

My grandfather William Tekippe said he has supported the Sisters since he was six months old. He was born toward the end of 1874, and the Franciscan Sisters came to Festina to take over the parish school in 1875. Brother Bernard (Carl) Gerleman from Festina, Iowa, in 1869 donated the first five lots in La Crosse on which St. Rose Convent was built. This story is told in A CHAPTER OF FRANCISCAN HISTORY, the centennial history of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, by Sister Mileta Ludwig, p. 159. The attached sheets are copies of pages from RIGHT-HAND GLOVE UPLIFTED, a biography of Bishop Michael Heiss, first bishop of La Crosse, by the same author, a few years later. Brother Bernard served as his houseman, gardener and companion during his tenure as bishop and archbishop. In the Franciscan history book I have marked pages where Festina is mentioned; also Brother Bernard Gerleman, Sister Cunigunda Urbany and the founding of the Odanah Indian School in 1883, and Sister Dominica Urbany and the founding of the FSPA school in China in 1928; also mention of Sister Thaddea Hageman who was an early teacher in Odanah, Sister Letitia Hanken and Sister Stella Smith, from Festina, who served in China.

From Sister Lucina Gerleman I learned that after the archbishop's death, Brother Bernard lived in a little house that stood on the corner across from St. Rose, where St. Wenceslaus Church was later constructed. He knit caps and mittens for the orphans at St. Michael's Home. When his health was failing, the Sisters cared for their benefactor by providing a room at St. Francis Hospital. He is buried in the Catholic cemetery on Losey, a short distance northeast of the earliest graves of FSPA in La Crosse.

The connection to the Paul & Seraphia Timp Tekippe family is that Brother Bernard Gerleman was an uncle to my great-grandmother, Catherine Gerleman Timp. Since I was the first Timp grandchild of Theodore & Ida Holthaus Timp, there was a four-generation snapshot taken soon after I was born, which I have.

Sister Patricia Tekippe, FSPA
All Saints Day, 2019

Yesterday I received from the St. Rose Archives obituaries and other records for three of the first FSPA from Festina: Sisters Edmunda Gerleman(niece of Brother Bernard), Cunigunda Urbany and Dominica Urbany. Sister Cunigunda(Margaret or Maggie) is not listed as entering from Festina because she was housekeeper for her older brother, Fr. John Urbany, who had been transferred from Festina to Lansing during the summer of 1877, and she went with him. Some years earlier he had called her from Germany, and she brought along a sister who was four years younger, Anna(Annie). Annie, 13, had talked about joining some group of Sisters, so when Mother Antonia visited Festina she took her along to La Crosse with them at the end of the school year. Her entrance date was June 1. Maggie entered in December of the same year. I learned these things from reading the papers. Even in just these few papers there is some discrepancy of dates, for example, in when the girls came to the United States.

As to the variant spellings of the names: I suppose one was common in German, the other in English.

I plan to print out the top part of this page to accompany the materials I will send. Thursday I expect company from Fort Atkinson, and hope to send these items back with them. Will let you know the plan!