

dark clouds of war and even civil war and revolution hang above our head, it might well be and we have no reason to refuse thinking, that they might be our last.” A few days later he notes “Every day gets more noisy with music and drums and [?] cheering and shouting – flags of the stripes and stars hang over the streets on long poles from different quarters of the city – I know not by what party these manifestations are made – but reminds me of similar demonstrations in my own country and later in [?] – and I think we have much to fear, that they be forebodings of similar events ...”

On January 13, 1962, he wrote: “The cold is exceedingly great; I perceived this morning about 10 or more below zero Fahrenheit. The soldiers left Westphalia again today to return to the Camp; some say that they are ordered to St. Louis to be mustered in as the regiment is at present full. From this fact it may be supposed that this exploit was performed without order or confusion from higher quarters. It is said that Bern. Bode was also molested.” Fr. Goeldlin wrote of his worries about community disturbances and marauders who had formed groups throughout the countryside, taking advantage of the unrest to rob and steal from local farmers. He worried further that with many of the community’s men forced to enlist that the local crops could not be harvested to provide food for the community and leaving families without much needed help them during the harsh winter to come.

One diary entry was particularly disturbing as he makes brief mention of Vienna, noting an inability to visit there because “...continued shooting had been toward Vienna last Friday, supposed to come from Rolla...” and in a later post that “...the dead body of Wieberg...” had been found on the road to Vienna, so he was given warning not to travel there due to the potential danger. (It was determined the victim was Henry Wieberg, a Catholic man from Rich Fountain, Missouri, who was come upon by a group of rebel guerillas on October 17, 1862. He was found beheaded four days later near the Maries and Osage county line. (The story of this incident is also shared in the Spring 2011 issue of the HSMC Maries Countian newsletter, Provost Marshall Papers, transcribed by Lisa James).

Fr. Goeldlin continued random entries about his travels and daily religious life throughout mid-Missouri. In late 1862 or early 1863 Vienna’s only Catholic mission structure was severely damaged by fire. On March 29, 1863, Fr. Goeldin makes a final entry about Vienna: “I did not visit St. Mary’s at Vienna, the church then being so much damaged that service cannot be had with decency.” It appears visits to the area were isolated after that time. Fr. Goeldlin’s last entry in the journal was on December 4, 1871, hoping that a local citizen would bring his overdue account up to date.

In 1872, Fr. Goeldlin contracted pneumonia while going a great distance in exceptionally cold weather to visit a sick parishioner. He rallied but his lungs were permanently damaged. A visit to his home of Switzerland failed to restore his health, so in 1873 he moved to the southern United States with hopes of healthful restoration with the milder temperatures. Never fully recovering, Fr. Goeldlin died there on February 11, 1875.

So, with that, it appears the story of Fr. Goeldlin is complete to the degree I can accomplish a summary. But then again, who knows.....some other reference of a long ago event that involved him may be discovered and once again, peak my interest. There is always more to tell. I’m just so glad that his words from 150 years ago were preserved and are there to help us remember all the sacrifices that were made for all we enjoy today.