

THE HISTORY  
OF  
ST. VICTORIA PARISH

1857

1957



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1857 - 1957

By  
John A. Diethelm

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Nihil obstat: Rev. Patrick H. Ahern, *Censor deputatus*  
Imprimatur: ✠ William O. Brady, Archbishop of St. Paul  
July 1st, 1957.

## FOREWORD

The history of the St. Victoria Parish begins with the history of Minnesota. Before the Territory was admitted to the Union, there were Catholic immigrants who had settled in the area of the parish. Our historical sketch is concerned with the lives of the missionaries, priests, the very first settlers, and of others who followed during the first twenty-five years of parish history.

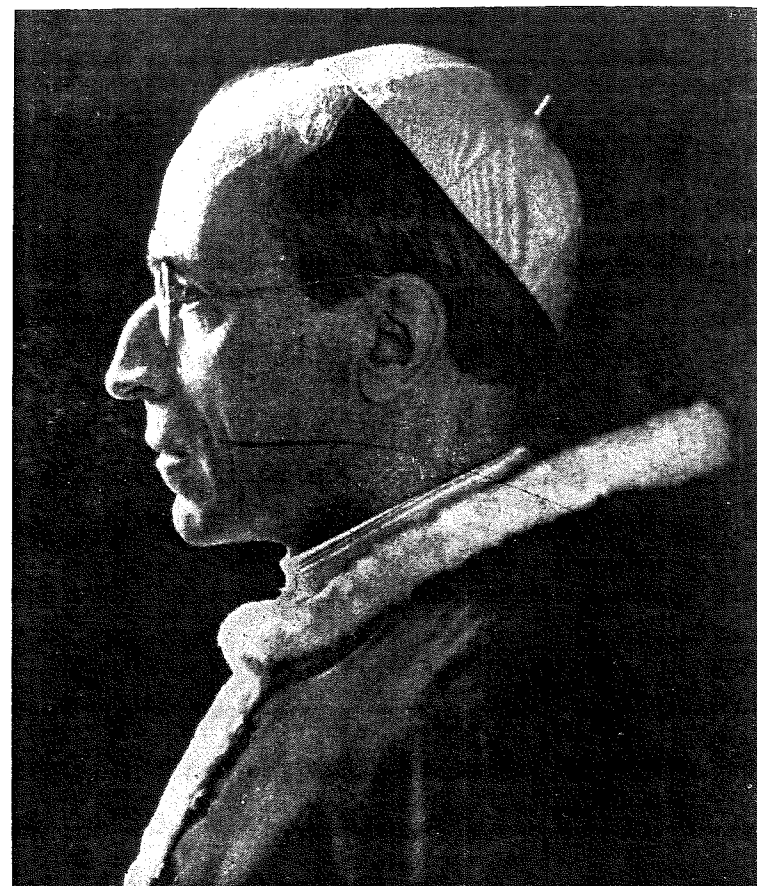
Since ninety per cent of the present members of the parish are direct descendants of the families that settled here before 1870, it is desirable and necessary that the present and future generations have a record of the work, struggles, sacrifices, success, and faith of their forefathers.

It has not been an easy task to make a record of the early history. We must remember that before 1855 there was no Carver County; no railroad in the county before 1870. There was no newspaper in the county before 1861; no church records until after 1856, the year when St. Mark's at Shakopee and St. Victoria were organized. Therefore the information on which our account is based has been derived largely from the definite knowledge of surviving children and grandchildren of the first settlers, and must of necessity be traditional up to the time at which public and church records are available.

This book is dedicated to the founders of the Parish of St. Victoria. May God reward them.

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance he has received, especially from Mr. J. M. Aretz.

J. A. D.



POPE PIUS XII

*Sponsored By:*  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Schmieg

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL

244 Dayton Avenue  
Saint Paul, Minnesota

May 16, 1957

TO THE REVEREND PASTOR AND PEOPLE  
OF ST. VICTORIA PARISH AT VICTORIA

The Archbishop is happy to join in your prayerful observance of your centenary of parish existence. The parish, of course, is the basic unit in the Church. Under the direction of a pastor, the fruits of Christ's Redemption are dispensed to the people; God is worshipped by the whole parish united in His grace; the faith is kept and prospers. A centenary marks not merely the passing of the years, but the growth and intensification of the faith. At such a jubilee, we remember the dead who have gone before us; we honor those who now form the parish unit; we hope for a blessed future.

With congratulations to all at St. Victoria's Parish and with every blessing to priest and people, I remain,

Devotedly in Christ,

✠ William O. Brady

Archbishop of St. Paul



WILLIAM O. BRADY, ARCHBISHOP OF ST. PAUL

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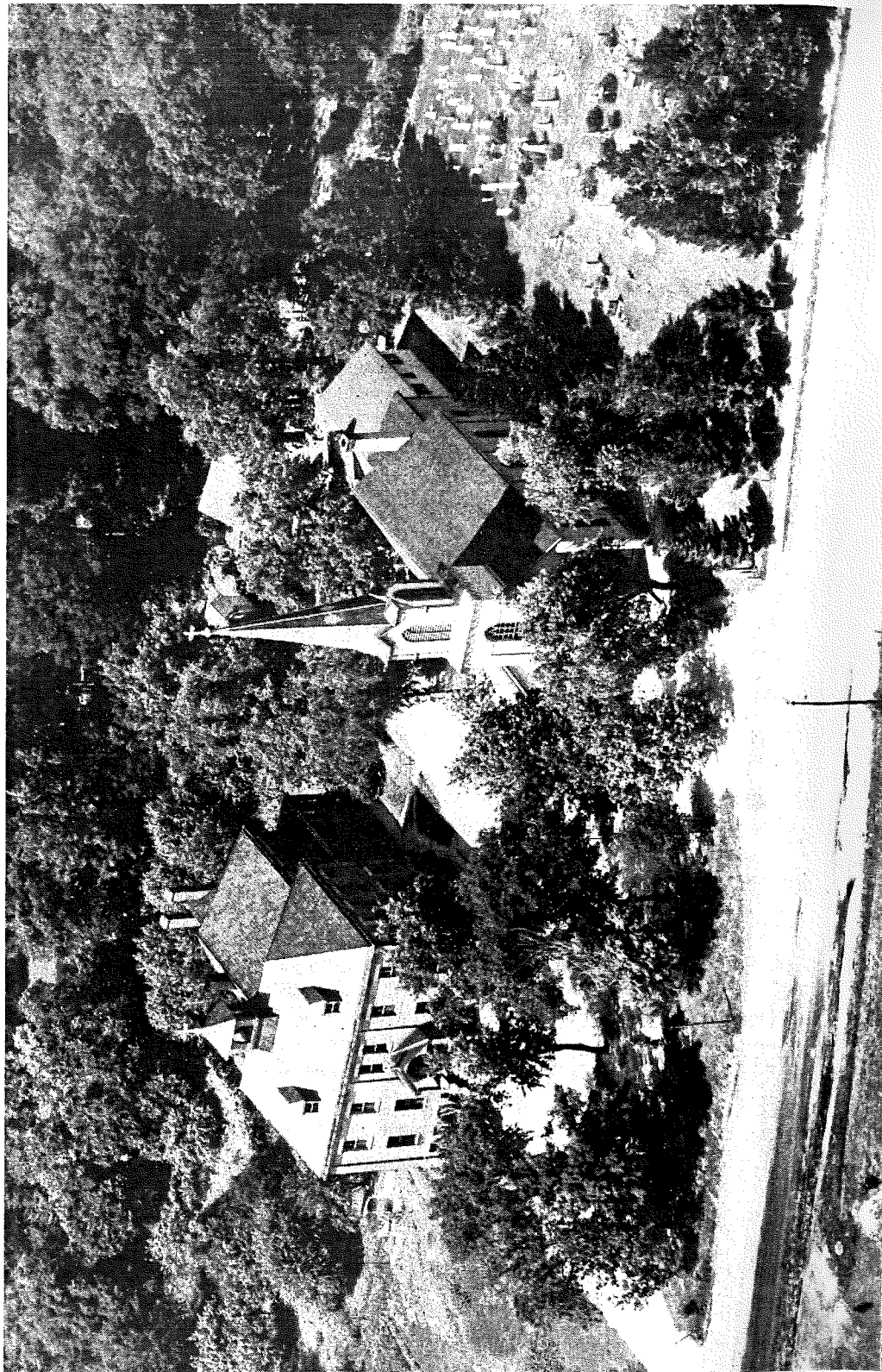
Dear Members and Friends of St. Victoria Parish:

One hundred years ago Divine Providence brought into existence the parish of St. Victoria. Who can estimate the blessings God has bestowed on this cherished spot of His vast universe, on this single cell of Christ's Mystical Body these past hundred years.

Glory be to God and ceaseless thanksgiving for all that He has wrought in the centenary of this parish, in every member living and deceased: from the founders, the first missionaries, the pastors, teachers, Sisters and faithful people down to each member of this parish as it continues today.

Can we forget our indebtedness to those hundreds who preceded us in upbuilding and maintaining St. Victoria Church and School? We are grateful to them for the spirit of faith they have shown us; for their work, their sacrifices, their accomplishments. We now reap where they have sown. We pledge ourselves to believe and work, to sacrifice and cooperate as they have, confident that Divine Providence will continue to bless and prosper our beloved parish in the generations who will follow us.

Clement Martin, O.F.M., Pastor  
*Sponsored By:*  
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## IN THE BEGINNING

It is not our intention at this point to write a detailed history of the discovery of America by Columbus in 1492, nor do we want to describe the struggles which ensued to gain possession of this territory by England, Spain, and France. Any school history gives complete details of the development of the United States. When Columbus discovered America, the entire continent of North and South America belonged to the Indians. Suffice it, therefore, to state in summary that the area of the parish originally belonged to a class of aboriginal Indians known as the "Mound-builders." After them it was in the possession of the Red Indians. Sometime before 1769 England claimed it; from 1769 to 1800, Spain. France had some sort of claim from 1800 to 1803. In 1803 the United States acquired the land west of the Mississippi River through what is commonly known as the Louisiana Purchase for \$15,000,000, or 4½ cents per acre.<sup>1</sup> On August 5, 1851, a treaty known as the Treaty of Mendota was signed with the Indians.

The Treaty of Mendota went into full legal effect on February 24, 1853, and the land was now opened to settlement by the whites. The Territory of Minnesota was organized in 1859.

Mound-builders, the name given to the Indians who formerly inhabited the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys, have left very remarkable earthworks in the area as their only memorials. The only known groups of mounds in this area are on the south side of Halstead Bay, Lake Minnetonka, and at Chaska. Some historians claim that they were built by the Mound-builders, and it is of interest to note that the archaeologist Winchell believed that the mounds around Lake Minnetonka are of Indian origin.

As early as 1857 scientists and curious visitors from the East began to show interest in the mounds, especially those in the vicinity of Halstead Bay. Sixty-nine mounds could clearly be seen on the shores of this little bay. After a visit to these mounds, Mrs. Harriet Bishop philosophized as follows: "By these mounds

*Aerial view opposite*      *Sponsored by Mrs. Gertrude Notermann and Family.*

is the place to pause and think back centuries to times when the red men, children of the forest and prairie, hunted and fished; loved and hated; fought, rejoiced, sorrowed, and died, leaving scarce a mark behind them, save these mounds."<sup>2</sup>

Mound-builders were formerly supposed to have been a semi-civilized race, but it is now believed that they were the ancestors of the present Indians. Some of the Gulf State Indians have built similar mounds within historic times. They are conceded by all historians to have been the original inhabitants of this area. At what period the Mound-builders were in Carver County and the area can never be definitely known. Pieces of their skulls and other bones indicate that they were a little people, even dwarfish, like the Japanese and most Chinese. It has been suggested that they came from the Orient, were Mongolians, and had yellow skins and complexions. Their successors had red or copper-colored skin and are commonly called "Red Indians" to distinguish them from their predecessors, the yellow-skinned architects of the mounds.

It cannot be stated with confidence who the first Red men were to occupy this region and to what particular nation they belonged. The Iowa Indians (the "Drowsey ones") settled near the mouth of the Minnesota River in about 1769 and 1770, in which years the Sioux were driven from the Mille Lacs country by the Chippewas and came to the west side of the Minnesota. The Sioux told the early white comers that when their bands came to the districts mentioned, there was an Iowa village at the mouth of the Minnesota River, but in a few years the Iowa tribes were driven out and away to the south and never returned to the region except for raids on the Sioux villages on the Cannon River. It is certainly known that the Indians on the Minnesota River who immediately preceded the whites were bands of the great Sioux or Dakota nation. They called themselves *Dakota*, a word meaning "allied" or "confederated" in their own language, for the great nation was composed of seven great bands (the seven council fires) united for their own good. The Chippewas and Algonquins called them "Nau-do-wes-suse," spelled "Nadoneessiou" by the French, which was finally contracted to Sioux.

In June, 1849, Territorial Governor Ramsey and John Chambers, a former governor of Iowa, were authorized commissioners to make a treaty with the Indians for the land west of the Mississippi River. After two years of negotiations, a treaty was finally signed on August 5, 1851, under a brush arbor erected by Alexis Bailly on

an elevated plain near Mendota, by the United States Commissioners Lee and Ramsey, and the following chiefs: Wabasha, chief of the Medawkantons, and sub-chiefs Little Crow, Wacouta (the shooter), Cloud Man, Shakopee (or six), Gray Iron, and Good Road. There was only one band of Wahpakootas, and Chief Red Legs signed for it.

The territory ceded by the Indians comprised about 23,750,000 acres, of which 19,000,000 were in Minnesota, including Carver County. The United States amended the treaty by striking out several provisions for certain reservations. The amended treaty was then sent back to Minnesota, and in September, 1852, it was signed by some of the chiefs and head tribesmen of the Indians. President Fillmore proclaimed it and it went into full legal effect on February 24, 1853. It had been in practical effect so far as the white settlers were concerned many months before.

The most prominent point under consideration is that the Treaty of Mendota included Carver County and was purchased from the Indians. Great was the general rejoicing among the squatters of the Carver County area over the fact that by the Indian treaties the country west of the Mississippi River had been legally opened to white settlement. The main reason was that all of them already had a claim of some sort in the land of promise. The fact that the treaties had been made was the consummation of their desires, hopes, and expectations.

It was in 1850 that the heavy influx of immigrants from Europe began. People from Germany, Austria, Holland, Switzerland, Ireland, and the Scandinavian countries came in great numbers to Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. This flow kept up until about 1890. By occupation most of them were farmers, craftsmen, carpenters, smiths, and masons. Most of these immigrants left their homelands on account of the disturbed political, religious, and economic conditions existing at the time. In search of peace and security they crossed the ocean and built new homes for themselves and their posterity.

Many immigrants were attracted by the level, spreading prairies of Illinois and Iowa. The forests of Minnesota and Wisconsin with their many lakes and streams appealed to others. "Big Woods," the name by which Carver and the neighboring counties were known at that time, was chosen by our forefathers.

Minnesota was made a territory in 1849. Carver County was organized in 1855. There was no census of the population, but it would be safe to say that there were less than one thousand



inhabitants in the county at the time. There was no railroad in the county and no roads, except the rudely cleared trails through the dense forest from homestead to homestead. In the very beginning the nearest and only village where some supplies and absolute necessities such as salt, flour, calico, seed, and other materials could be obtained was the then-small village of St. Paul. (There was as yet no Minneapolis.)

## THE FIRST SETTLERS

There are no records available, either church, public, or private, to show the exact dates of the arrival of the first settlers who came to the area before 1857. However, we of the second and third generations have known them personally, and have often heard them recount the story of the trials which they had to endure in establishing themselves in the New World. Although we are unable to record the exact dates in most cases, we are fairly certain as to the year of their arrival and, by piecing together their stories, we can give a fairly accurate account of them for the time not covered by written records. The story of the settlers who arrived here during the first six years, therefore, is entirely traditional. It was handed down to the writer by some of the settlers themselves, or by their children, and not after several generations which could bring about discrepancies through exaggeration, distortion, or imagination. We are, therefore, recording the story as related by Franz Tschimperle, Michael Diethelm, Carl Diethelm and his wife, Joseph Schmid, Michael and Heinrich Kessler, Leonard Breher, Nicolaus Deis, Martin Schmidt, Engelbert Schneider, John Ess, Mathias Baumgartner, and others, as correctly as possible.

Before any surveys or a treaty with the Indians were made, it was impossible for the first settlers to file for a homestead because the land still belonged to the Indians and, furthermore, lacked a legal description. Even after the treaty and the surveys, a settler who had established a prior claim sometimes waited as long as five or six years before filing, principally because of the fact that he did not have the required \$26 or \$32 filing fee, but also because he had to walk the long distance to Forest City, Henderson, or Litchfield to do so.

We know that Michael Diethelm, the eldest son of Carl Diethelm, was born in Switzerland on December 1, 1850. In later life he often stated that he was two years old when he

arrived here. In another paragraph we will show that a brother of Carl, who also was named Michael, preceded him in 1851. It is from these facts that our story of the very first settlers originates.

It was in the summer of 1851 when the brothers Michael and Carl Diethelm left their home in Galgene, Canton Schwyz, Switzerland, crossed the Atlantic, and came to America by way of New Orleans. They had read about the attractiveness of Minnesota in a book by Von Humboldt while still living in Switzerland.

Their first stop in America after leaving New Orleans was at Cairo, Illinois. Owing to the shortage of money, Carl, his wife, and their two children, Michael and Theresa, stopped at Cairo temporarily, where he took employment as a carpenter to earn passage to St. Paul. His brother Michael, however, continued up the river, arriving at St. Paul before the winter freeze-up.

In St. Paul Michael arranged lodging for himself and his wife until he could find good land to homestead. It was here that he heard of the present Victoria area, for which a treaty was being negotiated with the Indians. Quite a few immigrants were arriving in St. Paul at the time and it was the consensus of opinion that the treaty with the Indians would eventually be effected and the land west of the Mississippi opened for pre-emption. Michael finally decided to explore the country to the west. Providing himself with a few weeks' rations and an axe, he proceeded on foot in a westerly direction, blazing trees as he entered the wilderness in order to find his way back through the dense forest. He probably traveled through present Bloomington, Eden Prairie, and Chanhassen, and eventually came to the point where his grand-nephew, Eugene Diethelm, now lives, about 1500 feet north-east of the present St. Victoria Church.

The region around Victoria with its woods and meadows, its lakes and creeks, must have appealed to him. He stopped here, cut down a few trees to build a temporary shelter, and thereby established a prior claim to the land. He then returned to St. Paul and immediately notified his brother Carl in Cairo that he had found good land near St. Paul and advised him to follow as soon as possible.

After Michael returned to St. Paul from his successful search for a home, he remained there during the severe winter of 1851-52 to earn a little money. St. Paul was a bustling small village, and he found steady employment until spring as a carpenter. When at last spring arrived, he used the money he had earned to buy

a cheap rifle, some powder, caps, bullets, flour, salt, and a few other necessities, gathered up as many tools as he and his wife could carry, and began what was then a long journey of about 35 miles through the wilderness to the place where he had erected a temporary shelter in the late fall of the previous year.

After repairing the shelter and making it wind and rain-proof, Michael made several trips to St. Paul to get some more provisions, the rest of his tools, some seed, potatoes, beans, corn, and other vegetables. Because there was no trail or path as yet, travel was difficult and usually required from five to seven days to make the round trip. We can observe here that Michael's young wife must have been an amazingly courageous woman, with bands of Indians roaming the territory on their hunting expeditions; she remained at home alone while her husband would be gone for about a week in quest of provisions. At no time, we often heard her state, did the Indians molest her.

Michael's brother Carl with wife and children arrived in St. Paul in the spring of 1852. He came up the river from Cairo. Immediately he arranged temporary lodging for his wife and children and then started out to meet his brother. After arriving, he selected and established his claim by cutting down a few trees about one-third of a mile to the southeast of his brother's claim. Here there was a small patch of ground, about three acres, which the Indians had used several seasons previous. Most of the trees had been removed from it, and so it could easily be cleaned up for planting. The brothers then planted more beans, potatoes, and other vegetables. In later life Mrs. Carl Diethelm often remarked that the first crop was so abundant that it easily carried them through to the next season.

The brothers now commenced to build a permanent log house on the spot where Michael had staked his claim and completed it by midsummer. It was quite large, and both families moved in until a house for Carl was completed on his claim that fall. They now had homes for themselves and about three acres of land ready for the plow, more than they had had in Switzerland and of much better quality.

When Michael Diethelm came here late in the fall of 1851, he did not encounter a single settler. This was a dense hardwood forest, a real wilderness, containing many trees two and three feet in diameter—red and white oak, maple, basswood, elm and ash, together with the smaller varieties such as ironwood, poplar, white birch, butternut, hickory, and hackberry. Many of the

meadows were covered with a dense growth of tamarack which in many instances grew to a height of 75 feet or more. Because of their density they grew up very straight and slender and were used almost exclusively for rafters, joists, and beams in building houses and barns in these early days.

The woods teemed with deer, squirrels, quail, partridges, and large flocks of ducks on all the lakes and potholes. The first settlers saw large herds of deer almost daily, and large flocks of quail and partridges were foraging almost continuously in the clearing around their cabins. Fish could be caught in abundance from the shores of any lake in the summer and through the ice in winter. Fishers, mink, martens, and muskrats were plentiful along the streams and about the lakes; wolves, foxes, and racoons were everywhere. There were also some beavers, panthers, lynx, wildcats, and bears, which disappeared entirely within the first twenty-five to thirty years after the settlers came. They apparently could not stand civilization.

Cranberries were everywhere in the boggy marshes, and high-bush cranberries were abundant on higher ground along the edges of marshes and meadows. Strawberries grew wild in the meadows and on the creek banks. Blackberries red and black raspberries, black currants, and gooseberries were growing profusely along the edges of timber. There also were scattered patches of wild plums, the forerunner of our highly developed plum. There were many wild grapes, black haws, and several varieties of thorn apples. Butternut trees were scattered all over the hilly sections of the region, and hazelnuts grew on lower ground near the meadows. Chokecherries also abounded throughout the woods.

There were no fences. Oxen and cattle roamed through the woods and grazed around potholes, sloughs and meadows which abounded in the region. The lead animal usually carried a so-called "cow-bell" which was strapped around its neck and constantly rang while the animal was feeding, enabling the owner to distinguish his herd from others by the sound of the bell. After a few years, when the earliest settlers had cleared enough land to raise some grain crops, they were of necessity forced to build a fence around their fields for protection from the roaming cattle. Since there was as yet no barbed or fence wire, they were compelled to build rail fences. Red oak was the principal wood used for this purpose. Trees were cut down, cut into about 14-foot lengths, then split into rails. It took about 3500 rails to build a fence four to five feet high and a mile long. This fence could

be built in the winter time because no posts were required and because the snow, which did not drift in the dense forest, could easily be removed and the fence laid down. A rail fence did not cost a penny to build, only labor, which at the time was not figured by time and a half, 40-hour weeks, dollars, or cents.

There were many lakes in the region. Before the advent of the white settlers these lakes lay there serene, silent, secluded, and sunny, save for the shadows of leaning trees. They gave one that eerie feeling of fays and fairies. One could imagine water sprites balancing on swaying lily pads, and wood nymphs back among the ferns, napping in nodding lady slippers. Undisturbed, Lakes Bavaria, Minnetonka, Schutz, Pierson, Auburn, and the others were nature's perfect poems. Even to this day tourists from California, the West coast, Rocky Mountains, and Southern states often remark that we natives do not realize that we are living in paradise.

When the first settlers arrived, no surveys had been made to establish section and township lines. Therefore, all "sooners" who had squatted on the land before the lines were drawn were never certain that they had selected the proper building site for the land they wanted until the section lines had been established. However, even after the surveys were completed and a description was available, these early settlers waited from five to eight years before finally filing their claim. The reason was that by building a shack or house and clearing up some land and otherwise improving the property, they acquired a priority rating which apparently was respected by everybody, for there is not recorded a single case of claim-jumping in the entire area.

The foregoing is an accurate description of the primitive conditions which confronted the very first pioneers of the parish when they arrived here to establish their new homes. It is almost incomprehensible to realize the fortitude and resoluteness, the steadfastness of purpose against overwhelming odds which they had to overcome in establishing their new homes in a complete wilderness, 35 miles from any sign of civilization. The Indians still roamed about the area because they were still the owners of the land. Nevertheless, these earliest pioneers risked their all by living among these savages, hoping that a treaty would eventually be made. In addition, the fact must not be overlooked that these sturdy pioneers were handicapped and powerless to retreat. They came here with their wives and small children, they wanted land, they were several thousand miles from their homeland, and, in most cases, practically destitute. But with grim determination they tackled the job.

On May 10, 1852, the Diethelms' first neighbor arrived. He was Tobias Ottinger, who established himself about three miles to the southwest. He came from St. Paul with a yoke of oxen hitched to a stoneboat, loaded down with cooking utensils, stove, plow, some tools, and several months' food supply. He also had a little money, having worked as a huckster for some time in Missouri and several other Southern states. It took him about a week to travel the 35 miles from St. Paul to his homestead with his oxen.

It was in 1846 when Michael Kessler died in Bavaria. He was survived by his wife Barbara and six children, Heinrich, Franz, Michael, Joseph, Veronica, and Victoria. Victoria, the youngest, was fifteen years of age at the time of her father's death. They were living in a small village where they owned a modest home and a few acres nearby. Owing to the economic conditions of the time and having only a few acres of land, it was almost impossible for this large family to stay together and make ends meet. At that time several real estate firms from the north-central states were running advertisements in Germany, Holland, Belgium, and the Scandinavian countries, extolling the opportunities in America — low price of land, good virgin soil, low taxes, no military service, etc. — in fact, painting a picture of a utopia in the new world across the ocean where immense acreage could be acquired almost for the asking.

Several of the Kesslers' friends, namely Engelbert Schneider, Michael Ess and his sons John and Joseph, had already succumbed to the urge to settle in the new land and were sending back glowing reports to Bavaria from Cincinnati, Ohio. The Kesslers, therefore, decided to emigrate to the new land of promise as soon as possible. They arranged to sell their home and the few acres they possessed and after disposing of their holdings they had a little more money than was required for transportation to Cincinnati.

It is not definitely known when they arrived in Cincinnati. However, when they did arrive, their friends Schneider and the Ess's had already left for Michigan. Because Cincinnati was quite a bustling little city at that time, all the good land in that area had already been taken before the arrival of the Kesslers, and inasmuch as they were farmers and seeking land, they were not a little disappointed. Furthermore, the reports they received from Schneider and Ess in Michigan were not too encouraging. The entire family then, excepting the mother, took temporary employment in Cincinnati, and it was while working there that they

heard of the opportunity to obtain good land in Minnesota after the treaty with the Indians then under negotiation would be signed. This treaty was eventually effected in 1851. With the opening of the new territory, 160 acres of good land in Minnesota could be obtained merely for the cost of a small filing fee. The opportunity was too inviting to pass up. They therefore arranged transportation to St. Paul. Traveling to St. Paul via the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, they landed in the area of the parish in July of 1852.

Whether or not the entire family came here from St. Paul is not known. However, Mrs. Victoria White, a daughter of Michael Kessler, is of the opinion that the women of the family remained in St. Paul, while the four boys penetrated the wilderness to the west in quest of good land and, finding it in the present area of the parish, effected prior claims for themselves by cutting down a few trees. All their claims bordered on Lake Bavaria with the exception of Michael's, which was about one mile to the southeast. In consequence, the present Lake Bavaria was for many years known as Kessler Lake.

It is also the opinion of Mrs. White that the Kessler boys built a fairly large log house on Heinrich's claim near the north-west corner of the lake, and when completed, the entire family moved there and called it their new home in America. At this time none of the Kessler children were married; they all lived together with their mother. Later, in July, 1854, Veronica married Joseph Vogel, who had a claim in Chanhassen township near Shakopee. The marriage ceremony was performed by Fr. Augustine Ravoux, a missionary. Since there was no church in the community, the wedding was performed at her home. It is claimed that this was the first marriage in Carver County and that it was performed in Chanhassen township. However, according to the testimony of Mrs. Victoria White, the marriage took place in the presence of the entire family at the Kessler home in Section 24, Laketown.

Thus in 1852 the only settlers in the community were the two Diethelms, Tobias Ottinger, and the four Kessler brothers. In 1853 six more immigrants arrived from Bavaria and one from Switzerland. They were John Maier, Martin Schmidt, John Schmiegl, Celestine Lenhard, Joseph Schmid, Thomas Winkel, and Paul Mattle. In the next year the following settlers arrived: Franz Karl Stieger and sons Lorenz and Martin; Augustin Tschimperle and sons Franz and August; Carl Waldvogel, Zachary Fessler, Meinrad Fessler, Martin Fessler, Bernhard Fessler, Joseph Fessler, all from

Switzerland. From Bavaria came Leonard Breher, Thomas Schutz, and Thomas Winkel. From Michigan, Michael Ess and sons Joseph and John. From Cincinnati, Peter Winter, John A. Salter, John Holtmeier, and Henry Gerdson. The year 1855 brought thirteen more immigrants to the area. From Switzerland: Franz Fessler and John Leuthard; from Chicago, Peter Gregory, who had settled there three years previous after coming from Darmstadt, Hessen, Germany. From Austria-Hungary came Mathias Baumgartner, and from Bavaria, Christian Kreutzian, Thomas Kreutzian, Herman Kreutzian, Mathias Schutz, Thomas Lano, Theodore Lano, Joseph Schaaf, Andrew Riedele, and John Neunzinger. Ten more arrived in 1856. They were Joseph Kaley, Stephan Fessler, and Dominic Fessler, from Switzerland. From different sections of Germany came Nicolaus Kraye, Anton Windolph, F. X. Vogel, Valentine Landgraf, Anton and Martin Winninghoff, and Gottfried Allers. From Philadelphia came Charles Kaufman.

Thus by the end of 1856 there were already 28 heads of Catholic families and 28 young men of legal age who had claims in the community.

In the following section we will list all the Catholic families and young men of legal age and the year of their arrival, as correctly as possible, up to the year 1870. This list contains 118 names. This does not indicate, however, that this was the correct membership of St. Victoria Parish at any one time during that period. For during the first ten to fifteen years there were a considerable number of settlers who, because of dissatisfaction with the climate and various other reasons, sold their claims or their land if they had already obtained the title to the same. Thus all the Fesslers, with the exception of Zachary and Martin, sold out at an early date and moved to Oregon. Zachary left for Portland in 1890, and Martin moved to Edmond, Oklahoma, a little later. Joseph Borer moved to Nebraska in about 1880, and his descendants are now living in Forsythe, Montana. The Celestine Lenhard property was sold to Arnold Verginnes, and later to Arnold Riesterer, and still later to John Schmiegl, all within the first fifty years.

## THE POPULATION INCREASES

In the previous section we described the very first settlers who arrived before 1857 and how they managed to establish themselves in their new homes in the wilderness. The same conditions obtained for all immigrants who arrived here through 1856; we

have, therefore, refrained from recording a biographical sketch of each one separately. They all had to endure the same isolated existence until 1857, when some steamboats made periodic trips from St. Paul to Chaska and some business men established themselves in Chaska and commenced to buy produce, wood, and grain. They also carried a supply of the absolute necessities, for which the settlers previously had to walk to St. Paul. The first business transactions between the settlers and the business men at Chaska were mostly barter.

The new timber soil in this area was very productive and it did not take long to spread the news in their homelands. Mrs. Carl Diethelm was the only daughter of the Fessler family of eleven children. She notified her brothers in Switzerland that good land could be obtained here for the asking. Accordingly, within the next few years all ten of her brothers were here and made claims for themselves or bought out a Yankee squatter. The big news spread fast in Switzerland, and it did not take many years before there was quite a settlement of Swiss immigrants in the area. The same result was obtained from relatives and friends of the Kessler family, who arrived here in July, 1852. They also had written to their relatives and friends in their homeland and in Michigan, where some had already located. Their friends soon started to arrive and before the end of 1854 there were already 31 families and young men who had effected claims in the settlement. The Bavarians settled mostly to the south and the Swiss to the north of Lake Bavaria to Lake Minnetonka. At the end of 1856 the count was fifty-five.

Immediately after the Treaty of Mendota, quite a few adventurous bachelors and also some married men with their wives and children arrived on the scene from the New England states and selected desirable sites, built little log shacks, and established for themselves the customary "prior right." The Germans and the Swiss called them "Yankees." They usually stayed from one to six months and then sold their claims to a German or Swiss immigrant for any amount they could get, usually from \$10 to \$40. The Yankees would then relinquish their claim, move several miles further into the wilderness and repeat the same process. They were not violating any pre-emption law because they had not yet filed their claim with the Government. They were just professional homesteaders. It must, however, here be stated that not all of these so-called Yankees were professional homesteaders, for the Maxwell, Aspden, Lyman, Stone, Trumble, Abbot, Livingston, and

Aldritt families improved and developed their homesteads for many years, and many of these farmsteads are still held by their descendants.

Immigrants from Germany and Switzerland were constantly arriving in increasing numbers, and the Catholic settlers in the area increased proportionately. Following is a list of the early settlers and the dates of their arrival:

#### 1851

Michael Diethelm

#### 1852

Carl Diethelm  
Heinrich Kessler  
Franz Kessler  
Joseph Kessler  
Michael Kessler

#### 1853

John Maier  
Martin Schmidt  
Joseph Schmid  
John Schmieg  
Celestine Lenhard  
Paul Mattle  
Thomas Winkel

#### 1854

Franz Karl Stieger  
Lorenz Stieger  
Martin Stieger  
Augustin Tschimperle  
Franz Tschimperle  
August Tschimperle  
Carl Waldvogel  
Zachary Fessler  
Meinrad Fessler  
Martin Fessler  
Bernhard Fessler  
Joseph Fessler  
Leonard Breher  
Thomas Schutz  
Franz X. Vogel  
Michael Ess  
Joseph Ess  
John Ess  
Peter Winter

#### 1855

Franz Fessler  
Peter Gregory  
Mathias Baumgartner  
Charles Kaufman  
John Leuthard  
Mathias Schutz

Christian Kreutzian  
Thomas Kreutzian  
Herman Kreutzian  
Thomas Lano  
Theodore Lano  
Joseph Schaaf  
Andrew Riedeke  
John K. Neunzinger

#### 1856

Joseph Kaley  
Stephan Fessler  
Dominic Fessler  
Nicolaus Krayner  
Anton Windolph  
Valentine Landgraf  
Anton Winninghoff  
Martin Winninghoff  
Gottfried Allers  
Joseph Winninghoff

#### 1857

Anton Stimmler  
Wendelin Grimm  
Anton Hetten  
Jacob Steinberger  
Sebastian Einsidler  
H. J. Swillens  
Nicolaus Deis

#### 1858 - 1863

John Etzell  
Joseph Borer  
John Pfeifer  
Philip Miller  
Sebastian Hartman  
Arnold Verginnes  
Leon Yetzer  
Ignatz Yetzer  
Hubert N. Way  
John B. Steiner  
Henry Zanger  
Franz Marty  
Karl Schuler  
Ferdinand Heid  
Adolph Riesterer  
John Cruen  
Joseph Naab

1857



Carl Diethelm



Henry Kessler



Leonard Breher



Engelbert Schneider



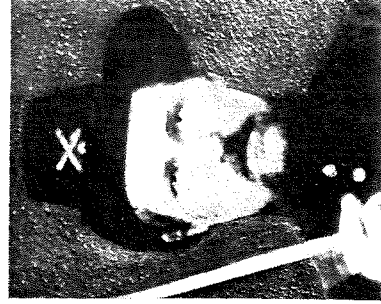
Martin Schmidt



Michael Ess



Zachary Fessler

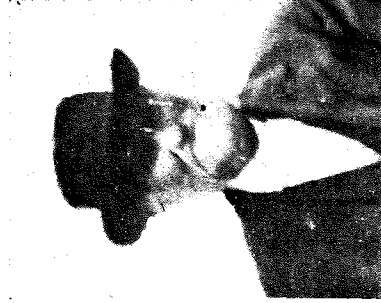


Michael Kessler

Sponsored By: Leo's Bar - Leo and Vangie Schneider

VICTORIA'S FIRST SETTLERS

1957



Martin Fessler



John Schmieg



Joseph Schmid



Franz Tschimperle



Michael Diethelm



John Ezzell



Jacob Steinberger



Nicolaus Deis

Sponsored By: Bud & Floyd's Place

1857

VICTORIA'S FIRST SETTLERS

1957

From the year 1863 to 1865 and a little later, the following Hollanders and Belgians arrived in the area:

J. C. Monnens  
Lambert Heutmaker  
Gerhard Van Sloun  
Henry Derhaag  
Peter Van Mulken  
Arnold Notermann  
J. W. Schutrop  
Jacob Gardner  
Casper Jansen  
John Dohmen  
Peter Willems  
Martin Dohman  
H. J. Kaesmaker  
Leonard Heutmaker  
Peter Van Sloun  
Leonard Van Sloun  
Henry Lentges  
Reinhold Notermann

Michael Savekoul  
Nicholas Roers  
Anton Aretz  
William Kohman  
Jacob Demons  
Mathias Timmers  
Theodore Heutmaker  
John Van Sloun  
John Derhaag  
Henry Van Sloun  
Theodore Notermann  
Leonard Joerison  
Mathias Rosen  
Jacob Rademacher  
John Maas  
Peter Bruns  
Franz Rosen  
Franz Dressen

About the same time three Irish families arrived and settled on the east fringe of the parish: William O'Brien, Mike Flood, and Mike Leddy. The Hollanders and Belgians settled within two and three miles to the southeast of the church. When all the land which was available at the time had been bought, those who came later bought land within two and three miles to the southwest. The congregation before the arrival of the Dutch consisted mostly of Bavarians and Swiss. The Bavarians located in the territory bordering and to the south of Lake Bavaria, with the Swiss predominating in the territory to the north of Lake Bavaria to Lake Minnetonka.

There were now four different nationalities represented in the parish, each speaking its own dialect. The Swiss, Germans, and Dutch did not understand a word of English. It did not take long, however, for the Hollanders and the Swiss to converse intelligibly with the Germans. The Germans also soon learned the jargon of the Dutch and the Swiss; even some third generation contemporaries can understand and speak all of them. The German language, however, became the official language of the church, and all prayers, announcements, and sermons were made in that tongue.

## NOTES ON PIONEER LIFE

When the first settlers arrived here they brought with them all the clothes they had in Europe, their tools and cooking utensils,

even their spinning wheels. They also brought along the customs of home and church which prevailed in the countries from which they came. These customs were faithfully retained thirty to thirty-five years, then were gradually relinquished. By 1910 they had almost completely faded out. The last oxen had vanished from the scene. New farm machinery was being developed and soon came into general use. The sons of the pioneers had taken over, established themselves, and were operating and living in fairly comfortable circumstances. However, they did not visualize the enormous strides in the development of farm machinery, transportation, medical science, etc., which were soon to come. Therefore, the third and fourth generations know very little about the sacrifices their forefathers endured to establish themselves in a complete wilderness, without a house, without any cleared land on which to raise a crop, without any protection from the elements, and without any money. All they had was the assurance that the homestead would be theirs if they could develop the same, and for that reason we are going to record the primitive conditions as they actually existed.

### BUILDINGS

The first buildings of the first settlers were built of logs. The log house generally consisted of two rooms and a low attic. The attic, however, was high enough to accommodate one or two low beds, and there was also room enough to store some wheat, barley, corn, beans, and other dried vegetables. There was no insulation under the roof, and a snowstorm in the winter often sprinkled a little snow on the beds and in the attic; modern air conditioners were not needed. The barn usually contained a low loft for hay storage. Tamarack poles were universally used for beams and rafters. Even some entire buildings were constructed with eight to ten-inch tamarack logs.

### FURNITURE

Furniture consisted of a small stove with a few pots and pans, a pail, and a washtub. The bedstead, table, and chairs were home-made. The mattress was a tick filled with straw, hay, or cornhusks, and a feather tick for warmth. Many of the settlers brought the feathers from Europe. Because wild ducks were plentiful in the area, there never was a shortage of feathers. Brooms were made from wire grass which grew along the water's edge.

### FARM TOOLS

To make a clearing in the forest an axe, saw, and grubhoe were necessary. Since saws were very scarce and money to buy

them even more scarce, most of the trees had to be cut down with an axe. A heavy breaking plow was needed to cut the many roots in the ground. While breaking ground, an axe was usually carried on the beam of the plow to cut the heavier roots. A small hand-made harrow was needed to work between stumps. This home-made harrow was entirely of wood. Cutting of hay and grain was done with a scythe and cradle, and all grain was tied by hand with its own straw, placed into shocks, and when dried out it was stacked near the barn. In the beginning there was no reaper or mower and so the grain was harvested as in Biblical times. Some years later when these implements did appear, the fields had to be cleared of most of the stumps before they could be used. It must not be overlooked that all of these pioneers came from Europe, and many of them, even after they had raised a few small crops of grain which they could not sell until 1856 or 1857, were still unable to buy a reaper or a mower at the cheap price at which they were then sold. Stumps had to be grubbed out. The threshing machine was not available until the late 1860's, and so for some 20 to 30 years the pioneers had to use the ancient flail to beat the grain from its straw. As far as is known, the first threshing machine in the community was operated by Wendelin Grimm in 1866, and a year or so later another one was operated by Michael Diethelm, John Derhaag, and Leonard Heutmaker. These machines were very small and were powered by another machine called a horsepower, which in normal operation required 10 horses.

### FOOD

On the first plot of cleared land, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, onions, and corn were planted. If the corn got ripe, it was pounded into meal for bread. In the beginning, before hogs and cattle were raised, wild game and fish were always plentiful, and it was an easy matter to keep the larder filled with this fare. In those years there were no game laws, no game wardens, no bag limits, no closed season, no fishing or hunting licenses, no migratory fowl stamps. A thin ironwood pole 15 to 20 feet long, a piece of string, and a hook baited with a frog or a piece of meat were all that was required to supply the settlers with all the fish they wanted. In comparison to their homeland, everything was free for the taking; even the land which produced enormous crops of vegetables and grain was free. These facts alone were largely responsible in subduing, to a large extent, some of the homesickness for the homeland from which they had just recently arrived.

Plenty of raspberries, gooseberries, black currants, grapes, strawberries, and cranberries, all wild, were available in season. They were made into jellies and jams if the settlers had money to buy sugar. During the first two or three years they learned from the Indians how to make maple syrup, sugar and rock candy, and since there were many maple trees in the area, they usually supplied themselves with a good amount of syrup and sugar. Canning and dehydrating were not as yet known. Several hogs were butchered in the fall for food in the winter. Large quantities of pork, liver, and blood sausage were always made. The balance of the meat was packed in salt brine to be used in the summer. No one seemed to know anything about smoked hams and bacon until about 1885. Some of the bladders of the hogs were blown up like toy balloons and left to dry out. They were then cut open at one end and used as tobacco pouches. One or two cows provided milk and butter. A handful of sprigs tied together served to whisk cream into butter. The Swiss always made a year's supply of cheese in the spring time. A small patch of barley was always seeded. This barley, when roasted, made a perfect substitute for coffee. Wheat bread was a rarity because flour had to be bought in St. Paul. In 1869 a small flour mill was established at Minnetonka Mills. When this mill commenced operating, farmers could take wheat there and get it exchanged for a certain amount of flour, bran, shorts, and midlings. No cash was needed. All materials were barter. Before this small mill was established at Minnetonka Mills, these early settlers had no form of transportation and carried their flour on their backs from St. Paul, a distance of 30 to 40 miles.

### INCOME

The fertility of the soil promised big crops of grain — wheat, corn, oats, barley, and rye. Wheat was going to be their main cash crop. It took several years to clear enough land to raise more grain than was needed for flour and feed, and even then there was no market for it nearer than St. Paul. In 1857, however, some business men established an outlet in Chaska. The only income the settlers had until 1857 was from ginseng and cranberries. In 1857 China ran short of the very thing that grew in the Big Woods by the ton — ginseng. From the sweet-tasting root the Chinese made a precious, life-giving drug. Ginseng they had to have. Through Government agents they offered from \$4 to \$18 a pound for the dried root. Freshly dug roots were incredibly heavy, but they grew lighter as they dried. Usually several settlers walked to St. Paul together with their dried roots and obtained cash for them.



When steamboats made periodic trips to Chaska, they could sell the roots there. The roots were harvested in mid-summer. The woods were combed of the valuable root by the settlers and a few Indians from the small reservation at Shakopee, and when the Civil War broke out the ginseng era came to an end. However, the Indians kept on digging roots throughout the unpastured woods until about 1885. Many a sack of cranberries was carried to St. Paul and bartered for absolute necessities. Some of the settlers would leave their homesteads for weeks to earn a little money elsewhere, usually in St. Paul, which was now a booming little village. Leonard Breher, for example, spent some months each year at his cabinet-maker trade there.

### **CLOTHING**

Most of the early settlers had brought along enough clothing to provide for their needs for the first few years after their arrival. Later the task of clothing growing children created a serious difficulty. Even if the money had been available, cloth was scarce, and practically all of the children's clothing was cut and sewn by the mother. Materials used were the cheapest cotton and woolen goods available — denim, prints, cotton and woolen flannel. Wool from the sheep was spun with the "old spinning wheel" brought along from Europe and then knitted into mittens, stockings, etc., for the whole family.

### **WOODEN SHOES**

In the beginning the Dutch all wore wooden shoes. Each member of the grown family brought a pair along from Holland or Belgium. Even some of the older children had a pair. One of these Dutch immigrants, a shoemaker by trade, settled in Chaska, plied his trade there, and for quite a few years furnished our Dutch colony with their needs. The use of wooden shoes steadily declined. These Dutch, and even some of the Germans, were also masters of the art of making willow baskets. The art has somewhat passed down to the present generations, and some homemade willow baskets can yet be seen.

### **MAPLE SYRUP**

There were very many maple trees in the area, and nearly everyone made maple syrup. The trees were tapped with a  $\frac{3}{4}$ " auger and a sumac spile was inserted. A trough container for the sap was made from logs 12 to 15 inches in diameter and about 24 inches long. These were split in half and hollowed out with a adze. Once or twice a day, depending on the flow of the sap, it was gathered and then boiled down in the woods in an open iron kettle

or in a wash boiler on the kitchen stove. About 25 to 30 gallons of sap was required to produce a gallon of syrup. Some also made maple sugar for jellies and jams and candy for the children. Rock candy was made from the syrup by hanging a white thread in it and leaving it undisturbed for five or six weeks.

### **SOAP**

Soap-making was a "must" chore in the spring. As lye was not available commercially, the settlers had to produce it themselves. A barrel for the process was obtained by sawing a thick hollow elm log to a length of about 4 feet and boarding it shut on one end. This end was then bored full of small seepage holes. The barrel was then filled with wood ashes. Water was then poured on top of the ashes, and the resultant seepage draining through the perforations in the bottom of the barrel into a wooden tub constituted a strong lye. The year's accumulation of fats was then added and the mixture boiled in an open iron kettle until it attained a liquid consistency. It was then left in the kettle to cool and harden over night; in the morning it was ready to be cut into squares and stored for use as needed.

### **SOFT WATER**

The rain barrel was the main source of soft water, as well as a prolific mosquito hatchery. During dry seasons a nearby lake supplied water for wash days. Ice and snow melted supplied their needs in winter. The first cisterns appeared in the community in the 1880's.

### **TOBACCO**

In the beginning all the settlers who indulged in smoking raised their own tobacco. The leaves were stripped before the first frost in the fall, hung up in a shed to dry, then packed down tight into a barrel to go through a sweating period. It was considered cured in about a month and ready for the pipe.

### **LAMPS**

Until about 1860 oil lamps were non-existent. The first petroleum in the United States was discovered at Oil Creek, Pennsylvania, in 1859, and it was over ten years later when the first oil lamps and kerosene arrived in this sector. The settlers, therefore, had to depend exclusively upon candles. In these early years all candles were homemade of tallow.

### **WELLS**

Wells were 3 to 4 feet in diameter and in many instances 30 to 40 feet deep. The first wells were lined out with either field stones or boards. Later the Chaska brickyards made a brick which

would fit a circle of about 3½ feet, and all deeper wells were lined with them. (These bricks can still be seen at the Carver County Historical Society in Waconia.) Water was raised from the well with a windlass or a pulley, and with the famous "old oaken bucket," or simply with a pail and a rope. During the latter part of the pioneer days, wooden pumps and wooden pipes came into use. The watering trough for the livestock was made from a log 15 to 18 inches in diameter and about 12 to 15 feet long, flattened on one side and then hollowed out with an adze.

During the 1890's deep wells and windmills appeared. The windmills were gradually replaced by the gasoline engine, and now since every farm in the parish has been electrified the gasoline engine has been replaced by the electric motor.

#### **BOATS**

Boats were made from very large logs. The bottom was slabbed off with a broad axe and then pointed at both ends, somewhat like a canoe, and finally hollowed out with an adze. The entire parish with its thirty lakes did not have a boat made of boards until about 1885.

#### **BAKE OVENS**

Many of the families, especially the larger ones, had an outside bake oven. It was built of brick about 4 feet square and 4 feet high. In preparation for the actual baking the oven was heated for about an hour by a large fire. The fire was then withdrawn, replaced by the loaves, and within one hour they were perfectly baked.

#### **LIQUOR**

Until about 1885 whiskey was not taxed by either State or Federal Government and was sold for 35c to 50c per gallon. The first storekeepers in Chaska always had a barrel of whiskey tapped with a faucet in their places of business, together with a tin cup for the self-service of the customer.

#### **RACCOON**

Raccoon fat was rendered and the lard was used to grease work harnesses and to soften and waterproof shoes.

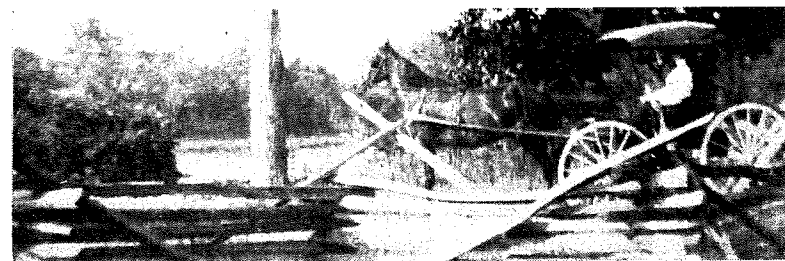
#### **SKUNK**

The fat was rendered and the oil preserved in bottles. It was used primarily as an ointment to apply on burns, cuts, and other wounds and sores. Its healing qualities were excellent.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

The chief mode of transportation among the first settlers was walking. They walked to St. Paul for provisions. The entire family

walked to church on Sundays and holydays, a distance up to 3½ miles or more. Even those who owned oxen preferred walking because the animals were too slow, and consequently they were used only to haul heavy loads such as cordwood, grain, and for field work. It took a whole day to make a trip with the oxen to Chaska and return. In the early 1860's when some horses came into the region it required less than half the time to travel the same distance. Steamboats, which made periodic trips to Chaska, carried the grain, cordwood, and produce to the market in St. Paul until the first railroad passed through Chaska in 1870. Victoria got its first railroad in 1882.



Horse and Buggy Days: 1899

The settlers who had horses drove to church with a lumber wagon until 1885 to 1890, when two-seated, platform buggies and top buggies appeared. About this time a large barn was built on the extreme east end of the church property in the shade of some large trees. This barn was for the protection of the horses from the severe cold in winter and the hot sun in summer.

In 1911 the first automobile appeared in Victoria. It was owned by Anton Schmieg — a Jackson touring car with right-hand drive and brass operating levers on the outside. A little later Hubert Kelzer bought an Overland, right-hand drive and operating levers on the inside. Neither of these cars had a self-starter. A trip to Chaska and return, which formerly required a full day's travel, could now be made within a half hour.

#### **OX YOKE**

An important chapter in the history of the parish could be written in terms of the curved blocks of wood, the "ox yoke". It was an epochal day thousands of years ago when certain unknown tribes ceased their wanderings for food and made permanent homes. They built fences to confine their livestock, began to plant seeds, and devised ways to use the power of animals. Thus was the

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beginning of training oxen to be used where power was needed.

As the settlers of this area conquered the wilderness, patient, plodding oxen furnished the power. They hauled cumbersome four-wheeled carts and stoneboats laden with tools and household goods. As homesites were staked and men felled trees for houses and barns, oxen pulled the trees to the building site and then onto the building on skids as the walls mounted higher. When trees were cut down to clear more land, the patient ox dragged the fallen giants away. In the spring oxen pulled plows among the stumps, and grain and vegetables grew green and lush in the soil the oxen had stirred for the first time since the dawn of creation. While the settlers established themselves, oxen played their humble role. They plowed all the land and pulled all the grain and wood to the market. This continued until the late '60's to the early '80's when horses appeared on the scene.

#### *SWISS CUSTOMS*

During the first 25 to 30 years the habits of life which the settlers had brought from Europe changed very little in both church and home. The Swiss people observed an old custom very conscientiously until the first generation had passed. On Good Friday of each year, before sunrise, all pieces of clothing and bedding were removed from the house and hung on a line for an all-day airing to prevent bugs and other vermin from entering the house during the next year. The Swiss settlers also observed another custom which was maintained for a long time. They would invite another Swiss family, and sometimes a German neighbor, once or twice during the winter season to visit and help partake of a large dish of "niedle" (pronounced need-lee). This is a Swiss national dish. It is just plain whipped cream, which was whipped with a whisk of freshly cut twigs. There were no side dishes, and everybody had to eat from a big dish in the center of the table.

#### *GERMAN CUSTOM*

Another custom brought along from the old world was the "ringing in of the New Year" with shot guns. A group of young men would start out about 11 o'clock on New Year's eve and go from home to home, fire a round of their artillery, and, when the door opened, they would file in and wish the occupants a "Happy New Year." Of course, they expected some reciprocity in the form of hot coffee, lunch, and perhaps a shot of "Red Eye," a popular brand of whiskey at the time. They would then depart and proceed to the next home to repeat the greeting. This routine lasted until four or five in the morning, when they would depart for home as best they could.

#### *WEDDINGS*

Weddings were celebrated with great pomp and hilarity. In most cases the entire congregation was invited to the celebration. Wedding presents were already popular and ranged from a half dozen pewter tea or tablespoons to lamps, tablecloths, or bedspreads. People would bring the entire family to dinner and supper, then go home and perform their daily chores and return as soon as possible for the ever-ready refreshments and a midnight lunch. To furnish sufficient food for a wedding of this size required the butchering of two hogs and perhaps a veal or two, plus six or seven barrels of beer. The wedding celebration to be really successful required at least three or four crews for charivari who played a tune with their instruments (saw blades, tin pans, etc.), made a short speech wishing the couple good luck, collected a little cash for beer, and then went on their way.

#### *DREAMS COME TRUE*

When the county finally had made surveys and had laid down township and section lines, it began to establish roads to the several settlements. The road of greatest importance to the Victoria settlers was the one from Chaska toward what is now St. Bonifacius and Watertown. Steamboats were plying periodically between St. Paul and Chaska and Carver, and a few business houses were established there where the settler could sell his surplus grain, cordwood, etc., and also buy groceries, dry goods, hardware, and other necessities. The settlers' dreams were now becoming reality. They had land — much more than they had in their homeland — and a market nearby. The trading center had now moved from St. Paul to Chaska and Carver. The ungraded roads followed the course of least resistance, avoiding hills, timber, meadows, and lower ground as much as possible. In reality they were little more than marked trails through which a vehicle or stoneboat could be drawn. Heretofore, all logs, with the exception of those used for firewood for the home, had no value whatever and were dragged together by the oxen, pyramided into large piles, and later burned. These logs could now be cut into cordwood or firewood and hauled to Chaska to be sold. Young hickory and ash of 1" and 2" in diameter were bundled up for barrel hoops; hickory and ash logs were cut into barrel-stave bolts and, together with surplus grain, potatoes, etc., could now be taken to Chaska and sold to the several dealers there. Our pioneers were now able to grow as much surplus grain as their land would allow and sell it for cash. The future looked bright. According to European standards, they were now very wealthy. They were now the sole lords over their vast acreage,

with prospects of larger crops as more land was cleared. It is true a great deal of work still stared at them — to clear more land, to get larger fields, to grow more grain. However, they were no longer living isolated in the wilderness but constituted rather a thriving community, and the privations they had endured during their primitive existence had come to an end.

In 1882 the railroad came to Victoria. Roads and bridges were being built. Log houses were being replaced by buildings of frame or brick. On many farms all tillable land had already been cleared of timber. Farm machinery came into general use. The boys and girls who were brought here from Europe were growing up. They were getting married, ready to take over the homestead, or start elsewhere. The sons and daughters of the pioneer families — Diethelm's, Breher's, Schneider's, Notermann's, Schmidt's, Schmieg's, Kohman's, Schmid's, Willems's, Deis's, Timmers's, Gregory's, Tschimperle's, Kaley's, Heutmaker's, and others — were assuming the responsibility for the further growth and development of the whole community.

The pioneer period of the parish had come to an end.

## THERE WAS NO CHURCH

Until the spring of 1857 there was no Catholic church in either Carver or Scott counties. Occasionally, perhaps once a year, a wandering missionary priest would come to the settlement that eventually became Victoria, and services would be held in a farm home. Confessions were heard, Mass was celebrated, and baptism was administered. The people were exhorted to hold fast to the faith of their forefathers and to build a church as soon as possible. We have it on the best authority<sup>3</sup> that Mass was celebrated in the homes of pioneer Michael Diethelm, Carl Diethelm, and John Maier. In August of 1854 John Breher, infant son of Leonard Breher, was baptized on a day when Mass was celebrated in the home of John Maier. We have it on the same authority and from the record at Shakopee commencing in 1856 that the majority of children born in the area up to 1859 were baptized in the home of Michael Diethelm. The missionaries would arrive in the settlement entirely unannounced and would stay in the area for a few days to care for the spiritual needs of the Catholic population. The names of these courageous priests should be remembered in pious gratitude. They were the missionary Father Augustin Ravoux, for many years the vicar-general of the St. Paul diocese; Fathers Keller and Sommer-eisen, secular clergymen; and beginning in 1857, the Benedictine

Fathers Benedict Haindl, Eberhard Gahr, Bruno Riess, and George Scherer.

On the testimony of Carl Diethelm and his son Michael, we know that as early as 1855 there already were 32 Catholic homesteaders in and around Victoria, and still no church. There was plenty of agitation to provide for this need, but the actual building was retarded by disagreement on the site of the projected church.<sup>4</sup> Part of the community lived on the north side of Lake Bavaria and part lived on the south side, with each party contending that the church should be located in its territory. If the southern group had prevailed, the church would have been built on the brow of the hill overlooking the southeastern part of Lake Bavaria, truly a beautiful site. But both factions were adamant, and when no agreement could be reached, negotiations broke down and there the matter rested. The impasse was not to be broken until the fall of 1856, and, oddly enough, the inspiration came from Shakopee.

On January 1, 1856, Father Keller celebrated Mass at the home of Anton Entrup at Shakopee. He urged the assembled Catholics to organize a parish and build a church for then they could hope to have a resident priest in their midst to take care of them. After the services the settlers of the Shakopee area agreed to hold a meeting on January 6, 1856. At that meeting St. Mark's Parish was organized. They appointed a committee of five to decide on a location for a church. On February 5, 1856, the committee reported that some lots could be purchased for \$250, and on March 3 following the purchase was made. On July 7 of that year a contract was let to Anton Entrup to build a brick church, 23 x 50 feet in size. This was the first Catholic church to be built in the entire area of Scott and Carver counties.

The several settlers of the Victoria vicinity who had attended services at Shakopee on that memorable New Year's day became enthusiastic over the rapidity with which St. Mark's Parish was organized, and they again brought up the matter of organizing their own parish. The matter of the location of the church stood exactly where they had left off the year before. In the meantime, ten more settlers had arrived, three of whom settled to the south and seven to the north and west of Lake Bavaria. Michael Diethelm and Celestine Lenhard had privately agreed that they would donate 30 acres of land at the proper time. They felt that this offer would break the deadlock if it was properly presented at the right time, because the opposition party, the southsiders, had never mentioned how the land on which they wanted to build the church would be acquired.

It is not definitely known when the organizational meeting of the parish was held. However, it can with confidence be stated that it was in the fall of 1856.<sup>5</sup> When this meeting was called, a large majority of the entire settlement was in attendance. For several years previous Holy Mass was offered only in the homes of some settlers. It was obvious to all that a church was needed to accommodate the community, but the southsiders, though outnumbered, were adamant, insisting still that the new church, if any, be located on the site of their choice. It was then that Michael Diethelm and Celestine Lenhard played their trump card — the offer of 30 acres of land at no cost to the community. This broke the deadlock, and it was agreed that the church would be built where it now stands. The suggestion of the southern faction that St. Victoria, a favorite saint among the Ess, Kessler, and Schneider families, be named as the patron saint of the new church was also agreed upon, and thus the first step toward the formal organization of the parish was taken.<sup>6</sup>

Further evidence that the movement to establish a parish was initiated at this date is found in the fact that in 1857 the community of St. Victoria was the possessor of the only Catholic cemetery in the whole of Carver County. It was for this reason that the body of M. J. Burkhart, a resident of Schnappsburg in the western part of the county, was brought to Victoria for burial in August, 1857,<sup>7</sup> and according to the record, this grave is located 900 feet west of the present church, on higher ground in the woods between two meadows. As far as is known this was the first Catholic burial in Carver County.

There is further corroboration of the fact that St. Victoria Parish was organized in 1856 in the baptismal record of St. Mark's Church in Shakopee, reflecting an intensification of Catholic life at this early date. Beginning on June 3, 1857, the community of St. Victoria was given religious services at approximately three-month intervals by Rev. Benedict Haindl and Rev. Eberhard Gahr, who were then stationed at the Benedictine Priory at Shakopee. The following baptisms are recorded at Shakopee:

DATE	NUMBER	PLACE OF BAPTISM	MINISTER
June 3, 1857	4	Home of Michael Diethelm	Rev. Benedict Haindl
September 29, 1857	3	Home of Michael Diethelm	Rev. Benedict Haindl
December 2, 1857	4	Home of Michael Diethelm	Rev. Benedict Haindl
March 3, 1858	1	Home of Michael Diethelm	Rev. Benedict Haindl
May 25, 1858	3	Home of Michael Diethelm	Rev. Benedict Haindl
June 29, 1858	3	Home of Michael Diethelm	Rev. Eberhard Gahr
December 9, 1858	5	Home of Michael Diethelm	Rev. Eberhard Gahr

We have been unable to uncover any record wherein the organization of the St. Victoria Parish is mentioned. However, it is positively known that the missionaries Ravoux, Sommereisen, and Keller visited the settlement occasionally from 1852 through 1856. Because the settlement was increasing steadily they always exhorted the settlers to build a church as soon as possible, for then only could they be assured of regular religious services and instruction of their children in the faith.

Thus, briefly summarizing the situation which obtained at the time, the following facts have been fully established: 1) that at the end of 1855 there already were 43 heads of families and young men of legal age in the community and the population was steadily increasing; 2) that a church was badly needed; 3) that the building of a log church did not involve any outlay of cash, save for a few locks and window panes; 4) that the settlers held several meetings in 1855 to organize a parish and build a church but could not agree on the site; 5) that the services were always held in the home of some settler, and it is only natural to assume that these homes were not large enough to accommodate all who came to the services; 6) that M. J. Burkhart was buried in the parish cemetery in August, 1857; 7) that this was the only Catholic cemetery in Carver County at the time; 8) that Shakopee effected the organization of St. Mark's Parish and commenced building a church in 1856; 9) that the St. Victoria Parish was organized soon after Shakopee commenced building a church. Therefore, considering the documentary evidence and the statements of the first pioneers, we can with confidence state that the organization of the St. Victoria Parish was consummated in the late fall of 1856.

## THEY BUILT A CHURCH

As stated above, St. Victoria Parish was organized in the late fall of 1856, the site was selected, 30 acres of land were donated, a cemetery had been established, and the records of St. Mark's Church at Shakopee show that in the beginning of 1857 the parish was served periodically by the Benedictine Fathers at intervals of about three months. The building of the church did not involve any monetary expense. The material to be used was logs, of which there were plenty nearby and could be obtained for the asking. Why the church building was not completed until the end of 1858 will never be known unless some old records of the Benedictine Fathers will be uncovered to throw more light on the matter.

At least two carpenters, namely Leonard Breher and Carl Diethelm, were among the first settlers of the community, and it was only natural that they donated their services. The 44 settlers were all anxious to help. Now trees had to be cut down and when cut into proper lengths they had to be laboriously dragged out of the woods by ox-power to the site and then dressed on two sides with a broadaxe. The logging up of the building was quite an undertaking. The logs had to be notched at each end to fit a saddle on the nether log in order to make a solid wall. As the walls grew higher, the logs, weighing 1000 to 1500 pounds, were raised on skids. It took a lot of manpower. After the log walls were completed the carpenters took over.

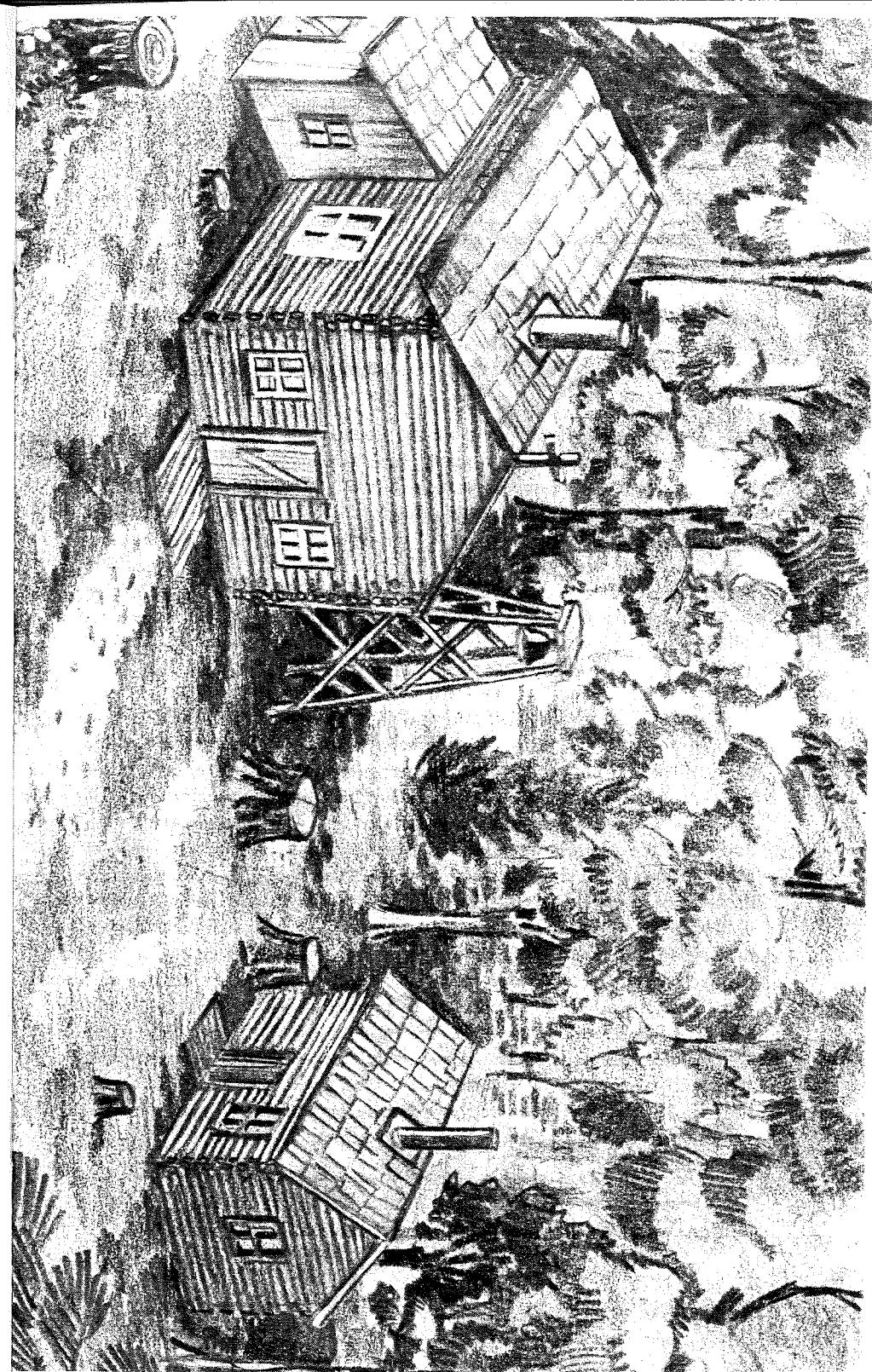
A roof had to be constructed with tamarack poles for beams and rafters. These poles were found in abundance in the neighboring meadows and sloughs. Openings had to be cut for doors and windows, frames built, doors and window sash boards had to be sawed from a log and built by hand. Boards also had to be sawed by hand from logs for the floor and the roof. Material used for shingles was red oak, the easiest to split. Red oak logs from 6 to 8 inches in diameter were sawed into 2½ foot lengths and then split into thin sheets which served as shingles.

To do all these things the pioneer carpenter had only a few tools. A saw, hammer, hatchet, draw knife, adze, brace and bits, a level, and a plane. After the carpenter's work was completed, all the open spaces between the logs were chinked and plastered with yellow clay and a sprinkling of hay or straw. Carl Diethelm and Leonard Breher supervised and did most of the carpenter work on the church. The necessary furniture — altar, communion railing, confessional, and pews — were fashioned by local hands. To this day the clapper used on Holy Thursday is the one made by Leonard Breher. To buy commercially-made furniture in those times was out of the question. Not only was the community poor but the country itself was in the grip of a financial depression during which more than 5500 banks went bankrupt, and depositors and stockholders lost over 900 million dollars.

The location of the little church (24 x 30 feet, facing south) was about 30 feet to the north of the entrance of the present church. A small lean-to was constructed of boards to serve as a sacristy. The interior of the church was given a coat of lime whitewash.

Opposite page: Log Church and School built in 1857.

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When the workers completed the job, one of them is said to have remarked: "Now we can tell our grandchildren that the church of St. Victoria was as large as the first cathedral in St. Paul." And so it actually was.

The people were happy to have a permanent place of worship. The Benedictines, who had established St. John's Abbey at Collegeville and who had a priory at Shakopee, continued to serve the small congregation from Shakopee at more or less regular visits. On the many Sundays when no Mass was offered, the people gathered at the church to pray the Rosary and a litany and to read the Gospel of the day.

In the spring of 1859 a new era began and all was well. The trading center had moved from St. Paul to Chaska. The parish had been organized. A cemetery was established; the church was built; and regular services were being held. The little log church was not too large, but it adequately served the purpose. Each year more land had been cleared, and as the size of the fields increased, larger crops of wheat were produced and could now be sold for cash at Chaska. Everybody was happy, and the drab existence which all of the first settlers had encountered gradually faded out. Their contentment, however, was not destined to last very long.

In 1863 the Hollanders and the Belgians began to arrive in the area of the parish. This did not relieve the overcrowded situation of the little log church. With the arrival of these newcomers, therefore, it soon became obvious that the little church was too small and that a much larger church was needed. All of the settlers who had built the church were agreed that it would be impracticable to build a larger log church. Bricks were already being manufactured in Chaska and although they could be bought for two or three dollars per thousand, the settlers' incomes were not sufficient as yet to assume the expense of building a large church. Even when they had some wheat or cordwood to sell, money was very scarce and was badly needed to improve the buildings on their own homesteads. The Dutch who were arriving steadily were also very poor. The free homesteads in the community had all been taken up and they had to buy out a Yankee homesteader with what little money they had. Two or three of these immigrants usually bought a 160-acre homestead and then divided it up among themselves.

The population was increasing fast, even though some of the very first settlers had sold their land and moved away. The little church was entirely too small to accommodate all who came to

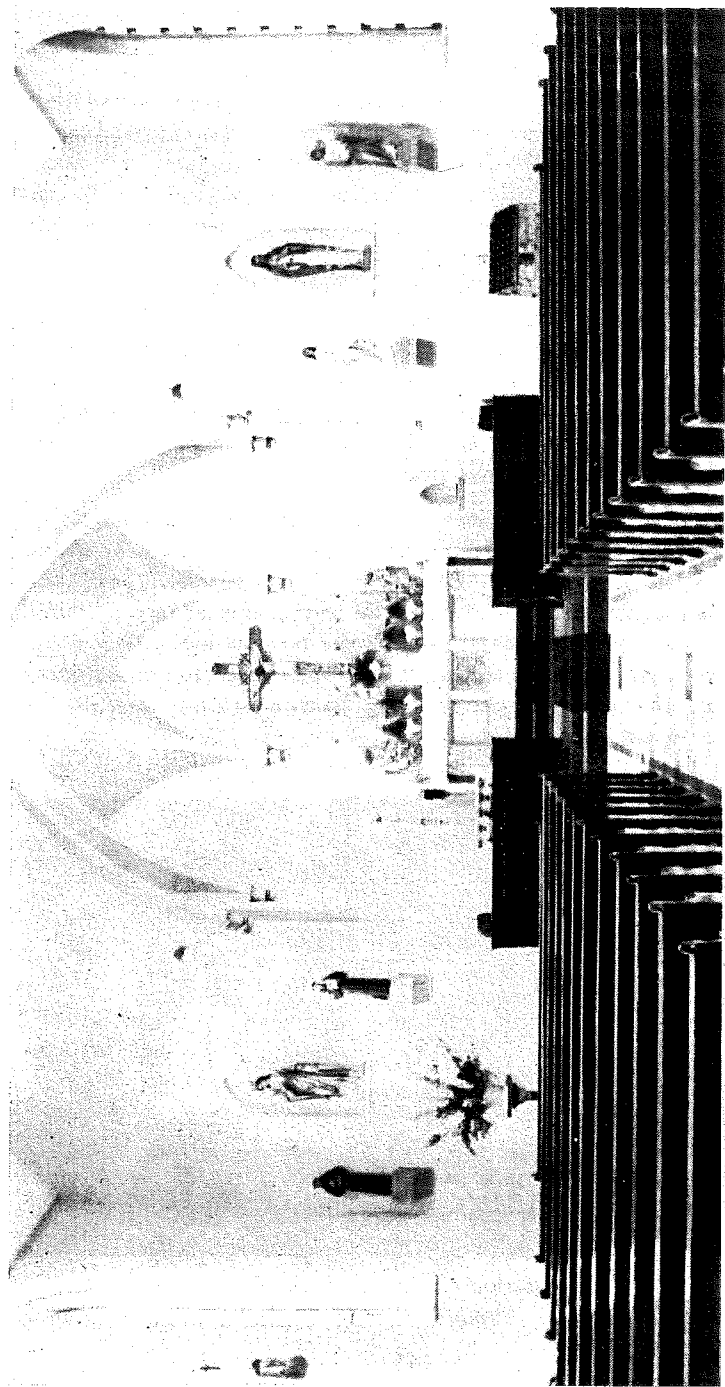
Sunday services. The building could not be enlarged and a new church of material other than logs would cost a considerable sum of money. Therefore the matter dragged along until 1870 when it was finally agreed to build the present brick structure. Fathers Matthew Stuerenburg and Valentine Stimmler negotiated the building of the church. Who the architect was or whether a contract was let to construct the building, whether it was put up piece-meal or by day labor, is not mentioned in the records. It is known, however, that with some help John Siems, a bricklayer by profession, who lived on the east shore of Lake Bavaria, laid all the brick. The cost of the building erected in 1870 was \$7,000.<sup>8</sup> The building did not hold the present steeple and had only a small turret on the upper east end of the structure to house the bell until 1884, when the present steeple was erected by Henry Becker of Belle Plaine. About 1890 a beautiful main altar and two side altars were built and installed by F. X. Hirscher and his son Joseph of Shakopee.

In 1896 the sanctuary was remodeled and the communion railing was moved out of the sanctuary under the direction of Father Raymond Holte. In 1953, because of overcrowded conditions, Father Bernardine Hahn remodeled the entire interior of the church. He removed the side altars, moved the communion railing closer to the sanctuary, thereby adding two rows of seats and considerably increasing the seating capacity. The balcony seating was also rearranged to add more seats.



Interior of Church — 1916

Sponsored By: Christian Mothers' Society



Interior of Church after remodeling in 1953.

*Sponsored By: Mrs. Elizabeth Dill*

## THEY WANTED A SCHOOL

Since all of the early Catholic settlers in Victoria had received their religious training in Catholic schools, it was only natural that they also wanted their children to have the same training under the supervision of the priest and teacher. In short, they wanted their children to be good Catholics and good citizens. In addition to secular subjects, they wanted their children to be instructed in the fundamentals of the Catholic faith, the most precious heritage they had brought along from their homeland. So at the same time that the log church was built, a school was also built. The location was about 75 feet directly east of the present brick church. The building was of the same construction as the church, namely logs, although not quite as large. The south side of the building was one large room which served as a schoolroom, while the north half was used as living quarters for the teacher. There also was a fairly high attic with room for an extra bed and a storage room. After several years the school proved too small and the old church served as an additional school room until about 1875 when a large two-story frame building was constructed.



Frame Schoolhouse erected in 1875.

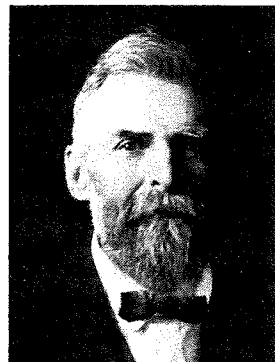
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From 1859 to 1881 the following served as teachers: Joseph Leuthard (1867), who later became a priest; Adam Bauer (1868); Werner Maehren (1869), who later joined the Benedictine Order as Father Pancrattus; Theresa Breher (1870-71); an anonymous nun who was forced to leave Germany by the May Laws (1872); from 1873 to 1881: William Hochausen, Mr. Utrecht, Mr. Huelsbeck, and Joseph Rupp in succession.<sup>9</sup>



Theresa Breher



John Breher

One of Victoria's first teachers (1870-71) and her brother, the first white child born in Carver County.

In 1881 the Franciscan Sisters of Milwaukee took charge of the school and served until July, 1888. Their names were Sisters Theresa, Philomena, Catherine, Innocence, Gonzaga, Hilaria, and Claudia.<sup>10</sup> After the Franciscan Sisters left, Father Aloysius Wiewer, O.F.M., who served the parish from 1886 to 1892, made every effort to get other Sisters to take charge of the school. He was unsuccessful until 1891 when the Sisters of Christian Charity arrived. During the two-year interim (1888-90) Lena (Breher) Byers was employed to teach.

The first Sisters of Christian Charity arrived in the parish of St. Victoria on August 27, 1889, and were warmly welcomed by the Reverend Pastor Aloysius Wiewer and the parishioners. School opened on September 2 with an enrollment of 50 pupils, divided into two groups. Sister Amanda Seiler, the superior, taught the upper division; Sister Leonilla Ruf had charge of the primary grades. Sister Ehrentrudis Manuel was the housekeeper.

The pupils afforded their new teachers pleasure by their good conduct, diligence, and attention. In October, 1889, the parochial school of St. Victoria became a district school, and, as such, was visited occasionally by the state examiner and members of the

board of trustees, who were well pleased with the pupils' achievements. Attendance, however, was rather irregular due to inclement weather and difficulty in transportation during the winter months. This prevented the smaller children from covering great distances. And during the harvest season the older children were needed at home. Thus at times the average attendance dropped to 20 pupils.

The first class of communicants was prepared by the Sisters for June 21, 1892, and consisted of four boys and seven girls. The sacrament of Confirmation was administered in nearby Chaska when the opportunity presented itself.

In July, 1892, Rev. Aloysius Wiewer was replaced by Rev. Patrick, O.F.M., who in turn was succeeded in November, 1894, by Rev. Cletus, O.F.M. During the summer of 1894 Sister Christiana Germrodt became superior of the convent and took over the teaching of the upper grades.

The Sisters had the privilege of having the Blessed Sacrament reserved in their convent chapel and enjoyed solemn religious services on one or the other great feast of the year when the Franciscan Fathers from the neighboring parishes came to Victoria. Nevertheless, serious difficulty arose as time went by. Since Victoria had no resident pastor, Holy Mass was offered only twice a month on Sundays and, if possible, four times during the month on week days for the children. On Sundays on which no Holy Mass was celebrated, the Sisters, pupils, and parishioners assembled in the parish church for a common prayer hour to substitute for divine services. Naturally, the regular reception of the sacraments proved a difficulty also, and these facts decided against the Sisters' further stay in the parish of St. Victoria. They relinquished their activity in June, 1895.

In 1895 J. M. Aretz was employed as teacher and he served in that capacity until 1900. The school population had now increased considerably, and as there were too many pupils for one teacher, Theresa Diethelm was employed for several years and assisted Mr. Aretz by taking over several of the lower grades.

In the spring of 1900 the Rev. Rudolph Horstmann, after a year's negotiations, came to an agreement with the Sisters of St. Benedict of St. Joseph, Minnesota. They arrived in the summer of 1900, took up residence at St. Victoria school, and have served the school continuously to this date. The first ones were Sister Vincentia, superior, Sister Bonaventura, principal, and Sister Vermunda. Sister Salesia came in 1902 and remained until 1918. Following are the names of all the Sisters who served here during the past

57 years: *Superiors*: Sisters Vincentia, Blanche, Perpetua, Theophila, Fidelis, Ludevica, Gratia, Aquina, Noreen. *Principals*: Sisters Violette, Cyrilla, Gratia, Aquina, Noreen. *Sisters*: Bonaventura, Veneranda, Salesia, Regula, Lamberta, Julia, Laura, Canice, Dora, Emerentia, Anita, Yolaine, Imelda, Doris, Cecile Marie, Esther, Maurilla, Ignatia, Gerard, Zitella, Desideria, Erasma, Micheline, Marcus, Benita, Arnoldine, Erwin, Austin, Josita, Loretta, Adelia, and Anthony.

## MISSIONARIES AND PASTORS

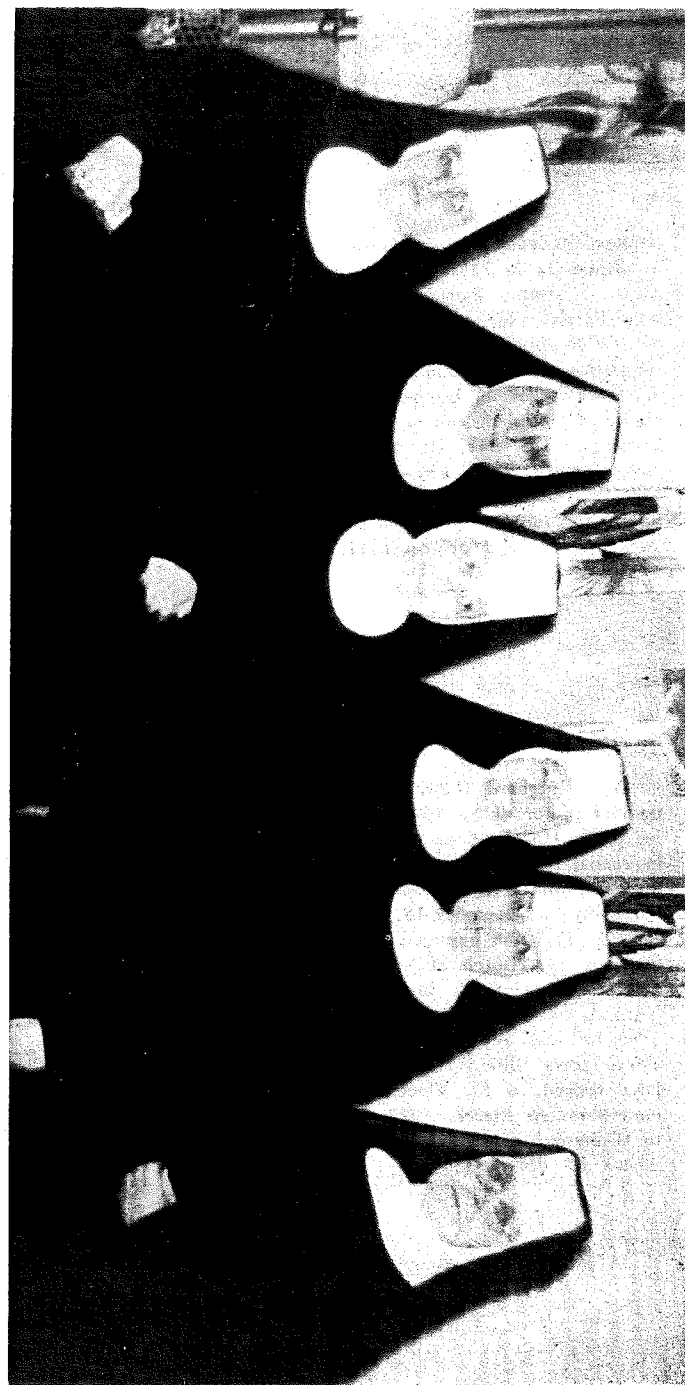
It was in 1853, a little more than a century ago, that the Rev. Augustine Ravoux of Mendota visited the Victoria settlement the first time. Until 1857 the settlement was visited about once or twice a year by either Father Ravoux, Father Valentine Sommereisen, or Father George Keller. These missionaries covered the area between St. Paul, St. Cloud, and Mankato. The trips had to be made on foot through the wilderness of the Big Woods, over roots and fallen trees, through heavy brush and boggy marshes. Thus these trips were made at a hazard to themselves to serve the Catholic settlements throughout the territory which they so zealously covered. There seems to be good evidence that the first Holy Mass was read in the home of Michael Diethelm by Father Ravoux in 1853, which incidentally was the first Mass read in Carver County. The second Mass offered in the settlement was at the home of John Maier. It was then that John Breher, the infant son of Leonard Breher, was baptized. He was the first white child born in Carver County.

In 1857 the Benedictine Fathers took over the missions in

Rev. Bruno Riess, O.S.B., was appointed missionary for Scott, LeSeuer, Hennepin, Sibley, Carver, McLeod, and Wright Counties from May, 1859, until 1862, and served the St. Victoria mission during that period. On one of his trips to Victoria from Shakopee, he was advised by a guide that he should board a packet boat and keep his religious habit concealed under his coat to avoid being detected by some insolent men on the other side of the river, who had vowed never to let a priest mingle with them. He followed this advice and passed through safely. He died on February 2, 1900, at LaSalle, Illinois.



Pictured here are the Benedictine Sisters presently serving the St. Victoria Parish. From left to right: Sister Anthony, Sister Noreen, Sister Adelia, Sister Arnoldine, Sister Erwin, and Sister Josita.  
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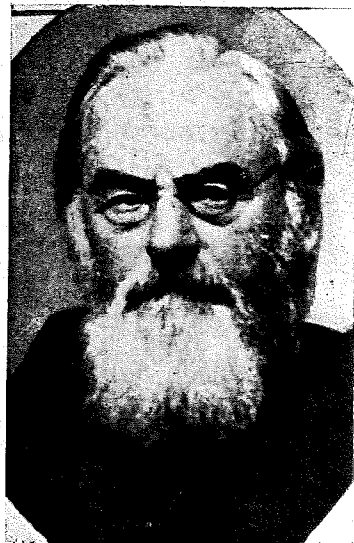


Carver, Scott, Le Seuer, and Hennepin Counties. They immediately established a priory in Shakopee, from which point they served the missions of the newly-acquired territory.

Rev. Benedict Haindl, O.S.B., arrived in Minnesota in 1857 from St. Vincent's Abbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, and was immediately placed in charge of St. Mark's at Shakopee and the missions. According to the baptismal record of St. Mark's Church, he personally visited the St. Victoria mission on June 3, 1857, September 29, 1857, December 2, 1857, and May 18, 1858. On September 20, 1858, he was appointed prior of St. John's Abbey and missionary to that surrounding territory. He died on April 11, 1887.



Rev. Eberhard Gahr, O.S.B., was appointed pastor of St. Mark's at Shakopee in 1866. However, as recorded in the baptismal record of that parish, he baptized 5 children in the home of Michael Diethelm on December 18, 1858; and on May 1, 1859, he baptized 3 children in the new log church of St. Victoria and entered the same as the first recorded baptisms of the St. Victoria Parish. After 1866 he was an itinerant missionary in Texas, Iowa, Illinois, and Kentucky, and later retired to St. Vincent's, his home monastery. In March, 1922, he returned to Minnesota to visit his sister in St. Paul, where he died.



After the departure of Father Bruno the following Benedictine

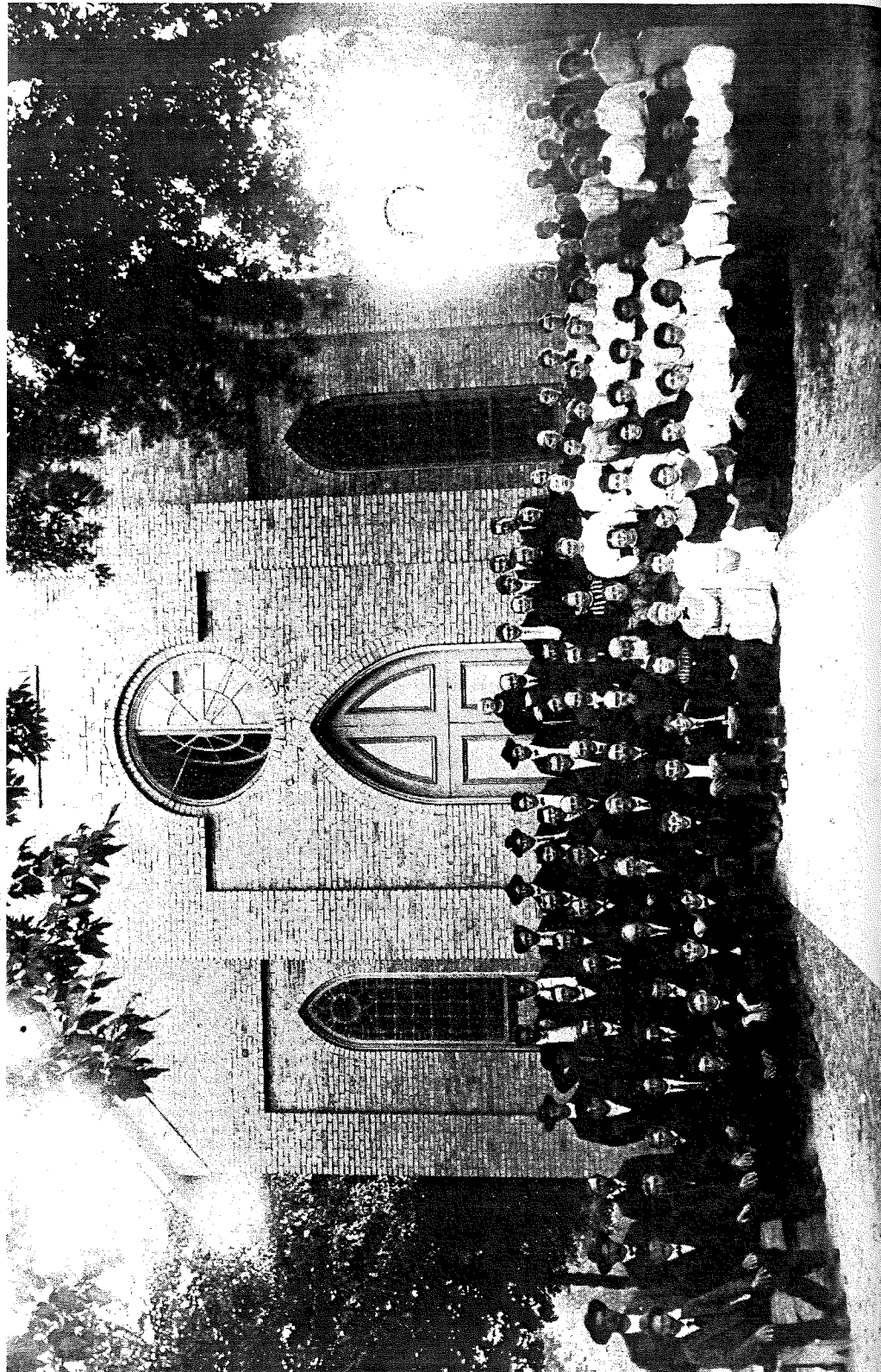
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Fathers served the St. Victoria mission at intervals of one to three months.

Rev. George Scherer, O.S.B.	August 1860—December 1862
Rev. Cornelius Wittmann, O.S.B.	December 1862—May 1863
Rev. Meinulph Stukenkemper, O.S.B.	May 1863—August 1863
Rev. George Scherer, O.S.B.	August 1863—July 1865
Rev. Magnus Mayr, O.S.B.	July 1865—August 1869
Rev. Matthew Stuerenburg, O.S.B.	August 1869—September 1870
Rev. Valentine Stimmler, O.S.B.	September 1870—January 1871
Rev. Valentine Stimmler, O.S.B.	January 1871—September 1872
Rev. William Lette (secular)	September 1872—February 1873
Rev. Valentine Stimmler, O.S.B.	February 1873—September 1875
Rev. Meinrad Leuthard, O.S.B.	September 1875—October 1875
Rev. Bruno Riess, O.S.B.	October 1875—November 1875
Rev. William Lette (secular)	November 1875—December 1875
	December 1875—October 1876

Because of the persecution of the Church in Germany, hundreds of Franciscan priests came to the United States in 1875. These exiles were received with open arms by the American bishops. It was in consequence of the German *Kulturkampf* by Bismarck that the Franciscans came to the diocese of St. Paul. In 1876 at the request of Most Reverend Thomas Grace several Franciscan Fathers arrived in Minnesota and established a residence at Jordan, and in 1880 a friary was established in Chaska, from which point the parishes of Victoria, Carver, St. Bonifacius, Waconia, and Chanhassen were served. From 1885 to 1890 only one priest served Victoria and Chanhassen; during that period, therefore, Victoria had only bi-monthly services. Following is a list of Franciscan priests who served here from 1876 to the present:

Rev. Sebastian Cebulla	October 1876—April 1877
Rev. Aloysius Wiewer	April 1877—August 1877
Rev. Eustachius Vollmer	August 1877—February 1879
Rev. Casimir Hueppe	February 1879—May 1879
Rev. Eustachius Vollmer	May 1879—June 1879
Rev. Suitbert Alberman	June 1879—September 1880
Rev. Ambrose Jansen	September 1880—December 1885
Rev. Aloysius Wiewer	December 1885—April 1892
Rev. Patrick Degraa	August 1892—November 1894
Rev. Cletus Girschewski	November 1894—July 1895
Rev. Raymond Holte	July 1895—August 1899
Rev. Lawrence Pauly	August 1899—September 1899
Rev. Rudolph Horstmann	September 1899—September 1900
Rev. Maternus Puetz	September 1900—January 1903
Rev. Didymus Storff	July 1903—August 1903
Rev. Hildebrand Fuchs	August 1903—July 1904
Rev. Cosmas Garman	July 1904—July 1906
Rev. Hubert Pfeil	July 1906—November 1909
Rev. Rufinus Moehle	December 1909—June 1914
Rev. Rudolph Horstmann	July 1914—December 1914
Rev. Heribert Stotter	December 1914—October 1930
Rev. Ives Beu	January 1931—November 1945
Rev. Arnold Schwarz	January 1946—June 1950
Rev. Lucius Hellstern	July 1950—July 1951
Rev. Justinian Kugler	July 1951—July 1952
Rev. Bernardine Hahn	August 1952—August 1954
Rev. Clement Martin	August 1954—



## VOCATIONS

While the historian for the most part must record the names of the first settlers, their sacrifices, their growth in terms of material gains and the development of parish life, there are tangible records also concerning the spiritual life of the parish.

The scanning of events of the past 100 years reveals the fact that 11 sons and 7 daughters of the parish answered the call to the priesthood and religious life.

*Rev. Valentine Nicholas Stimmler*, O.S.B., was the first member to receive the divine call. He came to this country from Wilwisheim, Alsace, France, with his parents in 1840, and settled in Pennsylvania. In 1850 he moved to Minnesota. He studied at St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, and made his profession there on January 16, 1866. He was ordained on March 3, 1869. He died while chaplain at Villa Maria Academy, Frontenac, Minnesota, on January 16, 1908. His parents are buried in the St. Victoria cemetery.

*Rev. Meinrad Joseph Leuthard*, O.S.B., was the first school teacher in Victoria (1867-1868). In 1869 he entered St. John's University, made his profession on July 16, 1871, and was ordained September 21, 1874. While administering to the needs of the sick and dying during an epidemic of smallpox at Melrose, he fell ill to the disease and died three weeks later on November 28, 1881.

*Brother Roman Marcel Poppler*, O.S.B., was born January 15, 1849, in Hopferau, Bavaria, Germany. He entered St. John's Abbey and made his profession on August 15, 1877, and died on December 13, 1922. He served in the German army during the Franco-Prussian War and took part in the capture of Paris and was decorated for his bravery. He later emigrated to this country and enrolled in St. John's University with the intention of becoming a priest. Finding the studies too difficult, he became a brother. Brother Roman was a physically strong man, easy-going, and very punctual and exact in his duties. His chief characteristic was his undaunted cheerfulness; nothing bothered him. Toward the end of his life Brother Roman suffered from chronic nephritis, which caused his death on December 13, 1922, at West Union, Minnesota.

*Rev. Herbert Joseph Diethelm*, O.F.M., son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Diethelm, was born on a farm near Victoria on July 26, 1901. He entered St. Joseph Seminary, Westmont, Illinois, in 1914, and

Opposite Page:

Parishioners of St. Victoria and pastor, Rev. Cosmas Garman, O.F.M. - 1905.

Sponsored By: Mr. & Mrs. John A. Boll & Family

was ordained June 29, 1928. He read his first Holy Mass on July 1, 1928, in St. Victoria Church. He was for five years in the Laymen Retreat Movement, and instructor at St. Joseph Seminary, Westmont, Illinois, for many years. At present he is serving as pastor of St. Hubert Church at Chanhassen, Minnesota.

*Rev. Louis Norman Diethelm*, O.F.M., the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ben M. Diethelm, was born at Victoria on July 21, 1923. He attended St. Victoria School through the grades, after which he began his studies for the priesthood at St. Joseph Seminary, Westmont, Illinois. On July 4, 1942, he joined the Franciscan Order and received the name of Louis. He was ordained on June 24, 1949, and read his first solemn Mass in St. Victoria Church on June 26, 1949. He was appointed assistant pastor of St. Anthony Church, St. Louis, Missouri, and is now pastor of St. Joseph's Parish near Jordan, Minnesota.

*Rev. Anastasius Frederick Schneider*, O.F.M., was born on a farm in Chanhassen township on June 15, 1923, and attended St. Victoria School. After the grades, he enrolled in St. Joseph's College, Westmont, Illinois. In July, 1942, he joined the Franciscan Order and received the name of Anastasius. On July 4, 1946, he made his final vows and was ordained on June 24, 1949. His first Holy Mass was celebrated in St. Victoria Church on June 26, 1949. His first assignment was as assistant pastor of St. Agnes Parish, Ashland, Wisconsin. After two years he volunteered to serve as a missionary in the jungles of Brazil, where he is now located at Fordlandia on the Tapajoz River, a large tributary of the Amazon.

*Rev. Conran Arthur Schneider*, O.F.M., was born in Chanhassen township on December 11, 1924. During his youth he attended St. Victoria School, after which he began his priesthood studies at St. Joseph's Seminary, Westmont, Illinois. Upon entering the Franciscan Order he received the name Conran. In July, 1947, he made his final profession and was ordained to the priesthood on June 24, 1951. He read his first Holy Mass in St. Victoria Church on July 1, 1951. After a year's study at Quincy College, Quincy, Illinois, he was appointed assistant pastor of St. George's Church, Herman, Missouri.

*Rev. Landelin Marvin Robling*, O.S.B., the son of Mr. and Mrs. Benedict Robling, was born on a farm in Laketown township. After attending St. Victoria School for eight years, he entered St. John's Preparatory School at Collegeville, Minnesota. After two years of college at St. John's University, he entered the novitiate of the Benedictine Fathers and received the name of Landelin in religion. He

was professed as a Benedictine monk on July 11, 1946. After six more years of study he was ordained a priest on June 7, 1952, and offered his first solemn Mass in St. Victoria Church on June 15, 1952. After several temporary assignments he was appointed assistant pastor of the Church of the Seven Dolors, Albany, Minnesota, in which capacity he is still serving.

*Rev. Ives Robert Schmieg*, O.F.M., son of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Schmieg, was born on February 12, 1930. After grade school at St. Victoria, he entered St. Joseph Seminary, Westmont, Illinois, in September, 1944, and entered the Franciscan Order on July 4, 1950. On July 5, 1951, he pronounced his simple vows, and on July 5, 1954, his solemn vows. He was ordained to the priesthood at Teutopolis, Illinois, on June 24, 1957, and read his first solemn Mass at St. Victoria Church on June 30, 1957.

*Frater Brennan Urban Schmieg*, O.F.M., son of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Schmieg, was born on August 18, 1931. He entered St. Joseph Seminary, Westmont, Illinois, in September, 1945. On July 4, 1951, he joined the Franciscan Order and pronounced his simple vows on July 5, 1952. He pronounced solemn vows on July 5, 1955, and will be ordained in June, 1958.

*Brother Duane Vernon Diethelm*, O.F.M., son of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Diethelm, was born at Victoria on December 22, 1936. He attended St. Victoria Grade School and spent two years at Guardian Angels High School in Chaska. On September 4, 1952, he entered the Franciscan Brothers as a candidate, and on December 16, 1952, received the name of Duane upon joining the brotherhood. He began his year of novitiate on July 4, 1955.



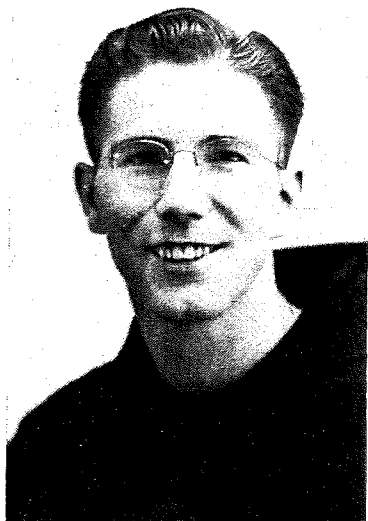
Rev. Herbert Diethelm, O.F.M.  
*Sponsored By: Mr. & Mrs. George Schmieg*



Rev. Landelin Robling, O.S.B.  
*Sponsored By: Mr. & Mrs. Ben Robling & Family*



Rev. Conran & Rev. Anastasius Schneider, O.F.M.  
*Sponsored By: Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Schneider*



Rev. Louis B. Diethelm, O.F.M.



Sister Rolaine Diethelm, O.S.B.



Brother Duane  
Diethelm, O.F.M.

*Sponsored By:* Mr. & Mrs. Ben Diethelm



Rev. Ives Schmiege, O.F.M.



Frater Brennan Schmiege, O.F.M.

*Sponsored By:* Mr. & Mrs. Francis Schmiege

*Sister Victoria Theresa Schneider*, O.S.F., the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Engelbert Schneider, was born in 1858. She entered the Franciscan Convent in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1882, and on August 15, 1882, was received into the Order. The first 15 years of her religious life were spent in Wilmette, Illinois. Thereafter she worked at the Sacred Heart Sanitarium in Milwaukee for 25 years, after which she entered the home for retired Sisters at Campbellsport, Wisconsin. She died there on June 16, 1954.

*Sister Avita Veronica Schmieg*, O.S.B., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Schmieg, attended St. Victoria School and entered the Benedictine Convent at St. Joseph, Minnesota, on January 10, 1911. She made her profession of vows on July 11, 1912. After serving as cook and housekeeper at St. Bernard's in St. Paul, New Munich, and Anaconda, Montana, she is presently a seamstress at St. Joseph's Home in St. Cloud.

*Sister Mechtild Helen Schmieg*, O.S.B., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Schmieg, entered the convent at St. Joseph, Minnesota, on July 11, 1912, and professed her vows on July 11, 1916. She taught at St. Mary's School and Cathedral High School in St. Cloud; was superior and principal at Perham and Waite Park, Minnesota; and at present she is superintendent of St. Joseph's Home, St. Cloud, Minnesota.

*Sister Rolaine Marilyn Diethelm*, O.S.B., the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Diethelm, was born on June 6, 1926. After attending St. Victoria Parochial School, she entered St. Benedict's Academy, St. Joseph, Minnesota, in September, 1940. Upon completing a year's novitiate, she pronounced simple vows in 1945 and solemn vows in 1948. She is presently teaching at St. Bernard's School, St. Paul, Minnesota.

*Sister Liberta Dorothy Williams*, O.S.B., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Williams, was born on January 10, 1927. She entered the Benedictine novitiate at St. Joseph, Minnesota, on June 21, 1944, and made profession of vows on July 11, 1945. At present she is serving at the Jesuit Retreat House in St. Paul. Previous assignments were at Holy Angels in St. Cloud; St. Benedict's Convent; Most Holy Trinity, St. Louis Park; Most Holy Redeemer, Montgomery; and St. Boniface Convent, Hastings.

*Sister Eugene Eleanore Wartman*, O.S.B., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Wartman, was born on July 25, 1931. In 1945 she entered the Convent of St. Benedict, St. Joseph, Minnesota, and made her final vows in 1952. She is now stationed at Assumption Convent, Richfield, Minnesota.

*Sister Gerald Lois Hauwiler*, O.S.B., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Francis Hauwiler, was born on March 25, 1936. She entered the Benedictine priory in St. Paul in September, 1953. She made her profession on July 11, 1955, and is now stationed at the St. Paul Priory.



*Sister Victoria Schneider, O.S.F.*

*Sponsored By: Mr. & Mrs. Math Schneider  
Mr. & Mrs. John A. Schneider*





Sr. Eugene Wartman, O.S.B.



Sr. Gerald Hauwiler, O.S.B.



Sr. Liberta Williams, O.S.B.



Brother Roman Poppler, O.S.B.



Srs. Avita & Mechtild, O.S.B.

*Sponsored By:*

Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Kraemer

## DIFFICULT DAYS

The good fortune of selecting this territory for a home by the first settlers is borne out by the fact that within the last century there was only one complete crop failure in this community. It took place in 1934 when there was no snow in the winter, and no rain fell until the latter part of July. Over half of the grain and corn planted did not sprout until after the rain, and whatever grain did germinate in the spring was so stunted that it was almost worthless.

The higher pastures were completely barren and the cattle were on the verge of starvation. All cattle, with the exception of a few of the best milk cows, were shipped to South St. Paul stockyards, and were sold for a pittance because of their poor physical condition — \$10 to \$15 for a cow which, under average conditions, was worth \$100 to \$150. The remainder of the cattle were kept alive with wild hay, alfalfa, and oat straw shipped in from Iowa and Montana.

In the early 1850's there was a killing frost every spring and summer month of the year, ruining all vegetables, corn, and beans. To have some kind of vegetable for their diet, the settlers picked young nettles growing profusely in the rich forest soil. They were served as salads, boiled soups, and otherwise used as is spinach today. A supply was dried and stored for winter use. This was not a complete failure, however, for the freeze did not kill the pastures and hay crop, and the cattle did not suffer.

In contrast to the excellent farming conditions prevailing in this area and the two failures described above, the Great Plain states of Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, and South Dakota had 11 drought years in the last fifty years. Thus, the decision of the first settlers to establish themselves here in Minnesota proved to be very fortunate.

In 1876 the state-wide grasshopper scourge also affected the parish area. The grasshoppers ate up all vegetation over which they passed and left the fields and pastures barren. The farmers tried to save their crops by building sheet metal pans about 6 x 20 feet, filling the bottom with tar, and then dragging them through the infested fields. This idea proved worthless, however, for within a minute or two the tar was completely covered with the hoppers and new tar had to be added. Actually, the grasshoppers were so numerous that they obscured the sun when in flight. Governor John S. Pillsbury's message to the legislature in 1877, known as the

"Grasshopper Message," was filled with recommendations for counteracting the scourge and for the relief of its victims. No relief, however, was voted to alleviate losses sustained by the people in the affected areas.

In about 1890 there was an infestation of chinchbugs in the area. By puncturing the roots of plants and sucking them dry, they damaged about 75 per cent of the wheat crop. No harm was sustained by the barley and oat crops because they were hard with maturity when the little bugs appeared. The wheat, however, was just in the milk stage and after being attacked, it bleached off in a day or two, leaving the kernels so shrunken that they were worthless for flour. The yield was reduced to 3 bushels per acre and could be used only for chicken feed. The corn crop was saved by the use of kerosene. Filling a sprinkling can with this substance, the farmers sprayed a strip of ground around the field and the bugs refused to cross the border. Fifty gallons of kerosene at 8 to 10 cents per gallon kept the insects out of a 25 acre field.

The scourge of the army worm, a species of caterpillar, occurred at the beginning of July in 1892. Where these worms came from nobody knows because none were observed the previous year. All of a sudden it was noticed that all the basswood trees were being defoliated. After the worms had stripped the basswood, they attacked the maple, elm, ash, and oak, and ended up with the hickory, which has a rather bitter leaf. All of the trees grew a second crop of leaves with the exception of the hickory, of which 99% died after the attack. Having stripped the wooded areas, the worms entered the swamp lands, and within a few hours all the willows were denuded. After cleaning a tree, the worms would descend by a web of their own making. Millions and millions of them were hanging in the air under the trees so that cattle had to be kept out of the wooded pastures. The people protected their shade and fruit trees from the pests by painting a strip of axle grease around the bottom of the trunks, over which the worms would not pass. In the gardens, however, raspberries, gooseberries, currants, and grapes were all stripped. When all the foliage had been eaten, the army of worms started on the march. They all traveled in the same direction, from west to east, and no obstruction would make them deviate from their course. When they arrived at a building, they would climb up to the cornice and clutter up until the chunk got too heavy and fell to the ground. They could not be kept out of the houses unless the openings were protected

with axle grease. Children could not go out to play but had to be kept in the house. The worms were literally everywhere. There was not an inch of ground which was not covered with them. The railroad tracks were so slippery with the pests that, incredible as it may seem, trains stopping at Victoria and Zumbra Heights could not start on the grade out of town without backing up several miles to the west to pick up momentum to carry them over the incline. Then, as quickly as the worms had appeared they disappeared, and no one knew from where they had come, nor where they went.

## SEEDS OF FAME



Wendelin Grimm

When the pioneer days of the St. Victoria Parish were over and the days of bare existence and homesickness had passed into days of circumstance, the community still held two elements of national fame: the development of alfalfa and the development of fruits which can withstand the rigors of the severe Minnesota winters. The parish claims the honor of being the birthplace of Grimm alfalfa, Wealthy and Haralson apples, Latham raspberries, Red Lake currants, plums, pears, apricots, and other fruits.

Victoria has not produced a great statesman, nor a great artist or poet. However, one of the parishioners, Wendelin Grimm, gained national fame by developing alfalfa known to this day by his name, Grimm alfalfa. In 1857 Mr. Grimm emigrated from Kuhlheim in the Tauber valley of the Duchy of Baden, Germany, and settled in the parish area, about 3 miles northwest of the village of Victoria. He brought along about 20 pounds of seed which he named *ewiger Klee* ("everlasting clover"). He planted about 5 pounds of the seed that same fall of his arrival and 5 pounds more the next spring. That produced a perfect stand. That fall he planted the rest of the seed. A year or two later his entire stand of *ewiger Klee* with the exception of two plants had frozen out. He then carefully nursed these two plants and gathered all the seed they produced and planted it. Within a few years he had a good stand of the clover which did not freeze out. He raised all the seed he could and later sold

Sponsored By: Victoria Hardware Co.  
Kenneth Wellens, Prop.

the surplus to his neighbors. Within a few years the United States Department of Agriculture proclaimed the Grimm strain of alfalfa as the only known alfalfa which could withstand the Minnesota winters. Grimm's persistence and patient work in developing this hardy legume has proved a boon to agriculture in the Northwest and paid off in uncounted millions of dollars. In appreciation for his services the United States Government has erected a monument to his memory on the farm where he carried on his experiments three miles northwest of Victoria.

In 1907 the University of Minnesota bought the original Martin Fessler farm adjoining the eastern border of the village of Victoria and commenced to develop hardy fruits and berries to withstand the severe Minnesota winters. Fruit-breeding is a continuous process — pollen, cross-pollination, seeds, thousands of seedlings — a tedious and enormous job. In 1917 a dream apple appeared. It was a large red apple, well-shaped, a remarkable eating apple, good for cooking and keeping. It was named the Haralson apple. Then came the Underwood and other plums. The Latham raspberry and the Red Lake currant, the leading variety, followed. All these were developed on the Fruit Breeding Farm near Victoria, together with several varieties of pears and apricots which have withstood the Minnesota winters for the last 10 to 15 years.

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF PROGRESS

Our main purpose in writing the history of the St. Victoria Parish was the recording of the names of the first missionaries, settlers, and conditions which existed in the beginning and confronted the pioneers who settled here during the first 25 to 30 years, with special emphasis on the members who organized the St. Victoria Parish.

We believe, however, that future generations will be interested to know that the people who resided here during the last century have seen more giant, unbelievable strides in material progress than were made in the 2000 years previous. Electric lights, stoves, motors, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, farm machinery, telephones, phonographs, radios, television, and all kinds of household equipment have appeared. Automobiles, submarines, supersonic aircraft tell the incredible advance of speed in transportation.

In the beginning, passage from Europe to America required anywhere from one to three months, depending on favorable trade winds. The early settlers of this area had to travel through the Gulf of Mexico, via the Mississippi River to St. Paul, for there

were not as yet any railroads from the eastern United States to St. Paul. When they arrived here, they found only dense forest and no clearings. The only tools available were the axe, hoe, scythe, and tools of similar type. Iron nails were very scarce, and almost all of the log buildings were tied together with wooden pegs.

It is not our intent here to re-describe conditions which existed at that time. But in order to record the speed with which new developments came about, we will dwell briefly on a few of the highlights. Houses were lighted with candles. Kerosene and oil lamps were not in use until quite a few years after the beginning of the petroleum industry in 1859. Up to 1890 there was no market for gasoline, which then sold for 2c a gallon. Small threshing machines appeared in the late '60's and were powered with a horse



Early Threshing Scene

power. In 1876 steam engines started threshing grain. Gasoline tractors appeared in 1892. Today there are 4 million tractors. In 1897 Marconi invented wireless telegraphy, the forerunner of radio, radar, and television. The pioneer had to walk where he wanted to go; today almost every family has at least one automobile. In the field of human endeavor the greatest advance has been made in medical science. Since the beginning of the century more has been learned about the causes, treatment, prevention, and control of disease than in any time in world history. As a result of this knowledge the health of millions has been restored and their life span extended.

Yes, the people who have lived in these last 100 years have seen more mechanization in machinery and more advance in medical science than all the people from the beginning of time to the 19th century.

*Sponsored By:* Victoria Repair Shop  
Mike Storms, Prop.

## APPENDIX I: FIRST RECORDED BAPTISMS

OMITTED

## APPENDIX II: PARISH SOCIETIES

In the early years of the parish there were no lay societies such as are now found in every active parish. Some of the women grouped together and formed an Altar Society to take care of the altar linens, vestments, flowers, etc., and the proper decorations for Sunday and Holyday services. This group also gathered periodically to scrub and clean the church and its furnishings.

From September, 1880, to December, 1885, the pastor of the St. Victoria Church was Rev. Ambrose Jansen, O.F.M., who was very interested in parish societies. He enrolled all the small children in the Holy Childhood Society. The dues, 12c per year, were used to support missions in the Far East.

The young men and young women formed sodalities; married women joined together in a Christian Mothers' Society; and the married men formed the St. Joseph Society, whose aim was to provide ways and means of maintaining the parochial school. Each of these sodalities had its distinct badge or sash and its own banner. In processions they made an impressive appearance. These societies were a wholesome influence and helped to create a parish solidarity.

Present societies are the Confraternity of Christian Mothers, St. Francis Society, St. Margaret Society, Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Association of the Holy Childhood.

In the fall of 1928, Mrs. John A. Diethelm was delegated to attend the annual convention of the Catholic Aid Association Women's Auxiliary and the Federation of Catholic Women at Wabasha, Minnesota. In July, 1929, a meeting of all the ladies of the parish was held in the school hall and it was agreed to meet regularly about once a month on a social basis and to charge a small fee which would be used for the support of the missions and the needy. The group decided to meet in different homes and charge 15c to play cards and bunco. The hostess would furnish small prizes and a lunch committee of four ladies would furnish the lunch. These meetings were a great moral and social success and continued for about four years without interruption. The meetings were discontinued in January, 1942. In all there were 102 meetings with sometimes as many as 65 ladies attending, and the total collections were \$650.35. There also were many donations of used clothing and Catholic magazines to be used in the work. The first officers were: Mrs. Emil Seifert, president; Mrs. John Diethelm, secretary; and Mrs. Louis Klein, treasurer.

## APPENDIX III: CEMETERY

The first Catholic cemetery in Carver County was in St. Victoria Parish. The record states that this cemetery was located 300 yards west of the present church, on higher ground between two meadows.

#### APPENDIX IV: CIVIL WAR VETERANS

George Winter: enlisted in Company M infantry; captured in the Battle of Brice's Crossroad and moved to Andersonville prison; died of starvation during summer of 1864.

Ignatz Yetzer: mustered September 1, 1864; fatally wounded in battle at Nashville, Tennessee, December 21, 1864.

Michael Kessler: mustered September 27, 1864; discharged with company.

Engelbert Schneider: mustered September 27, 1864; discharged with company.

Joseph Schaaf: mustered September 27, 1864; discharged with company.

Nicholas Roers: enlisted February 11, 1864; discharged with company.

John Etzell: volunteered in June, 1861; wounded at Mill Spring, Mississippi; discharged with regiment.

Meinrad Fessler: drafted; mustered May 28, 1864; discharged with regiment.

Joseph Schmid: mustered May 28, 1864; discharged with regiment.

Sebastian Einsidler: mustered August 29, 1864; believed to have drowned.

Charles Schuler: mustered December 23, 1861; transferred to invalid corps 1864.

Baptiste Steiner: mustered September 1, 1864; discharged with regiment.

Anton Aretz: volunteered in 1863; discharged with company; his company guarded at Mankato when 32 Indians were hanged.

Martin Stieger: volunteered and served three years; discharged with company.

Lorenz Stieger: volunteered; discharged with company.

James David Oakes: Spanish-American War in 1897. One of 7 volunteers from the entire county; stationed at Augusta, Georgia; discharged at end of war.

#### APPENDIX V: PRESENT MEMBERSHIP OF ST. VICTORIA PARISH as of December 31, 1956

Aretz, Anthony	Derhaag, Henry	Diethelm, Kenneth
Aretz, Kathleen	Derhaag, Ambrose	Diethelm, John
Aretz, Mrs. Rosella	Derhaag, Richard	Diethelm, Joseph
Aretz, Jerome	Diethelm, Anton	Diethelm, Paul
Aretz, William, Sr.	Diethelm, Ben	Diethelm, Richard
Aretz, William, Jr.	Diethelm, Elizabeth	Diethelm, Roger
Bednarczyk, Mrs. Amb.	Diethelm, Eugene	Dill, Mrs. Elizabeth
Boll, Bede	Diethelm, Florian	Ditsch, Sylvester
Boll, Fred	Diethelm, Frank	Ebert, Walter
Boll, John	Diethelm, George	Elke, Vernon
Buesgens, Germain	Diethelm, Harold	Funk, Mrs. Archie
Buesgens, Victor	Diethelm, Henry	Garvais, Andrew

Garvais, Ray	Notermann, Arnold	Snook, Mrs. William
Garvais, Virginia	Notermann, Ben	Sohns, Dale
Gregory, Frank Jr.	Notermann, Clare	Steinberger, Mrs. Al
Gregory, Mrs. Frank Sr.	Notermann, Elizabeth	Steinberger, Mrs. Car.
Gregory, Joseph	Notermann, Elaine	Steinberger, George
Gregory, Marvin	Notermann, Florian	Storms, Michael
Gregory, Henry	Notermann, Francis	Techam, George
Hanson, Mrs. Axel	Notermann, Mrs. Gert.	Timmers, Frank
Hanson, Carl	Notermann, John	Timmers, Rose Mary
Happ, Donald	Notermann, Raymond	Tschimperle, Art
Happ, Joseph	Notermann, Robert	Tschimperle, Betty
Hartman, George	Notermann, Walter	Tschimperle, Florian
Hartman, Leo	Oswieiler, John	Tschimperle, George
Hartman, Math	Pieper, Elmer	Tschimperle, Jerome
Hartman, Paul	Paal, Arnold	Tschimperle, Mary Ellen
Hauviller, Francis	Ploof, Robert	Vanderlinde, Ed
Heitz, John	Poppler, Erwin	Vanderlinde, Joseph
Heitz, Donald	Ries, Sylvester	Van Sloun, Anna
Hesse, Francis	Reus, Mrs. Anna	Van Sloun, Edward
Heutmaker, Art	Reus, Francis	Van Sloun, Francis
Heutmaker, Florian	Rhoy, Mrs. William	Van Sloun, Leonard
Heutmaker, Mrs. Joseph	Robling, Ben	Vogel, August
Jensen, Gerhard	Robling, Calvin	Vogel, Edward Jr.
Jesberg, Donald	Robling, Wilbert	Vogel, Robert
Jeurissen, Arthur	Schmid, Floyd	Vogel, Sylvester
Johnson, Rodney	Schmid, Frank	Wartman, Ben
Kaley, Frank	Schmid, Walter	Wartman, Donald
Kelzer, Clarence	Schmieg, Alphonse	Wartman, Eugene
Kelzer, Mrs. Anna	Schmieg, Ben	Wartman, Harold
Kerber, Anthony	Schmieg, Francis	Wartman, Doris
Kerber, Donald	Schmieg, George	Wartman, Phabe
Kerber, Jane	Schmieg, Gerald	Wartman, Richard
Kerber, Marlene	Schmieg, Herbert	Wartman, Mary
Kerber, Math	Schmieg, John	Weber, Fred
Kirsch, Ervin	Schmieg, Joseph	Weber, Harold
Kirsch, Jerome	Schmieg, Ray	Weinzierl, Anthony
Kirsch, John	Schmieg, Richard	Wellens, Frank
Kirsch, Joanne	Schmieg, Rose Ann	Wellens, Kenneth
Klaras, Richard	Schmieg, Wilbert	Williams, Gerald
Kocks, Delores	Schmitt, Ervin	Williams, Henry
Kocks, Herbert	Schneider, Florian	Williams, Herb
Kolb, Anna	Schneider, Gerald	Williams, Mrs. Ida
Kraemer, Theo.	Schneider, John Sr.	Williams, Jerome
Krueger, Conrad	Schneider, John Jr.	Williams, Joseph
Krueger, Roger	Schneider, Leander	Williams, Lawrence
Larson, Mrs. Bud	Schneider, Leo	Williams, Ray
Leizinger, Alois	Schneider, Leonard	Worm, Ed
Leizinger, Robert	Schneider, Math	Worm, Mrs. Anna
Leuthner, Maurice Sr.	Schneider, Philip	Yetzer, George
Leuthner, Maurice Jr.	Schneider, Thomas	Yetzer, Leo
Lydiard, Mrs. J. M.	Schneider, Victor	Zanger, Jerome
Mechtel, Mrs. Myron	Schrempp, Gerald	Zanger, Joseph
Murphy, J. P.	Schrempp, Leonard	
Notermann, Mrs. Anton	Schwalbe, Henry	

#### APPENDIX VI: MISCELLANEOUS

Rev. Franz X. Weniger, S.J., the noted missionary, gave a mission here in 1876. Under his direction the men of the parish erected a cross hewn of oak about 25 feet directly north of the present entrance to the church. The cross was about 20 feet high. Father Weniger himself painted the words *Rette Deine Seele* (Save your soul) on the arm of the cross. It stood there for over 40 years until age and decay made it necessary to tear it down.



Mrs. Ida (Neutgens) Williams is the oldest living member of the St. Victoria Parish. She was born on August 10, 1863, and has been a parish member since her marriage to William Williams.

*Sponsored By:*  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Williams



Joseph Diethelm is the oldest living member baptized in St. Victoria Church. He was born on January 27, 1864, and has been a member of the St. Victoria Parish during his entire life.

*Sponsored By:* Mrs. Anna Reus



Pictured above are five generations. Joseph Diethelm (fourth from left) is the oldest male parishioner. With him from left to right are Mrs. Kenneth Ulrich, her son, Timothy, Mrs. Rosemary Timmers, and Mrs. Anna Reus.

*Sponsored By:* Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Diethelm and Family

In 1863 Joseph Weber, a grand uncle of Fred Weber of our parish, painted a picture of St. Victoria for the altar of the little log church. In 1876, when the present brick church was completed, the altar and the picture were removed to the new church. The picture adorned the altar until 1884, when the steeple was erected and the old altar was replaced by a high altar and two side altars. What happened to the picture remained a mystery until some time in February, 1957, when one of the Sisters found it stored away in the attic of the present school building. The picture is well preserved, and the bold and realistic work shows considerable artistic talent. The picture now adorns the wall of the school lunch room. Mr. Weber also painted a picture of the Guardian Angel for the church at Chaska. He was also an inventor; he invented and built a little fanning mill which he sold to the early settlers. A bachelor, he lived in a cabin west of Pierson Lake.

\* \* \* \* \*

Instructions and Vespers. Until 1910 the priest would give a half-hour of instruction to the children on Sunday afternoons. After this Vespers were sung and Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament was imparted. The Sunday program entailed considerable hardship for the families living further away because they had to walk home several miles after High Mass, eat dinner, and return to the church by two o'clock. Since 1910 the Sisters have been responsible for instructing the children in their daily classes.

\* \* \* \* \*

Sermons and Announcements. Until January, 1931, all sermons and announcements were made in the German language. When Father Ives Beu, O.F.M., arrived here on that date, he made all announcements in both German and English and alternated the sermons in both languages. After his departure in November, 1945, the German language was not used any longer, and thus the last outstanding vestige of a German parish and German customs which had prevailed for almost a full century passed into history.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### APPENDIX VII: REMINISCENSES

Some of the older people of the parish can remember WHEN:

- all sugar was a soft light brown with large lumps, convenient for snitching;
- the blood was purified in the spring with sulphur and molasses;



The above picture of St. Victoria was painted by Joseph Weber in 1863.

*Sponsored By:* Mr. Fred Weber; Mr. and Mrs. Harold Weber and Family; Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Notermann and Family

- only green coffee was on the market and sold at 5c to 7c per pound;
- all fences were made of rails;
- you could catch hundreds of crappies through the ice as fast as you could pull them out;
- any amount of pickerel (northern) could be taken with a pitchfork or spear while they were moving up a creek at spawning time;
- there were no game laws, no bag limits - and no game wardens to worry about!
- blackbirds moved south at cornhusking time in flocks many miles long;
- the first post office here was called "Laketown";
- all well-dressed ladies wore large bustles and hoop skirts;
- every farmer raised barley, a perfect substitute for coffee;
- the only refrigeration available was in the family well or cistern;
- all grain was cut and laid into swaths with a cradle, tied with its own straw, placed into shocks, and then stacked near the barn to provide sufficient straw for the bedding of livestock;
- all corn was cut by hand, placed into shocks, then husked by hand, and tied into bundles with willows;
- chicory was a standard item carried by all grocery stores to be used as a substitute for coffee;
- a huckster wagon called periodically to sell tinware;
- chimney-sweeps tooted their trumpets on the roof-top and cleaned your chimney every year;
- peddlers walked through the countryside with a large pack of goods on their back and bartered for their supper, lodging, and breakfast with a red bandana handkerchief or a comb;
- shaves were a dime and haircuts advanced from 15c to 25c;
- the "guest room" was furnished with the ever-ready wash bowl and pitcher;
- a nickel bought more peanuts than you could put into your coat pocket;
- one end of a saloon counter was loaded down with four or five different kinds of sausage, brick and limburger cheese, herring, hasenpfeffer, baked beans, hot stews, rye and white bread - all free;
- little German bands visited the community occasionally and stayed anywhere from an hour to several days, leaving only when no more free beer and lunch were forthcoming.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 It is not commonly known that President Jefferson had no constitutional right or authority from the Congress to buy the land known as the Louisiana Purchase. The purchase was unconstitutional. At the same time Napoleon of France had no authority to sell the land. The question never was raised or our title would not have been worth anything.
- 2 Wilson: **The Minnetonka Story**, Colwell Press, Minneapolis, 1950; p. 42.
- 3 Testimony of Mrs. Carl Diethelm and Mrs. Lena Beyers, daughter of Leonard Breher.
- 4 As reported by Martin Tschimperle, son of Franz Tschimperle, a pioneer.
- 5 This date is corroborated by the statement of Martin Tschimperle that the organization of the St. Victoria Parish was effected soon after Shakopee began to build a church.
- 6 Testimony of Martin Tschimperle.
- 7 Letter of Mary Delsing, daughter of M. J. Burkhart.
- 8 **History of the Minnesota Valley**, p. 379.
- 9 The names of these teachers were furnished by Mrs. Lena Beyers, a daughter of pioneer Leonard Breher. She attended school during part of this period and knew these teachers personally.
- 10 Because the main convent of the Franciscans Sisters in Milwaukee was destroyed by fire, it is impossible to obtain a list of all the Sisters who served here. The names given are listed from memory.