



AWARD-WINNING ORGANIZATION 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003

historically speaking

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE HOWARD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The Miraculous W o m e n F R O M S a i n t L I B O R Y

By Ron W. Sack

When Americans needed health care, the nuns stepped up and opened hospitals. When children needed a proper education, the nuns opened schools to make sure a good education was available to all. When the homeless weren't being properly fed, the nuns opened food and homeless shelters. When the elderly needed care, the nuns cared for them.

Photograph above: Sister Mary Ann Wissing's visit to Saint Libory around 1940. Front row: Gerhard Wissing (her father), Sister Mary Ann Wissing, Anna Victoria Buddecke Wissing (her mother), and Valeria Buddecke (her grandmother). Back row: Albert Schwenk, Clara Wissing Schwenk, Lorraine Leschinsky Wissing, John Wissing, Agnes Wissing Roepker, and Arnold Roepker. Photograph courtesy of Albert and Clara Wissing Schwenk.



The altar of the second wooden Catholic church in Saint Libory. Most of the nuns who entered the convent from Saint Libory were either baptized or received their first communion in this church. Photograph courtesy of Albert and Clara Wissing Schwenk.

Clara Hundelt (Sister Mary Martine), who entered in August 1931; Mary Wissing (Sister Mary Roderick), who entered in January 1934; Leona Evers (Sister Mary Olivette), who entered in August 1935; and Maude Turk (Sister Mary Cataldo), who entered the convent in November 1937.

Two women entered the Order of Saint Joseph in Concordia, Kan. They included

Mary Burghardt (Sister Mary Emmerencia), who entered in December 1917, and Rosa Lee Rose (Sister Mary Madeline), who entered in November 1949.

The last one to enter the convent from the Saint Libory Parish was Joyce M. Janovec (Sister Mary Jacinta), who entered the Order of the Sisters of Notre Dame in 1961.

Continued on page 4.

America is better off because these valiant women took a stand and made sure that everyone in this country had all of the opportunities they were entitled to.

They took vows of poverty. They worked hard. They sacrificed.

Sixteen women from Saint Libory's Catholic Church answered the call. For a small parish like Saint Libory, 16 is quite a large number.

The first to answer the call was Mary Ann Boyle, who became Sister Mary Mathia. She entered the Franciscan Order in May 1889. Three other women also entered the Franciscan Order — Martha Kuiper (Sister Mary Martha), who entered in January 1894; Johanna Kuiper (Sister Mary Florentia), who entered in September 1894; and Annie Greenwalt (Sister Mary Lucinda), who entered in September 1909.

Nine women would enter the Order of School Sisters of Saint Francis in

Milwaukee, Wis. They were: Annie Buhrman (Sister Mary Guido), who entered in August 1913; Mary Graczyk (Sister Mary Rosata), who entered in September 1926; Mary Rock (Sister Mary Geraldina), who entered in August 1927; Lucy Wilson (Sister Mary Leonita), who entered in September 1927; Gettrude Buhrman (Sister Mary Secunda), who entered in August 1928;

My mother, Jan Schwenk Sack, said the entire family looked forward to Sister Mary Ann Wissing's arrival each year. Jan is shown to the immediate left of Sister Mary Ann in this 1957 photograph. "Going to the depot to pick up our aunt was an event," described Jan Sack. Sister Mary Ann Wissing is shown flocked around the entire Wissing/Schwenk/Roepker clan in Saint Libory. Photograph courtesy of Albert and Clara Wissing Schwenk.



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Sr. Mary Mathia / Mary Ann Boyle
Franciscan
Entered in May, 1889



Sr. Mary Martha / Martha Kuiper
Franciscan
Entered in January, 1894



Sr. Mary Florentia / Johanna Kuiper
Franciscan
Entered in September, 1894



Sr. Mary Lucinda / Arose Greenman
Franciscan
Entered in September, 1909



Sr. Mary Guido / Annie Buhman
School Sisters of St. Francis
Entered in August, 1913



Sr. Mary Emmeranza / Mary Burghardt
Order of Saint Joseph
Entered in December, 1917



Sr. Mary Rosalia / Mary Graczyk
School Sisters of Saint Francis
Entered in September, 1926



Sr. Mary Gerardo / Mary Rock
School Sisters of Saint Francis
Entered in August, 1927



Sr. Mary Leonita / Lucy Wilson
School Sisters of Saint Francis
Entered in September, 1927



Sr. Mary Secunda / Gertrude Buhman
School Sisters of Saint Francis
Entered in August, 1928



Sr. Mary Martine / Clara Humfelt
School Sisters of Saint Francis
Entered in August, 1931



Sr. Mary Rudolph / Mary Wising
School Sisters of Saint Francis
Entered in January, 1934



Sr. Mary Olivett / Leona Eeers
School Sisters of Saint Francis
Entered in August, 1935



Sr. Mary Cataldo / Maudie Turk
School Sisters of Saint Francis
Entered in November, 1937



Sr. Mary Madeline / Rosa Lee Roe
Order of Saint Joseph
Entered in November, 1949



Sr. Mary Jacinta / Joyce M. Jaworec
Sisters of Notre Dame
Entered in 1961

Of the 16 who who entered the convent and are still with their respective orders, only two are still living: Sister Mary Mattine (Clara Hundelt) of Milwaukee and Sister Mary Olivett (Leona Evers) of Omaha.

Four other women with Saint Libory connections also entered the convent, but they either moved away from the town or entered through another parish. One was Sister Francis Borgia Reutliver

Francis Borgia, a former resident of Saint Libory, spent her early years

in Howard County, entered the convent from Fordyce, Neb., and eventually was the head of her religious order — the School Sisters of Saint Francis. During her leadership, this order boasted a total of 4,000-plus worldwide. Its motherhouse is located in Milwaukee.

In 1965, the congregation's four provinces in North America, including the Central American mission region,



Most of the Sisters with Saint Libory roots (upper left-hand corner) came back for the dedication of the new church which was blessed and dedicated by Bishop Paschang on May 31, 1954. The parish celebrated the diamond jubilee the same day. Photograph courtesy of Albert and Clara Wissing Sehwenk.

was also a supervisor/consultant of high school religion for the Archdiocese of Chicago. She was also on the staff at the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University in Chicago.

Her connections put her in the national spotlight. She was interviewed on such television talk shows as the Phil

Donahue Show. She also wrote the book entitled "He Sent Two." The book was a historical account about the founding of the School Sisters of Saint Francis. As of 2003, she lives in California and was working on another book.

Our family had a special bond with one of these women — Sister Mary Ann Wissing. Sister Mary Ann was my

together with the European province, conducted 202 elementary schools, 31 high schools, 10 professional schools, 124 kindergartens, 9 hospitals, 2 clinics, 13 homes for the aged, 6 homes for dependent children, 8 sanitariums, and Alverno College for women in Milwaukee.

Sister Francis received her masters in English from DePaul University and

Sisters
of special note.

Top left photograph: Mary Ann Boyle, who became Sister Mary Mathia, entered the Franciscan Order in May, 1889. She was one of the first women to enter the convent from Howard County, Nebraska. Photograph courtesy of Saint Libory's Catholic Church.

Bottom left photograph: Sister Martine Hundelt (Claia Hundelt) entered the Order of School Sisters of Saint Francis, earned a Doctorate, and became the second woman in the United States to ever to teach at a seminary. Sister Martine currently resides in Milwaukee and has been honored as Professor Emeritus in History of the Church from Sacred Heart Seminary in Hales Corners, Wisconsin. Photograph courtesy of Sister Martine Hundelt.

Top right photograph: Mary Berghardt (Sister Mary Emmerencia), who entered the Order of Saint Joseph, made her final vows on her deathbed in December, 1917. Therefore, no photograph exists of her in her habit. Photograph courtesy of Eileen Dingwerth.

Bottom right photograph: Maudie Turk (Sister Mary Cataldo), who entered the Order of School Sisters of Saint Francis in November, 1937, came to Saint Libory via the Ephraim Train. She was adopted by Joe and Rose Evers Turk. Photograph courtesy of Leola Hansen.

All of the photographs of these women will be on display in the Parish Center at the Saint Libory Catholic Church.



mother's aun. After Sister Mary Ann entered the convent, she became one of the head cooks for the Order.

My mother, Jan Schwenk Sack, and my aunt, Kay Schwenk Scarborough, fondly remember visits made by Sister Mary Ann each year. "She added so much depth to our family," said Jan Sack. "Our family is deeper in our faith because of Sister Mary Ann."

"We always felt honored to have a nun in our family," concluded Kay Scarborough.

When I traveled to see Sister Mary Ann before she died in 1999, I came into contact with one of her dear friends, Sister Martine Hundelt. Sister Martine earned her doctorate and

became the second woman in the United States to ever to teach at a seminary. Sister Martine resides in Milwaukee and has been honored as professor emeritus in history of the Church from Sacred Heart Seminary in Hales Corners, Wis.

Both Sister Mary Ann and Sister Martine had a presence about them.

You always felt welcomed and loved when you were around them. Today, Sister Martine remains a very good friend of mine. Even though Martine has done some pretty incredible things in her life, she hasn't forgotten her Saint Libory roots.

This year, Saint Libory's Catholic Church is celebrating its 125th anniversary. The parish hasn't forgotten these great women. A display of their photographs is being planned to honor them.

It is hard to think of America without these women of faith. They sacrificed. They taught. They healed. They led. They made our lives better.

And for that, I say, "Well done, Sisters. Well done."

HCHS dedicates Saint Libory 41 school.

By Ron W. Sack

It may have taken over 30 years, but Howard County can now boast having a beautifully restored one-room country schoolhouse. The dedication of the recently restored Saint Libory District 41 school took place on Saturday, May 24 at the Howard County Historical Village in Saint Paul.

During the dedication, Evelyn Dvorak of Saint Paul, Shirley Johnson of Dannebrog, and Leo Blaha of Saint Paul presented their history book on Turkey Creek District 13 school to board member Carl Christensen. Jim Leschinsky of Saint Libory, a former student of District 41, helped raise the American flag with his sister, Joyce Leschinsky Ward of Saint Paul. Pat Holtorf Paulsen of Saint Paul, another former student of the school, led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance. Former students Betty Knuth Greenwalt who resides near Farwell and Bev Windolf Kunze of Owasso, Oklahoma cut the dedication ribbon. One of the many special guests at the dedication was Betty Schipman of Saint Libory. Schipman is a former teacher at District 41. Elmer Leschinsky, who is 91, released six balloons into the sky. Leschinsky was the oldest student who was at the dedication ceremonies.

The City of Saint Paul purchased the building at public auction in the mid-1960s. For many years, it was considered the "main" building of the Howard County Historical Society that housed numerous artifacts, most of

which did not pertain to the history of country schools. Once additional buildings were acquired, the contents of the school was moved to the other buildings.

Around 2000, the Board decided to begin restoration of the school. The leaky belfry was repaired. This leak caused major damage to the floor and interior walls. After the leak was repaired, the walls were patched. Floors were then cleaned and repaired. Interior walls were painted in a cream color with the woodwork being painted in a cool gray.

Historical Society members sent out a plea to Howard County residents for artifacts. Blackboard, a watercooler crock, lunch pails, tin water cups, photographs, books, benches, school desks, maps, and even an old picture of Abraham Lincoln were soon donated. About the only thing the school needs is a picture of George Washington and a piano bench.

In early 2003, work continued on the floor of the school. Green shades were custom ordered and curtains were hung. Seasonal decorations were made out of construction paper and placed on the curtains. An educational exhibit about the history of Howard County's country schools was placed in the cloak room of the school. Supporters, members, and board members spent at least 1000 hours volunteering time to restore this school.

Immigration exhibit added to depot.

A new exhibit has been installed in the Union Pacific depot at the Howard County Historical Village in Saint Paul. This exhibit showcases the "Hopes and

Dreams" of the pioneers and the opportunities associated with the arrival of the railroad. Saint Libory, which survived because of the railroad, is a case study for this exhibit.

Photographs of the early pioneers who settled in the town of Saint Libory or near it, particularly in the years from the 1870s to 1910, were loaned by the families for this exhibit. The following families participated in the exhibit: Buddecke, Assendrop, Wissing, Steinbach, Schwenk, Franssen, Evers, Dingwerth, Rock, McAndrews, Leschinsky, Fay, Teng, Kaufmann, Horak, Gerdes, Niemoth, Lodde, O'Halleran, Miller, Eller, Strehle, Haggart, Trentman, Graczyk, Buhman, and Turk.

This exhibit showcases over 40 photographs of these families. Also showcased are several of the early businesses, including the O'Halleran Store, the Illinois House, Union Grain, and the Leschinsky Store.

They will be missed.

By Ron W. Sack

This year, the Howard County Historical Society lost two dear friends. Alice Christensen Bartle, who was a 2003 board member, died on April 6, 2003. Her enthusiasm and love for preservation will never be forgotten. Bartle was a non-stop volunteer.

Another former board member, Virginia Gee Leth, died on March 19, 2003. Leth played key roles with the Veterans' exhibit and the history book "Entering Howard County."

Both of these women will be greatly missed.

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Questions?

Contact the Historical Society at the address above or contact any of the other board members.

Thank you!

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Veterans' exhibits expanded



A new exhibit honoring Howard County native Leo U. Goracke is now on display in the Gruber House. Goracke is the son of Frank and Caroline Goracke and grew up on a farm southwest of Saint Paul. During the dry years of the 1930s, he moved to New York and worked for the Ford Motor Company.

Goracke, who rose to the rank of First Lieutenant during World War II, was in service for four years and two months with three years and two months of that time overseas in England, Africa, and Italy. He served in a heavy tank battalion. Goracke wears the Silver Star, 2 Bronze Stars for Heroism (one for heroism in Northern Italy in April of 1945), Presidential Citation Medal, Purple Heart, Pre-Pearl Harbor Ribbon, Good Conduct Medal, European Medal with Silver Star for five major combat zones, American Service Medal, Marksmanship Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

As of April, 2003, he resides in West Seneca, New York. Our next newsletter will have a detailed story on Goracke.

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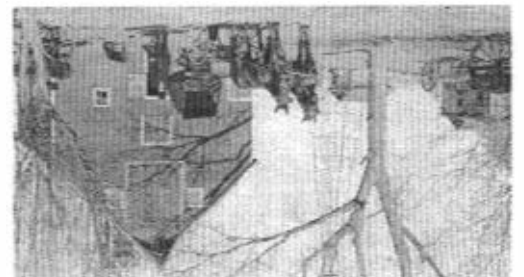
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Photograph on mailing side: John McAndrews farm east of Saint Libory.

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