



The *Great* Canadian  
Catholic Hospital History Project

Documenting the legacy and contribution of the  
Congregations of Religious Women in Canada,  
their mission in health care, and the founding and operation of Catholic hospitals.

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Projet de la *Grande* Histoire  
des hôpitaux catholiques au Canada

Retracer l'héritage et la contribution des  
congrégations de religieuses au Canada,  
leur mission en matière de soins de santé ainsi que la fondation et l'exploitation des hôpitaux catholiques.

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## Memories of Yester-Year

1911-1971

The Sisters of St. Elizabeth  
Humboldt, Saskatchewan

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St. Elizabeth

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# Memories of Yester-year



**1911**

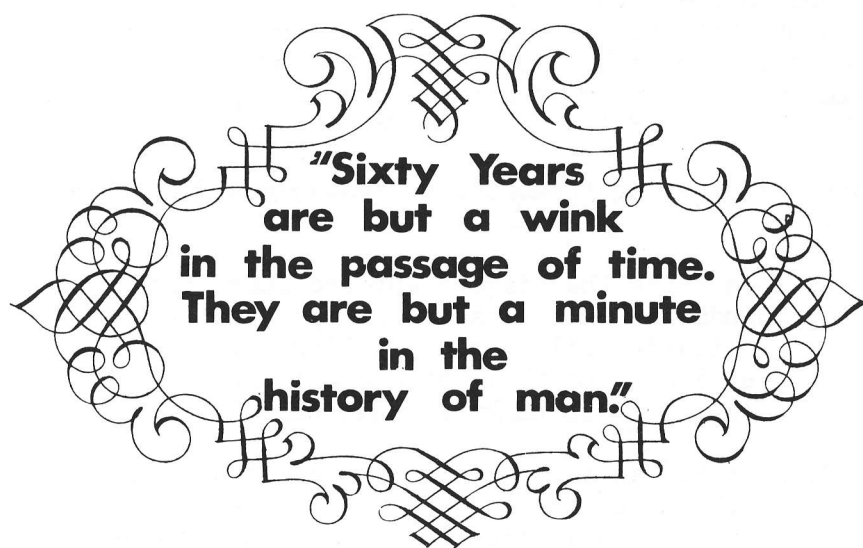
**to**

**1971**

**Sisters of St. Elizabeth**

**Humboldt**





**Ref. to cover photos:**

**top left - Rev. Mother M. Pulcheria Wilhelm first  
Canonical Superior**

**lower right - first sisters on their arrival at Muenster  
with Fr. Trunk**



## NOTE

"Memories of Yester-year" is an attempt to capture the historical record of a group of courageous women as it had been summarized by one of the pioneer Sisters and kept in the archives of the Congregation.

In presenting this premature edition, Rev. Fr. Oswald and myself wish to do so in the hopes that old and young will find it interesting and informative. There are incidents recorded which, no doubt, will produce smiles. There are others that may cause a moment of sadness.

As we present this brief publication we are also cognizant of the fact that it is by no means a perfect or a complete job.

The amount of source material which had accumulated over the years and the amount that has been added with the research in the past year has made it impossible to complete the project at this time. It will likely take many more months, and perhaps even years, to complete the history of the Canadian Foundation.

The reasons for offering "Memories of Yester-year" at this time are several:

1. This being the Diamond Jubilee Year of our Foundation in Canada it is hoped that this publication will provide a link with the past and bring to light a small part of a legacy left to us by our pioneer Sisters.
2. To serve as a foretaste of what is to follow in the complete text and, at the same time, provide a basis from which the authors can work.
3. To invite comments from the Sisters as to the contents, format, etc., for the future publication and, perhaps, even provide additional information.



## TRIBUTE

Our indebtedness goes to the following deceased pioneers who provided the material used in this publication:

Rev. Bruno Doerfler, O.S.B.  
Mother Pulcheria Wilhelm  
Rev. Dekan Berghold  
His Excellency Bishop A. Pascal  
Mother Augustine Platzter  
Sister Philomena Jug  
Sister Gabriela Lex

Our special Mention goes to Sister Mary Elizabeth, who so meticulously collected the historical material from the early beginnings up to about 1943, summarized it all into a comprehensive manuscript and put it into the archives ready to be compiled for the benefit of the Sisterhood she so dearly loved and served.

The more I personally work with the material provided, the more I realize the story needed to be told by one of the contemporaries of the time, one intimately familiar with the lives of the early pioneers.

Tribute should also be paid to those pioneer Sisters not mentioned above, both living and dead, as well as to other men and women who pioneered in the Humboldt-Muenster district, shared the disappointments, hardships, the joys and successes of the new foundation and whose foresight and determination helped to make St. Elizabeth's what it is today.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Special thanks is due to Rev. Oswald Fuchs, O.F.M., who received the enthusiasm and encouraged the writing of a complete history of our Canadian Foundation. The suggestion was made approximately a year ago. Since then his kind tutorship and his generous assistance in translations has made it possible to bring about the publication in its present form and at this time.

My indebtedness also goes to Rev. Thomas Schnerch, O.M.I., for his courtesy and generosity in assisting with the translation.

I wish to thank Sister Margaret Marie for the typing in the first stance, Mrs. Adrien Masse for the second typing, and Elizabeth Hutchison for the final typing.

Last, but not least, many thanks to Rev. Fr. Wilfred, O.S.B., who took time out of a busy schedule to do the editing of the total manuscript.

Sincerest appreciation goes to the Marian Press at Battleford, for the considerations received in regard to the printing and for the fine job done.

*Sr. Perpetua Haag*



## Cum Deo!

It was in November 1908 that at the Elizabethan Convent in Klagenfurt, Corinthia, Austria, "Bridal Day" (i.e. Investiture and Profession for new members) was being celebrated.

At that time dispensation from enclosure was granted on such days so that outsiders were permitted to enter areas ordinarily reserved for the use of Sisters.

It happened on this day that the Very Reverend Boniface Ecker, Abbot of the Olivantine Fathers at Tanzenberg, near Klagenfurt, visited the Sisters. He spoke of his intention to make a foundation in Brazil for his own Community. He invited the Sisters to transplant their organization to Brazil to be helpful to the priests in their missionary work. He promised his assistance in getting things started.

The offer was received with much enthusiasm by Mother Pulcheria Wilhelm, the Superior, and also by the other Sisters. Five of them immediately began studying the Portugese language.

A year passed without coming one step closer to Brazil. Not much was heard from the Abbot. To all appearances the project was slumbering and there was little hope that it would ever materialize. However, the Community continued to recite daily three Hail Mary's for the South American project.

On February 24, 1910, it was 200 years since four Sisters from Graz had come to Klagenfurt, the capital of Corinthia, to establish an Elizabethan Convent. These willing Sisters had to contend with great difficulties in carrying out their determination. They had to struggle with the poverty that prevailed in the convent for tens and even hundreds of years. There was much to be done, as was stated in the history of the Klagenfurt Congregation.



A desire prevailed amongst the Sisters, especially in Mother Pulcheria, to make a new foundation, preferably in America, as a perpetual commemoration of the Jubilee year.

The same year of 1910, the Sisters of St. Elizabeth became acquainted with the Rev. Alexander Berghold, confessor and spiritual director at the Good Shepherd Convent nearby. Prior to this time he had spent forty years in America doing pastoral work and accomplishing much good. He held America in high regard; one could even say he left his heart there, for as soon as conversation touched on America, he became highly enthused.

One visit the Sisters told him of their wish to make a new foundation and that they had intentions of going to Brazil. He advised them against it: "Brazil is not the place for you; North America, especially Canada, is the place."

Father Berghold was acquainted with Rev. Bruno Doerfler of Muenster, Saskatchewan, Prior of the Benedictines. He wrote to Father Doerfler that the Elizabethans at Klagenfurt wished to establish a new foundation and asked whether he had a suitable place to recommend. The reply was soon forthcoming.

In June Reverend Mother Pulcheria received a letter from Prior Bruno dated May 19, 1910. Enclosed was a detailed letter for Father Berghold. The latter had British Columbia in mind, but Father Prior immediately advised against it with the remark that there were a number of Sister Hospitals there already. He was more in favor of Saskatchewan, particularly for the newly erected St. Peter's Colony, and indeed for Humboldt.

He related all the circumstances as faithfully as he could so that one could immediately count on his words and carry them out with no regret. He always got information from the proper channels, studied the whole case well. Already in his first letter he was able to advise how the whole matter could be brought about.



These communications met with the approval of the Sisters at Klagenfurt as well as that of the clergy. Father Berghold was extremely happy over it. He wrote in his own characteristic way on the 15th of June, 1910, from a 'Restaurant' at the Station in Marburg:

"Very Rev. Mother:

After reading these letters several times I came to the conclusion that, if you would actually come to founding a hospital in America, you should seize the first opportunity as the best one.

Write to Rev. Prior B. Doerfler, O.S.B., at Muenster, Sask., without delay and tell him that you will be coming to look into the matter and will select whatever is most favorable. He could obtain a reduced fare to Canada for you and suggest the best route to take.

I will write to him myself and give you a special recommendation.

Am in a hurry. God bless you.

I remain,

Yours respectfully,

A. Berghold.

P.S. I will send a copy of my letter. Am ready to give the best advice possible in furthering your cause.

A. Berghold."

A few days later, on June 15th he wrote (from Mooskirchen):

"I am sending you another letter today, which had been sent to me from Canada, concerning the hospital project.

You will note therein what influence my little letter has had. I told you that once I start something, it will go. My influence reaches out much farther than is believed by those who know me here in Europe. And since I have started to use my influence to implement your plans, I would kindly ask you to put all your energy into the execution of them, so that I may not become an object of ridicule in the eyes of the world. Whenever I began something in America I was always



successful. I therefore gained the greatest confidence everywhere.

I had briefly stated my views a few days ago but forgot to mention that in this serious matter it would be advisable that all information acquired thus far be presented personally to the religious superiors, including the bishops, for their approval before anything decisive be undertaken. 'Mit Gott fang an, mit Gott hör auf'. The blessing comes from above, Rev. Mother. If everything is done with determination and not sluggishly, and the good opportunity is used, then within 20 years you will have four hospitals of the best in Canada. Deal prudently and spare neither time, money nor energy. Iron must be forged while hot and not allowed to cool off.

I wrote to good Bishop Albert Pascal in Prince Albert to thank him for coming more than half-way in advancing our cause and also to the good Father Prior.

Against all expectations everything has turned out so very favorably in so short a time. In America there is more enthusiasm for good works than here in Europe, where one would have given me over a hundred objections against it by now, without one single penny towards it.

It would be best if you would go to Canada yourself with four other Sisters, around the beginning of September. These Sisters could probably help out in other hospitals and learn the English language, while waiting for the completion of your hospital at Humboldt.

I would advise you to make copies of all letters you receive in this connection and send back my letters, that is, the ones that had been written to me. Whatever you write to the Very Rev. Prior Doerfler should always be copied and well studied. In completing purchases and making contract agreements, one should move slowly and carefully. Offers for support should be in writing. Promises should seldom be made. Show these letters to Dr. Quitt and ask him for advice regarding them.

I would regret very much if I had started only a straw-fire through my correspondence. It was meant to create an everlasting glow in America.

Now is the time seriously to consider the matter and then move forward energetically with much prayer and strong faith in God.



In all sincerity and deepest respect,

Yours devotedly,

Alexander Berghold,

Mooskirchen, Steiermark."

However, since Mother Pulcheria had written to Rev. Berghold telling him how the matter was being interpreted in Klagenfurt by the "Ordinariat", she received in a reply the following letter, dated June 22:

"Very Rev. Mother Superior:

Your letter was like ice-water poured upon my enthusiasm over the new foundation and I can clearly see that through this entirely erroneous interpretation of things at Klagenfurt one cannot count on any success.

I only ask that you calmly reflect on these few questions: What kind of advice can a bishop-ordinary give in matters entirely foreign to him? Klagenfurt is in Europe and Saskatchewan in distant North America. What great works can be undertaken without money? Is it possible to find, in any part of the world, a hospital completely furnished and finished, supplied with beds and patients, simply awaiting Sisters to come along and kindly accept it as a gift? Did any holy person ever accomplish anything great just through cash money, without putting his trust in God and without a great deal of sacrifice? Where can you find people who will immediately respond with financial support to a statement such as this? I want to go towards the interior of Africa and start something great! Why want to start a hospital of 30-50 beds right away in some small place, when 20-25 beds would suffice for about 4-6 years? Why want to expend 150,000 kronen immediately when 1/3 of it would be sufficient for the purpose?

I would be agreed to have you submit this letter to the Rev. Fr. Trunk or to anybody else for that matter.

What I wanted to write I have already mentioned in the other two letters and am kindly asking you to return the two which I had received from Canada.

You may be assured that the hospital will be built in any case even though your Congregation would not



undertake it.

Respectfully,

Your humble servant,

Alexander Berghold.

P.S. My last word 'Let us pray for one another and let us not become despondent!'"

After receiving a reply from Rev. Prior in Canada and before the matter was submitted to the Rt. Rev. Ordinary, Reverend Mother Pulcheria wrote a letter to Fr. Prior dated June 12, 1910, in which she stated the following:

"Very Rev. Fr. Prior:

I sincerely thank you for your letter of May 20th along with the newspapers and maps which came to me a few days later. May our Lord reward you for everything. Your Reverence put in a great deal of effort, and we really appreciate your sincerity and devotedness. Also, we are not afraid to undertake the work as long as we can obtain the guidance of your Reverence. We definitely need your expert advice as much on this matter in Canada as we have received the assistance of the Rev. Fathers here appointed by the Lord Bishop.

Frankly speaking, we are not academic women and do not have to be for the type of work we are doing. The patients are very fond of us and we are very fond of them.

Perhaps you already know our circumstances through Fr. Berghold since we have spoken to him on several occasions and he has definitely advised against going to Brazil, where the Rev. Abbot of Tanzenberg had wanted us to go. As it appears, however, the founding is not making much progress for the Order (on the Tanzenberg) has existed only a few years.

It was for this purpose that four of our Sisters had studied Portuguese for some time but gave it up since nothing seemed to come of the proposal.

I would, however, testify to the joy and willingness of the Sisters, and even to their developing a healthy common-sense toward making a new foundation.

Thus if the doctors of the place, or whoever is the authoritative body, are satisfied with our qualifications we would be willing to come, but it must not be too soon. Time is required to make the necessary preparations and very likely to ask Rome's permission first.

Therefore it would only be possible to begin the building in the Spring of 1911. For the time being I am only making a reply to the letter of your Reverence and thanking you for your efforts.

I take the liberty of sending you a brochure concerning our community.

How nice it would be after so many years, to establish a little convent overseas, especially during our Jubilee year. But God's will be done in all things.

I believe that one of the Rev. Clergy, who are constantly at hand, will be writing to you himself. Likely it will be the Rev. Dr. Klinsch. There are two of them travelling to America soon and it is possible that they wish also to go to Humboldt to look into the matter.

I beg your Reverence not to lose patience with us. Then surely with God's help all will come out right. Whatever is within our power will be done gladly both in a spiritual and material way.

In conclusion I beg your Reverence to pardon me for the lengthy letter and ask a blessing for the whole community and for this great undertaking.

Thanking you from the bottom of my heart for all the efforts on our behalf,

I remain,

Gratefully and respectfully yours,

M. Pulcheria Wilhelm, superior."

On July 16, 1910, Rev. Fr. Prior wrote to M. Pulcheria:

"Very Rev. Mother:

Your esteemed letter of June 12th reached me on the feast of Peter and Paul.



On the two previous days I also received letters from the Rev. Msgr. Dr. Klimsch and Rev. Fr. Trunk from Villach and on July 1st I received one from Rev. Fr. Berghold - all pertaining to the future hospital at Humboldt.

It gives me the greatest joy to know that these men are all so interested in this worthy cause.

Enclosed I am sending you a letter from his Lordship Bishop Albert Pascal, in which he gives his approval to the proposed foundation, in the French language (not yet having command of the English). In the German translation it reads as follows:

'My Rev. Father:

It gives me great pleasure to give my approval to the Sisters of St. Elizabeth from Klagenfurt for the erection of a hospital at Humboldt, the principal town of your colony in the diocese of Prince Albert and to wish them complete success.

Would you inform them that I will be glad to welcome them into our diocese with the permission of Rome, for I am convinced that they will do well here.

With sincere greetings and kind remembrances to you and your zealous missionaries.

Yours devotedly and gratefully  
in the Sacred Heart.

Albertus

Bishop of Prince Albert. "'

Father Prior continues:

"Before we can do anything else from here, it will be necessary for you to come yourself or send some sisters to investigate and then make a definitive decision on the founding of the hospital.

We can definitely count on the consent of our own bishop and no difficulties will be made by Rome if your Very Rev. Bishop is agreed to it.

Our bishop also informs me that he is willing to let you collect alms in the territory stretching from Warman to the boundaries of Manitoba along the Canadian Northern Railway and then he goes on to

report on the building place, the water line, etc.

Having given directives as to how the Sisters should travel when they come to look matters over, he concludes: 'In the glad hope that the planned project will eventually be realized, and with sincere assurance that I will do all in my power to co-operate with the Sisters, should they take on the work.'

I remain,

Respectfully yours,

Devotedly in Christ,

P. Bruno Doerfler, O.S.B."

In the meantime, several priests were contacted who could assist in the undertaking, particularly the Rev. George Trunk, parish priest of Villach. The Chancery office of the Bishop of Gurk has been notified.

One could see from the letter of the Rev. Fr. Berghold, which had been previously cited, that the chancery had many reservations, especially financial reservations with regard to the project.

However, this would not have been too difficult to overcome had not other obstacles entered in. These obstacles came up rather unexpectedly and rather harshly, but, as the saying goes, "Good works thrive best in the Shadow of the Cross." And such it was here, too.

In the summer of this year came that fatal crash of the "Centralkasse" (Credit Union) which was in charge of the clergy and through which many lost everything. Our convent, too, was hard hit.

For some time the extent of the loss was not known but it went far over 100,000 kronen, the equivalent of \$200,000 dollars.

Here are a few extracts from M. Pulcheria's letter to the Rev. Fr. Prior, dated July 16, 1910:



"The Rev. Fr. Trunk was prepared to leave on August 16th and had already shipped his luggage when he received a telegram on the 5th stating that the trip would have to be postponed for the time being because of great stir up amongst the clergy. Mgr. Weiss, director and manager of 'Centralkasse', had disappeared, leaving a great deal of disorder and debts behind. We, too, had part of our capital invested.

The investigation is not complete yet and so the clergy cannot leave. They hope to complete in October. It is remarkable how unforeseen circumstances occur, deferring our plans. Nevertheless, the greatest difficulties are often crowned with the greatest success. May this come true in the case of our endeavors.

The Rev. Fr. Trunk will come alone for the time being and as soon as possible. He will clarify things for you on our behalf. God willing, the Sisters may follow soon.

It is likely that I will meet more trials and difficulties but almost every great cause has been realized in this fashion. With the grace of God, I hope not to be frightened by them. He has the power to strengthen a weak woman and to support her to her struggles and in her efforts to go forwards.

We trust in Divine Providence and leave it all to its kind and wise guidance (etc.).

M. Pulcheria."

In reply, Fr. Prior sent a short letter of consolation and condolence. Since he was just about to leave for the Eucharistic Congress in Montreal, he merely stated that he is commending the whole matter to the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament.

He sent a more detailed letter on October 6, 1910.

In a letter dated Sept. 9, 1910 M. Pulcheria wrote again to Rev. Fr. Prior concerning the whole matter and sent him some local papers. She wrote:

"Rev. Father Prior will be receiving some newspapers, which were brought to us at the convent. You will see, therefrom how we are faring here. The poor Bishop! It was his kindness that actually brought this dilemma upon himself and us. He had asked us, in fact begged us, to put our money into it. At present everything is at a standstill. We thought we had practically reached our aim and were almost ready to leave. But now, the Lord only knows what will happen. Even if the matter would take a turn for the better, it would still be some time before we could get money again. To press the clergy would only make matters worse. The poor clergy can barely let themselves be seen on the street. They say that the bad ones are scolding and the good ones are being vexed and becoming discouraged over it. Then, too, there is a double cry: 'Away from Rome!' May the good Lord intervene again.

I ask your Reverence for assistance and advice."

M. Pulcheria continues:

"What can be done about our project now? The appointed Sisters would love to go. Moreover, they have such confidence in you that they believe nothing can go wrong. But, under the present circumstances the convent could not advance more than 15,000-18,000 kronen. Likely it will be possible to give further assistance as the money becomes available sooner or later.

And now I would kindly ask your Reverence to give us your frank opinion: Should we risk to undertake the project with the present means or should we wait? If you could not wait and would have to take other Sisters, it would be an eventuality which we would deplore very much. On the other hand, who does not have to submit to the unavoidable from time to time?

This undertaking has caused us much suffering already, more particularly myself, but also to the convent. I have, however, always thought that a cause usually becomes anchored during a storm, and if it be God's will it will move again. Personally, I have not changed my mind as to the undertaking.

Now I believe I had described the circumstances sufficiently to your Reverence and the papers will give you further evidence. The papers are not too reliable although most of what they say is true. If they only



would not be so merciless with the innocent.

Perhaps Rev. Fr. Trunk would not have to go along, that is, once we get that far. It will likely cost a great deal again. You will, no doubt, take the matter in your own hands. It should be done as your Reverence sees fit, and handled according to your best judgment. No one knows the situation better than you. Now that the matter has been placed in God's hand, may God's holy will be done.

M. Pulcheria."

Fr. Prior, who remained undaunted by the contents of this letter, made a detailed reply in a letter dated Oct. 6, 1910. Among other things, he wrote:

"I would have answered sooner but wanted to make more detailed inquiries as to what means were necessary for the erection of a suitable hospital in Humboldt. I discussed the matter more closely with the Catholic doctor at Muenster, Dr. Kourigan, as also with our Catholic doctor in Humboldt, Dr. Barry, and with our representative of Parliament, Dr. Med. Neeley.

They were all of the opinion that if a hospital is to meet the needs for several years it could possibly be fully equipped with 10 - 12,000 dollars (one dollar is equivalent to 4 Kronen and 88 farthings in gold.)

Since the Sisters, as they mentioned, could bring along 15-18,000 Kronen (co 3100-3600 dollars), and since as the men here believed they could get at least 1,500 - 2,000 dollars from private individuals within a short time, one would reckon that a debt of not more than 5 - 7,000 dollars would be left on the hospital after its completion. Naturally we in Klagenfurt were alarmed at the idea of such a heavy debt, which, however, does not mean much for a hospital under American conditions. In spite of this, Mother Pulcheria did not wish to drop the project altogether, but sought to revive it as soon as possible."

Fr. Prior continues to describe how the hospitals over there have to be equipped, what rights and duties the hospitals have, as well as to everything appertaining to hospitals, including their administration. He is

planning, however, to build a frame-house only, because, as he noted, the cost of building it in brick would be 2,000 dollars more.

With regard to the debt to be contracted, Fr. Prior also remarks, "The Sisters do not have to be concerned because wealthy Catholic people have assured him that they would vouch for the Sisters." He then goes on to say:

"If there is an efficient procurator who knows how to manage so that the expenses can be kept as low as possible without depriving the patients of essential needs, there is no doubt that within a few years the institution will be free of debt. This would be true even though later on you would not be in a position to send further monies beyond the first 15- 18,000 Kronen.

As you see from the above I am of the opinion that the whole matter can still be brought about in spite of the extraordinarily great loss which you suffered.

Nevertheless, I cannot unconditionally advise to pick up the project and go about sending a group of Sisters immediately. I do not know how the Sisters from Europe would accept these conditions which are so different.

Our severe winters will probably not affect the Sisters too much since their duties will more or less keep them in a well warmed hospital. Likely it will be the different languages and customs of the various nationalities which will appear strange to them at the beginning.

Perhaps they will also be homesick for the mountains of their homeland in this comparatively flat country. The freedom in the country may appear strange even though not uncomfortable to them.

A bureaucratic guardianship as in Europe is not to be found here. If the requirements of the Government are fulfilled, the hospital receives a grant. Other than that, the Sisters may organize things the way they wish and no complaints will be made as long as service to the patient is good and the condition of the building creates no menace to health. Also with regard to Church authorities, one has much more freedom than over there. So long as you observe your Constitutions and those regulations prescribed by the Holy See, you need not fear that the Bishops will interfere with your affairs.



If I thought your presence was not required at home on account of difficulties created by Msgr. Weiss. I would advise you to come yourself and to get full insight into the situation.

Under the present circumstances, I think the best thing to do would be to send the Sister, whom you would eventually make Superior here, along with another Sister of good judgment, in order to investigate the whole proposition. Then, if you decide to make the Foundation, these Sisters could get organized in a temporarily rented house and become engaged in nursing care. At the same time they could familiarize themselves more closely with the situation and eventually make a reply to you by letter.

Should your decision be unfavorable (which I can hardly believe) for Humboldt, they could then possibly look around elsewhere for another opportunity to make a foundation in this country or return to Europe.

Should your decision, however, as I expect, be in favor of Humboldt, the Sisters would then already be here to make preparations for the commencement of construction while the other Sisters could come later.

Naturally I shall gladly assist the Sisters wherever possible. The same is true of our doctors, who are already rejoicing over the future hospital.

Dr. Neely has told me that the Provincial Government provides plans for hospital construction free of charge. He promised to write me regarding the Humboldt situation, and we hope that within 10-14 days I will have such writing in my hands. I shall then have an estimate drawn up by an architect and a construction company, and inform you of the results.

It would please me immensely if the Sisters could be sent during your Jubilee year. The new foundation will be an everlasting memorial of your Jubilee Anniversary.

I read with great attention your description of the Weiss affair as well as the papers that reported on it (the ones you had so kindly sent me). We had discovered some of it in the 'Kölner-Volkszeitung', but had not considered it as serious as it apparently is.

It is actually terrible! Perhaps it is the depth of the complexity which gives rise to government intervention. One must say that the government has to do something if it wants to prevent thousands of its citizens from being reduced to extreme poverty. Unfortunately, I fear that,

in any event and in spite of the efforts made on the part of the government, the faithful will still suffer great privation. The government will not likely contribute anything from its own coffers. Hopefully they will go about it cautiously so as to be able to pay back the faithful as far as the means will reach.

Well, the dear Lord will provide so that eventually everything will rectify itself again. Storms do have to come so that the good may acquire better roots while the bad and the rotten may fall off.

One only knows, perhaps, the losses which the Church and the religious institutions are suffering through this crash will result in a new blossoming of life in the Church for the people of Corinthia.

When the Catholics are forced to exercise their sacrificial spirit in support of their churches and charitable institutions, it gives them a jolt and they learn to appreciate their religion and its institutions.

An old missionary once said: 'Where people are not being forced to bring sacrifice for their faith, the faith will go to sleep, but where they must bring sacrifice, their faith will come more alive'. I have often observed the truth of this saying.

I remain,

Yours very respectfully,

Servant in Christ,

Fr. Bruno Doerfler, O.S.B.,  
Prior."

As seen from this letter, it would appear that the financial loss suffered by the Convent at Klagenfurt creates no particular problem. Thus one may continue with the work of a new foundation. However, a different obstacle has arisen. The Rev. Prince Bishop, Dr. Joseph Kahn resigned. The poor Bishop had not been in a condition any more to be held responsible for his decisions. The Weiss Affair has further contributed to his break-down. He was a saintly bishop, but because his mental faculties were weakening more

and more, a change was absolutely necessary at this time.

Mother Pulcheria wrote on November 27, 1910:

"Rev. Father Prior:

Wish to communicate to your Reverence that a slight halt has again entered upon our undertaking and thus the delay in my more detailed writing. Sunday, Nov. 20th, was the enthronement of our newly named shepherd, the Very Reverend Bishop of Gurk, Dr. Kaltner, Suffragan Bishop of Salzburg. This was an uplifting, touching ceremony.

Dr. Kaltner is a beloved dignitary. Since his predecessor was not able to carry on the affairs of the Church for some time now, Dr. Kaltner will, no doubt, devote his energy to correcting the situation in Corinthia, especially as it affects the clergy.

Rev. Dr. Klimsch advised me to submit the American project to our new Shepherd for approval. One of these days he will speak to His grace about it (our project) and show him your last kind letter. He will, as much as possible, speak favorably on our behalf. I will then report the result to you immediately. All preparations have been made, so that we can go ahead, unless some unforeseen circumstances prevent us.

So please bear with us a little longer. We still hope that everything will turn out for the best, in spite of all difficulties.

Asking your Reverence for prayers and commending myself to one of your Mass intentions,

I remain,

Respectfully and devotedly Yours,

M. Pulcheria."

In a letter of February 4, 1911, Father Prior expressed his regret about the delay, and among other things he wrote:

"In Humboldt definite word about the Sisters' coming is



anticipated with impatience, particularly since recently a rumor was spreading that the Protestant doctors in Quill Lake (a station about 60 kilometers east of here), were planning to build a Protestant hospital there. The people in Humboldt have become disturbed. The Catholic doctor in Humboldt stated that, if a definite statement was not soon forthcoming that some Sisters would soon come to examine the situation in Humboldt and, if things proved satisfactory, to remain here forthwith, he would approach a French Community of Sisters who would be prepared, he thought, to build a hospital. The plan is to get ahead of Quill Lake and thus be assured that no competition could come from there. As I have mentioned before, there is a large German settlement in this community. For this very reason it would be regrettable to see a group of French Sisters build a hospital here. Besides that, we have been negotiating with you for nearly a year, and it would pain me to see you miss this great opportunity to establish a house here.

Please let me know what the prospects are for having the Sisters come here soon. If the Most Rev. Prince Bishop has already, as I hope, given his permission for the new foundation and it is possible for you to send Sisters soon, please inform me of this by cablegram at my expense, at the following address: Doerfler, Muenster, Sask., Canada.

In the hope of having a favorable answer from you soon, I remain, with the highest regard, very devotedly yours in Christ,

Fr. Bruno Doerfler, O.S.B.,  
Prior."

On February 28, 1911, Mother Pulcheria was able to inform Rev. Doerfler that the Sisters were thinking of setting out at the end of April or the beginning of May. She added that the Rev. P. Volbert, S.J., was contemplating a visit to Rome during Holy Week to obtain the final sanctioning, which he did. The Holy Father was happy to grant permission with the remark that it made him happy. He praised it and he imparted his Apostolic Blessing on the trip and for the hour of death.

This news was received with joy in Canada. In April, Fr. Prior wrote, among other things:

"Your kind message telling me that Sisters are coming at the end of April or the beginning of May was received with great joy, and I thank you most heartily for the glad news. The dear Lord will certainly bless you and the good Sisters abundantly for the work you are planning to undertake. I will do all in my power to support your efforts, and the people of Humboldt will also do all they can to help in this Christian work of mercy."

He gave useful directions for the trip, such that an attentive **father would give** his own children. Without his help the enterprise could never have been successful.

On April 30, 1911, the first three Sisters, Sr. Augustine Platzler, as Superior, Sister Philomena Jug, and Sister Gabriela Lex, left the Mother-house in Klagenfurt, and in the company of the Rev. George Trunk began the long trip to the unknown land, Canada. The good wishes and prayers of their dear Sisters were with them.

On May 14, 1911, they arrived at Muenster, Sask. The same day of their arrival Sister Augustine wrote to the Reverend Mother (General), telling her of their experiences on their trip and the welcome received at Muenster. The letter goes as follows:

"Dear Very Reverend Mother:

Just now arrived at 2 p.m. After a hearty dinner which tasted so good and after the joyful and warm welcome accorded us, I immediately sat down to tell you about the chief events and experiences of our trip. We embarked leisurely on the fast steamship 'Kaiser Wilhelm II' at 12 noon on the 2nd day of May. This was after a sleepless night of travelling through Bavaria, and seeing Munich the

capital, as well as a good part of Prussia and of Germany. At the wharf we were greeted with music which moved us both, but not to any feelings of joy. On the 3rd of May we passed along the coast of England and docked at Southampton at 12 noon. There we stopped until 3 p.m. The steamship was helped into the port by two small steamboats and again assisted in leaving. That evening at 8 p.m. we landed at Cherbourg, France.

The docking was said to be a beautiful sight, but I could not be there to see it because I was confined to the cabin with seasickness. The sea was quite calm but still, to the surprise of all the passengers, only one man was immune to the sickness. On the 9th of May we were pleased to catch a glimpse of terra firma (solid ground) visible from a distance, on which we landed at 3 p.m.

Before embarking at Bremen we met a lady teacher from Westphalia, who was travelling alone to join her brothers in Philadelphia. She was coming for reasons of health. We became close friends and she spent a good deal of time in our cabin. She was a very charming person. Together we held May devotions every day. In New York she was being met at the wharf by her brothers. Along with her they drove us to a hotel where we had tea together. We were also given 6 dollars (30K) by the brothers, and will probably be receiving more from them since, as their sister said, they were generous towards the missions and our lady friend promised to recommend us to them. We spent the night with the Sisters at Leo-House.

On the 10th of the month we started our overland trip to our new home. Of the huge amount of traffic and the many objects of interest that we now saw we could hardly say anything since it surpassed our understanding, especially of New York, Chicago, St. Paul, and Winnipeg. I'm sure M. Constanzia could not picture this, since she gets nervous even where there is a great deal of coming and going in her dispensary.

(Translator's note: this seems to be a reference to some Sister in Europe known to the recipient of the letter.)

The trip through the United States was quite monotonous. A short time out of New York there appeared a few small mountains and some big forests, but for the most part a vast stretch of plains with a few hills. In the southern part the fields are cultivated. There are also fruit trees and some fields are all white with the blossoms of fruit trees, very beautiful and planted in straight rows. The houses are often quite isolated from



each other, but there are also some big towns. Everything is well built. There are also fine granaries. The houses are generally whitish-grey or greenish, the barns are red brown and mostly constructed from wood. There are also large herds of horses, cattle, sheep and swine, with chickens intermingled here and there. These seem to be in plentiful stock here and all the animals seem to get along well together.

On the 12th of May at 8 a.m., we arrived at St. Paul, Minnesota, where we were well received and well-taken-care-of by the Benedictine Fathers. The Father Prior showed us around a nearby hospital with 80 patients and four operating rooms.

In the evening at 5 p.m. we set out for Winnipeg, where we stayed with the Oblate Fathers. We were received with joy and friendliness wherever we went.

At 9 p.m., May 13th, we began the last stretch of our journey to Muenster, where we arrived, thanks be to God, on May 14th at 2 p.m. We were taken to the House-chapel for a short visit by Fr. Prior. Then at 4 p.m. we went to May devotions conducted by the Prior. He addressed the community and told them they could consider themselves fortunate in that the long awaited Sisters, destined to found a hospital in Humboldt, had now arrived. He recommended this great undertaking to their spirit of charity and to their prayers. As we stepped out of the church, the Prior was waiting for us with a number of important personalities of the community. Among these was the Mayor of Humboldt (O.W. Anderson). The ladies and gentlemen in the group were very friendly and manifested their joy.

Today we remained here (at Muenster) with the Rev. Fathers. Tomorrow the Prior will go with us to Humboldt, where negotiations for the building of the hospital will begin immediately.

On the trip everything went well, in spite of the fact that we never slept more than one or two hours (every night: transl.), and then never without disturbances. Thus we arrived in relatively good shape, for which we give credit to the prayers of our dearly beloved and unforgettable Sisters, since we ourselves have done little praying so far.

Now I must close for today, for I am very tired. You have here the highlights of our trip. We must now get down to work and be prepared for sufferings which surely will come our way and during which we will feel the

companionship of our dear Sisters who, though separated from us by great distances, will be united to us in spirit. We end here with many kisses of the hand for you, dear Rev. Mother, and greetings for all the Sisters. To the Rev. Father Confessor we also send many kisses of the hand. Once more your prayers are requested for your greatly indebted daughters and Sisters in the far-away land of America."

From this letter it appears that a good impression was made by the reception accorded the Sisters and Fr. Trunk, but no mention was made of the disappointment experienced on that same day. Apparently the Rev. Fr. Trunk had telegraphed from Winnipeg as to the time of their arrival, but the telegram was delayed and arrived only a day later. As a result there was no one at the station in Muenster to receive them. Tired though they were, not having had the services of a sleeping car all the way from New York, they themselves began to drag their suitcases from the station toward the Monastery of the Benedictine Fathers. Some of the Fathers who saw the Sisters coming from afar went out to meet them and relieved them of their burdens. It embarrassed the Sisters somewhat to have the priests render this service to them.

After the first greetings, Rev. Fr. Casimir, O.S.B., brought a pailful of rainwater and said in a friendly tone: "So, now Sisters, you may wash yourselves." Seemingly their appearance indicated that a washing was not entirely unnecessary. This was quite understandable after such a long trip. They began to wonder, however, as they looked at the dark brown water. Up until now they had not experienced or known that one could get washed in that kind of water. They put a good face on the matter and thought to themselves that they ought to conform to the customs of the land.

In the evening they prepared themselves for a well-deserved rest and looked forward to a refreshing sleep, but alas, they received some uninvited nocturnal visitors, small in stature but all the more stinging in nature. As they were not used to this sort of thing they spent the night out of bed, not only that first night but many subsequent nights.

(\*Translator's note: bed-bugs seem indicated).

On the 20th of May Sister Augustina gave the following report:

"On Monday, the 15th of May, we drove with Rev. Fr. Prior to Humboldt, about two hours drive from here, to meet the Mayor, as well as other notable personalities of the town and to investigate possible building sites. We were well received by all the townspeople. Indeed we had been expected impatiently for some time since our departure had been delayed for so long.

A general meeting of the whole community of townspeople was held on May 16th to start negotiations for the building project and all that was reported to them orally seemed to have produced an impression favorable to our cause.

On the 17th we drove to Prince Albert with Fr. Prior in order to be presented to the Most Rev. Bishop and receive his blessing. As we approached the episcopal palace we could see him sitting on the veranda of the house with a large gathering of priests. As he saw us coming, he came down the steps and then as far as the garden enclosure. There we had the privilege of first greeting him. After that we were led by the grey-haired Church dignitary into a private room. In a prolonged interview with Fr. Prior he assured us of his joy over the Sisters' arrival. He said he could give them no money, since he was poor himself. He did, however, agree to allow the Sisters, as a special privilege, to have the Blessed Sacrament as soon as the building in progress made that feasible.

All this was interpreted for us by the Prior.

After supper we were called for by two Sisters from Notre Dame de Sion Convent who had a boarding-school in the neighborhood. We were well received by the Sister Superior



and all the other Sisters and we stayed with them until the 20th of May. During the day we spent the time in the Assistant-Superior's room, where the Sisters came in turns, and whenever they were free from class duties, to teach us English. We also visited the recently opened Sisters' hospital which impressed us favorably.

Fr. Prior interviewed the architect who had built the hospital and he agreed to draw up a plan immediately for our hospital. Whenever his plan would be completed and accepted, it would be sent to the government for approval. After the requirements of the government would be met, we would receive 50 cents per day for each patient (i.e., 2 kronen, 40 heller). As soon as the plans return from the government construction can begin on the new hospital and the same architect will direct the whole program. The Prior worked feverishly to get things moving as quickly as possible.

In spite of all this, the hospital was not to be ready until the following Spring. By the time all was approved and prepared, the summer had flown by. Then, if the building was to be of brick, as seemed to be the case, work would go on into the fall. In addition, time for the inside to dry and to be furnished had to be considered.

The local doctors wanted us to begin taking care of patients in a private home immediately, but the Mayor was opposed to the idea because he thought the people would not learn to trust the Sisters if they began in such a small way to treat patients. They also felt that this image could then possibly be carried over into the hospital care. Fr. Prior was of the same opinion and believed it better not to take such a risk before the completion of the hospital.

But, our being here is not a waste of time since government policy is that only trained nurses take care of sick people. These nurses must have at least two years of training and pay a sizable fee for the education. They receive good remuneration when they are working as trained nurses. Fr. Prior suggested, as soon as the building was under way, that we go to some hospital for some preparation, even though we would not have to remain very long, in view of our previous experience in nursing. At the same time we would possibly learn enough English to pass the nurses' exams. Nurses must have their registration in this country in order to be able to do nursing.

Fr. Prior is planning to inquire at Saskatoon about us

being accepted by the Sisters there. He thought they would gladly accept us and not only take care of our needs but also give us some remuneration since we would be helping with the care of the sick.

We are, thank God, in good health, and happy since we have found here nothing but hearts full of love and gratitude towards us. I had never expected the Sisters would be so respected here. When we travelled (by train) to Prince Albert, we had to pay only half-fare. The people here, a great many of whom are German, associate freely with us since we are the first German Sisters to come to Canada. This gives the people great joy.

But, dear Sisters, when you hear that things were going so well for us until now, do not forget to pray for us, since the good Lord knows that we are just a young sprig which the Most Reverend Bishop desires to see grow into a mighty tree. At this point God lets us taste only sweetness and spares us the hard crust until later, when surely we will be able to digest it more readily.

With regard to our prayer life, things are not so good since we are always on the go, having to be now here and now there. Our prayer life is thus frequently disturbed. I am sure the good Lord has reason at times to be dis-satisfied. This also holds for my efforts at writing. Everything has to be done in a great rush."

Sister Augustina then describes the agricultural activities of the country here. For these Sisters everything was new, and things seemed to be done so easily and simply.

Her letter continues thus:

"As I mentioned before, we were given a kind of reception in the Notre Dame Convent. We went to Communion with the Sisters of the Convent. We were also invited to their recreation. They arranged for a car to be at our disposal and along with one of the local Sisters we toured the town and saw the sights. This town is very large and beautiful, but so is Humboldt quite big and is growing rapidly. It is a good location for a hospital.

The Rev. Prior goes to so much trouble for us. He travels

a great deal and spares himself no fatigue to get the construction under way. He incurs heavy expenses for us without an afterthought. Thus, when we travelled to Prince Albert, he paid the fare for us. Once we had dinner on the train at his expense and this is no small matter since people here eat more than in Austria. We always have a good appetite.

Dear Reverend Mother, you will probably receive a letter from Notre Dame Convent (Prince Albert). The Superior is so fine a person that one rarely finds one like her. She realized that our knowledge of English was poor so she thought at least one of us should stay with them to learn the language. She has great sympathy for us, knowing through long experience, how hard the life of a missionary is at the outset. She would allow us to live according to our Rule, would take of needs at no cost to us, and be willing to take in other Sisters who would come later. I felt I could not go along with this plan and I told her that I would write to you, Rev. Mother, since I could not accept the offer without your permission. She was in total agreement with this. I feel if we spent this time in a hospital, we could learn more about the care of the sick and still have the opportunity to learn English. I conferred with Fr. Prior on this point, and he also felt it would be better to be in a hospital.

The Rev. Father Prior inquired whether you intended to send enough Sisters to have all the work in the hospital done by us, since having hired help would be much too expensive. It is the practice in Sisters' hospitals, when there are enough of them, to have them do all the work. I would prefer this plan, especially since no rooms for outside help are being provided in the hospital, with the exception of that for one male assistant, whose help is necessary right from the start. I would be very happy, dear Rev. Mother, if they could come in the Fall and stay on immediately, for when the building is finished there is all the furnishing to be done. Whether I myself can be present for it I do not know. Fr. Prior thinks I should be there but I begged him to let me go. I asked him to consider it since he shoulders the full responsibility in any event and since I'm unable even to converse with the construction foreman it would be better if he continue on our behalf. I told him that I could be gaining knowledge at a hospital during that time, particularly if I were at Saskatoon, which is not far at all. He finally agreed to this.



On June 13th, Sister Augustina was able to report that the construction site had been purchased and paid for.

"We drove back to a place outside Humboldt, which we had visited frequently and where we acquired a nice piece of land with water supplied by pipe. The landsite measures  $7\frac{1}{2}$  acres and is conveniently situated.

With regard to piped in water supply, this is not easy to obtain since the town does not have its own yet, but is **only** planning to install one. Therefore, the only source at this time is that of the railway company. The owner of the property, Mr. Philip Flory, could have had \$100 an acre for the land but he did not sell it. Now, for the purpose of a hospital, he was selling it for only \$50 an acre.

We had been offered other building sites -- two of 10 acres each, by the government, completely free. But Fr. Prior thought it would be better to accept other benefits from the government rather than this one since the land title would not be given outright to the Sisters but only its use as long as the hospital stood on it. If, however, the hospital would be sold, or transferred to some other site the ownership of the land would revert to the government.

Then there was also the offer of a wonderful plot of land, also 10 acres and completely free, by one of the Humboldt doctors (Dr. Barry). This location was, however, quite far out of town and the other doctors as well as the townspeople were opposed to its acquisition. Fr. Prior felt it better to conform to these peoples' view for fear of creating ill-feeling and jeopardizing future relationships with them as well as the possibility of receiving help from them.

About the latter site we have the following note in a letter of the Rev. Prior to Sister Pulcheria: 'Apart from that, the spot was really attractive, out in the open it seems to me. But the other medical men would not allow the hospital to be built on Dr. Barry's land and since these men were influential people it would be better not to rub them the wrong way.'

"A few days ago we received the plans from the architect which look rather attractive but we do have to make a few changes, which would not require much time to do. Thus we hope to be able to commence with the construction

fairly soon. We had another prospective building site, 10 acres, 5 acres of which would have been given outright and the 5 others sold to us at \$30 an acre. But there was a mortgage against this land and it would take a few weeks to clear this up. When we told this man that we could not accept his offer because of the probable delay resulting from the mortgage, he broke down and cried. It hurt him so much to think that the hospital would not be on his land."

On June 13, 1911, Mother Augustine wrote a second letter to M. Pulcheria. In part it reads as follows:

"Dear Rev. Mother:

As you have just seen we have now a nice, well-situated construction site, provided with a supply of water. Although it is somewhat more costly than any of the other sites Fr. Prior believes that in actuality the price is lower because of the water supply being included.

The other site, although somewhat cheaper and well situated, did not satisfy me completely. Its main advantage was the water supply; but apart from that, it was located on the other side of town and one had to cross the whole town to get to church. This location is about half a mile from the church and outside the town limits. Thus there will be no taxes to pay. The taxes in the town are low at this time, but could eventually go up.

Even in the event that the town would grow to the extent that the hospital would come within its limits the tax-free status is something the Rev. Prior safeguarded immediately. He was also thoughtful enough to procure other benefits for us such as the town providing grounds for landscaping, sewage disposal system and electricity. It was also agreed to look after the sewage disposal at present since there are still no sewage pipes provided as yet.

When we had finished these transactions a weight was lifted from my heart, although I felt very sorry for the other man. I believe sincerely that it was the prayers of Rev. Mother which changed the tide of events and reached a happy conclusion.

I hope, dear Rev. Mother, that all will go well from now on. Rev. Fr. Prior is very devoted and tireless at his job. The amount of time and effort this project has cost him God only knows. Were it not for him we would have a hard time since we have not mastered the language as yet.

Although the people favor the hospital project and are glad it is being built, most of our dealings are with business people and the government authorities, who speak only English. Still, the community is mostly German.

The priest in Humboldt is also very capable and helpful to the Prior. The building site was paid for immediately and now we have only \$20 in the cash box. If it is possible for you to send us some more, we would be very grateful. We ask you from the bottom of our hearts to pray for us, for we need it. It has been so long since we have been away from the convent that we feel really homesick for it. Sister Gabriela especially must feel it, but even I have strong bouts of it at times. Still, I know you are praying."

Now a message came from the Rev. Fr. Prior himself. In a letter dated June 21, he discussed the new foundation and the reason for his prolonged silence. Apparently he was waiting to have something definite to write about.

"Before all else I must thank you for having made it possible, in spite of all the difficulties, to have sent us Sisters. The dear Lord will certainly reward you abundantly, and certainly also bless your convent and hospital in Klagenfurt. I am firmly convinced that the new foundation will have a bright future, and that gradually this young sapling will grow to become a big tree. May the good Lord bless this good work."

After that he discussed the search for and the purchase of, the building site along lines similar to those to be found in Sister Augustine's letter. Fr. Prior was of the opinion that the hospital should have only

between 15 to 20 beds. Still, the Architect made the designs for between 25 to 28 beds, to which Fr. Prior did not agree. Changes had to be made. It was agreed the building would be of brick, since prices of wood had risen enormously in the past year. The reason for the increase was the extensive use of wood by the many immigrants who were building their houses at this time. Wood was just not to be had.

Up to a year ago the Prior and the medical men thought the hospital could be built for \$10,000. Now the Prior was sure that it could not be done under \$15,000 and, as we will see later, even this figure was too low an estimate. He hoped to collect enough through free-will offerings and subscriptions to reduce the size of the necessary loan for the building to \$10,000. He added the remark that the costs could be a little higher still. Since one could not get a loan under 7% interest, it would mean a lightening of the Sisters' burden here if the Motherhouse came to their assistance.

But the obstacles that presented themselves in this connection were insurmountable. The Weiss affair caused such a stir among the people and in the minds of the civil authorities that a great deal of mistrust of the clergy and religious institutions resulted. Be this the cause or be it fear on the part of the civil authorities that the convent of the Elizabethan Sisters was about to invest large sums of money in their American foundation, in any case the right to administer their property at their own discretion was taken away from the superiors of the convent.

This convent had always been under the jurisdiction of the local ordinary and could not, without his permission, undertake any important project or make a large expenditure of money. Now was added the supervisory role of the government, and to top it all, that of the finance



minister. These functionaries, especially the last mentioned, kept such tight control over everything that the convent authorities could no longer freely administer its affairs. The smallest transaction of buying or selling and any sizeable donation had to be approved by these three levels of government. This was the reason why the convent was no longer able to be of help in respect to the afore-mentioned. Besides there was also the heavy losses suffered as a result of the failure of the Central Bank.

It seemed that the dear Lord wanted to show the necessity of relying on His Providence, rather than on men and money. Actually things went better than one could have hoped for.

Another source of worry were the trained nurses without whom the hospital could not receive the 50 cents per day per patient grant from the government. None of the Sisters who had come here had any official diploma from either **Austria** or **Canada**. For that reason they wanted to enter **hospitals** where they could acquire the necessary skills, especially in the areas of clinical experience which they were still lacking. There was also the need to learn English in order to write the required examinations. Otherwise it would be necessary, at the beginning at least, to hire trained nurses and that would be, for the small new hospital, a heavy financial burden since at the time the monthly fee for one nurse was about \$100.

Still Fr. Prior restrained the Sisters from going to hospitals for training until the plans for the building are completed and the construction itself is underway. In the letter referred to, he writes further:

"For the present the Sisters are living in Muenster at the Monastery. A few weeks ago they had occasion to nurse the daughter of a poor family who was stricken with a serious throat illness. I had warned these people

to call a doctor but because of the expenses they neglected to do this. The Sisters had her back on her feet in a short time.

Last week we arranged a trip for the Sisters through a part of our German Catholic colony. On Wednesday they drove from here through Humboldt on to Fulda. There they took part, on Thursday, in the Corpus Christi procession. On Friday they went through Dead Moose Lake (now Marysburg) and Lake Lenore to Annaheim and saw the beautiful churches there. In Annaheim they stayed Saturday and Sunday and returned to Muenster after Mass.

I must not fail to say that the three Sisters made a very favorable impression by their discretion, humility and reserve. An undertaking in the hands of such good people cannot but draw God's blessing upon itself.

And now I still have a big request. In our little Monastery the kitchen set up is very poor since we have no lay-brothers to take care of it. Outsiders tend to be unreliable and are hard to find for such a job. At present we have an elderly couple to take care of the cooking and baking, but the work is too hard for them and they would like to withdraw. The Sisters here think that you might be able to send us some Sisters to handle the cooking, baking and washing for the Monastery. The kitchen and dining hall, as well as the pantry and supply rooms, are in a separate building. We also have in the neighborhood a house with six rooms which could be adapted to the Sisters' use. Usually we are nine people in the Monastery besides three hired men, but it is to be expected that this number will increase as time goes on. We make no big demands for special quality cooking and baking but are satisfied with simple, healthy, plain fare. I believe three Sisters could easily handle the cooking, baking and washing for the Monastery. I would like to ask you to help us in this matter if at all possible.

As we have learned from a later letter, written by Fr. Prior to Sister Pulcheria, Dr. Barry fixed up his new house as a small temporary hospital. He had a few patients who needed appendectomies and he was anxious to show the people that this sort of operation could be performed in Humboldt. At first he would have liked the Sisters as nurses, but I dissuaded them from accepting this assignment for fear that some failure would occur and hurt the Sisters' reputation. We had a doctor and registered nurse come from Saskatoon. A few days after the operation the doctor asked the Sisters

again to take over the nursing care of these patients. Sister Augustina accepted the invitation. Soon other cases presented themselves, such as a leg operation for a school girl, a broken leg, and an eye operation, etc. Things went so well that he said Sister Augustina was better than a registered nurse. When there was to be another appendectomy he insisted on Sisters alone being present, apart from the assisting physician. The operation took place and succeeded so well that in 10 days the patient was allowed to leave according to the doctor's verdict. She preferred, however, to stay on another three days with the good Sisters."

Sister Augustina also reported in a letter to the Rev. Mother, on the way things went in the first days with regard to the care of the sick:

"I have just returned from Dr. Barry's hospital where I was relieved by Sr. Philomena. I have been working there for five months now and have assisted at seven operations, of which two were appendectomies. There was also the case of a woman having an eye removed. At the last two operations I had to administer the chloroform since the doctor assigned to this function could not be there.

How terrified I was at this you can imagine, since I have only witnessed one anaesthesia myself. Nevertheless, Dr. Barry thought I understood the business very well. I also had to treat a Protestant man with a broken foot. He was said to be formerly unfavorably disposed toward the Sisters, but since he was quite sick and needed a lot of care, particularly during the night, he expressed his satisfaction to the other patients and is now in quite the opposite frame of mind. A woman who had blood poisoning and who, according to the doctor, was sure to die is now fairly well recovered.

Oh! how good the dear Lord is that he should cause us to be so successful in our care of the sick. Our Sister companions must surely be praying for us, and I thank each one from the bottom of my heart and ask that they continue the same in the future for our prayer life is suffering these days. Recently I have not been able to recite the entire office on any one particular day. Private duty nursing is very demanding since the patients are so exacting. Thus I once spent eight days

with a woman patient without being able to go to bed for even one night. The wages are good, however, that is \$3.00 a day and this will help us in the building of the new hospital. Also the service to the sick we have rendered thus far will benefit the collection which I am about to undertake (until now I had no time for it) since it has made us better known amongst the people.

I can now report to you with great joy that the building is in progress. I hope that you will rejoice with us, knowing that we will soon have a home of our own. Everyone here expects the construction to move ahead rapidly. Fr. Prior and Fr. Rudolph have set everything in motion now to have the construction speeded up. We beg you, therefore, insisently, to pray well and hard that the project proceed successfully and end happily.

We will have plenty to do. If only the necessary manpower would not be lacking. Dr. Barry is also very happy about our hospital. He is on the road nearly day and night with his horse and I often wonder how the good man can hold out. The two other doctors are absent. If I could fly like thoughts do, I would certainly be there with you to report in person how things are going in America."

On the 17th of August she continued her letter and congratulated M. Pulcheria on the occasion of her nameday and then related the following:

"That we have a fairly bright future ahead of us now will no doubt also be a source of joy to you and will make you forget the many heartaches associated with the project. The reward for all eternity will be yours. Certainly before all is said and done we will run into many difficulties yet.

From what I have observed while working in the operating room and with the patients, it would seem that the doctors are satisfied with our work but the language problem makes things difficult especially in weighty matters. The fact is we have, through lack of time, learned hardly any English, and the doctors are not proficient in German by any means. I must now close. It is already midnight, about the time when you will be



going to Mass and receiving Communion. May God reward you a thousand times for all the prayers offered on our behalf.

Your spiritual children in America.

Sr. Augustina."

Sister Mary Elizabeth goes on to write: One can easily see from this letter the Sisters were not idle, but strove to be faithful to their calling with all their strength, i.e., in the care of the sick under circumstances that are foreign to them and make great demands on their energies. The good Lord has certainly given them special strength to bolster their courage for the task assigned to them, namely, the founding of a convent and a hospital. After God they are most indebted to Fr. Prior Bruno, who devoted himself to the Sisters with selfless and fatherly care. This can be gathered from his letter to M. Pulcheria. The following is his letter of Sept 20, 1911.

"Very Reverend and Respected Mother Superior:

Your friendly message of August 29th reached me about a week ago as I returned home from the General Chapter of our American Monastery in Newark. I would have replied immediately but I had to first orientate myself after an absence of half a month. As the Most Rev. Bishop had also arrived on the 13th of the month and stayed until the 17th, on which day he imparted Holy Orders to a cleric here, I had not the occasion to go to Humboldt until yesterday. But now I can give you news which is all the more satisfactory.

First of all a word about the Sisters. They have gained for themselves the respect and love of everyone in the few months of their presence here and I must bear witness that they are good and worthy religious. At the beginning they struggled with homesickness, which is quite natural for people who spent so many years in the quiet place of the cloister and were then abruptly

transplanted from there. They struggled bravely against the homesickness and are now over the worst of it. At the beginning they wanted to go into a local hospital until their new hospital was ready in order to gain clinical experience in the care of the sick and to learn the English language. I advised them to wait until the construction of the hospital was under way. Even then the superior would have to remain here in any case, since frequent consultations with her about the building would be necessary. The other two, however, could go.

As you know, there was a delay in the construction and so I felt it were better for these two Sisters to go to some hospital. We then wrote to a number of Sisterhood hospitals in Western Canada and asked if the two Sisters could go to them for a few months of experience. From every one of these places word came back that they would be glad to receive our Sisters but that they had absolutely no room to put them up. Their entire buildings were filled with patients and they themselves (these Sisters) were crammed together in tiny quarters. I visited one of these hospitals myself and saw in reality the whole building from basement to roof overflowed with patients. Where the Sisters themselves slept is still a riddle to me. This particular Sisterhood promised however to take in the Sisters of St. Elizabeth in the Winter as soon as their new building was completed.

In the meantime an offer came from the Benedictine Sisters in Duluth, Minnesota, to receive our two Sisters in their big hospital and not only to teach them English but also to allow them to follow courses in their School of Nursing. And thus Sister Philomena and Sister Gabriela have left yesterday (Sept. 18), for Duluth. Sister Augustina is currently on a begging tour of our German colony of St. Peter to gather alms for the building project and has had so far unexpected good success. By the time the two others left she had taken in from the Muenster and Annaheim communities within 14 days \$700, to be given when the people would have sold their harvest produce. If the other 21 communities would give on the average even half this amount each, then half the costs of the construction proper would be taken care of. You can well imagine how glad the Sisters are at the unexpected results of the canvass. In addition, the town council of Humboldt foresees making a contribution of \$2,500 out of tax money. It wishes to wait for the coming year when the building has made good progress so as to prevent any ill feeling among the voters and ratepayers since this contribution out of public monies has to be approved by the taxpayers.

As you can see, there is no need to worry about the financial matter. Of course, there will remain, once the construction is finished, a few thousand dollars debt but certainly they will not be burdened with a heavy debt. As I wrote to you in my last letter, it would certainly be a relief for the good Sisters if you in the Motherhouse in Klagenfurt could loan the remaining sum required to cover the costs of the building and furnishing, after all the contributions have been totalled. But if the Motherhouse is not able conveniently to make the required loan, the Sisters here would have no difficulty in making it here. They would have to pay higher interest rate. Do not have any worries about these financial affairs. The good Lord has already shown that the new foundation is pleasing to Him and that He will not abandon them.

Now I will give you joyful news about the progress of the building. As you certainly know the Sisters purchased, a few months ago, for the sum of \$375, a fine building site comprising  $7\frac{1}{2}$  acres (3 hectares) of land on the outskirts of Humboldt. It is one km. from the railway station. The Sisters must also have written you in August the excavations for the building were completed at the cost of \$252. It took a long time, though, before the building itself was begun. The fault lay principally with the Health Minister of the Province, who took a long time to approve the plans which had to be submitted to him.

These plans were sent to him by the Architect on July 10, and when I visited him in his office on August 6 he told me he had not yet seen them. Upon my insistence that there was some urgency to the matter, he promised to get it immediately. At the end of August I wired him to ask him to let me know how far the matter had advanced. His reply was that he had sent the plans with the sketches of the desired changes back to the architect. At the same time I received a letter from the architect saying he approved some of the alterations and then returned them to the Minister with a protest against the others because they represented no noticeable advantage and would only raise the cost considerably.

Finally the plans were approved and the architect announced he was ready to receive bids. Yesterday he brought the bids to Humboldt with the building contract for the walls and the cement work ready to be signed with the required formalities. The building contractor (the man speaks German and his name is P. Hansen) obliged himself to have all the cement work of the ground floor and the brickwork up to the roof completed by Nov. 1, 1911.

At the bottom of the walls he will lay pipes to catch the moisture and drain it off, thus assuring dryness on the ground floor. Besides that the basement will have a thick cement floor. Under this on the walls of cement as far as they extend will be a covering of asphalt to prevent all dampness from seeping through. For this he will receive \$8,200 (41,000 Kronen). This sum will be paid in five instalments, the last of which to occur 32 days after completion of the job. With the bids for the subcontracts such as plastering, carpentering, ironwork, heating, water piping, bath and toilet facilities, electric fixtures, glasswork, the architect was not satisfied that the cost should be up to \$14,000. He hoped to receive other bids which would reduce the cost by a few thousand dollars. He believes the building can be covered with the roof the beginning of the real winter's cold, so that work on the inside can proceed during the winter.

The hospital structure will have as ground plan measurement of 40 x 56 feet (about  $12\frac{1}{4}$  x 17M), without taking in the projecting half-circular curve of the chapel and the operating room immediately above it. Also the two meter projecting porch is not counted in. The ground floor has an open height of 9 feet (about 3M) and holds the central steam furnace, wash machines, kitchen and dining room for the Sisters, living space for a hired man and cellar space. The groundfloor is about  $\frac{3}{5}$ M below the ground level. The first floor holds a nice, roomy chapel, a reception room, patients' rooms, bathrooms and toilets. On the next floor is the spacious operating room with overhead lighting, preparation and sterilization rooms, a room for the hospital chaplain, patients' room, bathrooms and toilets. On top, in a fireproof attic are the living quarters of the Sisters.

All rooms are well lighted and provided with ventilation fixtures. The patients' room and wards have about 23-24 cubic meter space per bed. On the outside a metallic sheltering roof will be constructed in front of the entrance in order to assure the transfer of patients from the ambulance without exposing them to the vagaries of the weather. Two iron staircases extend on the outside from the roof to the ground in order to provide escape in case of fire to the Sisters and the patients.

As you can see, the building conforms in every regard to the highest standards which can be found in any modern hospital.

The total cost of the site and the building according to the latest calculation will come to about \$22,000



(110,000 kr). Since this includes the central heating system, electric wiring, water piping, and fixtures, bath and toilet fixtures, as well as cupboards for clothing, linen and supplies, the additional inside furnishing and equipment will not be expensive. Under normal circumstances the hospital will have room, in addition to the Sisters, the chaplain, and a manservant, for 18 patients. In case of necessity this figure can be increased by one-quarter.

From your letter I can see you are worried about the approval of the Sisters for nursing. I inquired about this matter of the Health Commissioner when I visited him at the beginning of August. He assured me the approval depended on him entirely. He does not have a definite program set up for all nurses to follow. Since he visits all the hospitals of the province from time to time, he bases his decision of approval upon the performance of the nurses. He said he could easily see if a nurse understood her business and if so would give his approval regardless of where she had taken her course."

Fr. Prior reports further on the care the Sisters give to the sick as was mentioned above. Then he continues:

"I feel He (God) was so assailed by the Sisters that He could not but help them. He wanted to give them trust and confidence, since at the outset they were very uneasy. No sooner were all the patients out of the provisional hospital than the Sisters received calls from all sides to do nursing in private homes. They even received telephone calls asking them to act as midwives. In the end they had to stop taking on any such work, otherwise the two Sister would never have gone away to a hospital for training.

When the Sisters came here first they complained sometimes: 'If we could only have some patients come to us once the hospital is finished!' Now they themselves say they have no fears in this regard. I must confess that I myself sometimes feel the hospital will turn out to be too small and that soon a large wing will have to be added. In any case, things are not as bad as was feared, namely, that the Sisters would not have any patients come to them. In addition the Sisters are not only healthier and stronger than they were in Klagenfurt, as they themselves say, but they are cheerful and full of hope. Often have they told

me: 'If only the Sisters over there knew how good our prospects here are.' If I then said: 'Why don't you write them?' the answer would be: 'It's no use, they wouldn't believe us. But if we wrote things are going badly, they would believe us.'

Perhaps, Reverend Mother, you will feel the same way about what I am writing to you. And I cannot blame you for it because there is such a difference between the situation here and that over there. Someone who knows only the situation over there cannot possibly have any conception as to that over here. I assure you, though, that all I have written in this long letter corresponds exactly to facts.

In closing, one more prayer. As you have perhaps seen in the St. Peter's Bote, our Monastery has been raised to the status of an Abbacy in Canada. My humble self was named the first Abbot and, God willing, the solemn consecration will take place in our Monastery chapel this coming October 18 on the Feast of St. Luke. I would like to ask you to recommend to the prayer of your community on that day our new Abbacy and its new Abbot and also a small prayer for me to God that He may always bless us.

Your most devoted in Christ,

P. Bruno Doerfler, O.S.B."

Sister Mary Elizabeth continues her narrative:

Now, after so many obstacles have been overcome, construction finally got under way. Two Sisters were in Duluth while the good Sister Augustina remained alone, which did not appeal to her very much since she had spent so many years in a community of many members. She was, however, very busy, and that kept homesickness away and made it easier for her to forget that she was alone in a strange land. She was accompanied by a priest for the most part of her begging tours, which were very successful.

Sister Augustina wrote:

"It is certain that we will not be able to complete the grounds this Fall since (at the end of Sept.) the weather is already very cold. We do, however, hope to have some more fine weather. Here they have what is known in Austria as 'Old Women's Summer'. In Canada they called it 'Indian Summer'. We have not yet completed three communities and have collected \$1,700. There are in all 23 settlements in the colony. To the Monastery we are very much indebted and still we received from it \$200 for the building fund. On Sept. 24th and 25th we saw snow in America for the first time. An additional worry for us, concerned the water supply such as it is."

On October 6th, Sister Augustine again wrote to Klagenfurt.

She said:

"We had hoped to receive our supply of water from the railway company since their conduits run right by the hospital. But how long their supply would last, I do not know."

She was right. The supply did not last for us and not even for the railway company since Burton Lake was all dried up. Thus the hospital has had to manage without it for many years, use poor quality of water and purchase the drinking water. Attempts were made to dig wells, one of which extended to a depth of ? feet. Still the hospital has no supply of water of its own.

In the year 1911, when the hospital was being built, winter began very early and was very severe. The begging tour had to be interrupted and the work on the construction stopped because of the severe cold at the beginning of November. The walls of the ground floor only were completed. Thus the winter went by and nothing could be done but to wait for Spring to continue the construction.

In the meantime Sister Augustina hoped that in the Spring Mother Pulcheria would herself come and organize things. She herself was uneasy about the prospects of setting things up satisfactorily. Hence, she repeated invitations and requests for the Reverend Mother to come. Already we find her making recommendations for her trip:

"You must take a good rest when you arrive in New York. Stay there at least two days and then take sleeping car accommodation for the remaining trip. As hasty a trip as we made you would certainly not survive. I marvel still how we were able to live through it. If we had not a sleeper for the last night we would certainly have become ill. Sister Gabriela and I had swollen feet and felt pain in them. We were afraid they would break out into open sores. None of this was true for Sister Philomena.

I am very busy sewing during the time left over from nursing the sick. Today (Nov. 25th) I still have to drive 14 miles to see a sick lady. She is the wife of a storekeeper and is said to be very ill. There are so many sick people and no place to house them. Dr. Barry himself resides in his house now and so I have to visit the sick in their homes. This is very inconvenient.

It is unfortunate that just this year the cold weather started so early. In three weeks the walls would have been finished and work on the inside could have proceeded. But the dear Lord seems to take pleasure in seeing us pilgrims without a home of our own. But let everything be in God's hands. The more, I think, we now yearn for the convent life, the more we will appreciate it later on.

As you might have seen in the newspaper, I have bought an additional  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres of land. It was, of course, very expensive, costing \$200. It was beautiful bushland contiguous to our property and within the town limits. The most Rev. Abbot thought we just had to buy it."

In the meantime Mother Pulcheria became ill in Klagenfurt. This was a source of great concern to Sister Augustina, who was looking forward to her arrival. On December 27th she wrote:



"Very Rev. Mother: With great joy I received your last letter, a sign that your health has been fairly well restored, thanks be to God. Yesterday I returned from nursing a lady who would have liked me to stay on for another month. I just could not do it, for my own health was being impaired by it. I had a high fever for a few days. I think the cause was the lack of sleep since the time remaining over from nursing I had to spend on prayer and the care of the little baby.

I earned \$40 for that month, which is really a bit less than in other places, but since the lady had tuberculosis which is a lingering illness, I did not want to take more.

Rev. Mother, you ask whether the Sisters should come in the Spring even if the hospital is not ready. Yes, of course, let there be many and let them be brave ones who come, for there will certainly be enough work. If the good Lord grants a nice Spring, the work will proceed rapidly. A good part is already completed and all the material is ready at hand.

About the debt you need not worry too much. I am not alarmed by it. If we could have loaned the money from outside the country, it would have been preferable because of the high interest rate here, but that is seemingly not an easy thing to do since the citizenry is still suspicious enough even though there is no justification for it. Concerning the \$2,500 promised us from Humboldt, a meeting was held last week. Only 14 ratepayers in attendance. However, the sum of 12,500 kronen is assured us.

The townspeople of Humboldt are always very friendly, in particular the Mayor. I also got to know Dr. Neely last week. He is our representative in Parliament and is frequently absent from here. He was very friendly and wished us success in our hospital project. At the same time he also promised to assist us in every way possible. He is a charitable man and, although he is not a Catholic, he gives freely to the Church and other worthy causes."

On the 18 of February, 1912, Sister Augustina reported again:

"I was 14 days away nursing. The man died after much pain and suffering. Then I had to stay another 14 days in

order to console the lady, who was the man's sister. These people (the Dauk family of Annaheim) are much concerned about us and are our best benefactors. Since the man's wife and daughter had predeceased him and he had been all alone, his relatives bequeathed me all his household furnishings such as stove, dishes, a good deal of coffee and sugar, five big pillows, two fine featherbeds (goose feathers), a brand-new meat-grinding machine, three fine gold rings such as we wear, and many other small articles. I also received \$20, and when the hospital is ready, we will get two small pigs. Earlier they had made an offering of \$35 to us."

The Very Reverend Abbot Bruno, who was to travel to Klagenfurt in the Spring to accompany the Sisters who were to come over, wrote on March 30:

"I was always certain about my trip overseas. Now I have definitely decided to go and expect to leave here between the 15th and 20th of April."

Then he gave news of the hospital construction.

"Since all the subcontracts have not yet been let, I cannot leave immediately after Easter. By the middle of the Month of April things will have reached that stage. The wall construction, which has been stopped since All Saint's Day because of the cold, will start again right after Easter. It will not be possible to take possession of the building before the 1st of August since the walls have to be allowed to dry thoroughly.

Furthermore, I have the feeling that the architect is very slow and does not insist that things move as fast as possible towards completion.

The people of Humboldt were very sorry that the hospital could not have been opened last Fall. Many told me they thought it could have been filled throughout the winter. We are beginning to fear that in a short time the building will prove to be too small.

Before leaving here I wish to be of help to the Sisters in making a temporary loan until the building is finished. After that it will be easier to make one on the basis of a mortgage. As far as can be seen at this time, a loan of about \$15,000 will suffice. Last fall we took initial steps to procure a loan. But since construction had to be stopped early on account of the oncoming winter, we let those plans drop for the time being in order to avoid the Sisters paying interest for six months unnecessarily."

On the 22nd of April he wrote:

"My departure was delayed for a few days since I did not want to leave before all the formalities connected with the loan of the money for the completion of the hospital in Humboldt were attended to. Now that all is in order I will set out tomorrow, please God."

At the same time as the hospital was being built a small temporary house was constructed. It was meant to be a barn but was remodelled into a dwelling for the Sisters. The two Sisters in Duluth returned for Easter and were kept busy with nursing duties in private homes. They were not able to come out of these places for a long time since they were quarantined because of contagious disease. As we read in a letter Sister Augustina wrote on April 11, 1912. She said also:

"A whole year will soon have flown by in the stream of eternity since we departed from our dear Cloister where so many graces were imparted to us and from the Community of unforgettable Sisters whose many good deeds, teaching and examples we are grateful for. Yes, the 30th of April will surely be the most unforgettable of our lives. Yes, were it not a work of God and had not God's grace strengthened my recalcitrant nature, I would never have been able to make the necessary sacrifices. One can so readily see here the hand of God who chooses the weakest to further His plans."

How the inherited goods, mentioned earlier, were brought to Humboldt, is narrated by Sister Philomena, who was assistant superior at the time:

"Sister Augustina, at the time we were in Duluth, had nursed an elderly gentleman on a farm somewhere near Muenster. Before he died, he bequeathed to her all his household goods. So, after returning from Duluth, Sister Gabriela and I, along with a student studying for the priesthood (but who died beforehood), drove out to Muenster to fetch the property. We drove two horses hitched to a hayrack.

Our destination was about five miles from Muenster. We disembarked at Joe Hoffman's farm and went into the house while Mr. Hoffman's sons went with the student and helped to load up. When the loading was finished the two of us climbed up on top to find a secure spot among this rubble and then proceed homewards.

It must have been an interesting sight, to see two Sisters perched high up on top of this odd assortment of things in a hayrack. The people we met stopped to look up at us in amazement. We arrived back at Muenster in the evening and could not hope to drive further.

The next morning a council was held among the menfolk as to who would accompany us to Humboldt. Since they were all busy, the conclusion was that the Sisters would have to drive alone. But neither of us had ever driven a horse, and the concern was over the possibility of the horses running away. To prevent such a disaster we were given two old horses to be assured nothing would happen to us. We mounted the hayrack and took up our positions in the midst of our domain. The whole personnel of the Monastery was gathered to bid us a fitting farewell. They all laughed heartily. We were proud to be so brave. Perhaps the others thought along different lines, namely, 'here goes snailspace to Humboldt, to arrive there after three hours of safe driving.'

Naturally we had enjoyment and happiness in doing this. As we approached the hospital, under construction, all the workers stopped to look at us in amazement and came to help us unload. Although all the stuff on the wagon was paltry we felt fortunate to have it since it was our property. We now had a stove, two chairs, a table made of unplanned wood, some dishes, three old spoons, and in

addition, a broom. We gave the old horses time out to eat, set up the stove, made some fire, washed the dishes and made tea, which tasted like no other tea we ever drank. We had a lot of fun.

Now time had come to set out on the return journey. The horses seemed to have become stiff after making so long a journey in their old age. However, with the wagon empty, things should go all right. As we figured they should be going faster and started to goad them onwards, alas! one of them stumbled to the ground. His legs had got entwined and he could not get up any more. In spite of the shock we could not help laughing. We got down from the rack and tried by all ways and means to bring the horse to his feet. After a great deal of effort, we actually succeeded in doing just that. To top it off, a piece of the harness broke. We bored a hole in it with a pocket knife and tied things together with our garters since we had no other material at hand.

Very late that night we arrived at Muenster. Here we were teased for being out so late, to the effect that perhaps the horses had run away on us."

There were other horse stories current at the time told by Sister Vicar, of which a couple are related here:

"As I was nursing in Humboldt, I became so homesick that I could not stand it any longer. I asked the lady for an afternoon off, which she readily granted. I was going to set out for Muenster on foot but I went first to see Fr. Rudolph, the pastor of Humboldt, to seek his advice. He said it was impossible to go to Muenster and back the same day. He did, however, offer me an old horse that was good for nothing else and said he could hitch up for me if I so wished. This was agreeable to me. The housekeeper would not hear of letting me drive alone. She insisted on coming along.

The poor animal we hitched up was blind and even deaf. It strode along on its own speed. All at once the reins fell out of the lady's hands and out of the vehicle. We yelled all we could to get the poor thing to stop but to no avail. It just plodded along. I tried to reach forward as far as I could to get a hold of its tail, which I succeeded in doing. I pulled it and then the horse stopped. We fetched the reins, got into the seat again but then the animal would not move. Nothing



helped but to pull the tail again. This done, we were on our way and nearly bursting with laughter.

We saw ripe Saskatoon berries along the wayside and decided to step down to break off a few branches but the horse would not stop, again until its tail was pulled. I pitied the poor thing so much, that it had to make this long trip for us. I would sooner have loaded it up on the wagon and pulled the thing myself. In spite of all this we had a good afternoon in the fresh air."

She told still another story:

"When we once drove to Humboldt with one of the priests and approached the railroad track, the horses suddenly became frightened, stood up on their hind legs and danced around. Luckily, we two Sisters could jump off the wagon. Some men came by and calmed down the animals. When the horses were still, we mounted the carriage again, but before long there was a repeat performance. This happened three times and each time we had to jump down.

The fourth time it happened when we were not far from Muenster, on the return journey, and a violent storm broke out. There was wind, thunder, lightning and rain such that it seemed the floodgates of heaven had broken open -- a real cloudburst. Then the horses were wild and danced around the prairie with us. The priest tried to retain them with all his strength. They, however, were prancing around on their hind legs. We were down from the carriage by now. After all this cavorting around on two legs they managed to get the tongue of the wagon on one of the horse's backs.

For a long time there was nothing we could do, and we were sure this was the end for us, since steaming horses have a way of drawing lightning bolts upon them. While the priest held the horses in front by the reins, he was unable to reach the tongue. When he released his hold, they became frantic again. So he asked me to go in front of those wild horses. As soon as they saw me they jumped from side to side. Still, where the need is greatest God's help is nearest. A farmer came driving by and came to our rescue.

When all was back in order, the storm was practically blown over. You can picture to yourself what we looked

like, wet through and through. The coloring had come out of our black veils and swept over our faces and on to the white head-covering. Never in our lifetime had we looked like that. This experience was amusing in retrospect."

Still another story:

"One time the two of us, Sister Gabriela and myself, had something to do at the Hoffman farm. These people are a fine German family, about four miles from Muenster. As we were proceeding on foot, suddenly a man came up behind us and insisted that we sit on the cart and drive as there was not room for three on the seat. He directed us that when we reach the place on the road where it passes in front of the Hoffman farm we should tie the horse to a tree and leave it there for him to pick up after reaching the spot on foot. We had no choice but to do what he asked. He followed as we galloped along. This was no mean horse like the ones described earlier.

As we looked back we could not see any trace of the man. At the specified spot we attached the horse and walked the short distance to the Hoffman house. To this day I don't know who this man was. We described the events to the Hoffman family and depicted the horse and the man, but no one knew him nor could they remember ever having seen such a person in the area. One nearly had to believe that it was St. Joseph or some messenger sent by him."

Now this should be enough stories about horses. There were more similar happenings, but this will suffice to show what sort of new life and situation the Sisters had come into after leaving the peace and quiet of the cloistered existence they had been used to. In later life one thinks of these happenings with joy. They caused a good deal of discomfort but also a lot of happiness and fun. As the pioneers say, those were the best times.

On April 23rd the Rt. Rev. Father Abbot departed from Muenster for New York, there to embark for Europe. He reached Bremen on May 13th, took care of some business in Germany and then travelled to Klagenfurt to make arrangements with Rev. Mother and the departing Sisters for their trip to America. He then went on to Rome, returned to Klagenfurt and set out with the Sisters from Klagenfurt on July 6th. The names of the Sisters were: Sister Euphrasia Weiss, Sister Salesia Scheriau, Sister Clementina Possenig, Sister Helena Karnicer, Sister Xaveria Motschilnig, Sister Agatha Loibnegger, and the novice Sister Gertrude Bergles. In the group was also Margaretha, who had served as hired help for many years in Klagenfurt and who now wished to immigrate to Canada. She later got married and is now Mrs. Joseph Brecker.

When the Sisters had left the convent, the news reached Rev. Alexander Berghold, who gave expression to his joy in a letter dated July 19th. This was his swan song with regard to the American foundation. He wrote:

"Rev. Mother Superior: Had I a hundred tongues, I would intone a Te Deum with everyone of them. Thanks and praise be to God, yes, a thousand times. The good work, in the path of which seemingly insurmountable obstacles stood two years ago, has now proven successful by the grace of God and the intercession and power of our Blessed Lady. Upon the request and with the planning of His Grace the most Reverend Abbot Bruno, from a far-off land, your Order has established a foundation in the unmeasurable expanses of distant America. This foundation will outgrow the motherhouse in 25 years in every respect. Rev. Mother, you have sown in this region, as large as it is distant, a good seed which, under the vigilant and skilled father according to the heart of Christ, Abbot Bruno, will soon bear beautiful and blessed fruit. I will never fail in my prayers for you, for your foundation and my dear friend in Muenster, Canada. In

those darkest, nearly hopeless days, which have now turned to joy, I recommended to you an unshakable trust in God.

Beginnings in all good things are hard! If the beginning is too easy, the result is poor! When seeding time is laborious, the harvest is usually fruitful. I beseech you to say a prayer for me that I may have a happy death and that some of my earnings be left over for the foundation in Humboldt. I am very satisfied and happy that all is going the way I predicted in my letter to you two years ago.

This Tuesday the 'beloved group', under God's protection and guidance, will arrive in New York. Even though most of the Sisters are strangers to me, still I send them all my best greetings and wishes. Before January 1, 1913, all the Sisters under your jurisdiction will have a great yearning for the far-flung regions of Canada. It is my most heartfelt wish and hope that out of that domain will come to you joy, good luck and blessings, both material and spiritual. One thing is certain. Had I not, when I proposed the acceptance of your and my plan for a foundation to the Prince Bishop, Dr. Kahn, enjoyed the trust and friendship of His Excellency, you would not have had as much interest in Canada as you have today. His Grace, the Chancellor, Dr. Ehrlich, and several people in high positions, were definitely against the proposal. Today we sing 'Allelulia' that the crisis has blown over, the fog lifted and a land full of hope, beautiful and free, is drawing our hope-boat to its shores.

Most devotedly and respectfully

Your well meaning,

Alexander Berghold,

decanus emeritus (dean emeritus)

Let us often pray fervently for each other."

Now a few lines on the Sisters' trip. As was mentioned already, the nuns left their beloved little cloister on June 6, 1912, accompanied by the Rt. Rev. Abbot Bruno, who took care of them as a father. They

travelled on to the Tauerbahm to the City of Trieste, which in those days was Austria's largest seaport.

On the 9th of July he reported again:

"I have to write again to say how things are so far. Quite possibly the letter I sent you at Patras has not arrived yet. Yesterday morning early, as we woke up, we were riding at anchor in the harbour at Patras. There was a great deal of noise all over the ship because of the embarkation of passengers and loading of baggage. I didn't, therefore, consider it fitting to say Mass. In the course of the morning, around 9 o'clock, a storm broke out of the north with strong winds. Our ship, which was moored at the rear to the stone wall of the wharf and also tied up in front, was blown sideways by the wind until it struck an English ship moored nearby. No damage was done however, fortunately, and at 3 in the afternoon we set out again. By 7 p.m. we were away from the Greek Islands. The sea was less calm and began to pitch. By 8 o'clock all the Sisters were a little seasick. This morning the weather is fine again. At seven we had Holy Mass. Our entire community was present and all but two felt well enough to receive Communion. These two still had nausea and thought it better not to receive the species. Today at 2:30 p.m. we expect to reach Palermo from where this letter will be sent to you. They say another 250 passengers will embark there. Then the boat will really be filled. Only 1st class is still quite empty. For the second class and third class there have to be two shifts at meals. This morning, right after Holy Mass, we passed by Messina where 4 years ago a fierce earthquake took place.

Tomorrow we expect to reach Algiers. That will be the last time a letter can be posted before we reach New York. We will, naturally, not fail to do that."

July 10, 1912, evening:

"Very Rev. Mother:

Since our boat will arrive at Algiers early tomorrow morning that will be our last chance to send off a



letter, I will write quickly to say things are going well. The Sisters are all well and hale and hearty. They are busy making rosaries which the passengers quickly wheedle off them. This morning all were able to go to Communion. Tomorrow morning there will be no Mass because of the noise and disturbances at the harbor. We left Palermo yesterday evening at 8:30. A couple of hundred passengers, mainly Italians, embarked there. The ship is really filled now. The 1st class, however, is half empty. In Algiers probably very few passengers will embark but we will take on a good cargo of coal for the trip. This is expected to take place at 1 p.m. On Friday we pass through the Straits of Gibraltar, between Spain and Africa. Later we will pass by the Azores and then no more land will be sighted until we reach New York on the 20th."

They landed safely on the aforementioned day in New York and reached Muenster, Sask., on July 27 at 2 p.m. Concerning this, Sister Augustina relates:

"To our great joy, the dear Sisters arrived on the 27th of July. I was at Muenster to await them and have spent most of my time there because of my unsettled state of health. The Sisters all travelled to Humboldt the next day while I had to stay behind, on orders of the Rt. Rev. Abbot, who thought the weather to be too cool for me.

The hospital construction, during the absence of the Abbot, proceeded very slowly. But now we hope things will change. His Reverence, the Abbot, thinks the opening can take place on the first Sunday in October. We expect our new home through the Queen of the Holy Rosary. May God grant this. We and the whole surrounding community have been waiting with eagerness, and even impatience, for its completion.

The Sisters have already related how our companions at Klagenfurt had busied themselves and had done all in their power to help us here in our early days, which were assuredly beset with many difficulties. I have not seen any of the many nice things (sent over) for the baggage went directly to Humboldt. I will, however, go there as soon as I can to look at it all. I rejoice already

because I know that it all came from the still and hallowed cloister, where we spent so many happy days. All these things were made by our companion Sisters, to whom we owe not only corporal benefits but above all spiritual ones. Indeed, second only to our heavenly bridegroom, we owe our life in the convent to the forbearance and indulgence of our good Sisters.

It is not possible to write to all of them now and thank them all individually, since on the 1st of August the Bishop is coming here, and after that, according to the instructions of the Abbot, there will be many things to look after. First, everything will have to be regulated, particularly the Novitiate, on which the Rt. Rev. Abbot is keeping a sharp eye. This we consider a great blessing for our young Community. May it become a hot bed of virtue in the eyes of God, and afford great joy and honor to its Motherhouse.

But as soon as I have time I will write more. For now I can only say a thousand times: God reward you. May the dear Lord recompense you a thousand times by giving you peace and joy. These are the greatest gifts we can have and they give us strength and courage to accept sacrifices here below and secure for us a heavenly crown above. May He bestow on your convent His blessing for time and eternity. I thank the Father Confessor for the Ciborium covering which pleased us very much. I thank the convent-boarders, the hired helpers and all the others who contributed in any way toward it.

I am now with Sr. Euphrasia and Sr. Gertrudis in Muenster, since the Rt. Rev. Abbot wishes us here. There is so little room in Humboldt. Sister Gabriela is with Sisters Salesia, Celementina, Agatha and Xaveria in Humboldt. Sr. Philomena is away nursing some sick person but will return soon. Thank God all the Sisters are in good health. Sister Gabriela, in particular, has been enjoying a constant good health since she is back from Duluth. I marvel at this for she was earlier always so sickly and had to stay in bed in Duluth for six weeks.

Jacob (translator's note: hired man, presumably), is in Muenster for haymaking time. We will receive what hay we need from Muenster. We now have a cow and two small pigs. These were bought for us by Jacob so cheaply that

the Abbot says he stole them rather than bought them. For the winter we would need 2 - 3 cows. We do have already 17 chickens, which I received from the woman I nursed during the winter. Later I will receive some more."

The temporary house which sheltered the Sisters in Humboldt was so small that after the newly arrived settled in with us the beds had to be placed side by side. There was no space between them and one had to climb into bed over the bottom end. Clothing was strewn around on the floor. Thus it happened that in the morning shoes and stockings were appropriated at times by others than the rightful owners. The food supply was also very short. It happened that one evening there was nothing to eat, but the good Lord sent someone at the last minute. This was a lady from a farm who had been selling vegetables in town and was unable to sell all she brought with her. She went to the Sisters and donated a big head of cabbage and some potatoes. This was received with thanks and provided a good evening meal.

Some time before the hospital was finished it happened one day that the Very Rt. Rev. Abbot dropped in with the Most Rev. Bishop Pascal. They asked to have dinner with us. You can imagine the shock felt by the Sisters, since they were still in the small temporary quarters and had nothing but three inherited spoons, the very primitive table, the two rough-hewn chairs and no decent dishes and, furthermore, nothing proper to cook for a meal. The two worthy gentlemen sat each on one of our trunks and watched us as we scurried hither and thither, frightened, and not knowing where to begin. They were amused by the goings-on since they

looked on so contentedly. The Most Rev. Bishop said: "Don't be afraid, I did not have such a nice house at first when I became Bishop!" (spoken in English, then translated into German - Translator's note). We had no forks or knives, only a couple of pocketknives. These they handed to the distinguished guests on this their first visit. The Sisters were, of course, highly embarrassed, but the visitors seemed to derive the greatest pleasure from the proceedings.

In a letter dated August 5, 1912, the first since his return, the Very Rev. Abbot reported that he did not find Sr. Augustina in good health. We considered the situation precarious because of possible tuberculosis infection. Still, he hoped that a certain doctor in the United States, who had helped many and restored their health, could also help Sr. Augustina.

He reported further:

"Since August 1, 1912, the Sisters have taken over our Monastery kitchen and we are very pleased. They are themselves uneasy, wondering whether they give satisfaction and thus give themselves a lot of trouble and work. Once they get used to the assignment, they will find things easier."

Since the Abbot's return, work on the construction is proceeding more smoothly and so there is hope of having the opening of the hospital sometime at the beginning of October.

Finally, the long-awaited day for the blessing of the new hospital arrived, October 3, 1912, a day of rejoicing. The Most Rev. A. Pascal, O.M.I., Bishop of Prince Albert, presided over the blessing himself. Accompanied by the Very Rev. Abbot Bruno, he drove to Humboldt

from Muenster and about 3:30 p.m. the beautiful ceremony began. Dressed in surplice, cope, with miter and crozier, he was assisted by Abbot Bruno and Father Prior Peter and Fathers Rudolph and Casimir. The Bishop proceeded first to the Sisters new sleeping quarters. He recited Psalm 4, read the blessing and sprinkled the room with holy water. In the Sisters' community room the same prayer was repeated along with Psalm 83. After that, the dining room was blessed and Psalm 127 read. Then came the kitchen with Psalm 22 and a special thanksgiving prayer. The procession then filed into the basement, where Psalm 143 was recited. At the entrance door Psalm 147 was read, along with an excerpt from the Gospel. Finally, the chapel was given a special blessing. There Psalm 90 was recited. The Sisters and the good people who came from Humboldt, as well as from Muenster, to witness this colorful ceremony listened to the various blessings with real interest. In the rooms for patients, Psalm 6 was the one chosen. Each room received a blessing appropriate to its purpose. Unfortunately, Sisters Salesia and Helena were prevented by their functions from attending the blessing.

After the ceremony there was an evening meal served for the clergy in one of the rooms of the hospital at which were present also Mayor Anderson of Humboldt and the contractor of the building.

At the occasion of the blessing, the ladies of the town and surrounding district brought the Sisters some beautiful and expensive presents. For these the Sisters are indeed grateful. The people, both Catholic and Protestant, manifested on this occasion their gratitude and, as on previous occasions, their good wishes and co-operation with the



Sisters. This day was especially a day of rejoicing for the nuns, for now, after a year and a half of indecision and wavering over the cause, they finally had a home of their own. This was to be their cloister and now they could begin the regular religious life and also practice their calling as nurses.

Nevertheless, even though the building was now blessed, work on the inside was not completed and the hospital could not be opened. One day -- it was on October 25, 1912 -- when the carpentering was completed on only one floor, the doctor arrived and asked if we could not admit a patient. The Sisters could not refuse and set about immediately cleaning up a room which was full of plaster. They prepared it for the patient and in a few hours he was himself in it. His name was Mathias Strueby from Marysburg. He was operated on the next day for appendectomy. Yet it was not that simple. First the operating room had to be cleaned up. Then the sterilizing equipment had to be prepared, and the kitchen stove had to be set up so that food could be cooked for the patients. There was a continuous flow of patients from then on -- seven in the first week. Two Sisters, Sr. Philomena and Sr. Salesia, spent the night making bandages and sterilizing and were unable to get to bed.

The first female patient was Miss Mary Loehr from Muenster. She came on October 26th, and required a bone operation. Both operations proved successful. By the end of December, thirty-one patients had been admitted.

The first person to die in hospital was C.O. Knapp, elevator man from Engelfeld, who suffered acute peritonitis and departed this life on

January 15, 1913. He had not come to the hospital soon enough.

From the opening of the hospital in October 1912, until Dec. 21, 1913, 281 patients were nursed. Of these, 128 needed operations. During this time 15 died, while the others were able, in most cases, to leave the hospital in good health. In the year 1914, 281 were admitted and there were 137 operations. In that same year 8 persons died and 21 babies were born. Nursing days totalled 4,068.

From now on the number of patients grew steadily. In 1917, it was 518. Although God's blessing was on the Sisters' care of the sick, they were not altogether free of suffering. One of the doctors in whom the Sisters trusted most, thinking he would be helpful to them, became, as time went on, very difficult to please. He could not accept the fact that some patients died, until the other doctors made him understand that it could not be otherwise and that were were mortality rates everywhere.

On the whole, there were not enough people to do the work. Thus the Sisters were very much in demand and each had to be on night duty a few times each week. Sister Augustina was not getting better. The doctor advised rest and more rest, but this was hard when there was so much to be done. She was also to eat well. One day she was asked by her doctor, who was not proficient in German yet tried to speak it: "Are you eating enough?" Sister Philomena was there, also. He used the word 'fressen' which shocked her when she heard it. Both Sisters were stunned at his expression and he immediately sensed this. The Sisters informed him that only animals eat (fressen), whereas people eat (essen).

He tried hard to speak German, but the result was usually

comical. Once he said to a man: "You have to pay" (du must zahlen), and when this man answered that he had no money, the doctor said: you should buy a cow, meaning to say, you should sell a cow (kaufen instead of verkaufen).

Although none of the Sisters had a diploma from the government here, they alone did all the nursing in the hospital. Sister Philomena had learned a great deal at Duluth and Sisters Salesia and Clementina had completed their courses in Klagenfurt. The clinical cases that presented themselves created no difficulties for them. Still, one day the doctor brought a registered nurse with him to the operating room. He soon let her go again. However, as the shortage of manpower continued to make itself felt, the Sisters did take on one hired nurse.

In the year 1912 the term of office of Rev. Mother Pulcheria expired. Now she was free and able to devote herself to the new foundation and no longer from a distance but right on the spot. For this reason the Rev. Abbot Bruno came in the Spring of 1913 to Klagenfurt to accompany the foundress and those Sisters wishing to join her on their trip to Canada. It was no small matter for her to leave the convent in Klagenfurt. She was not young anymore, having reached the age of 60. At that age, moving from a well-regulated, ancient convent to a far-off foreign land where the customs are totally different and the language not understood, was very difficult for her. Still, she made the sacrifices and departed with Sister Seraphina and Sister Walburga, in the company of the Very Rev. Abbot Bruno. She left her cloister and her homeland towards the end of June 1913 and undertook the long journey. In her group were

also Elizabeth Ehrenreich and Elizabeth (last name unknown). The latter of these is married since and is known as Mrs. Massinger.

The Very Rev. Abbot chose the same route as with the other Sisters a year earlier and embarked on the same vessel, the 'Kaiser Franz Josef I'. The travellers went to Trieste and went on board on the same day. They landed in New York and reached Humboldt, July 14, 1913.

About the first days of the trip we have this report of the Rt. Rev. Abbot Bruno: T/ss Kaiser Franz Josef I - Sunday, July 7, 1912.

"Very Rev. Mother Superior:

As I began to write, the Sisters left for supper. I will be going in an hour and so I can send you a brief report on our trip so far. Obviously there is not much to report since things have gone so well. We arrived at Trieste yesterday at 11:30 a.m., and drove immediately to the main office of the steamship line. I succeeded in having the officials give us another 5% discount off the price of the boat tickets, which for the seven Sisters and Margaretha amounted to 124 Kr. We had to wait a long time for the ship's doctor who did not come until sometime between 3 and 4 p.m. to examine the eyes of the ticket holders. At five o'clock we were on the ship and at six it unmoored. The sea was very calm; today it is a little choppy. The ship is the smoothest sailing vessel I have ever travelled on. One can hardly feel the sway and there is not the slightest sign of seasickness on anyone. Today I said Mass at 9:00 a.m. The altar is set up and furnished with all the necessaries in a huge cabinet on 2nd class deck. When not in use it is locked up.

When the weather permits I will be able to celebrate Mass every morning at 6:30. The Sisters and Margaretha received Holy Communion today and regret only that they did not take along more hosts to permit Communion every day until we reach New York.

Our travellers are in good spirits. Since our departure from Klagenfurt, I have not seen them weep. Only during that long delay in the office of the steamship company

at Trieste did tears nearly make their appearance. I believe the trip will be harder on you and on the Sisters at home than on the travellers.

We expect to arrive at Patras in Greece early tomorrow morning and from there, this letter will be posted back Klagenfurt. From Palermo I expect to write again and perhaps that letter will reach you sooner than this one.

With heartfelt greetings to you, to all the good Mothers and Sisters, as well as to the Father Confessor and Rev. Pastor Trunk,

I remain with great respect

Yours devotedly in Christ,

Bruno, O.S.B, Abbot.

P.S. I am told the ship will arrive in New York on July 20th and at exactly 12 noon."

At last the foundress had arrived. She was surprised at some things and disappointed over others. Although the hospital was fully modern it lacked many comforts, and any kind superfluity. It was a convent and a hospital at the same time and still is now (1941).

The first profession of vows in the Canadian colony took place on April 19, 1913. Sister Gertrude Bergles was the first to do this. The celebration took place in the convent chapel and the Most Rev. Pascal himself presided, assisted by Fathers Wilhelm, Peter and Casimir.

On Nov. 7, 1912, the hospital secured the services of a resident chaplain in the person of Father Wilhelm Hein, O.S.B. He held this position until September 16, 1913, when, because of failing health, he returned to the United States. There he died of tuberculosis of the lungs on August 18, 1918.



In November of 1912 the first Candidate entered. She was Agnes Schmidt from Humboldt. Her parents were among the first settlers in this district.

An important date for the new establishment was August 30, 1913, when Abbot Bruno, after having celebrated Mass in honor of the Holy Spirit, vested with the powers of the local Ordinary, declared the new foundation independent of the Motherhouse in Klagenfurt. At the Canonical election of a Superior General, which followed the solemn pronouncement, Mother Pulcheria Wilhelm was chosen on the first ballot. From that day on our Community at Humboldt was a self-sustaining convent and Motherhouse. Bishop Pascal confirmed the election of the new Superior on September 3, 1913.

On November 24, 1913, Sister Seraphina pronounced her temporary vows for three years. At the same time the Postulant, Agnes Schmidt was given the habit and her new name, Sister Marianna. She took temporary vows on February 10, 1915. In 1914 Sister Seraphina was sent for half a year to the Sisters of Sion in Prince Albert to learn English and to gain nursing experience with the other Sisters there in the hospital.

In the year 1913, even before Mother Pulcheria arrived, another Candidate from Humboldt had entered. She received the habit and was given the name Sister Celestine. She even went on to make final vows in 1918. She had received a diploma in nursing and was a good worker. She was not, however, a good Religious and left in 1919. A year after Sr. Celestine entered, 1914, her sister entered, was clothed with the habit and received the name Sister Franziska. She made temporary vows in 1916

but had to be dismissed in 1918 for lack of religious spirit.

Our Community was incorporated by the Saskatchewan Legislature during the 1915 Spring session. So far all had gone well. More Candidates applied, but Sister Augustina's health continued to fail. Mother Pulcheria, also, was ailing with stomach trouble. The blow that was feared for so long struck the fledgling community on January 8, 1916, when the first superior and one of the pioneers, Sr. Augustina Platzner died after prolonged suffering. Her illness had been partly caused by the drain of her energies resulting from the strenuous efforts exerted in her practice of charity. She had contracted consumption and died in the 45th year of her life. Her health, even at Klagenfurt, was never the best. The hardships of the first year and the many privations endured by the Sisters at that time could not but leave a lasting effect.

Sister Augustina was born in Pusarnitz, Corinthia, and entered the Convent of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth on June 29, 1890. She was then sent to one of the city's pharmacies to take the pharmacy course. After three years of preparation she passed the examination on October 7, 1893.

The burial took place on January 11th, after the Requiem Mass celebrated in the Parish Church of Humboldt by Rev. Prior Peter. That day it was 49 below zero. She was laid to rest in a plot of ground chosen as God's acre by the Sisters themselves only a few weeks before her death.

Exactly 4 weeks after the death of Sr. Augustina came another

hard blow to the young congregation. On February 5th, the Rev. Mother Pulcheria herself passed into eternity. Already since the Spring of 1915 she was ailing and towards the end of that year her condition became so bad that she made a trip to Winnipeg to consult the best doctor there, Dr. Mckenty. He recognized the gravity of the condition immediately and declared she had cancer of the stomach. His verdict was that only an immediate operation could prolong her life. Without it, death would come in a short time. The Sisters were very disturbed by this news. They sought refuge in prayer and stormed heaven for the well-being of their dear Mother. But the divine counsels revealed other designs. God had other things in store for his servant.

On February 4th, in the morning, Dr. Mckenty, who had come from Winnipeg for this sole purpose, with the assistance of Doctors Barry, Cox, and McCutcheon and also Sisters Philomena and Salesia, undertook the difficult and serious operation. This lasted two hours and, to all appearances, went well. On all sides there was rejoicing and hopes for the recovery of the patient. The next morning, however, on February 5, there was a change for the worse and already at 8:15 a.m. she began to get weaker. After the Sisters had gathered around the death-bed and Rev. Fr. Boniface, who was the hospital chaplain at the time, had performed the last rites, she passed quietly away into a better world.

She did not die unprepared, for she was fully aware of her condition and recognized the dangers of the operation. In case of her death she made all the necessary arrangements before the operation.

Thus she had specified how the coffin was to be made and also the exact spot where she should be buried.

Strengthened by the consolations of our holy religion and after begging forgiveness from the Sisters for any possible offence against them, she submitted herself, trusting God and acting under obedience, to the operation which was to precipitate her death. Her earthly remains were interred beside those of M. Augustina in the cemetery of the convent, on the 8th of February. The funeral service was held in St. Augustine's parish church by Rev. Prior Peter. He also gave the funeral oration as he had for Sister Augustine. The final absolution and burial were conducted by the Very Rev. Abbot Bruno wearing his pontifical vestments.

The beloved deceased was born in Unterinntal, Tirol, Austria. At the age of 25 she sought entrance in the convent of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth at Klagenfurt and was gladly accepted. She received the habit on Sept. 29, 1879, and made her vows on November 15, 1880. True to her Tirolian origin, she was of a straightforward, modest and unspoilt nature, coupled with an unselfish love of neighbor. A genuine, spontaneous piety characterized her entire life. Along with Christian fortitude she possessed a great understanding of people. These warranted for her responsible positions in the Order. At Klagenfurt she filled many positions, first as sacristan, then as procurator. Later she was in charge of the laundry and then became superior for two terms of three years each. It was during her second term that the Humboldt foundation took place. After the second term was ended she was named Novice

Mistress, which office she held until her departure for Canada.

Although the Canadian foundation was close to her heart, she did not really feel at home in the local situation. She strove to implant the true religious spirit in the Sisters and in the new foundation. She wished to have the Sisters drawn to a life of genuine piety. Her recourse in all difficulties was to prayer. May the dear Lord reward her for all she did for the nuns and for suffering humanity. May He repay her with everlasting happiness for the sufferings she so bravely endured. The Sisters were inconsolate over the double loss. Still, the dear Lord, who permits the wounds, has also the power to heal them. To show His chosen ones that it is He who rules and guides all, He sometimes pulls away the supports we think indispensable.

New election had to take place. In the interim, the direction of the house was in the hands of Sister Walburga, the vicar at the time. The election of a new superior took place under the presidency of the Most Rev. Bishop Pascal on April 2, 1916. Sister Euphrasia was chosen for a three year term, and now the orphaned community had a new mother. As a result of the increasing number of patients who in their need took refuge in the hospital, the necessity of expanding the facilities soon made itself felt. In the same year (1916), under the direction of the new superior, the St. Rochus Hospital (Isolation Section) was built, about 200 paces away from the main building. Also a new laundry house was built. It was a two-story brick structure with the ground floor measuring 26 x 32 feet. The basement floor was equipped for the laundry; the first floor held a workshop, and the

second was made to be the Novitiate. The room where the washing was formerly done in the hospital became the Sisters' refectory.

Still these extensions soon proved insufficient. The need was felt in the fall of 1918 to plan a big extension to the existing hospital. The excavations were done before winter set in and during the cold weather the bricks would be transported in. In the Spring of 1919 work began in earnest on the new construction, and by the time the following winter came around the structure was under cover. During the winter the work proceeded, so that in February 1920 the wing, which measured 37 x 68 feet, was completed. This addition is equipped with modern furnishings. In this two-story building there are 18 fully-furnished rooms. One of these is a suite of rooms for the chaplain; another is a beautiful room for the Bishop which he himself furnished. All the private rooms were furnished by benefactors. In the attic floor there are 12 cells for the Sisters, separated by a hallway. In this there was erected a Way of the Cross. In the basement there is the steam-heating furnace along with additional rooms, one large and another small. The whole construction cost more than \$60,000, which was raised through private subscriptions.

From the time of Sister Euphrasia's election in 1916 until 1920 when the new building was completed, many pleasant things, as well as unpleasant ones, took place. When the new members join the Order that is a source of joy. October 4, 1917, was an occasion of rejoicing, for on that day the parish church in Humboldt was the scene of a ceremony for the temporary vows of the following Sisters: Sr. Elizabeth



Lopinski, Benedicta Yungwirth, and Theodora Sieben. Three others were given the habit, namely Sisters Aloisia Heisler, Hyacintha Senger, and Pulcheria Poth. The ceremony was conducted by Bishop Pascal, and a touching sermon was delivered by Abbot Bruno. Unfortunately, Sister Aloisia found the religious life too burdensome and left in 1934.

In the Spring of 1918 Sisters Philomena, Salesia and Clementina, and Theodora, received their official diplomas as registered nurses. Prior to receiving the habit, Sister Theodora had been sent to the Grey Nuns' Hospital in St. Boniface, to undergo training.

On April 2, 1919, the term of office of Mother Euphrasia expired. On that day elections were held under the direction of Abbot Bruno, and Sister Walburga Swetlin was chosen superior.

As was mentioned earlier, the first chaplain, Rev. Fr. Wilhelm Hein, returned to the United States. His place was taken by Rev. Peter Fisher, O.S.B., until, at the beginning of October 1913, the Abbot Bruno appointed Rev. Fr. Boniface Puth, O.S.B. of Muenster to this post. He stayed on until the appointment of Rev. Tharcisius Schmid on September 20, 1916. Father Schmid was very helpful to the Sisters. He knew how to assist both in word and deed and wherever there was need. This was not only in spiritual matters but in temporal as well. Particularly at the time of the construction in 1919 he was extremely helpful.

In June 1919, when Bishop Pascal had to stay in France for reasons of health, Abbot Bruno administered confirmation in the Diocese of Prince Albert. He had to interrupt this tour because of a heart attack, and enter a hospital. He chose to go to "his" Sisters in

Humboldt, even though at the time he was closer to Saskatoon. Just a few days later, on June 12th, the dear Lord called him to Himself to reward him for all his loyalty and his efforts.

Sister Walburga, the Superior at the time, relates:

"It was in the afternoon, about 4 o'clock, as Sister Marianna and I were with the Rev. Abbot to fix up his bed. He remarked that it like being in Purgatory to be lying down in this heat. I asked him whether he was more comfortable and he answered in the affirmative. Then Sr. Marianna and I left his room. After about a quarter of an hour he called again. The Sister in charge entered and he asked whether I could not return again. I went in immediately and he said to me he wanted to draw a few points to my attention. We were having a pleasant exchange, when suddenly he reached for his heart with his right hand and breathed so painfully that I was frightened. I asked him whether he was not feeling well. He gave me no answer and at the moment appeared to be at his last gasp. The Rev. Fr. Schmid was immediately called to give him Extreme Unction and in a quarter of an hour he was a corpse."

This caused the young community a terrific pain, since until now we could always rely on him, knowing he would help us and take care of everything. As Sister Walburga expressed it, "Our pain was as big as the ocean." The older Sisters clothed him and carried him into the small house, with lighted candles. The other religious followed them. It was so touching to see the foresaken children, his little sheep, carry him, their best father and benefactor. Rev. Sr. Walburga gazed after him and wept bitterly. She dreaded the future. Still, the newly-elected Abbot Michael Ott, wrote to the Sisters soon afterwards and

consoled them, saying he would do all in his power to fill the heavy loss. This was a balm for the bleeding hearts. Abbot Bruno had died on June 12, 1919.

It should be mentioned here that in January 1918 another 58 acres of adjoining bushland, on the west side of our property, was purchased.

Since the hospital was twice as big now as before, more help was needed, but to keep hired help would have been too expensive. So the thought came to ask the Motherhouse if there were not some more Sisters prepared to come to help. In the summer of 1919 Mother Walburga wrote to Klagenfurt asking that some Sisters be sent. She mentioned that the Father Confessor, Fr. Schmid, wished to go to Klagenfurt himself to accompany these prospective missionaries. He was to go to France in any case, to travel back with Bishop Pascal, who had been there for health reasons. Already in February Fr. Schmid was prepared to make the necessary arrangements, this being the post war period and travel very unreliable. In Klagenfurt the yearning for America had simmered down somewhat in the hearts of many. This letter served to enkindle it again. Immediately, some Sisters said they were prepared to come. In Humboldt the authorities were ready to defray the costs of the trip. This was no longer possible on the part of Klagenfurt, since the convent there had entered upon poor times because of the war and the currency devaluation.

The Rev. Fr. Schmidt undertook the journey in January 1920 and arrived at Klagenfurt in the second half of February. He received

permission from the Canadian government for 10 Sisters to enter the country, but only four accepted to come. A few others would have liked to come, but they were dissuaded and so remained behind. Father Schmid had received permission from the Prince Bishop at Klagenfurt to go through the cloistered part of the convent for the whole duration of his stay there, instead of just the hallways. He made the best of impressions not only on the clergy but on the religious and at the convent as well. He was even invited to luncheon with the Bishop on one occasion.

The day for the departure arrived. It was March 2, 1920. In the very early hours of the morning all were on their feet. Just after 4 a.m. the Rev. Schmid said Mass at which the Sisters received Communion. Following this a community breakfast was held for the departing Sisters in the big recreation room. After a last farewell and a last embrace the time had come to go to the railway station. The limousine made available by the Most Rev. Bishop Hefter stood in readiness for the drive to the station. To this was added the convent carriage, for the travelling group was made up of seven persons, namely: Rev. T. Schmid, Sisters Elizabeth Premru, Christina Drexler, Rosalia Brunner, Alexia Jantschge, and two Candidates, of which one is now called Sister Clara Luschin. The second, Maria Christoeffl, was dismissed during her Novitiate and returned to Austria.

Then Sister Mary Elizabeth continues to speak about their arrival at Winnipeg on May 8th, where they attended Mass at St. Joseph's next morning. She goes on to say:

As the evening approached we went to the railway station in the company of Rev. Hilland (a Winnipeg pastor who hosted them during their stopover there. trans.note), to begin the 1st stretch of our journey. With fear and yearning we set out for Humboldt, the long-desired goal of our trip. The closer we came, the more fearful we became. In Muenster two of the local Sisters stepped into the train with us. In the person of Sister Benedicta we saw the first Canadian Sister. Even the very Rev. Prior Peter was at the station to give us a welcome. At the Humboldt station, three Austrian Sisters were waiting for us. These we had known before and had lived with at Klagenfurt. Amongst them was also the first Canadian religious, Sister Marianna. From some letter I had learned that Sr. Marianna wore glasses. As I was under the impression that she was the only one in Canada who wore them, I greeted her like an old acquaintance: "Greetings, Sister Marianna". She was much astounded that I should already know her. Later I explained the mystery to her. Once we had greeted those Sisters we knew and those we did not know, we felt quite at home and fearless. (Apart from the one Candidate who was dismissed later on, the others are still hale and hearty, even though 21 years older.)

On July 13, 1920, Most Rev. Albert Pascal, OMI, died in France, where he had gone to restore his health. He was the fatherly friend and benefactor of the Sisters and of the hospital. His wish had been to spend his last years with us. For that reason he had furnished the special room in the priests' quarters. This room is still called the Bishop's room. But God's will was different. His health had been

undermined when he went to France, but he went there to recuperate and then return to Canada. The plan was to return with Father Schmid who, in January 1920, went to accompany the Sisters from Austria; but circumstances would not allow it. Now he rests in his homeland, France. He was so very kindly disposed towards the Sisters, a real father and pastor, a great benefactor. As has been mentioned before, he donated \$5,000 to the new foundation. The \$6,000 which was loaned to the Sisters was reimbursed to his own sister after his death.

He was always happy to be with "his Sisters" at Humboldt, as he called them, because our Motherhouse was located in his diocese. Whenever possible he tried to please the Sisters. He even held an ordination ceremony in our old chapel because he felt the Sisters would like to witness such a ceremony. May God repay him a thousand times for all he has done for us.

In April 1920 the new extension had been finished. In May two new verandas on the south end were added to the 1st and 2nd floors.

It was to the most Rev. Bishop Pascal that we owe so many spiritual favors. It was he who allowed us to have Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and devotions so frequently.

Now that the hospital had been extended and the number of the Sisters increased, there was more business activity connected with it. It so happened one day that the hired man was so busy making hay in the neighborhood of Muenster that he had no time to bring the hay back to Humboldt. At this juncture, Sister Alexia said: "I will go to fetch the hay," and "I will go along," said Sister Serafina, the superior at the



time. The hayrack was hitched up and the two heroines sat upon it merrily and were soon on their way to Muenster. It was not too long before they realized that the rack was not firmly attached to the wagon.

When they were about 4 miles from Humboldt the rack slipped to the side where Sr. Serafina was sitting and the whole thing, including both occupants tumbled over on the ground. The horses ran away with the wagon and left the rack and its heroic occupants on the roadside. Sister Serafina went to the closest house and asked the man there to phone the next farmer down the road and request him to catch the horses and tie them up somewhere. The man did just that; in addition, he phoned the hospital telling them what had happened. This did not suit our two wayfarers, because the Rev. Mother immediately sent Mr. Brockman to the scene of the accident with instructions to bring them back in the car. The Sisters refused to return without the hay. They begged Mr. Brockman to help them replace the rack on the wagon and load it with hay. This he did. He drove back to Humboldt alone and the two adventurers returned successfully with hay and rack. Thanks be to God, no injury was received by anyone.

The next year, that is 1921, the grotto was built in the cemetery. Father Schmid was architect and director of the construction. A hired man and Sister Euphrasia helped him. The costs of the construction were borne mainly by Father Schmid. His wish was one day to rest there at the feet of the Mother of God, whom he loved and revered in a child-like way. In this same year there were many pine and spruce trees planted around the hospital. In the year 1922 the big summer house near

the cemetery was built. This work was planned and directed by Fr. Schmid. Once, when he was on a ladder, he slipped and sprained a foot.

The X-Ray machine was acquired this year. It cost from 6- to 7-thousand dollars. Sisters Salesia and Benedicta were the first to learn about the X-Ray and to operate it.

During the same year also the college was opened at Muenster. Our Sisters took charge of the cooking and washing. Sister Christina was the first superior. There are nine Sisters employed the year round.

On November 1st, in the company of Rev. Joseph Wickel, six additional Sisters arrived from Klagenfurt, namely: Sisters Margaretha Grutschnig, Jacoba Schober, Philomena Esenko (who received the name Maria at Humboldt), and also three lay Sisters: Sisters Martina Ratz, Ottilia Niederwieser and Seraphina Spath (whose name here was Sr. Bonaventure). In the next year (1923) however, Sisters Martina and Bonaventure returned to the Motherhouse at Klagenfurt.

From the very first years of the establishment of the Sisters in Humboldt, they had been asked by Rev. Fr. Palm, O.M.I., to build a hospital in St. Joseph's colony because there were so many German families emigrating from Russia. Although he was always refused he still returned with the same request every year. Prior to this time the request could not be granted because of the small number of Sisters, but now that there were more Religious and the prospects for a new establishment loomed before them again, the Sisters decided to go to Macklin to open a hospital. At the beginning of January 1922 Sisters Euphrasia and Marianna betook themselves to Macklin to find a suitable house for the project.

They soon found one. Developments of this establishment are given later.

In the following year, 1923, the Nurses Training School was set up. There were two students in the first class, namely, Miss Beatrice Woodcock and Miss Alma Crackel. Both received their diplomas in 1926. The first superintendent was a lay person, Miss Goden. She was in charge for one year and was succeeded by Sr. Salesia Scheriau. Since then it has always been Sisters who directed the School.

The first Nurses' Home was the small house, called St. Joseph's House, which had earlier served as lodging for the Sisters. This place burned down on Dec. 27, 1925. Then the isolation building was taken over as a nurses' home. It had been built in 1916. On that spot there is still today the School of Nursing. In 1943 there were 30 student nurses. In the years 1926 and 1927 graduation exercises were held in the workshop above the laundry, later in the town hall and then in the Knights of Columbus Hall.

On September 8, 1922, the Sisters' veil was altered in accordance with instructions by Abbot-Ordinary Michael Ott. On that day he administered Confirmation to some Postulants. The sponsor at Confirmation was Mrs. Henry (Catherine) Brockman.

After the Abbacy of St. Peter's had been raised to the status of Abbatia Nullius in 1921, work was begun on our Constitutions according to the Abbot's directions. These were to conform to the new Code of Cannon Law, which had come out in 1918, and to the circumstances of today's living. For this task it was the Sub-Prior of the Abbacy and our

Father Confessor, Father Schmid, who were chiefly responsible. They had many consultations with the Reverend Mother and her Counselors. The new Constitutions went into effect as soon as they were approved by the Abbot-Ordinary.

On July 1, 1924, the hospital in Scott was taken over. It was closed, however, in 1932, because of unfavorable conditions.

In December of the same year a small hospital was opened by the Sisters in a private home. Further developments of this will be given later.

In the year 1924, on July 25th, Sisters Euphrasia Weiss and Agatha Loibnegger celebrated their Silver Jubilee of Profession.

In 1926, as a result of the efforts of the late Dr. H.R. Fleming, nurses' registration was received by the following Sisters: Gabriela Lex, Gertrude Bergles, Serafina Pfurtscheller, Marianna Schmidt, Elizabeth Lopinski, Benedicta Yungwirth, Antonia Bohl, and Augustina Mainzer. That was a great favor for the hospital, since they received registration by waiver, i.e. without having to write any examinations. From then on, however, all the Sisters had to follow the three-year course and write the official examinations, otherwise they could not become registered nurses. It meant a great deal of effort and concern on Dr. Fleming's part. He was also very helpful in the setting up of the School of Nursing, as well as on many other occasions. May God reward him and have mercy on his soul. Our duty it is to show our thanks through our prayers.

The year 1926 brought a severe loss. Already in the Spring of 1924 Father Schmid had suffered two strokes in quick succession, from

which he recovered only slowly and partially. He remained somewhat paralyzed. By degrees he regained enough strength to say Holy Mass. For a while he could only have it in his room, but later he was able to get to the chapel. Every morning at 6:45 he was wheeled into the chapel to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass which was his greatest joy and happiness. Often, however, his condition did not permit this, which was always very trying to him. He did, however, offer up this sacrifice too, willingly and placed himself peacefully into the hands of God. The dear Lord, who will not be outdone in generosity, permitted him to celebrate his Silver Jubilee of the Priesthood in our chapel, surrounded by his many friends, on March 2, 1926.

A few weeks before his death he felt strong enough to undertake a trip and pay a visit to our Sisters at Scott, with the intention of remaining there a few days. On Sunday, July 18, he gave the Sisters in Humboldt a conference on the topic suggested by the Sunday's Gospel, "Give an account of thy stewardship." Who would have guessed that by the following Sunday this gospel would already apply to him. The next day, Monday, he asked to be taken to Scott by car. On Wednesday he gave the Sisters at Scott a conference. He had Mass the following morning as well as the two previous mornings. During the day he was very gay and relaxed. He said to the Sisters he liked Scott very much and ask Sister Philomena, jokingly, whether he could stay on a little while longer. Towards evening he felt ill and asked to go to bed. It was then that he suffered a stroke which left little to be hoped for. He said to the Sister in attendance: "I am ready to die." The Last Rites were

administered. He lost the power to speak, was unable to go to confession or receive communion. With a tremendous effort he said: "To Humboldt, or whatever you think." Soon after he lost consciousness and there were repeated convulsions every quarter of an hour throughout the whole night.

On Friday morning he was to be transported to Humboldt, but since the train was very late it was impossible to make connections with the Humboldt train out of Saskatoon. Thus it was necessary to bring him to St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon. His condition grew steadily worse. On Sunday morning, death seemed near. Beside his deathbed knelt Mother Walburga, who had come in from Humboldt with Sister Christina. From Scott the superior, Sr. Philomena and Sisters Salesia and Theresia were present. Shortly before 12 noon he passed, peacefully and quietly, to his eternal reward.

With edifying composure he had long looked death in the face. It had now put an end to his earthly journey and no doubt allowed him to join the heavenly choir. He was dressed in priestly garb, transported to Humboldt and there laid out in the little parlor which had a window opening up into the chapel. Day and night the Sisters kept watch beside the remains of their dear Father. On Wednesday the body was taken to the Parish Church in Humboldt, where a Solemn Mass for the dead was held and a funeral oration delivered by the Very Rev. Prior Peter. A long procession later followed the coffin to the grotto that Fr. Schmid himself had built.

The Rev. Fr. Tharcisius Schmid was born August 2, 1873, in Aaran, Switzerland. He attended school in Freiburg, Switzerland, for a



few years and then went to France, as a boy of 8, to a "Gymnasium" (college). Very early in life he decided to consecrate to God his rich gifts of mind and heart in the service of the priesthood. He, therefore, went to a Seminary in Paris to prepare himself for this vocation. He was ordained on March 2, 1901, in Cannes, France. Endowed with broad knowledge and filled with enthusiasm for his vocation and eagerness to work, he began his priestly career as Vicar at Menens (Freiburg) in Switzerland, but in 1902 a broader field of endeavour opened up before him and drew him to Western Canada. This country became his second home and the center of his charitable activities. Father Schmid was a Canon-Regular of the Order of the Immaculate Conception founded by Dom Grea.

In 1909 this congregation was dissolved and Fr. Schmid became a diocesan priest. He immediately joined the ranks of the clergy in Prince Albert diocese in Saskatchewan, serving as pastor at Wakaw, Duck Lake, Carlton, and Bonne Madonne. Wherever he worked, he won the confidence and the love of the faithful.

Since 1912 Father Schmid had been a member of the diocesan council and after the death of Bishop Pascal he was named Administrator of the diocese. He came to Humboldt on Sept. 20, 1916, and remained chaplain at St. Elizabeth's Hospital until his death.

He was a real father for the Sisters, greatly concerned for their spiritual and material welfare. Wherever he could, he helped by word and deed. He spared the Sisters many dollars by his skills and his readiness to serve. Many little repairs and maintenance jobs in the

house were done by him. In the end he bequeathed to the Sisters all he had possessed, which totalled about \$2,000.

Many of his efforts were blessed with success through the help of God and because of the virtues with which he was endowed. Child-like in his submission to ecclesiastical authority, full of joyful trust in God in the midst of sufferings, full of love and having a winning way with people -- such is the picture of him which we will always retain. He was particularly concerned to instil in the religious community a love of the regular life and he encouraged the observance of the Rule and Constitutions. May the good Lord recompense him for all the good he did for us. To him may be applied the words of Scripture: "Those who teach others wisdom shall radiate like stars in the sky".

In January 1924, the violet-ray machine was acquired.

On January 25, 1925, the root cellar beside the laundry house was built at the cost of \$3,000. The brick walls for the extension on the laundry house were built during this year as well and completed the following year. In addition, in this same year (1925), the veranda on the 3rd floor (Sisters' section) was added. Dr. H.R. Fleming contracted to pay the labor, while the Sisters' paid for the material.

A new sterilizer for the operating room was purchased. It cost \$1,827. The following year a new operating table, costing \$800 was installed. The old one was donated to the Cudworth Hospital. During the same year there was a great increase in patients, particularly male. Thus the Bishop's room had to be made into a hospital room.

In this same year, 1926, the hospitals at Macklin and Cudworth were built.

Also in 1926 a new isolation house was built of brick, on the spot where the old St. Joseph's House had stood. This small house had been the Sisters' residence and later the locale of the Nursing School until it burned down on December 27, 1925. On July 13th the first patient entered the new isolation house, known as St. Rochus Hospital. To the former isolation building was added one big room and the whole converted into a nurses' home.

In April 1928, elections for a new superior took place. The new superior was Sr. Serafina Pfurtscheller.

Because of the increase in the number of patients, already referred to, the new mother superior, with the consent of the Board of the Hospital, decided to extend the facilities and to add a bigger chapel. A loan of \$50,000 was made with the permission of the Ordinary and work was begun in the summer. The architect was Mr. Desrocher of Edmonton, the contractor was Mr. Stadelman. The contract with Mr. Stadelman cost \$49,991.00. As things go in the construction business, the outlay for the building was higher than first anticipated. Also an extensive remodelling of the old building was undertaken. In the whole hospital the windows in the basement were enlarged. In the first building the old wooden stairs were torn out and new terazzo stairs built. The whole surgery department was altered. The X-Ray equipment was installed in what was formerly the chapel. A new electric elevator, costing \$3,362 was added. The entire old building

was rebuilt. The cost of this was about \$4,000. In the basement of the new wing there is the kitchen with a small adjoining room which, until 1942, was used as a supply room and now lately as a bakery. Close by is the Sisters' refectory. There is also a dining room for priests, one for the nurses and a small room that is used as a dining room for occasional visitors.

The exterior of the building was completed before winter, and the inside was undertaken after that. At first the plan was to build a fireproof structure, but as the necessary materials were not immediately available, the plan was changed and the cost reduced by about \$2,000. The very Rev. Abbot at first would allow only a \$55,000 loan; \$45,000 for the new building and \$10,000 for remodelling of the old building. In the end a loan of \$60,000 was made from the Montreal Trust Company.

Unfortunately, even this amount was not enough to cover the costs. The Abbot would allow an additional loan on the condition only that the Sisters would, in a few years, open a hospital at Watson, so as to prevent another Order of Sisters from coming to that colony. He was given assurances to that effect. There was, however, no enthusiasm for opening a hospital there since the distance from Watson to Humboldt is so short that anyone wishing to go to Humboldt could easily do so.

In this year the postulants' veil was changed. Since 1922 when the Sisters' veil had been changed, the postulants were wearing the black ones made out of the ones used by the Professed Nuns. But since 1928 they wear round, white, short veils. The custom to address

the Postulants with the title "Miss" (Jungfrau), as had been the practice in our Order before, was re-established.

This same year the time for recreation was regulated and set for 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Then the signal was given for silence, and everyone went to the chapel. For five minutes each Sister prepared her meditation for the next morning. Then there was the official night prayer. By 9:30 everyone was expected to be in bed.

(NOTE: The \$60,000 loan was not enough to cover all the costs.

Another \$20,000 was needed and requested of the Montreal Trust Co., but the company refused. Where to now?)

By 1929 the construction commenced in 1928 was nearing its completion. The work on the interior of the new building was progressing rapidly and hopefully the chapel would be ready for services at Easter. Sisters Serafina and Walburga undertook, in March, a trip to Winnipeg to make the necessary purchases for the chapel. A donation of \$1,000 had been made by the late Mrs. Elizabeth Massinger to help defray these expenditures.

On Palm Sunday, March 24th, the Rt. Rev. Abbot Severin, O.S.B., blessed the new chapel, with the assistance of the Rev. Fathers Dominic and Benedict.

On Good Friday the Blessed Sacrament was transported there with the Sisters making up the procession. The first divine service was held there on Easter Sunday, March 31st, 1929. The Abbot had directed that Sunday Mass in the hospital chapel be considered

fulfilment of one's obligation only for the residents of the hospital.

NOTE: (When the chapel was finished there occurred one day the visit to the hospital of a Mr. Schneider, a brother of Sr. Alphonsa. He was pleased with the chapel and promised to talk to Mr. Berthold Imhoff about decorating it free of charge, at least the sanctuary. Mr. Imhoff said he was prepared to do that, inquired about the designs we would like, and drew these during the winter. During the summer he came to Humboldt and decorated the sanctuary. He did all this free of charge, but we had to pay the cost of the paint. He hoped to be able to decorate the entire chapel.)

Since 1929 the Superiors of the branch houses belong to the Central Council, according to directions from Father Abbot.

In the Summer of 1929 it also became necessary to build a new icehouse. At the same time a shop was added for carpentry and mechanical work.

On September 13, 1929, the chicken coup was partly destroyed by fire. It was restored the following year, and a slaughter house was built at the same time.

In January 1930 the Depression set in and our income was very meager. We had to borrow money from the bank.

On April 15, 1931, there were Elections for a Superior. The present superior, Sister Serafina, was chosen for another three years. In the afternoon, in the presence of the counselors and branch superiors, the Very Rev. Abbot Severin gave directions on a few points



which needed attention.

- Silence. The grand silence especially should be observed at the specified places.
- Charity. The older Sisters should be careful to give good example to the others and win them by their affection.
- So that the young Sisters can acquire the real spirit of the Order, they should not be sent to a branch house but be kept under surveillance for the whole three-year term.
- In the Novitiate it would be advisable to transfer the reading period to another time of the day, because during the first hours of the afternoon people are usually tired and sleepy. Perhaps the recreation period could be placed in the afternoon and the reading in the evening. It would also seem advisable not to require too much work from the Novices and the Postulants, so that they could have more time for spiritual exercises and spend more time in the Novitiate quarters. They should learn more about the religious life and its duties and perform them, for this is, after all, the main purpose of the Novitiate.
- Constitutions should be observed strictly, both in the Motherhouse and in the branch houses.
- The Superior of a branch house should not allow a subject of hers to visit her relatives without the express permission of the Mother Superior.
- In the branch houses no gifts should be made to private persons but all the handicraft not needed in the particular house should be

forwarded to the Rev. Mother, who will dispose of them as she sees fit. Also, all such articles should be made at recreation only, and not during working time or on the floors.

In 1931, Sister Salesia and Sister Agatha decided to return to the former Motherhouse at Klagenfurt. Sr. Salesia went to Cudworth to recuperate somewhat before going on the trip. Sr. Agatha, however, changed her mind in the meantime, and the plan now was for Sister Salesia to go alone. But when Sr. Philomena found out that Sr. Salesia was travelling alone, she wrote to the Rev. Mother begging permission to go along. The reasons she gave for the trip were to accompany Sr. Salesia out of sisterly love, and to visit her aged mother in Austria. She hoped her relatives in Austria would pay for the trip. The plan was submitted to the Very Rev. Abbot, who gave his permission, on the condition that Sister Philomena promise to return to Canada.

On October 23rd, Sisters Philomena and Salesia departed, and, after leaving Humboldt in the morning, spent the day at the College. At 4 p.m. they caught the train for Winnipeg and from there to Montreal and New York. The arrangements for the trip had been made by Mr. C. Franke of Winnipeg. On October 30th, they embarked on the steamer 'Europa', and on November 6th, landed at Bremen. From there they travelled through Vienna on to Klagenfurt, where they arrived on November 9th. On January 28, 1932, Sister Philomena returned from her European trip, to Humboldt.

On Sept. 17, 1932, the Sister Vicar Walburga died. Chosen as

the new Vicar was Sister Philomena Jug, who was then the Superior in Battleford.

In October 1932, according to Father Abbot's instructions, the Juniorate was placed under the direction of its own Mistress. The Mother Superior was no longer to hold this office. The Vicar, Sister Philomena, was named Mistress of the Juniorate. Notwithstanding Father Abbot's wish that the Junior Sisters spend their whole three years of training in the Motherhouse this was not always possible because of the shortage of help. The ruling then adopted called for these Sisters to spend the last six months before their Solemn Vows in the Humboldt Convent. This is still the practice today.

In November 1932 a copy of the new Rule and Constitutions arrived from Klagenfurt. The Rule had been approved by Pope Pius XI on October 4, 1927, for the Third Order Regular and the Statutes for the Sisters of St. Elizabeth in Klagenfurt. This copy was submitted to the Very Rev. Father Abbot with the request that steps should be taken to adapt these Statutes to the Humboldt Community as much as conditions permitted and then acquire approval for the latter. This work was immediately undertaken, and in due course it was completed. When it was submitted to the Abbot, he suggested it be translated into English, since the Bishops of all the dioceses in which the Sisters worked had the right to have a copy and the present Bishops of Saskatoon and Prince Albert could not understand German. When the translation, by Rev. Fr. Augustine, O.S.B., with the help of a Sister, had been done, the Very Rev. Abbot judged the translation not acceptable and asked

that Father Sittenauer do the translating. This man has not to this date (1943) gotten around to this job. Year after year we were given assurances, but we no longer had any hopes of receiving approval of these new regulations. The old Statutes, approved by Abbot Michael in 1923, were adopted for another three years at the occasion of the election of the Rev. Mother. There are a number of points in these which can no longer be observed. May the good Lord come to our assistance and have mercy on us, so that we may attain a true religious mode of life.

In April of 1934 Sister Philomena, the Mother Vicar at the time, was elected as Reverend Mother. Mother Serafina Pfurtscheller, who had been Rev. Mother, then became the Mother Vicar.

Since, because of the labor problems, the income both at the Humboldt hospital and at Macklin was reduced, the very Rev. Abbot expressed the wish to see efforts put forth to have the interest on the debt reduced and the time for the repayment of the capital extended by five years. The matter was placed in the hands of Mr. C. Franke of Winnipeg, who was the representative of the Montreal Trust Co., and after prolonged discussion with the Company and between the Company and its shareholders, we were granted the favor requested. The payment time was extended to four and a half years. This was a boon for the two houses. In this transaction Mr. C. Franke had been very helpful. May the dear Lord reward him. The Montreal Trust Co. granted the rate of interest to extend after five years until the whole capital be repaid.

The other Company, represented by Victor Mathieu, re-imposed

5½% interest after the five year period was over. The Montreal Trust Company had, however, to reprint its bonds and this cost a lot of money. A lawyer from Winnipeg, Mr. Murray by name, was very helpful and well disposed towards our Community while these transactions were going on. He asked for only a modest fee for his work. In recognition, the convent sent him a gift of \$25, for which he was very grateful. He wrote back saying that such a thing had not occurred to him before, and that usually he is not thanked for his work. He is a Catholic and is using the money for charitable purposes.

In April of 1936 Rev. Fr. Abbot granted permission to sell some extra land which we owned. A purchaser had announced his willingness to buy it. It was sold to Mr. Jean M. Crozan for \$1,200. He made a down payment of \$500. This was on April 28, 1936.

In January 1937, Rev. Mother Philomena fell seriously ill. She had a slight stroke and from this she recovered very slowly and only partially. When in April the elections for Superior took place, Mother Serafina was chosen superior. After a few months, when Mother Philomena was well enough to attend the Community exercises regularly, she was named Vicar of the House.

Since in the Humboldt chapel only the sanctuary had been decorated (with paintings) the rest of the walls were covered with white plaster, which was quite dark by now. In 1937 the suggestion was made to have the entire chapel covered with paintings. The Very Rev. Abbot consented only, though, on condition that a benefactor be found to defray the cost, which would be in the neighborhood of \$1,200 according

to an estimate by Mr. Imhoff. In fact the dear Lord sent us a benefactor in the person of Mr. Knittig, Sr., who, since 1929, had been living with us in Room No. 4, 2nd floor, of the new building. This man donated \$500 towards decorating the chapel. And so, steps were taken to have the whole chapel covered with paintings, since this might no longer be possible later. Mr. Imhoff's health was not good. He had high blood pressure, and so a stroke could be expected at any time. He died in 1940. God rest his soul!

#### **SISTERS IN MUENSTER**

As was indicated earlier, the late Very Rev. Abbot Bruno had made application for the services of the Sisters for the Monastery at Muenster. It was in 1912, after 7 Sisters came over from Klagenfurt, two of these took over the kitchen duties as well as the washing for the Benedictine Fathers. These men were very satisfied with the Sisters' work.

When the College was built, the Sisters moved in and took over the same duties as in the Monastery. Now more Sisters were needed. Of these, five or six religious, Sister Christina was the first Superior. At the beginning of 1923 there came a request from Muenster for two more Sisters. These were expected to set type in the printing shop. The request was granted. When a type-setting machine was procured by the College the services of the Sisters were no longer required. They remained in the College, however, because with the



increased enrolment at the College the amount of work to be done also increased. Gradually, as time went on, there was always the need of one more Sister, until the total number stood at nine. It had been agreed that the sum of \$1,500 was to be paid annually for the Sisters' services. Their number did not matter, as long as the kitchen and the washing were taken care of. During the war years the crowds of students were even greater, and the Benedictine family increased also, so another Sister's services had to be enlisted. This time the number stood at 10. Now the stipend was raised proportionately.

A word of thanks must be said here for the Very Rev. Prior Peter, who was so punctual and honest in the matter of payment. The fee was paid every four months and Father Prior was always sure to bring it to Humboldt himself, and even a few days ahead of time. Although the Sisters have to be steady and diligent at work, they were well taken care of, both spiritually and physically. The Very Rev. Abbot Severin, who came to Muenster in 1927, always gave the Sisters a conference on Sundays when possible and when he was at home. May God recompense both Fr. Abbot and Fr. Prior for all they have done.

### **THE HOUSE IN MACKLIN**

It was shortly after the opening of the hospital at Humboldt that the Rev. Franz Palm, O.M.I., brother of the pastor of Humboldt at the time, Rev. Fr. Rudolph Palm, O.S.B., attempted to obtain Sisters for the St. Joseph's Colony and have them build a hospital. This

request could not be complied with for many years because of the small number of Sisters. They were hardly able to perform all their duties at Humboldt. But because of the 1920 increase and the acceptance of a few new Candidates, the number of Religious rose to 28. The request of Father Palm could finally be given some consideration. On January 2, 1922, Sister Euphrasia and Sister Marianna travelled to Macklin to begin serious negotiations with Father Palm and the people of the district. It was finally agreed to take on the project. First of all an appropriate house had to be found to serve as a temporary hospital.

After a prolonged search and lengthy negotiations, it was decided to take the beautiful house of Mr. Shaw, who was willing to sell it. Although a wooden structure, it was well built and in good condition. There was a basement where the laundry could be installed. On the first floor was the kitchen, one small, and two bigger rooms; on the 2nd floor there were four rooms, one of which was used as an operating room. There was room for about 15 patients and, in case of necessity, even more. A well had to be dug, so that there would be water for the house. The well cost \$1,300, and there was water in sufficient quantity. In March, another three Sisters arrived. They were Sisters Serafina, Theodora and Alexia. The hospital was then opened.

In the year 1924 the Oblate Fathers undertook to have a good German doctor come to the colony, since the community was largely composed of Russian-Germans. Thus, in 1925, a capable surgeon, Dr. F.L. Eid, came to Macklin from Germany. The sick poured into Macklin from far and wide to see Dr. Eid. The hospital could hardly hold them all

and was always full to overflowing.

The decision was, therefore, reached to build a bigger, modern hospital. On the north of the city  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a section of land was bought and on it a modern hospital built. The plan for it was made by Mr. Desrochers of Edmonton and the building contract was also undertaken by him.

In the summer of 1926 the cornerstone was laid and on May 12, 1927, the new hospital was solemnly blessed by His Excellency, Bishop Prud'homme of Prince Albert. At the time when the hospital was built and for a few years after that, Sr. Serafina was superior in Macklin. The first official superior was Sr. Euphrasia. The first hospital chaplain was the Rev. William Brabender, O.M.I., who held this position for a number of years until he left Canada to return to Europe.

## ROSTERN

In December 1935, a request came from the Bishop of Prince Albert, Dr. Joseph Henry Prud'homme, to have the Sisters take over the hospital at Rosthern, which had, until then, been under the direction of the Grey Nuns. Since the necessary personnel was available, it was decided to accept the offer for one year. Thus, on December 31, the Sisters went there to assume management on January 1, 1936.

In May 1937, a vote was taken among the Sisters, including those in the branch houses, to see whether the Rosthern Hospital should be retained for another year. The result of the voting showed that 46

were against and 16 in favor. Still it was retained for a while longer.

Deo Gratias

(Thus ends the chronicle as written up by Sister Mary Elizabeth Premu.

## PRAYER

O heavenly Father, the approach of this Diamond Jubilee Year of our Canadian Foundation reminds us of the flight of time and the numerous blessings you have bestowed on this Community in the past.

Throughout this year we will rejoice in the service of the Lord in numerous ways. There will be sounds of music, words of prayer and hymns of praise, which shall be heard in Your Holy City and chanted before Your altar on high.

Our God, and God of our fathers, renew this year unto us for good and for blessing, for joy and gladness, for salvation and consolation, for support and sustenance, for life and peace, for pardon of sin and forgiveness of iniquity, for you have chosen us from many and have appointed us to fulfill a mission on Earth so now bless us and grant us the grace to do Your will in bringing new life and hope and joy and peace to those in distress, to the poor, the suffering and the needy. Amen.



