
Die Deutsche Ecke

The German Corner: #15

Cranberry Prairie

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For the time being, I have decided to interrupt my series on the customs of the Plattdeutsch speaking Germans with a series on the six convents of the Sisters of the Precious Blood founded in and around Mercer County. After the series on the convents, I will continue with short histories of the six mother parishes in and around Mercer County.

Father Maria Franz Salesius Brunner (1795-1859), a Swiss Missionary of the Precious Blood and founder of the American Province of that religious community, established in his arena of ministerial activity ten convents to serve as a refuge of prayer for the sisters and as mission centers for the priests. Of these convents, six he established in and around Mercer County, Ohio. The other convents of his founding, all in Ohio, were: *Mary at the Crib*, New Riegel; *Mary of the Angels*, Marywood (Thompson); *Mary at the Sepulcher*, Glandorf; and *Mary, Mother of Good Counsel*, Glandorf. Each of the convents Father Brunner dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary under some title, and as well he often gave to each a place name. Father Brunner established in 1858 an eleventh and last convent on his final trip to Europe. This convent was at Schellenberg, Liechtenstein, at which place he died on 29 December 1859.

Convent of MARY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS ~ MARY OF THE ROCK ~ Saint John ~ 1846

Maria, Helferin der Christen Kloster ~ Maria im Stein / Maria Stein ~ Sankt Johann

The Maria Stein Convent was Father Brunner's first establishment in Mercer County. The land for this convent was purchased in August 1845, and work was quickly commenced on the erection of a brick building. A part of this old convent exists today as the walls of the courtyard. The cornerstone was laid on 16 November 1845, but it would not be until 24 September 1846 that five sisters arrived at Maria Stein from New Riegel to take possession. The place name given by Father Brunner, *Maria Stein*, was done so in remembrance of the Swiss Benedictine Monastery that he had once belonged to. At the Swiss Maria Stein, there was venerated a miraculous painting, Mary of the Rock, depicting her according to her local apparition. Father Brunner had a copy made of this painting, and this he placed at Maria Stein. Father Brunner in 1857 designated Maria Stein as the motherhouse of sisters. In 1923 the motherhouse was removed to Salem Heights near Dayton, Ohio. A generous gift of sacred relics was given in 1875 by a Milwaukee priest, Father James M. Gartner, and Maria Stein soon became a place of pilgrimage. Also to be found at Maria Stein for some time, was a Normal School for those sisters preparing to be teachers. A new convent, along with a spacious chapel and a chapel specifically for the relics was dedicated 23 August 1892. This building exists today, and was designed by Cornelius Lange. Maria Stein continues to be a place of prayer and pilgrimage. The convent land in 1880 consisted of 289 acres, with 57 sisters residing in the convent. In 1900, the number of sisters residing there had risen to 93 sisters.

From whence they came... PROVINCE OF WESTPHALIA, KINGDOM OF PRUSSIA

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| Darup: | Vagedes |
| Dielingen: | Bordewisch |
| Dreierwalde: | Fischer, Schmackers, Sÿnck, Wenning |
| Dringenberg: | Schröder |
| Dülmen: | Lohmann, Pottkötter |
| Everswinkel: | Austermann, Brüning, Ossenbeck |
| Fuchtorf: | Artkamp, Flaute |
| Geldern: | Stammen |
| Geschner: | Heidemann |
| Greven: | Alte |
