

URBANY FAMILY HISTORY

By Sister M. Dominica (Anna) Urbany – January 27, 1927

Including Rev. John Urbany and Sister Kunigunda (Margaret) Urbany

My father, Nicolaus Urbany, was of Italian descent. His ancestors emigrated to Germany, and later to the Grandduchy of Luxemburg. My mother, Mary Nickels, a very devout woman, was a native of Luxemburg. God blessed their union with eleven children. Two died in infancy. Father was an officer stationed at the boundary line between Luxemburg and Belgium. He was very devoted to his family, and whilst he was a Catholic, he could not be classed among the most fervent kind. Nevertheless, his chief principles were, scrupulous honesty and faithfulness to duty, regardless of consequences. He was a very stern man, and his word was law to members of the family. Mother, on the other hand, was very mild, and dearly loved by all the children. She assisted at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass daily, when possible.

Father, mother, and daughter of about thirteen years of age, became the prey of a terrible epidemic, the cholera, which raged in the vicinity of Hobscheid in the year 1866. They died on three successive days. Anie on Saturday, father on Sunday, and mother on Monday, thus leaving a home of eight children parentless. The youngest child, Sylvester, was then only one month old. God in his Divine Providence did not forsake His children. Several worthy relatives cared for the three youngest as they would for their own.

My oldest brothers, John and Gregory, the oldest in the family had already been placed in a college by our parents. John continued his studies for the priesthood and was ordained three years after the death of our parents. Shortly after his ordination, he bade farewell to his native land and sailed to America. He came to Iowa, to the diocese of Dubuque, which was then the only diocese in the state of Iowa. His parishes were Charles City, Festina, Lansing and Carroll. As his health was beginning to fail, he sought relief in a warmer climate. He went to New Braunfel, Texas, where he died after his arrival, at the age of thirty nine years.

Gregory, the second child in the family, and father's favorite son on the account of his extraordinary talents, was sent to college at the same time with his brother John. It had been father's ambition to make a great man of him. When Mexico was fighting for its independence, there was a call for volunteers and a promise of a great reward, should Maximilian, the Emperor of Mexico, win. This was great temptation for many an ambitious young man, and Gregory, very enthusiastic for the cause, sought his father's permission to join a band of other young students, who wished to fight for Mexico. The permission was firmly and decidedly refused. Gregory still insisted on going, and asked for his father's blessing before leaving. Reluctantly the father gave his consent but refused to bless his boy. The promise of the great reward was too enticing for the young man to heed his father's admonition. He left his parents' home, little thinking they never again would enjoy his mother's warm embrace and the look into the stern loving face of his father.

The brilliant hopes of the Mexican army were shattered through the death of Emperor Maximilian. The entire army was captured and made prisoners of war, but was finally released. It was during this time that our parents died. It was not until Gregory's return home that he received knowledge of this sad event. He afterwards followed a course of his own as conductor of trains in different European countries until finally we failed to hear from him.

The third of the family is Mary; she has always taken the place of a mother, particularly in behalf of the younger children, since the death of our parents. For their sake she struggled through many a hardship. After our brother's ordination, she followed him to America to be his housekeeper at Festina. She remained with him until his death. At present writing, she is at St. Francis Home for the Aged, in Dubuque, Iowa, where she intends to spend the remainder of her days.

The fourth in family is Theodore. Though but a mere boy at the death of our parents, he had been placed at a baker's school to learn the trade in which he became very proficient. When the Franco-Prussian War broke out, he enlists in favor of France. After the war he remained with the French army for several years. His troops were sent to Africa to protect the French possessions against invasions by the Arabs. His experiences with that tribe in the Sahara Desert are very thrilling. After his dismissal from the army, he returned home. He was married and had two children. Both died in

infancy. After the death of his wife he came to America, at the request of our sister, Mary, who always showed a most affectionate heart toward all members of the family, trying to help them along as well as she was able. He lived in Oconto, Wisconsin and died on August 9, 1926.

The next in age is Barbara. After the death of our parents, she was sent to Paris to make her home with one of father's sisters. After some years she was married to a Frenchman, by the name of Tinsonnier. She also died on December 9, 1926. Her husband and her children, with the exception of one daughter, Helene, have preceded her in death.

Next came my sister Margaret. She was but eight years old when our parents died. She was cared for by one of my mother's sisters until the age of eighteen when she was called by our Reverend brother to make her home with him. She remained with him until her entrance into the convent in 1877. She was known in religious life as Sister Kunigunda. She passed to her eternal reward on May 21, 1926.

The next in the family is myself. My personal history will give you details.

Now comes my baby brother, Sylvester. Though but a baby of one month at the death of our parents, he grew to manhood. At the age of twelve he also was summoned by our Reverend brother to come to America. He remained with him until his sojourn to Texas. Sylvester is married and lives in Carroll, Iowa.

One by one the members of our family have dropped out of their ranks, until at the present time there are but three left. It will not be long, and these also will have answered the Father's call, as we hope, to enter life eternal, there to meet those who have gone before us, and where there will be no parting.

Sister M. Dominca – Personal History

I am the tenth child of Nickolaus Urbany and Maria Nickels. I was born on October 30, 1863, and was baptized the following day. My sponsors were Gregory Urbany, my second oldest brother, and Anna Elsen, a cousin of mine. I was named Anna after my Godmother. When I was about two and one half years old, I lost both parents by an epidemic. My Godmother, Anna Elsen, then adopted me. I received the best of care, and was sent to school at the early age of five.

My oldest brother, John, came to America shortly after his ordination. He was first stationed at Charles City, and then at Festina, Iowa. It was here he called for my oldest sister Mary to come to this country to be his housekeeper. I, being the youngest of the family, then seven years of age, came with her as a companion in 1870.

At the opening of the new school year, I was sent to school, which was conducted by secular teachers the first few years. In 1875, Our Sisters were called to Festina. It was only then that I began to make progress. In 1877, Mother Antonia, and Sister Xaveria, now both of blessed memory, visited the Sisters in Festina. Being told, that I intended to enter some convent, she took me with her without any previous preparation. I entered the convent on June 1, 1877.

Sister M Dominica Urbany

1863-1936

Anna Urbany, our Sister M. Dominica was the tenth of the eleven children born to Nicolaus Urbany and Maria Urbany, nee Nickels in Hobscheid, Luxemburg. She was born on October 30, 1863. When she was about two years old she lost both parents who fell a victim to the cholera than prevalent in Europe. She was adopted by her good godmother until she was seven years old when, at the invitation of her Reverend brother John, she came to America with her older sister Mary. Father Urbany was then stationed at Festina. Anna went to school there and was then acquainted with our Sisters who then conducted the school at Festina. At the age of fourteen she was admitted as a postulant and not long after, being appointed was sent to do class work in the grades. This she continued for twenty-five years until the opening of our first Domestic Science School at Sparta in 1904 of which she took charge. Later, she was sent to St. Angela's Carroll, Iowa, and finally, in 1928 to China where she labored until her death, October 9, 1906.

Sister M. Dominica had been suffering for years from cancer of the liver and of the stomach and was well prepared to meet her God, being fully resigned to His holy will and offering herself repeatedly for His honor and glory and the salvation of souls.

She was buried in China.

May she rest in peace enjoy the reward for the many sacrifices she made in laying the first of our foundations in a pagan land where she was at first assisted by five and later by eleven Sisters.

R.I.P

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