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**News from the Volksfreund: 1884-1889**

Three and half years after the surveyor set the witness stone and marked five acres of open land into lots organized as a village, reports from the new town of Charlestown (or “Charleytown” as it was commonly referred to in everyday speech and sometimes in print), began appearing in the *Volksfreund*.

These reports are collected in this book under four parts, each covering four, separate decades, from the earliest report in 1884 to the last in the series in 1920. Chapters dealing with various facets of the culture precede each decade of translations.

The articles were written in the German language, the “mother tongue” of the people. Now translated into English for the first time and collected in one book, the news from “Charleytown” pulls back the curtain of time and lets the reader experience what life was like in a pioneer German community in central Missouri.

**Volksfreund of 20 February 1884, letter dated 8 February 1884.**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

Our new Charlestown is noticeably flourishing. In the short time of its existence, it has already improved considerably, and it is in a state of constant growth.

Thomas Heisler built a saloon for Mr. Owen on Walnut Street. On the opposite side, Mr. Sandbothe is also building a saloon, and in a short time several houses will also be built.

Mr. John Westermann has made it his task to give the youth of the school education that is necessary for life.

The firm of Luecke & Wilde owns the best tailor workshop in the county, without a doubt.

The area around Charlestown still has a lot of good land available, especially along the rivers. In the past year, two young people from Westphalia, Osage County, moved here. They also had the good fortune of immediately sailing into the harbor of marriage, as soon as they had a home in Miller County. If young people from densely populated areas want to end their bachelor life, they would be well advised to come here and secure a home and then take one of our good German farmer's daughters and marry her.

On the 4th of February John Lueckenotto was married to Miss Theresia Bax.

F. L.

**Volksfreund of 9 April 1884, letter dated end of March 1884.**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

Even though there are many readers of your treasured paper in the Charlestown area, one seldom sees anything about Charlestown in the *Volksfreund*.

Although Charlestown is a new little city, it is growing very quickly and is flourishing. For example, the wagon maker, J. H. Ortvals, built a new house, and a beautiful one at that. Mr. Pendleton and Mr. Sandbothe have built a new pub. The postman and the Justice of the Peace Fritz Lampe (likely to still be well known to many people in Jefferson City) is also building.

Thanks to the efforts of our ardent pastor, Cosmas Seeberger, we have a very nice church here. Last week, the hard-working church manager Thomas Boeckmann planted some lovely shade trees around God's house and the priest's house. As I have heard, the church will also get a new organ soon. The choir is excellent because there are many good singers, and Fritz Lampe is the leader; thus, things must go well.

During this warm weather the wheat is excellent, much better than people thought; it did not freeze like last year.

W. Luecke, who used to be with the blacksmith, has sold out, as I have heard, to a Mr. Sonnen from Westphalia. I don't know what Mr. Luecke wants to start now; some say he wants to begin a store. That would be just fine.

More to come on another occasion.

*A Reader.*

**Volksfreund of 30 April 1884, letter dated 16 April 1884.**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

We have survived the period of fasting, and the highly celebrated Feast of Easter 1884 is also over.

On *Gründonnerstag*<sup>1</sup> we had a big celebration here: the children had their First Holy Communion. The divine service began at 9 o'clock in the morning; adults prayed the rosary in the church, the children in the schoolhouse. After that, the children were brought to the church. The school children went first, followed by the Young Men with a banner (the Young Men have gotten a new banner which is very beautiful), then came the choir, then the Young Women, then the Married Women with a banner, then the rest of the people. They went to the schoolhouse in that order. On the way they prayed the rosary. When they got to the schoolhouse, the singers began the song: "*Kommet, lobet ohne End,*"<sup>2</sup> and thus the children were brought into the beautifully decorated house of God. There the pastor, Fr. Cosmas Seeberger, gave a very instructive address to the children after Holy Mass began. For communion the children went in pairs to the table of the Lord. After the service the priest again gave a very gripping speech to the First Communicants and the older people. It was an exultant celebration, the likes of which has never occurred in Miller County.

From Holy Thursday until Good Friday evening the church was continuously visited by many worshipers.

On Easter we had a late church service because Fr. Seeberger had to do an early service in Mary's Home (6 miles from here).

Last Sunday, the following were announced for marriage: H. Ortbals, the wagon maker, with Miss Heisler from St. Thomas, and Joseph Lueckenhoff with Miss Blei.

On Holy Thursday, Herman Rehagen had the good fortune to be blessed by his wife with a new daughter.

More later. *A Reader.*

<sup>1</sup> Literally, "Green Thursday," but it translates to Holy Thursday.

<sup>2</sup> "Come praise without end, the Most Holy Sacrament," was the first line of the song, No. 142 in the Hellebusch *Gesangbuch* (1874).

**Volksfreund of 25 June 1884, letter undated:**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

A reader wrote to us:

Mr. Wetlock sold his store to Misters Herman Lueckenhoff and Wilhelm Luecke. These two have filled the store with new wares and are doing a good business. As I have heard, Misters H. Sandbothe and Peter Faehn (who used to be the clerk at Wetlock's store) have gotten together and want to begin a business. Provisionally, they are starting a grocery store, but since they have bought a big frame house, I am of the opinion that soon it will become a real store.

In recent times this area has been heavily visited by agents who are promoting harvesting machines, sewing machines, and also newspapers. Included among those promoting newspapers was Mr. John Bredemann of Jefferson City, who did a good business for a New York newspaper. (The farmers in Miller County should not send their money to New York, but rather should keep it in the neighborhood.)

The new organ for the church has arrived and contributes much to the beautification of the church services. Mr. Fritz Lampe is the organist.

The wheat in this area is splendid, and the farmers are looking forward to a rich harvest.

The marriage of Mr. Wilhelm Luecke and Ms. Mueller of Jefferson City was announced Sunday for the second time.

Joseph Dickneite bought a farm near town, and he will leave us in the next week. It's too bad that the good-natured Joseph is leaving our little town.

**Volksfreund of 29 October 1884, letter dated 24 October 1884**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

It's been a while since we've seen much about Charlestown in the *Volksfreund*. Although there is not much new in this area, I still want to share a few things so that our town will not be completely forgotten.

Recently, our church got two beautiful new statues, namely St. Lawrence, our church patron, and the holy mother Anna. Also, a new altar has arrived which will soon be put up. The new statues will find their place on this altar. The holy mother Anna will be on the left, with St. Lawrence on the right and a Jesus statue in the middle. The altar with the three statues will be a great adornment to our house of God.

As far as our little town goes, it has also been improved. There is one more house there, namely that of Mr. Peter Badder who built it himself. Also we have a new doctor here, a young and apparently very nice man, but I am not allowed to give out his name. He is said to have quite a good patient base. He lives with Mr. Wilde. There are two saloons here, and these always have good beers, cigars, etc. There is also a good billiards table in each of them.

Big city people who visit us thus do not need to fear that they have to lack anything or that they will die of boredom.

Anton Dubbert bought a piece of land from Mr. Brumley; this place is on the Osage River and is known under the (not very nice) name “Devil’s Elbow.” Dubbert paid \$2,000 (*≈\$59,000 in 2023*)<sup>3</sup> for it. We have heard Wilhelm Worms has bought a hill farm, known as “Banter’s Place.” He paid \$500 (*≈\$15,000 in 2023*).

Recently the old Mrs. Lausch and Joseph Bax died. He was a man in his best years. He left behind a wife and five or six children. Mr. John Gudemann, who has been feeling sick for six or seven weeks, now is on the way to recovery.

A while ago our school started up again. Mr. Joseph Dickneite is the teacher. The parents and the children are in general satisfied with him.

*Reader.*

### **Volksfreund of 5 Aug. 1885, letter undated**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

A reader writes:

Our Mr. Boedeker is finished with painting the church. Also, the priest house got a new paint job.

Misters Lueckenhoff and Luecke are having their store building “weatherboarded”. It will look a lot better then.

There was the wedding of Mr. W. Worms and Miss Bisges of Wardsville on July 14th.

Last week the one-year-old child of Mr. Huechtmeyer had the misfortune of knocking over a pot of boiling water. The child was burned so badly that it will be difficult to keep it alive.

The stork came to Conrad Kemna last week and left behind a strong little boy.

The harvest is mostly over here, which is very fortunate for the farmers because no one would be able to stand to work in this heat. The wheat on average did not do as well as the farmers thought it would. It is pretty light. Oats and grass are good.

Last Sunday our pastor reorganized the singing choir and for the time being chose only six who will sing for now. The rest can also sing, but they must first go to the practice sessions. Those that were chosen were: F. Lampe (organist and singing teacher), H. Sandbothe, J. Dickneite, W. Worms, J. Gudemann, H. Doerhoff and B. Doerhoff.

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<sup>3</sup> Equivalent dollars in this edition are inflation adjusted as of April 2023, using the CPI Inflation Calculator, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1913 to 2023. Years prior to 1913 are adjusted from the 2005 inflation adjusted numbers in previous editions of this book.

**Volksfreund of 30 December 1885, letter dated 21 December 1885.**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

It appears that our area has completely disappeared from the memory of the *Volksfreund*. For this reason, I will give a sign of life in the form of these lines.

On the 6th, 7th and 8th of this month, we held the Forty Hours Devotion here.<sup>4</sup>

To the dismay of the whole parish, our pastor, the esteemed P. Cosmas Seeberger, was sick on the morning of the first day. Even now he is unable to say Mass. Luckily there was another priest here at the time, also belonging to the Order of the Precious Blood, who had to hold the devotions alone.

Our schoolhouse is being newly improved and has received windows and doors. Joseph Dickneite and Frank Evers are taking care of the work.

The priest house has been freshly plastered. Also, the wagon maker, H. Ortbals, has a new paint job on his house.

But it's not just our town that is being improved. The farmers are also beginning to want to get rid of their old woodpiles. For example, Conrad Kemna built a new two-story frame house, and his brother, Frank, also is now in the middle of building.

Approximately two weeks ago, the farmer Edward Ortbals had the misfortune to lose four horses. People say that they died of a glandular illness.

Mr. Wetlock bought out Mr. Sandbothe. It's too bad that the faithful Herman will leave our town. It is not yet known where he is going.

Also, as I learned yesterday, Misters Lueckenhoff and Luecke have also sold out to Wetlock.

Our blacksmith, Joseph Sonnen, sold his part of the workshop to J. Wilde. More to come.

*A Reader.*

**Volksfreund of 14 April 1886, letter undated.**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

To the great happiness of the whole parish, our pastor Fr. Seeberger is on the way to recovery from his long suffering. Although he can't yet say

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<sup>4</sup> Forty Hours Devotion is a Catholic religious service that literally lasts forty hours, which was the time Christ was in the tomb. The first day, known as the Day of Exposition, opened with a Solemn High Mass, concelebrated by three priests, plus a fourth priest as the Master of Ceremonies. After Mass, there was a procession in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, carried in the monstrance, which was then placed in a niche over the altar, where it remained for forty hours. Following this came the Litany of the Saints and other prayers. The second day was the Day of Adoration, with a Mass but no procession. On the third day, the Day of Reposition, the elaborate ceremonies of the first day were repeated, ending with a Solemn High Mass that concluded with the song "*Grosser Gott, wir loben dich*" ("Holy God We Praise Thy Name"). Between ceremonies, parishioners made "visits" for indulgences.

Holy Mass, he is already well enough to occasionally visit the church. Our parochial school building is completely finished and is surrounded by a beautiful fence. It is an adornment to the town.

Last week our postman, Fritz Lampe, had the misfortune to break his right arm. This is how it happened: He had harnessed his horse to a small, two-wheeled wagon. Approximately eight miles from his house the horse got skittish and bolted. Fritz fell out and broke his arm. Mr. Luebbert from St. Elizabeth brought him home in the evening where Doctors Nixdorf and Gregory, who are both from here, bandaged his arm. As I have heard, the patient is on the way to recovery.

Two weeks ago great forest fires blazed here, and farmers had to put forth a lot of effort to defend themselves from the fires. Joseph Boeckmann had about 2,000 fence rails burned.

It seems that the stork has been very generous in 1886. Since the New Year, the following have received a gift from him: Christ Stuckenschneider with a son; F. Evers, ditto; H. Twiehaus, ditto; J. Buechter, ditto; D. Holtmeyer, ditto; H. Verhoff got a daughter. But we have also had a death in this year.

### **Volksfreund of 18 August 1886, letter dated 8 August 1886.**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

On the first day of the month, J. Bax, who is the oldest son of Mr. B. Bax, was buried. The deceased was only 19 years old and was treasured by all. He was the first young man who was buried in our cemetery. The Young Men's Sodality and a great many mourners were present at the burial.

The stork visited the families of Misters H. Heckemeyer and F. Massmann and left a young daughter for each.

Joseph Wilde gave his house a new paint job. However, the color this time is not red as before but white instead. His new icehouse will soon be finished, then there will be a cold drink. *Ja, ja, der Joe macht sich!*

Our Dr. Nixdorf has now also opened a saloon. He always has good drinks and good Silas.<sup>5</sup>

Last week W. Tapphorn bought a new warehouse. He will soon be in position to be the only person in the area to be able to hold wheat in storage. Tapphorn bought 200 acres of land from Mr. Wetlock for \$700 (~\$21,000 in 2023). This land is on the Osage River, about a mile from St. Elizabeth. It should be a good place for a river landing. I wish the young man luck in his endeavors. Moreover, I wish him a good wife (he doesn't have one yet).

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<sup>5</sup> An advertisement in the January 7, 1892, issue of the *Miller County Autogram* announced that Dr. Nixdorf's drug store sold "drugs, patent medicines, perfumes, sundries, and all goods usually found in a first-class drug store." The ad also said wines were for sale, for "medicinal and sacramental purposes."



The farmers need rain. They cannot plow the stubble fields, and the corn is suffering very much. In some places it is already completely dried out.

*A Reader.*

**Volksfreund of 8 December 1886, letter dated 30 November 1886.**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

People are going to soon think that all of Charlestown has moved away, because recently nothing has been heard about Charlestown in the *Volksfreund*. But that is not true. To the contrary, our little town has gotten bigger in recent times.

Mr. W. Luebbert, who is currently in Jefferson City, is having a nice house built. The Justice of the Peace, F. Lampe, has made an addition to his house.

On Tuesday, the 23rd of the month, there was the marriage of Mr. Herman Boeckmann to Miss Albers from Westphalia. The esteemed Fr. Walser performed the marriage. And on Thursday, the 25th, Mr. Anton Tellmann was married to Miss K. Buechter.

On the 24th, Joseph Boeckmann was blessed with a strong son by his wife.

On Friday, the 26th, the body of the deceased child of Mr. William Wetlock was laid to rest.

H. Struempff bought P. Whalen's farm for the price of \$2,500 (~\$76,000 in 2023).

H. Luebbert bought out W. Kalbert for \$1,225 (~\$37,000 in 2023).

*A Reader.*

**Volksfreund dated 16 February 1887, letter dated 11 February 1887**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

After the rain the sun shines! Spring seems to be on its way, unless it will be sent into flight again by the frosty hand of winter.

Business is going slowly here. Money seems to have run out in Miller County.

On the 8th of this month in the local church, Mr. Bernhard Oligschlaeger from here and Miss Maria Schanzmeyer from Westphalia were bound together in marriage by the esteemed pastor, Ferdinand Walser. Best wishes to the newlyweds.

Our popular and jovial farrier and hotel owner, who always serves his customers in the most friendly ways and who knows how to entertain them with his spirited disposition, mourns the loss of his industrious and talented apprentice Jeremais Mangers of Babtown, who decided to run his own business in the future in Mary's Home, Miller County.



Charlestown as well as all fair-minded citizens in the area are happy about the victory they won, when on February 2nd the local saloon was shut down for an extended time. This saloon had given much cause for complaint and was to a great extent the cause of many fist fights and scuffles, which often came to bloodshed, not to mention the frequent cursing and swearing that often accompanied them. Our town, as well as all of Miller County, had quite a bad reputation up until then. This will now be improved, especially when our county is cleansed of the bad "tie-maker" people, whose only achievements are fighting, drinking, and other vices. Just have a bit of patience, and Miller County will have a better reputation. Live and learn!

In our county there is still a lack of good schools and working Germans. There are still many nice bottom farms that can be bought cheaply. Our county is blessed with the best soil in all of central Missouri, and the German who settles here will do better than he would if he moved to Kansas or Arkansas.

The local Catholic parish is making great progress under the industrious leadership of the most esteemed pastor, Ferdinand Walser. The wish of all the members of the parish is that Ferdinand Walser will be with us for a long time.

Whoever wants to know more about land, etc., should contact Mr. Joseph Wilde, St. Elizabeth P.O. (Charlestown), Miller County, Mo.

A tailor and a shoemaker would do well here.

We have learned from reliable sources that within the next two years the steam engine of a new train route will pass in the vicinity of our so well-positioned town, and Charlestown will then become a good place for business.

*Apollo.*

### **Volksfreund dated 24 August 1887, letter dated 13 August 1887**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

On Wednesday, the 10th of this month, the Catholic parish at Charlestown celebrated the feast of its church patron, St. Lawrence. The Solemn High Mass began at 9:00 a.m., celebrated by Fr. Bremerich from St. Thomas, assisted by the esteemed Fr. Dickman, C.P.P.S, from Sedalia, as deacon, and the esteemed Fr. Kellersman, from Koelztown, as subdeacon. The esteemed Fr. Erntz, from Wardsville, was the master of ceremonies. The esteemed Fr. Hoog, from Jefferson City, delivered the sermon in the German language. The sublime celebration ended with Benediction of the most holy saints, performed by the esteemed Fr. Edward Jacobs, C.P.P.S, from Montrose, along with the gripping song, "Holy God."

Besides the priests named above, the sanctuary also included the esteemed Fr. Walser, C.P.P.S. The person who delivered the sermon, which was well spoken and had words that really went to the heart, described the faithfulness of St. Lawrence and how he took care of the church goods that

were entrusted to him as deacon. At the end of the sermon, he praised the things that the Charlestown citizens have done since the founding of the parish, with great sacrifice but also with great willingness and cooperation. He encouraged the parishioners to keep working in unity with the priest, as they have in the past, to continue to develop the parish, because "*Eintracht macht stark!*"<sup>6</sup>

And that's right, the Charlestown parish deserves all praise. It was founded in 1881, and the new parish has developed to include 80 families, all in great unity. As it was earlier with the tireless pastor Fr. Cosmas Seeberger, so it is now with their new priest; they work hand in hand.

The sodalities are also doing well. Besides the nice church, for which there is unfortunately not a steeple, there is also another nice new building, a part of which was made into a school, and the other part is a convent. So the parish, besides having a new church and a rectory, can now be happy about having a proper school. This is where one sees what has resulted from the unity between the parishioners and the priest. If other parishes would also find such unity, they would also prosper like the one in Charlestown. This is the heartfelt wish of yours truly,

*An Eyewitness.*

### **Volksfreund of 21 September 1887, letter dated 13 September 1887**

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

Finally, after a long drought, there is rain again, a good thing for people and their animals.

On the 30th of August, in St. Lawrence Church, Joseph Doerhoff and Elizabeth Bax were forged into the yoke of marriage by Fr. Walser.

Henry Struempf, born in Koeltztown, a very treasured citizen of our area, was sick for several weeks, and we're happy he's getting better.

As has already been reported earlier in the *Volksfreund*, Mr. Henry Drueding, who studied at the teaching college in St. Francis, Wisconsin for several years, arrived here on the 24th of August and on the 5th took over as the teacher at the Catholic school. Mr. Drueding comes here with the best recommendations of the rector of the above-named teaching college, and he is praised because of his admirable demeanor and his very thorough knowledge as a teacher and as an organist. Welcome!

Mr. Herman Ortvals, the local carpenter and wagon maker, has finished the contract that he made in the spring of this year, namely, to complete the local school building. His work as carpenter and painter deserves great praise, and everyone has to say that he knows his job well in every

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<sup>6</sup> "Unity builds strength."

respect. Whoever sees his work, cannot help but say that the work praises the master.

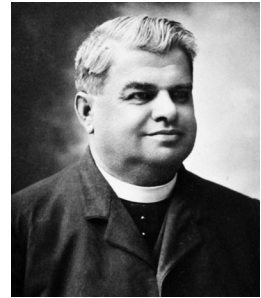
*Karlstadt.*<sup>7</sup>

### Volksfreund of 14 December 1887, letter dated 6 December 1887

*From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

On Sunday, the 4th of December, the esteemed Fr. Walser celebrated his 35th birthday. The parish, which has prospered, was happy to use this opportunity to express its love and thankfulness to its treasured shepherd and father.

The loyal parishioners came to the jubilee from near and far to bring their greetings. At six o'clock in the evening, the choir of the St. Lawrence Church, which is under the leadership of the director, Mr. Drueding, brought the esteemed father a serenade. Mr. Joseph Wilde, who is from here, then expressed good wishes on behalf of the parish. Afterwards, everyone went to the school hall where they had beer and cigars, and they alternated in a very entertaining way between songs and jests. In this event there was true German camaraderie and German happiness. There were many jokes and anecdotes, all expressed in the most basic and *urgemütlichen Plattdeutsch*.<sup>8</sup> It would have been good for the *Volksfreund* to send



*Fr. Ferdinand Walser*

a reporter. What was especially good was the piece read by Mr. Wilde, “*Olle Bunte*.” But what really caused laughter to the point of having a stomach-ache was the song that he belted out: “*Die Leineweber*.”<sup>9</sup>

Everything went in the best order, and everyone was of the opinion that this was the greatest evening they had ever experienced in Charlestown. On every face you could read only one language and the same wish, which was “that the esteemed Fr. Walser would stay here for a long time and would often celebrate his birthday in our midst.” Since the local school has carried the name of a parochial school, the people in town seem to have more faith in it. The average number of students attending school per day is 50. In the previous year, there was barely half that amount. It won’t be long until Charlestown will have to expand the schoolhouse, or even build a new one. This is all thanks to the good leadership of the esteemed pastor. More later.

X.

<sup>7</sup> Charlestown.

<sup>8</sup> The most congenial *Plattdeutsch* (Low German).

<sup>9</sup> “The Linen Weavers” was a humorous German folksong in which the leader would sing a line and everybody would join in singing the response made up of nonsensical, rhyming words: “*harum di sharum di schrumm, shrumm, shrumm*.” For music and words go to [www.liederbank.de](http://www.liederbank.de).

**Volksfreund of 25 January 1888, letter dated 17 January 1888***From Charlestown, Miller Co.*

Since the *Volksfreund* hasn't reported on the local area for a long time, I want to let something be known about Charlestown again, which is still in the same old place.

All of the local readers of the *Volksfreund* hope that you will receive many new subscriptions with prompt payment in the New Year so that the paper's existence will remain secure and happy.

William Wetlock of Charlestown, who was a popular businessman, has now become the new postmaster, and he still knows how to do his work precisely and on time. In the New Year he will add a second store to the one he already has, filled with furniture and hardware. Also, he will expand his first store with an addition. Thirdly, Mr. Wetlock will make an addition to the house he recently bought from Mr. Christoph Stuckenschneider so that he can live there more *gemütlich* and also to improve the appearance of our little town. Things should keep progressing this way.

Mr. Christ Stuckenschneider, one of our most jovial and well-loved citizens, has adorned the outskirts of town with his very nice house. Why did Mr. Stuckenschneider build outside the city limits? Probably he is afraid that we want to vote for a waterworks here, just like in Jefferson City. In case it comes to this, we will make the corporation line include the outskirts of the city, so that Mr. Stuckenschneider won't have to go as far to get drinking water as he does now.

Mr. Stephen Dickneite from Westphalia bought forty acres next to the church property. He is thinking about leaving Westphalia in February, to move to Charlestown, and that's great. Stephen is just the right man for us, because he is thinking about building a two-story house, and he has enough experience in his work as a carpenter to complete all the structures that are supposed to be built this year. Mr. Dickneite comes here with the best recommendations as an industrious workman and a true loyal American and citizen. Unfortunately, he is a Republican, but we also have to have some of those. I bet, though, that Mr. Dickneite will vote for Cleveland in the next presidential election. Cleveland is the true man for the people.<sup>10</sup>

So welcome, Mr. Dickneite! Bring more businesspeople with you: shoemakers, tailors, and also people who want to help work in the fields. The most beautiful bottomland is still to be had here. But hurry! Otherwise, the best will be gone.

Our so well loved and esteemed Fr. Walser has returned safely from the trip that he made to Sedalia, Missouri. He expressed the opinion that it would have been better if Jefferson City had voted on the 10th of this month for

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<sup>10</sup> Grover Cleveland was the Democratic candidate for president.

a new train instead of voting for the waterworks. In that case, he wouldn't have had to go two miles on foot, from Osage Bluff to Charleston. (What is going on? – *Volksfreund* editors)

On Friday the 20th, the feast of Saint Sebastian was celebrated here. Sebastian is the patron of the sick. More later, because as I've heard, Mary's Home will also report in soon. Otherwise, they might get jealous that we are the only ones reporting something from Miller County.

*A Loyal Reader.*

### **Volksfreund dated 28 March 1888, letter dated 20 March 1888**

*From St. Elizabeth,<sup>11</sup> Miller Co.*

Yesterday, on the feast of St. Joseph, the St. Joseph's Men's Sodality celebrated the feast of its patron. In the morning, at a quarter before eight, the 63 members of the Sodality made a procession to the church. At eight o'clock the Rev. Charles Meyer of Mary's Home celebrated the Mass, and the members of the Sodality went to the table of the Lord. After the truly moving sermon by the Rev. Ferdinand Walser, the new banner was blessed, and the Sodality members renewed their faith.

Here we are really working towards expanding and beautifying our town. New streets are being laid out, and new buildings are being built in every direction. In the east part of the city, Mr. Chr. Stuckenschneider built a splendid house. South, Mr. Stephen Dickneite is busy building a new house. West, but somewhat outside the city border, Mr. Wilbers is building a new house, and next week Mr. Kaufmann and Mr. Wetlock will also begin to build a new store building.

Rev. P. Bremerich from St. Thomas honored us on the 19th of the month with his visit.

As we have heard from a good source, Mr. Joseph Wilde plans to build a splendid beer garden here. We congratulate him on this totally original idea, and we're excited about the completion of it. "Wilde's Grove" will be in the southwest part of the city, which seems to be perfectly suited to this purpose.

Furthermore, we're really working to beautify the church and school lot. In place of the old bell house, there is now a nice but not so tall tower, and on the cross of this tower there is a weathervane with a rooster that has so far only announced good weather. The church and the school lot will get a new, nice fence put around it. Daily, they are working on a new road to the cemetery. This road is going to be the first township road in Miller County.

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<sup>11</sup> This and the next two letters use the name St. Elizabeth rather than Charlestown, indicating a personal preference of the correspondent. In the 1890s the name Charlestown was again used. In 1902 the name St. Elizabeth replaced Charlestown in the byline, and that usage continued thereafter.

Now we get mail three times a week, and there is a good chance we will get daily mail soon. Now if only the train would come, we would only need electric lights and streetcars to put St. Elizabeth on the way to being a big city.

As one sees, there's no lack of intelligent people and entrepreneurs in our town, and, therefore, we can have the boldest expectations.

On Friday, the 16th of the month, in the local parish school, there was the school test, which all people interested in being in the school were invited to take, and most of these people followed the invitation. The results of the test were such that our teacher, Mr. Heinrich Drueding, could be praised. The great order, the attention and the quiet demeanor of the children, but also the great progress that the small ones made during the last seven months, are the obvious proof of the great work of the teacher who is always concerned that the children come to school regularly. Without regular attendance the children will not achieve anything. The parents seem likely to blame the teacher if the children, because of not attending school regularly, do not achieve as much as the students who regularly come. As I said, the achievements of the children were much better than anyone expected, and everyone hopes that Mr. Drueding will stay with us for many years to come.

Mr. Drueding is also doing great work with our church choir. He studied Cecilian music and knows how to put it into practice. The choir has children from 9 to 15 years old and sings with an exactness and purity of pronunciation and of tone that would put many of the choirs of the big cities into the shadows.

*A Reader.*

### **Volksfreund dated 23 May 1888, letter dated 18 May 1888**

*From St. Elizabeth, Miller Co.*

The 10th and 11th of this month were days of joy and blessing for our parish because the Holy Bishop Hogan was here. The parish had been looking forward to the visit of this great guest for a long time, and each person tried to work towards preparing the most splendid reception possible.

On the 10th of the month the Most Holy Bishop delivered the sacrament of confirmation at Mary's Home. At 1:30 in the afternoon he drove to Charlestown. The St. Joseph's Men's Sodality and the St. Aloysius Young Men's Sodality hurried to meet the approaching guest. They waited for him on the Osage River on horses, arranged in an espalier. After the reception of the bishop's blessing, the procession began moving. The Most Holy Bishop was in the middle of the procession in the accompaniment of the Most Reverend Walser.

At five o'clock the Most Holy *Oberhirte*<sup>12</sup> came into the town amidst the ringing of the bells and the firing of guns. After that there was a festive procession to the church from the school. And then there was the bishop's blessing.

On the next day, the bishop administered the sacrament to 51 people. After the Holy Mass and the sermon there was the festive dedication of the cemetery. In the sermon, the bishop mentioned his amazement at the quick flourishing of the parish. This blossoming showed how much unity, love and fear of God are the prerequisites for both bodily and spiritual happiness. He told the parish that the spirit of unity should be maintained and that they should stand by the priest in the future to improve the parish.

In the afternoon, at 1:30, the Most Holy Bishop went to St. Thomas. He was accompanied by the esteemed Fr. Hoog from Jefferson City and Fr. Walser from here. The two previously mentioned sodalities were the escort to St. Thomas where there was also great preparation. Also, in St. Thomas, the members of the Men's and Young Men's sodalities had ridden out to receive the most holy guest. The greeting was not far from Sugar Creek. The wagon of the bishop traveled in the middle of the procession, which was about a half-mile long. This looked like the triumphal procession of a prince, as the whole journey of the bishop seems to be, and showed the Catholics, once again, how they should honor and celebrate their *Oberhirte*.

X.

### **Volksfreund dated 22 August 1888, letter dated 10 August 1888**

*From St. Elizabeth, Miller Co.*

On Thursday, the 9th of this month, our parish celebrated the feast of St. Lawrence, the patron of the church and the parish. The celebration was appropriate to the importance and meaning of the festival. It was made even better by splendid weather, and there were a great number of people taking part in it: parishioners, as well as clerics and the members of neighboring parishes. The priests for the festival were: Fr. Chas. Meyer from Mary's Home, Fr. Bremerich from St. Thomas, Fr. Kellersmann from Koeltztown, Fr. F. A. Diepenbrock from Westphalia, Fr. Joseph Pope from Rich Fountain and Fr. A. B. Kuennen from Vienna. These men were accompanied by Mr. Mathias Hausner, the teacher in Koeltztown, and Geo. Lalumandiere, the teacher in Westphalia. They met here on Wednesday afternoon. Despite the long journey and bad roads they still maintained their good spirits. Soon after the first greeting and the welcome, there was lively conversation and congenial camaraderie. There were songs, games and jokes until late in the evening, all very entertaining.

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<sup>12</sup> High shepherd.



The church service the next day went in good order and was splendid. From seven to eight o'clock there were six Holy Masses, and these were well attended. At nine o'clock there was a Solemn High Mass. Rev. Diepenbrock was the celebrant, Rev. Kellersmann served as the deacon, and Kuennen as the subdeacon. Rev. Pope gave the German sermon and Rev. Kuennen the English sermon. Rev. Pope explained the meaning of the feast in good words and showed the people in attendance how one can and must imitate this great saint and his virtues. The esteemed priest also spoke about the amazing progress of the parish since his last visit. Rev. Pope had visited our parish approximately six years ago and was there when we installed and dedicated the St. Lawrence statue in our church. He praised the ambition of the parish to get a priest, church, and school and warned them to maintain the good spirit of unity and love. Rev. Kuennen gave a clear and moving sermon that expressed the joy of the feast and called for praise and thanks. After that there was Benediction and the closing "*Te Deum*."

The church was well decorated for its name's feast. It was hardly big enough to hold all the visitors.

The guest priests and teacher, etc. left at two o'clock in the afternoon after the joy of the feast was expressed by a glass of beer and cigars and also through jokes and songs. We are very thankful for the friendly visit, and we hope to see them again for *Laurentius* '89.

Some people even came from Tuscumbia, the county seat: Mr. Hauenstein and Mr. Johnson. St. Thomas was also well represented, but not all of the expected guests came, perhaps because people had guessed that the hotels and private houses would be filled with visitors.

X.

## Volksfreund dated 17 October 1888, letter dated 11 October 1888

*From St. Elizabeth, Miller Co.*

On the 16th of September a Democratic club called the "Cleveland and Thurman Club" was founded here. It presently has 125 members, but the number is steadily increasing. On Sunday the 6th of the month there was a meeting, which almost all of the members attended. At this event the new campaign flag was raised. This flag was put on an 80-foot-high flagpole. It proclaims from a great distance that the Democrats from our area have come together to support Cleveland and Thurman and will go through the election battle in united ranks. The club includes the Democrats of Jim Henry and Osage Townships of Miller County. This club was founded by Joseph Boeckmann, who is the president, Henry Drueding is the secretary, F. J. Wilde the treasurer and Joseph Dickneite vice-president.

On the 30th of the month there will be a Democratic and Republican mass meeting. The candidates for the different county positions will attend and give speeches.

The County Collector is probably going to be Mr. Herman Ortvals from here. He is well loved by everyone, a steadfast Democrat, worthy of the job, and completely competent.

On Sunday, the 7th of this month, the new organ at our church was played for the first time. This organ is from the firm of Pfeffer & Son in St. Louis. Mr. Pfeffer arrived to set up the organ in time for it to be played on the Feast of the Holy Rosary. It is an organ with a 16-foot tone, and a complete pedal. Its strength and the fullness of its sound would be better appreciated in a bigger church, so I think we will have to build a new church soon. The organ was inspected by the teacher, Drueding, and he said that it complied with the contract and that it was a good, solid piece of work. Mr. Drueding, who is known as an excellent organist, can now use his talents to make the church services better.

For a city man and a man of the world, it must probably seem strange to suddenly hear a celebratory and majestic organ song during a trip through a small, Catholic community. Whoever thinks that he has shut himself off from the world and believes that art can only be found in opera and concert houses in big cities would find out that the simple and Christian country man also has an understanding for art and will not withhold any of his means for the purpose of improving the church service. Yes, the parish of Charlestown has shown through its purchase of the organ that it's ready to make sacrifices. This was shown in a very touching way.

The church owned a very good "Melodian" one that many parishes might like to have for their church (it is still for sale); however, all were unified in the decision to buy the organ, as this was suggested by Rev. Walser. This shows how unified our parish is under the leadership of the esteemed Fr. Walser. The parish has almost 90 families, and in the short time-period of seven years has flourished. What it means for a parish to build a church, a school, and a rectory in such a short time, and also to support the church service, the priest and the teacher, and at the same time, to be without debt at the end of the year, can only be known by someone who was a member of it or has led something like it. The main accomplishment of Fr. Walser is probably the founding of the parochial school and several church sodalities. He clearly saw that the parochial school is the foundation of the parish and that the sodalities are the best means to maintain the unity and peace in the parish. The sodalities can correctly be called a worthy daughter of Westphalia.

Wednesday, the 26th of September, Mr. Joseph Wilde was surprised by his wife with a good son. I say surprised, because this time the heir appeared,

and this time he was called Heinrich, which means "Master of the House." Also, the stork left a young son for Mr. John Otto. Much good fortune with this!

The health report is not so good around here. Many children have gotten whooping cough, and many of them have already died from it. That is very distressing for the parents and the teacher. There are also many who have fever here.

X.