At 10:30 a.m. the cannon on board shot a salvo as a sign of approaching departure. There were still boats coming from the pier with passengers. The second salvo came at 11:00 a.m. Many "Hurrahs" were sent over the water when the colossus<sup>64</sup> had lifted anchor. Within thirty minutes we passed the lighthouse and the swimming buoys were no longer visible. The North Sea was open for a safe voyage.

<sup>63</sup> Port of Bremen.

<sup>64</sup> Seemingly, Gärtner's pet name for the *Washington*.

Xavier already felt funny in his stomach, as he said, and that was a bad omen. I gave him a glass of Margaux, and it helped quickly. Rain from the north came quickly. Around 2:00 p.m. the storm created high waves and sea sickness claimed its victims. Xavier was the first victim and then Weinhart. Only I and Franz were able to take care of the others. We enjoyed being [good] Samaritans. We gave them Cognac, the best remedy to quiet the stomach without overstraining it. By evening most were back on their feet, and the coffee tasted all the better. After having coffee, I took the patients up to the north deck for some fresh air. The rain and wind stopped at 6:00 p.m., and the sea came to rest for a good night's sleep. I stayed on the deck until 10:00 p.m. What will the next day bring?

*June 19, 1852, Day 2, Fair*

I woke up at 7:30 with a good appetite and ate a good breakfast. I heard Xavier's labored and noisy breathing, a very bad omen. At first he did not want to eat anything, even though it was a good idea. With an empty stomach you get weak, and you cannot fight the ravages of sea sickness. So we gave him Cognac again, which does miracles for him. But it did not work as fast and was not as lasting as hoped. After that I inquired about the three nuns and got the following message: Sr. Benedicta was weak on her feet and Sr. Maura was very hot with fever, since she had had no bowel movement for several days. Only Sr. Walburga was without difficulties. I gave Sr. Benedicta a glass of Malaga<sup>65</sup> and a dose of nuxvom<sup>66</sup> for Sr. Maura < >

The bulletin of the captain at noon indicated the latitude at 52.20, the longitude at 2.45 east, and at 263 knots. The steamer *Cambria* passed by on its way to Ostend [Belgium]. Mr. von Brentano was in his cabin without seeing the coast of England, for he had taken a dose of creosote on the advice of his doctor in Augsburg, and now thought he was poisoned. A glass of Madeira eased his problem. By the way, the sea was stormy again and pushed the *Washington* into the riptides. It seesawed back and forth and made the passengers even more sick. Later that evening, the northeast wind became even stronger and stirred up the sea so mightily that we thought there was danger of being thrown against the rocks of the southern end of England which was only a couple hours away. But the people trusted the captain and his crew. Only a few people stayed up on the foredeck while the

<sup>65</sup> A sweet fortified wine originally from Malaga, Spain.

<sup>66</sup> A treatment for constipation.

others retreated to their cabins. I stayed up on deck until 11:00 p.m. before I went to my cabin, still without any inkling of sickness.

*June 20, 1852, Day 3, Cloudy, Feast of the Sacred Heart*

Even with the turbulence of the sea and the dancing of the steamer, I enjoyed the short sleep and awakened to greet today's feast. Bruno, Xavier, and the others complained about the bad feeling in their stomachs. Their love for me seemed to have no bounds, in hopes that I would give them more of my "radical serum."<sup>67</sup> I joked that this first ocean trip is the "apprentice fee" for the making of a master in the long run. I urged them to have patience and to keep calm until the dangerous Canal de Manche is behind us. By the way, the last Cognac bottle made its round again among my group of victims. I helped the three well-tested nuns with Madeira. They had a terrible night. Mr. von Brentano was feeling better after his poisoning incident from the day before. He pushed me also to take a taste of my "medicine." He thought I would need it to improve my spirits.

In the morning at 9:00 a.m. a small ship cast a light on our *Washington*—a good sign that we would soon enter the harbor of Southampton. From the distance we could see the lighthouse of the Isle of Wight. At 12:00 the ship's cannon thundered a greeting to the country that would supply the coal for the long trip. At 1:00 p.m. the anchor chain thundered to the depth and the drum called us to lunch. That sounded good, but not for us since the convalescents asked to be taken to land. Small boats were already there to pick us up according to our wishes. What else could we do?

The stay was to be about three days until the coal was loaded on board, so we got off onto the solid ground of English soil. Southampton is a nice small city, with wide streets and handsome houses with lovely little gardens and trees in the background. Our first visit was to the Catholic Church, not far from the customs building. But it is not recognizable by a steeple, because the tolerance of the High Church [of England] does not allow such a visible witness of Roman popery.

<sup>67</sup> The translation is questionable here, since Gärtner seems to be speaking with a bit of sarcasm. It would seem that Bruno and Xavier had been sarcastic about the liquor Gärtner had been using to alleviate their seasickness.

The Church is in gothic style, about 80 feet long and 30 feet wide. It is extremely clean inside with polished kneelers and seats. The noble high altar is well decorated without excessive symbols. The altar painting is from a French school. It was a gift of the French General Rosa, as the Church had been commissioned by the French ex-king Louis. The priest was young and handsome, not overly so, but he was cultured. He had just had a sung Vesper service when we, the pilgrims, entered. He had fine-looking people in the choir, and after the ceremony I took the liberty to visit him in the sacristy. I got a most friendly reception with a request to visit more often.

In the meantime, the Augsburg Baron, as Mr. von Brentano was known on the ship, joined us and we went to Broadway, the main street, where noble people moved in colorful array. Our eyes were really opened when we saw the most modern carriage ever, without a horse or other animals to pull it. It seemed to move by a miracle force. A gentleman was sitting beside a lady, moving his foot from time to time, as if pushing an organ pedal. Of course the gentleman was able to give "horses"—or whatever it was—the commands he wanted. Franz and Bruno nearly stopped breathing and thought of <> jumping on the "carriage of the gods" and riding on it. They realized, of course, that this was not possible, but it was a joy to see the vehicle. Satisfied by what we saw, Mr. von Brentano led us to a building where we could see a group of gentlemen through the windows around a table full of bottles. They had ale here, the English beer, a bottle for two shillings. However, it did not earn our respect since the bittersweet taste, compared to the beer in Munich, is like yeast to buttermilk. Evening was near, so we returned to the ship for dinner which was reasonably acceptable to our people. Due to the thick fog, most of us went to our cabins. There was no moving back and forth, since the ship was well secured for loading the coal. The stay here was to be another two days. It was good for the seasick patients.

*June 21, 1852, Day 4, Mild with rain, Feast of St. Aloysius*

We got up at 6:30 a.m. and went to the local church where we were invited to celebrate Holy Mass. Fr. Xavier celebrated first and I heard confessions with permission from the local pastor. Then I celebrated the Holy Mass in honor of St. Aloysius with the special intention *pro dilectus patrius abbate*.<sup>68</sup> I also prayed a special blessing for the local people because many holy people came from this country to German

<sup>68</sup> "For our beloved father abbot."

areas to spread the Church. St. Aloysius would never have believed that someday the “old world people” would come back to celebrate Mass on English soil. It was a very refreshing Mass. Unfortunately, a terrible rain stopped us from discovering more [of the city]. We rushed back to the ship, and it was boring the rest of the day.

After lunch the weather improved, and our three nuns also wanted to visit the Church, where they did their silent meditation. Then we went to the square together where we looked at fabrics for vestments with Mr. von Brentano, bought two umbrellas for three shillings, and six pairs of shoes, since the prices were so low. Plagued by thirst—a natural result of sea sickness—the nuns asked for water which I got for them in the nearby shop of a harness-maker whose wife had just returned with a bucket full of fresh drinking water. It was crystal clear, like the holy spring of Hippocrene<sup>69</sup> in Greece. It was so fresh that it would be good for the gods! The people in the store could hardly understand the hearty and lively gratitude [of the nuns]. After returning to the steamer, I sat at the dining table and wrote a letter to Rev. Prelate,<sup>70</sup> to be posted along with a letter from Xavier. Bedtime was 11:00 p.m.

*June 22, 1852, Day 5, Cloudy*

At 7:00 a.m. we went to Church again and met a poor missionary from West India celebrating Mass. Fr. Xavier was next [to celebrate Mass] and then I said my Mass. At 9:00 a.m. the pastor had a funeral. He blessed the coffin in its glass carriage, pulled by black draped horses. Many other carriages followed. At breakfast the captain called me to his cabin and handed me a letter from Mr. Unkraut from Bremen, with the news that finally the two crates from Wilten had arrived. They were already on the ship, *Amaranth*, sailing under Captain Probst, on its way to New York to Kölker and Möllmann. What exciting news! Let's hope that good winds will allow the ship to sail past Southampton, and may it have a good journey ahead, even though its arrival in New York will be some days behind us. The invoice will await the arrival of the *Amaranth*. Before lunch Xavier wrote a letter

<sup>69</sup> According to Greek mythology, everywhere the winged horse, Pegasus, struck his hoof to the earth, an inspiring spring burst forth. One of these springs came forth from the mountain of the Muses, Mount Helicon. The Hippocrene (“horse spring”) opened at the behest of Poseidon, to prevent the mountain from swelling with rapture at the song of the Muses.

<sup>70</sup> Gärtner and Sailer's Premonstratensian Abbot in Wilten.

to our confrere, Dominic, telling stories—some good and some not so amusing—of the trip so far. It was included with my letter to Rev. Prelate and taken to the post office in town. The pastor gave us a tour of the church, explaining its possessions, beginning with the gifts of the former King Louis of France, who had stayed here as a guest for a while. It was already 10:00 p.m. when we returned to the ship to sleep.

*June 23, 1852, Day 6, Fair*

A nice morning enticed us to go to the church already at 6:00 a.m. so as to pray for the Lord's grace for today's departure—that our old *Washington* may safely arrive in her transatlantic homeland. Thus the three nuns in particular prepared themselves for holy confession—together with the men of our group—while Fr. Xavier celebrated Mass. Then in my Mass they received the bread *pro felici itinere*,<sup>71</sup> as a certain pledge and sure hope of finding a prosperous and productive activity on the other side of the ocean.

The pastor invited us—the three nuns, Mr. von Brentano and me—for breakfast where we exchanged invitations for the pastor to come to America and to Tyrol. We walked through the little town for the last time, where we said *auf wiedersehen*, “good-bye” and “see you again.” Maybe it was really *nimmer wiedersehen* this afternoon, “never see you again.” When we returned to the steamer, the sailors were already preparing to lift the anchor. We were especially worried and excited when the thunder of the cannon signaled for departure. Our thoughts were somber, as if we were facing life or death as we stood on the upper deck and looked back to the town. We looked at the small Isle of Wight with its proud terraced gardens in front of Queen Victoria's Osborne Castle.<sup>72</sup> The sight made us want to forget the dangers of the sea and its coast, which had cost the lives of thousands of sailors.

At 2:00 p.m. a couple of sailors rolled a cannon out in the open and a third sailor had the igniter in his hands. As soon as he touched the powder there was a tremendous thunder that resounded to the houses around the shore. On and off shore a “hurrah” began, and hats and handkerchiefs were waved from both sides of the water. The pastor, too, made sure we saw him and we gave him an excited greeting back. At 3:00 p.m. the outer point of the Isle of Wight was reached. The

<sup>71</sup> “For a good journey.”

<sup>72</sup> The Osborne Estate was bought by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert in 1845 when they were looking for a seaside residence for their growing family.

Needles,<sup>73</sup> sharp comb-like rocks, stuck out of the water. But they were really no danger to the ships, because the shipping route was well marked and the lighthouse showed the direction. The channel is about an hour-long trip. Fr. Xavier did not attend lunch because he was already seasick and stayed in his cabin. Sister Benedicta also stayed back to avoid seasickness. The others were brave and came out. We spoke about the future and all of our expectations. At 10:00 p.m. we went to our cabins for the night.

END OF PART I

<sup>73</sup> A row of three distinctive stacks of chalk-like rocks that rise out of the sea off the western extremity of the Isle of Wight, England, close to Alum Bay.

<sup>74</sup> Part II will appear in the June, 2013 issue. It covers the ocean voyage from South Hampton to the New York arrival, June 24 to July 12.