Natural History
of
Collegeville, Minn

1934

-(LAB)ORA-

This Modest Labor of Love

for St. John's

is most respectfully inscribed to

THE RIGHT REVEREND D. ALCUIN DEUTSCH O.S.B.

FIFTH ABBOT OF ST. JOHN'S

BY

D. ALEXIUS HOFFMANN,
O.S.B.

Contents:

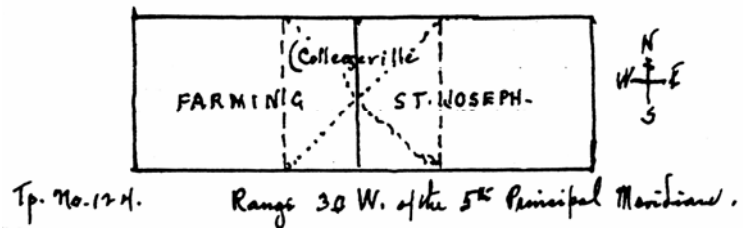
Natural History of Collegeville - Minn

(originally written in 1926 finished 1934)

Perhaps you will surmise that this treatise was inspired by the Natural History of Selkirk - well it was. Some years ago I suggested to some of our scientific gentlemen that each contribute something in his line - botany, geology, hydrography, etc of the Township of Collegeville. Nothing was done. The professor of entomology collected a great number of bugs, moths, butterflies and such other little creatures of the insect tribe. The early botanical collection by Fr. Urban Fischer (who left us in 1886 and joined the Mount Angel community) was forgotten: the museum was in a measure enriched by a number of stuffed animals from gophers to an American buffalo; also by many interesting minerals, **ore, petrifactions**, kinds of wood, shells, coral formations; Indian weapons, pipes, charms, ornaments; Alaskan curios (from Mr. J.A. **Aretander**), stuffed pigeons (from Mr. Blum of Mpls), some gifts of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington D.C. but there was not much collaboration, and so my dream of a natural history on a larger scale remained a dream. Then the spirit came upon me to take a hand at it, at the risk of incurring criticism. If the treatise is so poor that it is actually a caricature, bury it. It will not be very scientific in terminology, I dare so, for I have very little science in my head. Still it will represent what I have seen and have tried to name and describe. Since 1875 I have been living in this township and studied it from various points of view.

Geography

The Township of Collegeville in Stearns County Minnesota, lies about 45º 30' N. lat and about 94º 18' long west of Greenwich, England. Reference to a map in the Historical Atlas of Minnesota, 1874 by A.T. Andreas (whoever that may have been) shows no Collegeville Tp. That map - of Stearns County - has the 2 townships of St. Joseph and Farming contiguous one to the other, thus:



At this time the townships of St. Joseph and Farming had each 54 sections (each 640 acres). Then in 1880 the 18 western sections of St. Joseph Tp and the 18 eastern sections of Farming were welded together to form a normal Tp. of 36 sections and this new unit was called Collegeville, a name selected by Abbot Alexius Edelbrock of St. John's Abbey. It was not a new name, as there is a Collegeville in Pennsylvania and another in Indiana and possibly elsewhere. The name appears in our books as early as 1877. It is one of the most hilly Townships in the county, originally covered with woods, lakes, and timber. When the Abbey of St. Louis on the Lake was build in 1866 on the north shore of our lake there was no railway line in Stearns County, though one was in course of construction from St. Cloud out to St. Joseph; a stage road out to Breckenridge -(Over Sauk Centre) and Fort Abercrombis (near Wahpeton, N.D.), passed within a mile of the abbey and is still part of the modern highway (since 1926). The St. Paul and Pacific RR

was built through Stearns County in 1872, but it did not cut through what is now this Tp of Collegeville (so that Collegeville station is not in Collegeville Tp!); it passed out of St. Joseph and through section 32 of St. Wendel Tp, making, a few miles above that point the sharpest curve in the whole line, it is said. Look at a railroad map. In section 32 of St. Wendel, Collegeville RR station was opened in 1879, although there was as yet not Collegeville.

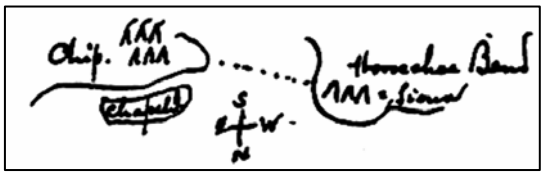
Collegeville Tp is bounded on the east by St. Joseph Tp., on the west by Farming Tp., on the north by Avon Tp, and on the south by Wakefield Tp. It was settled by two white families in 1858 (or 1856 some say). The influx of immigrants in 1880, when the Tp was duly organized, was due to the efforts of Abbot Alexius Edelbrock, Wendelin Merz (a shrewd speculator) and some Slovenian priests, chiefly Rev. **Jos Bick** and Ignatius Tomazin. Our township begins a little south of the railroad track (G.N.R.R.). The station (Collegeville) is [is] ten miles from St. Cloud, 75 m. from Minneapolis, and 85 m. from St. Paul.

St. John's Abbey and University are situated in section 1 of Collegeville Township on the north shore of (what was) a beautiful lake. Previous to 1866 the community had lived on a farm in section 31 of St. Wendel Tp. (1864-66) and previous to that (1856-1864) two miles below the city of St. Cloud. The "Order of St. Benedict" owned sections 31 in St. Wendel Tp; also section 1 (one) and the north half of section 2 in Collegeville Tp. (or rather in St. Joseph Tp.); also section 6 and about 1/2 of section 7 in what is now St. Joseph Tp. This may look like a baronial estate, but it is, for the greater part, poor soil, covered with small lakes or ponds, marshes and timber that is used for fuel. About 1880 and the years following, when the Germans and Austrians ("**Krimmer**") came in, they paid $4.00 an acre for RR lands, and the speculators did not mean to lose either. "Our community," or better, members of it, acquired this property by "claiming" under the Federal Pre-**emption** laws, partly by means of Land Warrants issued to soldiers after the Mexican War (1846-47). Soldiers (ex-soldiers) holding such warrants did not care to have land and consequently sold their warrants. These were in the 50's and 60's of the last century and Abbot B. Wimmer purchased a number of them, giving them to various members of our early community who filed for lands and paid for them with these warrants. The charter granted [by] the Territorial Legislature in March 1857 conferred exemption from taxes, and the exemption stands to this day (A.D. 1926). Some parts of the land above described have been sold, but we still hold about 2,000 acres, all in use one way or another, wood for fuel and building materials, the lake for water - pasturage - cemetery - fields and garden, and grounds for the institution.

Ordinary "dirt roads" connect the institution with the outside world in several directions: 1) north eastward, a road running out to Collegeville station, or St. Joseph, 2) northwestward to Avon, meeting the highway about a mile from the Abbey and 3) a road out to Cold Spring. In the present year (1926), the highway between St. Joseph and Avon is being paved with cement, and our road to the station will be regulated and improved with State aid. So much for the geography of Collegeville. I shall jot down what I know of its history.

History

To begin with, there was no written or painted history of Collegeville and environs before the creation of Stearns County in 1853. If the old French explorers and traders of earlier centuries came through here, they left no trace of there presence anywhere. Before 1853, the Winnebago Indians, who had been brought up to Minnesota in 1849 and lived on a reservation at or near Long Prairie in Todd County, had used that country north of the (real) Watab river for hunting grounds, and I have been told that they sometimes roved beyond that river southward and carelessly set fire to the woods, perhaps to spite the earliest settlers. However, the Chippewa (Ojibwe Ojibway) Indians had been here before the Winnebagoes, and there was occasional warfare between the two tribes. Neither the Winnebagoes nor the Chippewas left any very remarkable traces in Stearns Co., whatever may be said about the country farther to the north. (See Browers' works). A few years ago (1922), an old Chippewa Indian (John Smith) died at Bemidji at the age of 127 years. He was a Catholic and died as such. On occasion of a visit to St. John's in 1922, I think, he told our people here that he remembered hearing of the war of 1812 with Great Britain, also that he was a witness of a battle (or shooting match!) between Chippewa and Sioux, encamped respectively on a point south of the Chapel Island and on the opposite shore of the lake. The year is not stated. I do not vouch for the truth of his statement; still it is quite plausible. I have it from Rev. David Yuenger of our community.



When the Benedictines came to Minnesota (1856), some Winnebagoes were still in the State, and Chippewas lived scattered in several bands in the northern part e.g. near Brainerd, at Red Lake, Fond du Lac, etc. After the transfer of the Winnebagoes to a new reservation in Blue Earth Co. - near Mankato - between 1854 and 1857, and the establishment of White Earth Reservation [in] 1867, we saw very few Indians around here. At long intervals they would come down in small groups, with permission from the Indian agent, I presume, to hunt and to beg, but they were not to "park" indefinitely anywhere outside their reservation.

Before passing to more recent history, I am going to insert here what may be considered some of the earliest information about our part of the world i.e. about the northern part of the U.S. then still in the making. I translate from the Latin of a pig-skin covered Geographia . . . by (Rev) **Henrius Nidendorff S.J**. printed at Wurzburg in Bavaria 1739 and now in our library.

"PENTILIMNIS," or the Region of the Five Lakes. This region was so named for five lakes; it is bounded on the north by SUD-WALLIA (South Wales!) and Hudson Bay; on the east by Canada; on the South by Florida (the country east of the Mississippi, a.); on the [west by] Louisiana. The two westernmost lakes pour their water down an immense cataract (the Niagara Falls, a) to the other three lakes, the common outlet (for all) being the St. Lawrence River. Around these lakes live several Indian tribes, the wildest of which are the Hisrona and the Hiroquis (Iroquois, a), who have, however, become more

gentle since they have come in contact with the Christian faith. (Then follow the names of stations (forts? posts?) in the Indian Country):-

Hirochi (Iroquois) or **Hioques**-numerous stations between Lake **Erie** - now Lake **Conti**- and Ontario - now Frontenac.
Hurons, on the shores of Lake Huron, now Lac d'Orleans.
Illinois, several stations on Lake Illinois, now Lake **Daufshin,** (Lake Michigan).
Kilishmea, at Lake **Conde** (L. Superior), where there is a French fort.
Miamis - several stations on Lake Illinois.
Missilima Makinoroson between Lake Conde and Lake Illinois. (Missilima **Makinoroson** = **Michili** Mackinak, belonging to Michigan. Lake Superior was also at one time called Lac Tracy, which is a French word. a). Thus wrote Nidendorff in 1739.

Accordingly we - or Stearns County - then belonged to "Louisiana" and in theory belonged to France and Spain until the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. There was never any organized form of white government up here until Minnesota was settled by white men. Our section of the country was, successively, a part of Louisiana, Iowa, and Wisconsin. Since 1849 we are in Minnesota; since 1855 in Stearns County, and since 1880 in Collegeville.

Very little can be said about the early settlement of our township. We are told, in the first printed account, the "History of the Upper Mississippi Valley" (1881), that the earliest settlers were George Scherer and Joseph Jonas, both farmers, who settled in section 26 about 1858. Their names may still be seen in the Plat Book published in 1896. Other early settlers were Peter Eich, Paul Obermiller, and Frank Rass. Mr. Eich settled on the rising ground west of our "Watab" (Stump Lake) in 1866 and was employed as a carpenter in the building of the old stone house here. Obermiller had a farm on the other side of the Watab near the hamlet known as Flynnville. Since 1866 many other farmers came in, still one can scarcely see one house from the other. The farmers live scattered throughout the township; Flynnville is not a recognized village, but only a group of houses built by the Abbey for its employees - I should say, any married employees. Some houses have disappeared. For instance in the 80's of last century one Thomas **Sytlow,** a **Palunder**, lived with his wife in a log cabin on the crest of a hill at the southern **extremity** of the "Watab" near our fired brickyard. After he and his wife were dead, the house was destroyed (It was on our property). Straight across from our fish hatchery lived our **Koroll** with a large family. He was a farmer and, on the side, a tailor who patched clothes for us students. He was subsequently killed by a falling tree and his children were placed in an orphanage. At the point where the road turns up the hill on the other side of the Watab lived a Mr. Boer, wife and son, who made some trouble for us and moved away. Just south of our cemetery was a cottage built by the Abbey and inhabited successively by Mr. and Mrs. Hofbauer, the parents of our Prior Norbert H; J Schwalbenberg and family (he was one of our carpenters); Theodore Dillenburg, Jos. Pohl and wife, and perhaps one or two other parties. It stood between the new parochial school and the cemetery; no longer in existence. At the Watab dam were our two mills - a sawmill and a grist mill; the mill wheel and mill race was between the two. Both burnt down in 1882, December, and on the hill near by were two log huts that served as

smithshop and carpenter shop. Bro. Kilian used to shoe horses and oxen there. These buildings have all disappeared and the mills were never rebuilt.

The earliest map in which the 36 sections making up Collegeville Tp appear (though at the time still included in St. Joseph and Farming Tps) may be found in A.T. Andreas' Illustrated Historical Atlas of Minnesota 1874, pp. 154-155, in a map of Stearns County, compiled and drawn by O.E. Garrison, St. Cloud. The only items marked in this map are St. John's College on the north shore of "St. Louis Lake," Cedar (Big Fish) Lake and the South Fork of the Watab River. The Plat Book of 1896 (by C.M. Foste) is non-instructive. I shall take the trouble to transcribe the owners of the 36 sections as recorded in that book. It may not be necessary to state that not all the persons mentioned were actually resident - they were the owners:

Section 1. Order of St. Benedict, 465 acres;

Section 2. Margaret Rass; Peter Eich; Mat. Reisinger, Franziska Reh; Wm. Múgg; V. Stanek (Later went to Washington and in 1922 was gardener for St. Martin's Abbey at Lacey: I met him there).

Section 3. H.C. Waite; N.P. Clarke (both residents of St. Cloud); Anton Heckel; Great Northern R.R.

Section 4. John Schluster; "Order of St. Benedict" (SE1/4 or 160 acres); Carolina Merz (wife of Engelbert Merz, the land agent); D & B Johnson Mfg Co.; I.G. Johnson.

Section 5. Horace E. Thompson (E 1/2) and the G.N.R.R. (that was 'railroad land').

Section 6. J. Dickinson & Co.; F. Schúmann; Ephram Müller, J.P. Keppers; J.A. Carne; F. McManus;

Section 7. Anna Holm; E. Heland; Nic. Faendel; E. Schúmann; G.N.R.R.; Chas. Wolf; J.H. Hansen;

Section 8. Robert Kaller (Kalla?); Mary L. Searle; C. L. Atwood (St. Cloud); J.H. Hansen;

Section 9. H.C. Waite; J. Eder; Margaret Rass; Chas Raspasek; G.N.R.R.;

Section 10. H.C. Waite and Caroline Merz; Jos. Hackner; Mat. Berg; G. Suring;

Section 11. Order of St. Benedict (120 acres); John Janker, (our blacksmith, later moved to West Union); Wm. Popple; Jos. Koler; N.J. Klein; Aug. **Buvois;**

Section 12. Order of St. Benedict (upper half section - 320 acres - our Lake); Anna Pueringer; Xavier Strixner; Wm. Brinkmann;

Section 13. M. Pueringer; H. Brinkmann; Louis Hartig; John Hovash; Agnes Mertes; M. Hovash; F. Falkner; John Dullinger; Mich. Dullinger;

Section 14. Horace E. Thompson; Order of St. Benedict (80 acres); Chs. Kremers; Jacob Mathy;

Section 15. Chs. Kremers; Henry Aretz; Frank Kremers; G.N.R.R; John Eisenschank.

Section 16. School Land (State); T.F. Koch;

Section 17. Henrietta Krenz; Frank, William, and Ernest Krenz; J. Carne; Theo. Beiner (Bruener).

Section 18. Fritz Schomer; Sander Swensen; J. DeWenter;

Section 19. G.N.R.R; J. DeWenter; M. & P. Mauren; M. Kommers; A. Thyen; B. and H. Lambeck;

Section 20. C. H. Page; John Kost; S.V.R. Hayes; L. Thelen; F.P. Nierenhausen; B. Kost;

Section 21. G.N.R.R. Co; S. Guggenberger;

Section 22. John Fuchs; Jos. Hoppe; J.M. Schreifels; M. Witzman; A. Oster; S. Thelen; M. & P. Maurin; W. Wischkle; G.H. Graves;

Section 23. G.N.R.R; P. Barthel; And. Stockinger; Christian Wittmer;

Section 24. Jos. Dullinger; A.W. Kraemer; Franz Falkner; Benedict Kost; B.A. Terway; A. Sotebier (?); Andrew Stockinger;

Section 25. G.N.R.R; Mich. Merhen; John Wagner; John Theisen; Jos. Sauer; T. Jacobs; P. Tauban;

Section 26. M. Schmidt; J.M. Schreifels; George Scherer; John Hoewing; B. Scherer; Joseph Jonas;

Section 27. Andrew Klein; Barbara Klein; P. Meier; Eva Weyland; George Klein; B.N.R.R. Co; Nic. Keller;

Section 28. School Land; John Weyland; Clarke & McClure; Peter Kollner; Go. Klein; F. Mack; Scottish American Mortgage Co;

Section 29. G.N.R.R. Co.; Nic. Keller; P. Weyland;

Section 30. M. and P. Maurin; M. Schromel; Jos. Scheibel; B. Thome; Minnesota Loan and Trust Co; G. Schlauen; H. Korte; W. Wieber; B.H. Bauning;

Section 31. M. Klein; Marg. Nierenhausen; K. Drontle; G.N.R.R. Co.; Geo. Guettner; Bankratz Voelk; John Scherer; J.A. Mossbrugger.

Section 32. George Linder; J. Oster; John Kraus; M. & P. Maurin; Theresa Linder; Mich. Schrammel.

Section 33. Geo. Klein; M. & P. Maurin; J. Weyland; John Scherer; George Klein; Geo. Dieterich; G.N.R.R. Co;

Section 34. M. & P. Maurin; Theodore Blum; John Klocker; Scot. Amer. Mortgage Co;

Section 35. G.N.R.R; John Schmidt; Jacob Blum; Maria Louis; J. Kinzer; Mic. Feien; P. Abel; Mat. Schmidt; Jos. Klocker; J.W. Metzgroth;

Section 36. Joseph Jonas; John Neis; Cath. Hoffmann (?); Blazius Kuzera; M. Miller; Albert Czerwinski; Geo. Leiter; A. Winkel; N. Hansen Jr.; August Winkel; School Land (Note: At that time, according the same Plat Book, the Order of St. Benedict also owned in Section 6 (563 acres) and ¾ of Section 7 (340 acres) in St. Joseph Tp.; also Section 31(636 acres) in St. Wendel Tp; 160 acres in Section 24, and 240 acres in Section 36 of Avon Tp.- and smaller parcels elsewhere. Altogether, in the four contiguous townships the OSB owned 3084 acres).

The establishment of a parish in Collegeville Tp dates from late in the year 1875, when Abbot Alexius Edelbrock commissioned the then Prior of the Abbey – very Rev. Clement Staub, OSB, to form a congregation of the few farmers who came to our church (the old frame chapel that stood south of the main group) for Sunday services. The first meetings looking towards organizations took place in December, 1875, but it was not until January 1, 1876 – almost ten years after the Fathers had settled on the present location – that Father Clement took actual charge. The congregation is known by the same name as the Abbey – St. John the Baptist. No other denomination has hitherto had a chapel or meeting house in this Township. The first public or district school was built in 1881 and stood on the other side of the Watab, near our two mills. It was blown down by the cyclone of June 27, 1894 and was never rebuilt, at least not in the same place. I think its successor was the one that stood near **Zwillings**, south of our cemetery. There were, and are, also 3 other district schools in the township (See Hist. Of Stearns Co. 1915). Since fall, 1925, the congregation has a fine parochial school (of brick) south of the cemetery. It is taught by Franciscan Sisters. As to industries – farming is the only one; no trades; no stores – nothing. For a time there was a goat farm somewhere (on the hill to the west); one man was a cooper (Brinkman); another made pottery – but we have nothing of it today (Historical Sources: History of the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1881, which also contains a special article on "The Benedictines," inspired if not written by Abbot A.

Edelbrock – a regular newspaper blast; History of Stearns County (2 vols) by W. B. Mitchell, 1915, to which I contributed the history of the Catholic Church in Stearns County, the History of St. John's Abbey and University, and a brief sketch of Collegeville (the latter in Vol. II, pp 1265-66).

Geology

Begging everybody's pardon, I essay to speak of the geology of our township. From the fact that no one has ever displayed much interest in the study of local geology, I gather that not much is to be said. The hilly character of the surface shows evidence that it marks the end of the Glacial Period here, when the movement of the ice carrying heaps of soil before it ceased pushing and the soil was gradually covered with vegetation, while water remained in the depressions to form lakes and ponds. There is no prairie large or small in Collegeville. A great prairie extends from St. Cloud to St. Joseph, and St. Joseph's Prairie (as St. Jos. used to be called before 1860) is next to Jacob's Prairie and beyond Cold Spring was Richmond's Prairie, etc. It is all hill and dale, lakes, marshes, with timber or shrubbery covering the soil except where the trees have been cut down or the soil plowed. The surface of the soil is sandy, below the sand is gravel and in some places clay. Although there are outcroppings of granite in St. Joseph Tp., there are none in Collegeville Tp., nothing but stray boulders, some of which have been found on the top of the highest hills in Section 1. Small boulders – vulg. "niggerheads," are so plentiful that all the houses and fence might be built with them if they were not so hard to handle. No fossil remains of any kind have been found here – no petrifactions. The soil is not of the best quality for farming purposes; that of the prairies above mentioned is much better. No mineral or metallic ore has been discovered. So much for our "geology".

Mineralogy

Here again I will be far from "scientific." I have mentioned granite and "niggerheads." Other varieties such as are usually found in glacial drift might be enumerated – some of the boulders are of red, some of blue granite. Quartz, flint, mica, carnelian, agate are quite common. In several parts of the Tp., e.g. in Section 1, excellent sand pits have been worked; also clay beds; from the latter all the brick used in constructing the main group of buildings, except the 110 ft. extension with the Kitchen, etc, were built. The bricks are red in color and might be better looking if the burning of the bricks had been in better hands. Still they are durable and do not seem to weaken under the assaults of wind or weather. The first brickyard used by the Abbey was at the southern extremity of the Watab, in the sole of the valley behind the parochial school – that was in 1867 when the south wing, abutting the old stone house one the north, was built. In 1872 it was transferred to the west bank of the Watab, just opposite the old Porkopolis (pig pen); then to the hollow at the foot of "Bunker Hill" and finally to the present site of the tennis courts. Most of the clay for the college buildings, down to 1886, was taken from the north shore of Boniface Bay.

It was one of our amusements – Arcadian you will say – 60 years ago to "hunt" for carnelians along the lake shore. Some were very beautiful. We washed them, took them

home with us, placed them in water and from time [to time] took them out to admire the striping – what you call those stripes in "science?" In size they ranged from pebbles the size of a pea to stones the size of a small fist. Sorry to say we had no way of polishing them (Fr. Fidelis Lucking polished a few by waterpower at the old mill race about 1894). No one cares for them today. I hunted for carnelians as late as 1915 in New Munich, but found very few. It was my ambition as a cleric and priest to have a carnelian cross on my table and collected stones for that purpose. The cross was never made or even attempted by me. For many years I accumulated such stones, but eventually gave them to others. The museum did not care for them.

Hydrography

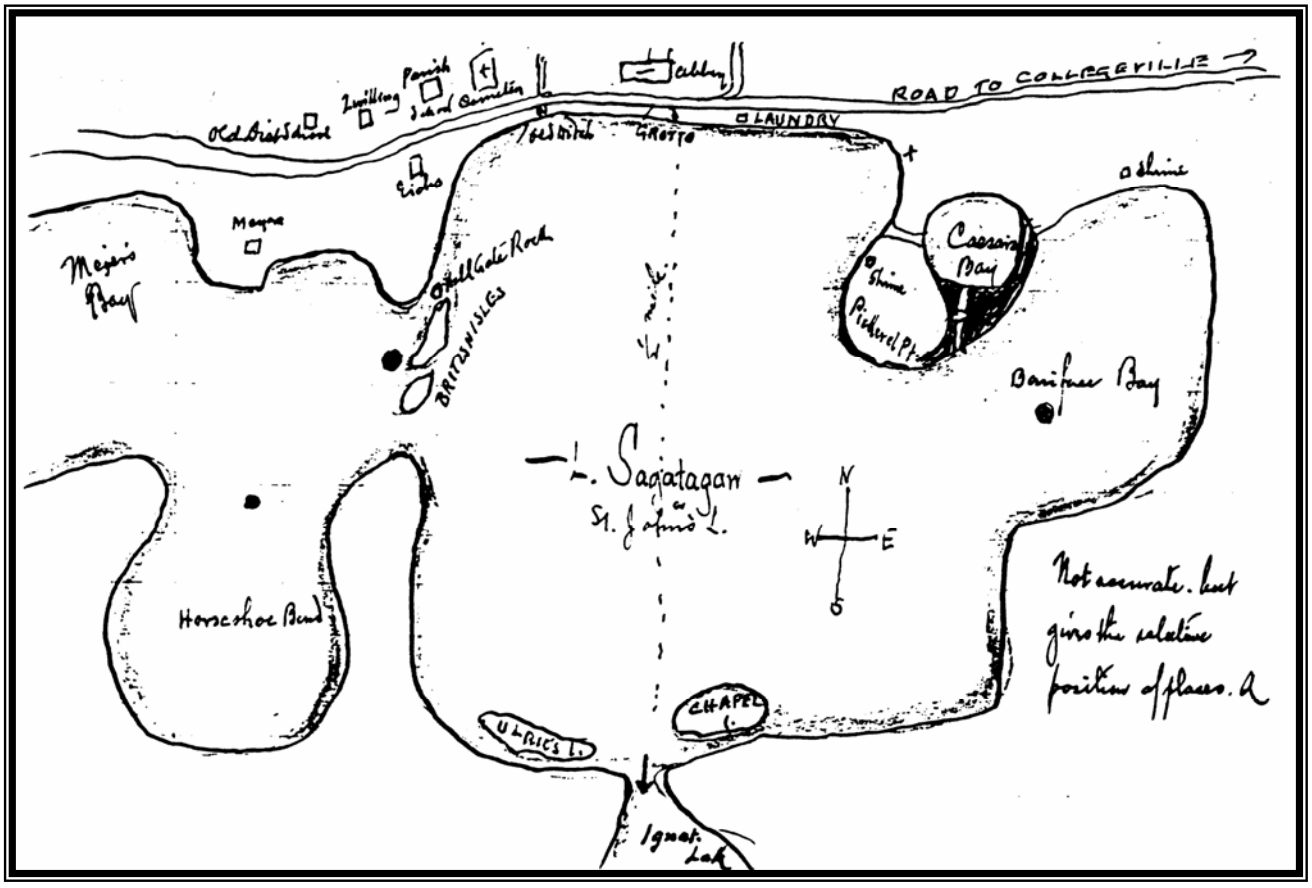
Our state is famed for its thousands of lakes. Not counting Lake Superior, we have a very large number, and some are so large that they even appear on maps of Minnesota. Look at the map for Red Lake, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, Detroit Lakes and then go and see whether we have no reason to be proud of them, even if they are only water. To speak the truth, many of them have disappeared in the last 50 years. In Collegeville Tp., the largest one is our lake, I believe. It was by the witness of early maps first called St. Louis (or Lewis) Lake, later, St. John's Lake, and recently – since 1896 – in consequence of attention I drew to it by reviving its old Indian name ("Vision of the Island" poem in the S.J. Record for June 1896), which is Sagatagan – accented on the tag, and all the a's as in all. This was, in 1896, said to have had an area of 360 acres. The map of 1874 (in the Atlas of Andreas**)** shows only St. Louis Lake and Cedar Lake – now Big Fish Lake. Big Watab Lake is indicated but not named there.

Within the 36 sections of our Tp, I find the following in the Plat Book of 1896:

Section 1. Lake St. Louis; about half of it is in section 12 (which is just below section 1); Stump Lake (which is the "beautiful" Watab – which is really only the North Fork of the Watab), an artificial lake created by the building of a dam across the Watab close to the northern line of section 1 in 1868, in consequence of which the water rose and formed the Lake. When the surface was frozen, the trees standing in it were cut down and the stumps disfigured the **[word]** for many years to come. They are still there, I suppose, but submerged.

Section 3. Winkel Lake (never saw it) and 3 smaller ones.
Section 4. 3 ponds not named.
Section 5. **Kreichle** Lake (not known to me), about 80 acres.
Section 7. Pitt's Lake (not known to me).
Section 8. Thomas Lake (not known to me).
Section 9. Schuman Lake (not known to me); Middle Lake (not known to me).
Section 11. Long Lake (but not named) is it Pflugers L?; empties into Watab.
Section 12. Ignatius Lake (not named), south of our Lake and connected with it.
Section 13. Island Lake
Section 16. Big Watab Lake, about as large as ours.

Section 18. A pond about 40 acres in area in the SE ¼.
Section 22. Little Watab Lake.
Section 26. Nameless Lake, about 40 acres.
Section 28. Big Fish Lake, which lies in part of sections 28, 29, 32, and 33.
Section 29. Long Lake.
Section 30. Sand Lake.
Section 31. Med (?) Lake; Eagle Lake.
Section 34. Nameless Lake of 40 acres.
Section 36. Is the only one that has no lake or pond marked in it. In all about 60 lakes or ponds are marked in the map. That was 30 (now almost 40) years [ago]. Some of the smaller ones have dried up, owing to draining, and deforesting. Our own has fallen 4 feet since 1916 (and considerably since). At that time the water reached almost to the lowest step of the ornamental landing in front of the cemetery. Boniface Bay is drying up, Meyer's Bay no longer has any water in it. It was formerly possible to enter Ignatius Lake (Bay) from ours in a boat, but that is no longer possible. Perhaps a map of our Lake and its bays – as it was as late as 1906 will be of interest.



Our Lake (Sagatagan) has no longer either a visible inlet or outlet, and seems to depend upon internal springs, rain, and snow for maintenance and increase. At one time previous to 1875 it had an outlet (artificial) on the north shore (See Map). A ditch was dug along the south line of our present vegetable garden to let down water into the Watab, but some seems to have objected (the State or County authorities?) and the ditch had to be closed. I still remember that sluice gate at the Lake end of the ditch (or "canal"). The low stage of the Lake renders it imperative that something be done to keep up the water supply. Suggestions have been made to tap Island Lake, but that may be a matter of difficulty and will have to be arranged with the farmers and others. Besides, Island Lake may be short lived too. Before 1875 Island Lake was tapped to supply the Watab. I saw the ditch. Why it was closed I cannot say. That Lake is a shallow sheet of water, having no inlet and (at present) no outlet. It may cover about a quarter of a section (160 acres) and has a small island off the south shore. We used to think the Lake was even more beautiful than our own.

Before dismissing our Lake, I will add a few details. The name covering the whole lake was St. Louis L. or St. John's L., at present Sagatagan (unofficially). I am inclined to think that Sagatagan was a name for a group of lakes near which the Indians gathered punk or spunk. Hence Spunk Lakes at Avon. They were named for an old (minor) chief called Spunk and known to early settlers. In Indian his name was Sagatagan. Our lake plausibly forms part of the group. It had no name before our Fathers found it. They called it St. Louis L. in honor of King Louis (Ex-king since 1848), a benefactor of the American missions; the Abbey was St. Louis on the Lake also. The distance across the main body (see map) from the foot of the Lourdes grotto to Chapel Island is one half of a mile. The first chapel was a neat edifice of brick, adorned with scroll saw work by the late Rev. Vincent Schiffrer**,** OSB in 1873. It was taken down in 1903; mass had never been said in it. A new chapel, called Stella Maris, was built in 1915-16 of cement blocks by clerics under the direction of Frs. Lambert and Urban Weckwerth OSB. An altar was set up in it, but was removed and is now in the oratory for the seminarians. The Lourdes grotto (the grotto proper was begun in 1908) was finished in 1916 and the sloping part in which it stands is one of the finest things in our State. Setting out from the foot of the stairs that lead to the Grotto and going westward along the shore, you will see a neat little dressing house for our bathers, built by our clerics about 1924; Architect Fr. Angelo Zankl, OSB; a fine piece of work in which the native niggerheads (granite blocks) were used to good advantage. Farther along the same shore is the Seminarians' Park (not enclosed) with a few benches or seats and a flower bed. Farther on, and on the other side of the road is the cemetery four our dead and for the parishioners. The front, along the road is a handsome cement wall with a very ornamental gateway, dating from 1915. The trees in the cemetery and the tall hedge around the far side of it have always been in the care of the successive classes of novices since 1884 (as far as the trees are concerned). South of the cemetery is the parochial school of Collegeville, built with substantial aid from the monastery ($5,000), in 1925 and opened in November of that year. Farther on, and on the lake side of the road is a two story frame house originally built for Mr. J. Rupp and wife who had a little store in the first floor for a number of years. Now it is the

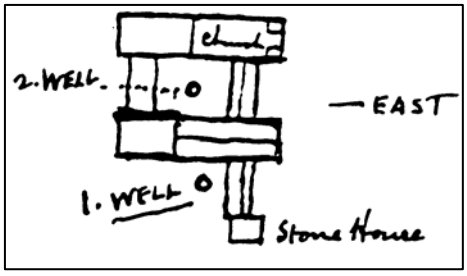
dwelling of the Eich daughters, who are employed as seamstresses for the institution. Next, but on the other side of the road, is the Zwilling home (belonging to the Abbey) – the abode of numerous families. The children are not all living, though the name might lead me to think so. Aside of that house was a small district school house, where we used to go to vote (In the early 80's we used to vote at the old mill on the Watab). Beyond that, and to the extremity of our lake there is no building of any kind. The southern end of the lake was formerly known as Meyer's Bay, since a Mr. Meyer and family lived in a log house there, surrounded by a small farm. His wife used to do some laundering for us down to 1878 when our steam laundry was inaugurated near the foot of the Lourdes grotto (that laundry has disappeared; a new one was built next to the power house. Only the drying house remains standing. Previous to 1878 all laundry was taken to the houses of farmers here and at St. Joseph and there treated to strenuous manipulations on "wash boards" (or in creeks?) with or without home made soap and super heated **sad** irons. Meyer's house is no longer to be seen. The son and heir –Sebastian (Bastl) M. settled in Avon Tp. And is still one of the pillars of Collegeville parish. The bight opposite Meyer's Bay was called Horseshoe Bay or Bend because of its shape. The entrance to Meyer's Bay is guarded by two (three) tiny islands dubbed British Isles (why?). Between these and the mainland behind the Eich home and picnic grounds was a narrow body at mouth of which was Hell Gate Rock. When the Lake was at its best, the rock was a foot below the water (I do not know whether it is still there). At the southern extremity of the Lake and not far from the Chapel Island was Ulrics Island – no longer an island today. Chapel Island, at first called Doctor's Island, for Rev. Dr. Aylward**,** a secular priest who taught here a few years before my time. It is no longer an island, corresponding to the definition of one. Boniface Bay was named for Abbot Boniface Wimmer. Pickerel Point is a modern name for the southern end of the peninsula (I don't know why it is called so – Name originated in the '90's in consequence of some good catches of pickerel). We had no name for it. At present the only feature of the peninsula is the little wayside shrine of our lady of the Lake (or of the Lilacs). The two cement bridges (one is made of "niggerheads" were built in 1915 (or 1914?). Caesar's Bay is dried up. The hill covered densely with several pine varieties was called Adrianople (though there is no ople or polis in the place), in memory of Reverend Adrian Schmitt OSB, who planted many of the trees last century (in the early '90's). He is now (1934) pastor of Waubun, Minn. At an earlier date – in the '70's – the hill was called Lethert's Island (though it was no island) for Rev. Ambrose Lethert OSB and his brother, Carl. A few years ago (1930?) a large crucifix (brought down from White Earth by Abbot Alcuin) was set up there among the trees. Along the north shore was a small pond, now dry. Near it stood the first laundry (see above) 1878-1913. Some years ago a subsidiary pumping station was built near the grotto. So much for our lake. A canal was dug by the scholastics in '93 or '94 from Caesar's to Boniface Bay.

Ignatius Lake, named for a Brother who made a claim there before 1860, cannot any longer be entered by boat, and not much is left of it. Formerly, by reason of its complete seclusion and attractive setting, I think these lines from Virgil's Aeneid (Bk I) where he describes the harbor in which Arneas found shelter, might have well described it:

Est in secessu locus . . . . insula portuno
Effiait objactu Loterum . . . turn silvia <u>scena</u> coruseis
Deauper momentiques atrum mensus imminet umbra.

There was also a small lake near the eastern line of section 36 in the Tp of Avon and on this side of the highway. It had no name (**Shuman's** Lake) and is now dry. Of the other lakes, little more can be said than that they are falling, and some have disappeared. Around the larger lakes in the SW part of the Tp. Are numerous summer cottages in which there was some frolicking during the Volstead era. I have already mentioned the Watab. Now that name property applies to the River formed by the union of the North and South forks of the Watab. The North Fork (<u>our</u> Watab) rises, or did rise, in Island Lake in sec. 13, widens into Long Lake and again into Stump Lake (Our Watab), then meanders lazily through sections 31 and 32 of St. Wendel Tp., and in sec. 4 of St. Joseph Tp joins the South Fork; thence moving on in a northeasterly direction till it tumbles into the Mississippi about 2 miles above Sauk Rapids and is finally absorbed by the Gulf of Mexico. The South Fork of the Watab rises in a pond marked Schumann's Lake in sec 9; then flows through Middle Lake, Big and Little Watab lake, leaves Collegeville Tp on the eastern border of the SE 1/4 of sec. 25, strolls northward to St. Joseph, but remains about a mile west of it, meets the North Fork in sec. 4 and glides on to the Mississippi, as above. Both Forks are more creeks; the "Watab" below the mill dam is no more than 8 or 10 feet wide and a foot in depth. A study of the map, that is, of the area between the two "forks," will show that it is well drained and lies higher than the surrounding country. Collegeville is about 1100 feet above sea level.

Besides the Lakes and Rivers above mentioned, there is no distinguished hydrographic feature in the Tp. There are, of course, numerous springs; many have run dry. The water supply of St. John's Abbey and University is partly lake and partly spring water. From the beginning in 1866, lake water was used for cooking and washing. We had a well with a "moss covered bucket" - two buckets in fact fastened to two ends of a chain about 30 feet west of the present south wing previous to 1885, when it was filled in. Its location is approximately indicated on the following sketch:



The second well was in the square, or quadrangle (see above) in the 90's of the XIX century. It too has been covered up. In 1898 a <u>hydraulic</u> <u>dam</u> was installed in the "Watab" River bottoms near the former fish hatchery under direction of Rev. Anselm Ortmann, OSB, now pastor of St. Joseph's church in Minneapolis. It supplied good table water for almost a quarter of a century when the springs gave out. A new well was then built about half way between the dam and the power house, an electric pump was set up

in it. In 1932 a drive well was begun, but no good results were obtained. There is a pump on each of the college campuses.

I almost forgot about our waterworks. For about 10 or 12 years beginning with 1866, the water for cooking and general kitchen use was hauled up in barrels, placed on a wagon that was drawn by 2 oxen, Bro. Maurus Feldhaus in charge. Day for day, in summer and winter, he would drive down to the lake to a low point near the cemetery. There he would dip up the water with a pail or bucket fastened to a long handle and pour it into the barrels. In winter it was necessary to break a hole in the ice. **Tantae moliseral Romanam condere gentam!**

This primitive procedure became a memory when the first water works were installed in 1876-77. The pump was in the laundry and the water was pumped up the hill into a small reservoir dug out and walled inside. It was - and may be is still - there along side of the **pretentious** water tower designed by Rev. Chrsyostom Schreiner (+1928) and drawn by me. It was built in summer 1890 when Rt. Rev. Bernard Locnikar was still Abbot Elect. Inside of the tower is a large steel tank. I don't know its capacity. The tower is quite a show piece. From that hill the water is pumped from the Lake, is led down to the buildings in pipes. In 1877 we had only a few faucets along the first floor; gradually the system was enlarged. The water was used for cooking, drinking, for the wash room (where we washed our faces in the morning. We had no indoor toilets!). That water supply would have amounted to little in case of a fire. But it should be remembered that the main group of buildings was still very small - only 4 units: the stone house, the first brick wing, the middle building and the north wing connected with the present church which dates from 1882. The only device on hand for fighting a fire was a "Babock Extinguisher" to be strapped upon the back. It did good service in the fire that damaged the Stone House in March 1877. Speaking of water, reminds me of drinking. Some of our enemies, **crew** priests in the diocese of St. Paul said that we used to have a brewery. We never did, and we never owned one elsewhere wholly or in part. We never brewed beer and never made wine. Only an old gardener used to make a cask of wine for himself and that cask remained dry when he passed away in 1898. Mass wine began to be made by **Proverator,** Fr. Raymond about 1929.

Information on rainfalls etc. will be found in the records of the Meteorological Observatory (or Station). This station was established in 1892 on the Fourth Centennial of the Discovery of America. The first meteorologist or "weather man" was Rev. Subprior Peter Engel - later Abbot. The first section was in the turret of the middle building; after the completion of the Science Hall, it was moved into the tower of that building and is still there.

Which reminds me of the Astronomical Observatory. The first observatory was located in a small cupola on top of the Reservoir. I forget which year. Some one told Rev. Peter that it was a poor place, as the floor was not even and steam from the water would rust the instruments. In consequence, Rev. Peter Engel had the present observatory built in 1894.

Flora

A State as far north as Minnesota might be supposed to be unfavorable to the development of a fascinating flora – yet even this corner of "God's Country" has its charms, modest though they be when compared with other countries. I can only speak of Minnesota in recent times, since the coming of the white man. It is not my aim to reach out farther than my personal knowledge toes – for I know nothing about Botany. Naturally, one would begin with the flowers that are commonly observed – and those will be wild flowers.

Most beautiful of all is the gorgeous Water Lily (*Castalia*?) which grows in our Lake. Its roots are deep in the mud, usually not far from shore; the stalk, which is about 3/8 of an inch in diameter, sometimes must grow to the length of 4 or 5 feet before it reaches the surface, where it unfolds its leaves, thick, heart shaped leaves some times a foot in diameter. The leaves almost cover the surface of bays and the shade they afford makes it a favored resort of the finny tribe on bright days. The lilies, pure white in color have several layers or tiers of thick, smooth leaves, scented and surrounding a golden heart. They are in full bloom towards the end of June – about St. John's day, and are from 4-7 in. in diameter. Their scent is sweet and heavy, almost overwhelming. You would find them – thousands of them – in the bays.

Then there is the yellow water lily – perhaps I should call it a pond lily, with leaves like those of the former, but yellow, fleshy, smaller and crimped as so to form a cup. The flowers are about 2 or 3 in. in diameter; the petals always turn inward even when the bloom is at its height, as if they were reluctant to expose to eager eyes the heart about which they cluster. These flowers are not popular and they have no attractive scent; they look plebian alongside their white sisters. I do not know what their scientific name is.

Next come the swamp lilies – also yellow – with short stems, small leaves and a heavy flower growing close to the ground. In the swamps were also a few smaller flowers, such as Trilliums, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Pitcher Plant. Along the shore of the lake grew the Iris, or Blue Flag, with sword-like leaves resembling those of the gladiola and a shapeless – I was going to say ragged – but wonderfully tinted flower, well deserving the name iris = rainbow, as almost all the colors of the rainbow may be found in it. I wonder shy it was not selected for our State flower. Perhaps because it is common elsewhere also – or because it is hard to draw or paint! The cup, which in general outline, is like that of a lily, looked as if it had been touched by the wind; it contained some liquid much sought for by bees and other insects. In wet places, such as marshes, we find the Lady's Slipper (*Cypripedium)*, and here I cannot forbear making a comment. Lady's Slipper, My Lady's Slipper was formerly Our Lady's Slipper; why was it named Cypripedium for

Venus Cypria? Is that the work of an atheist? Many flowers were named for Our Lady in "ye olden time" – marigold, for instance. It is surely a unique "flower," because of its shape, which reminds one of a baby's woollen shoe; the corolla is yellow, specked with brown. There are several varieties. It is said that the leaves are poisonous when they have become dry. I wonder, I was never poisoned by them although I handled them wet and dry. Maybe they are poisonous if you eat them, or if they get into contact with an infection. As the marshes dry out, this curious "flower" will disappear, but its memory survives in many tame varieties planted throughout our woods by the brethren. It is also popularly called the Mocassin Flower, from its resemblance to that form of Indian footgear. Here and there in our woods one will find a cluster of "honey suckles" – at least as we called them and they deserved the name. To my utter chagrin I was told that they were inaccurately called "honey suckles," and the right name is Columbine. Be it so, it will not make the honey any sweeter. It has long slender stalks and branches and the flower hangs downward; its 4 or 5 honey sacs being above and easy to access. The content of the tiny sacs is very sweet; we used to suck them dry and throw them away, thus depriving some bees of food supplies.

I must [not] forget to mention the bold and enterprising flower – fiorello – that we used (unscientifically) to call a violet; later I was told that was the wrong name (To bad that the flowers cannot tell us their names!) and that the true or correct name was "anemone hepatica" (liver shaped wind flower!) triloba – because it had 3 leaves or lobes, I suppose. Slender, short stem – 2 or 3 inches, and this terminates in a three leaved flower of a very light blue or violet color. After the snow has gone, you search for indications of spring in the woods. Trees and shrubs are still in a state of suspended animation, but from among the dead and dry leaves on the ground peeps out the anemone hepatica triloba so boldly, so confidently that one is almost ashamed to pluck it out of the soil. Dainty little herald of spring , of new life, what a lesson you teach us! "Early to bed and early to rise," etc. – you rise earlier than all the rest and face the cold morning air of April.

A flower less popular, but more useful is the flower of the Dandelion = lions tooth. As to the plant itself, I may say that it grows almost every where in this latitude, and plain folks delight in eating the leaves, which look so forbidding. The leaves are cleaned, vinegar and oil is poured upon them and lo! You have a sort of lettuce. Like the anemone, the flower – a golden spangle upon the green mantle of Mother Nature – a yellow daisy – is one of the earliest to make its appearance on grassy places. From the heart of the plant shoots up a greenish tubular stem upon which the yellow flower grows. Some people not only eat the leaves but gather the flowers to make dandelion wine out of them. It is said to be a specific for kidney trouble (see the homely French word in Dic.).

If the flowers are permitted to grow on the stem they are replaced by flossy, hair-like processes which look like balls of gossamer; hundreds of little silky spikes radiating in every direction. These spikes are about one inch in length and carry with them the seed of the dandelion when they are swept off their feet by the wind. We used to call those

gossamer balls "four o'clocks" – another misnomer, I suspect. We used to believe that one could tell the time of day by the number of puffs of breath required to blow away all the spikes. If you blew them off in 4 "blows," it was 4 o'clock, of course. An adept would regulate his blowing to suit any hour desirable. The dandelion flower is of the kind that have fixed habitats; it observes periods of wakefulness and periods of repose. When the sun sets, the little golden petals huddle close together and are covered with a green blanket; they sleep until the sun is above the horizon and then wake up to greet the king of light, following him along his airy route till e draws near the western horizon. That is tall their work, still it is something. Our Lord says the flowers do not **sew**, and yet they are objects of His Providence. Am I right in assuming that it is a sort of sensitive plant, or is that heliotropism? It would be unfilial to the Creator to say that this flower is not beautiful. Yet many people, notably such as want a nice lawn with just one kind of herb in it, look with hostile eye upon the invasions of the dandelion, which acts just as men do (you know the distinction between natives and foreigners – dandelions are treated as foreigners – they must get out!). With sharp, small trowel shaped knives they dig out the very roots to prevent the propagation of the herb. In vain. As long as they cannot prevent the winds from carrying the tiny spores – if that is what they should be called – across the country, they will not prevent the propagation of the dandelion plant. It is the Dens Leonis (which does not mean a lion's den, but a lions tooth, suggested by the serrated edges of its leaves), or *Taraxicum officinale.* Our dandelions are comparatively small. In Washington State I saw some that were about three times as large, and the tubular stems were as much as 15 inches. The stems contain a tart milky substance in the fibres. We used to break off the stems and blow through them, producing a sound like that of little bassoon! The girls used to split the stems part of the length and curl them into simple ornaments – that did not last long.

Any large open space used to be called a "prairie." These prairies were covered with myriads of "prairie roses"; stalk and leaves and thorns being like those of real roses. The bush grows to the height of about 2 feet and the flowers have but one tier of petals, delicate pink in color. They belong essentially to the landscape and to its indigenous insect denizen, and are designed to live in the wild state only. Plucked, they will droop and the leaves will wilt – and the beauty of the bloom hath departed – **et cecitid flos** (the most beautiful little sentence I know of). Years ago, there was a secular priest at New Ulm, Minn – well known was he to our early Fathers – I met him several times. That was Rev. Alexander Berghold, a **Styrian,** a small man, dark and Indian-like, apparently coarse, yet soft of heart. He had an instinctive love for the natural beauty of the North Star State. (He is dead now.) Many years ago, he published a neat volume of poems, in German, entitled "Prairie Rosen," a fine tribute to the wild flowers. (I cannot say that I read many of the poems, but he was a good German scholar. The book is in our Library.) I might pad this essay with a number of selections, but the reader may get the book and help himself. I do not know whether Anna Lethert, sister of our late Rev. Ambrose Lethert, wrote any poems about "prairie roses." She was a clever poetess; for years many of her poems appeared in The Wanderer. She died at the Home for the Aged in St. Cloud, I think. (In my private library I have a MS. poem of 18 pp. – all religions – one poem, without any reference to "prairie roses," however.)

There are other flowers less common, and mention of them would hardly be appreciated, since they are wild flowers – in fact so wild that they have no name in the vocabulary of ordinary people. Among others, there is a sort of butter cup in the low places – bright yellow; and a variety of "Black Eyed Susan" on slender, almost leafless stalks. They main contain something of interest for bees and humming birds. A very common violet flower on a leafy stem is known as the Canadian geranium. The flowers are very small, both leaves and flowers will wither shortly after they are plucked. There is also a sort of snap dragon – a whole dozen of them climbing up a short pulpy stem. The flowers are yellow. If you press them lightly they will open their mouths, for which reason the Germans call them LOEWEN-MAUL, I believe. Then there is "golden rod," our State flower – at least it used to be. It is a weed with tiny yellow flowers clustering around the upper extremity of the stalk and making a very "brave" appearance. Yet many people have an aversion to "golden rod," and will even avoid it, as the very sight of them will produce a sneeze, because the spores get into their noses. People are convinced that the spores of "golden rod" cause hay fever. Why blame golden rod if hay works the mischief. It is not so easy to say who suffers now from "hay fever" – he that has it and sneezes day and night from Aug 15 to Oct. 15, or those who have the sneezing and behold the real distress of the sneezer. It was my good fortune to travel in a Pullman sleeping car through Montana in August 1919. The car was almost exclusively occupied by hay fever sufferers and I had a hectic night in consequence, although I did not have that "fever." They annoyed me very much all night by their sneezing, sputtering, blowing, etc. Few took the pains to muffle their sneezing. Some of them had a temporary remedy with them; I could hear them draw the cork and take a dose – after which there was a silence for a spell. Next morning the porter stealthily dropped some bottles out of the window. The smell of the "medicine" remained to tell the tale! Those who know, smiled. A good deal of publicity was given to golden rod some years ago; poems were written about it, and our Band played a very stirring "Golden Rod March." Since hay fever has grown popular, neither the poems nor the music have any longer a wide appeal. For all that, golden rod will remain as beautiful as ever.

Roving through our woods you may find other flowers – even peonies, asters, lilacs, mignonette, tiger lilies; these have been sown by some of our lovers of the forest, and are not wild flowers. I cannot begin to describe the tame flowers raised here. (The local florist will be able to tell you all about them.)

Weeds

I have also entered the field of weeds. (Who was it asked "Why is a weed?"). I suppose golden rod will have to be content to be classed with them. It is not easy to draw the line – utility seems to be the criterion – as if God had made anything that was useless! Give a dog a bad name – and so on. Beginning with the Lake: there are many kinds of plants or weeds on and under the water: but they are not popularly named and are not eaten by either man or beast, if you except fish and turtles. Along the shore are sedges and bulrushes, some growing to the height of 4-5 feet above the surface. On the prairies, the grass before the settlers came in was high, especially in marshy paces. In oak and maple forests there was an undergrowth of shrubbery and vines, some with some without

flowers or berries of any note, hazel, Kinnickinick (accent on the last syllable), raspberries, strawberries, etc. In moist places you would find ferns and brackens; on the open places, nettles, beggar's lice, mullein **(Kasnigakaza)** with a tall rod spiked with small yellow flowers; milkweed (so called because if the stem be broken and acid milky ooze comes out. We used to believe that it would raise warts on the hand:-some say it is poisonous, yet we tasted of it and survived.); thistles with pink flowers like small paint brushes; Indian Tobacco, Tansy (milfoil) and many others, the use of which some beasts know better than I do. In conclusion, I might mention water cress (*Rorippia nasturtium*?) which is plentiful about fresh water springs and pleases many palates. I have never had a hankering for it. It grows plentifully near the Watab.

Mushrooms

Since I have mentioned water cress, I may pass over to another edible substance – mushrooms (champignons or whatever one may call them). **We** found poisonous and harmless ones, white, black and red ones, puffballs, toadstools, etc. One variety, perhaps I should call it a fungus, comes out on the lawns after long rains and grows with remarkable rapidity. They are small, grey and grow close together.

I see I have omitted the little plant or herb called woodruff (French **asperisle**; German: **Waldmeister**), which may be found in the woods behind the cemetery and near Pickerel Point, and probably elsewhere. It has a thin, tough stem and several whorls of small leaves like this - about ½ in. in length; no flower as far as I can remember. It stands no higher than about a foot, grows in clusters and fills the woods with a very delightful scent. I used to pick them in considerable [quantity] and hide them in a table drawer in my room. In England they used them to sweeten the linens in the clothes-presses. Another English name is woodrow, I believe. I don't suppose it was named for Woodrow Wilson! Fr. Adrian Schmitt, OSB who first drew my attention to it, said that the Germans [used] to flavor their solemn "punches" with Waldmeister. I wish I could write a poem about it.

Juniper

An evergreen shrub here about is the juniper (*Juniperus communis*) which keeps close to the ground and sometimes extends 3-4 ft. in every direction, though rising no more than a foot above the ground. It is a needle bearing shrub and its needles are sharp. The fruit is a small, tough, dark blue berry about 1/4 inch in diameter. It has medical uses; in some countries gin is made out of these berries. Many used to **strew** them upon live coals to disinfect or change in the air in room.

Ginseng

Ginseng is also found; not so plentiful as in former times. The name sounds Chinese and may be Chinese, for in China the root is very popular. Between 1856-70, Stearns County farmers (e.g. Richmond), Rev. Martin Schmidt told me, use to pay their stove bills with Ginseng. The Ginseng money was eventually carried to Minneapolis, whence

it was shipped to the Chinese markets. - Less popular than Ginseng was poison ivy (*Rhus toxicodendron*) which grows low-not as of vine but on slender shafts. The weed has 3 leaves of bright green. Large patches of poison ivy may still be found here; I know of one at Pickerel Point. Many people are sensitive to this week; contact with it and (some said) even the very sight of it, will cause inflammation on the skin and travel from the hands to other parts of the body. This may be due to wiping the face with infected hands. The late Abbot Peter Engle suffered from poison ivy several times: once his head was so swollen that he did not show himself for several days. I was more fortunate, although I handled the plant repeatedly. Either my system was so wholesome that poison had no effect on the surface of my skin, or I was like (**Mothridates of Pontus)**, so full of poisons, that no **man** could get into me.

Mention of juniper berries suggests other varieties of berries-all wild ones. Some - e.g. June berries,: grew on trees as large as ordinary plum trees; they are no longer plentiful here. The berries are red and yellow-not very sweet. Blackberries and gooseberries may be found in patches. I remember how some patches were trodden down and out by the reckless folks who pillaged the shrubs. Sometimes I think they were planted or sown; likely however they are wild. Small strawberries come out in season for the birds to eat and the little white flowers may have something for bees and birds. They are usually small, not much larger than 3/4 of an inch, and rather sour. With milk and much sugar they will make a tolerable dish. However, after seeing and eating the "tame" strawberry 1 1/2 in. in diameter, that grow in the garden of St. Martin's Abbey at Lacey in Washington state, you will not care much for our midgets (Germans call them **Fodsbuswan; French: Fraise.)** Most common around here and throughout northern Minnesota was the marsh cranberry (one used to say cram-berry). Our variety grew closer to the ground; in northwestern Minnesota it grew on shrubs-the Indians called it pimbina, whence Pembina (pronounced Pem-bi-naw). The little plants were hidden in the tall grass and had to be searched for. The berries about 1/2 in. in diameter, red and yellow, with tiny seeds inside. Cranberries were not as a rule in eaten raw. A dish that we use to hail with delight was the cranberry pies served on Sundays buyer crooked brother Bro.William in the last century. He used to buy the berries from farmers living hereabout. The large campus used to be our cranberry marsh.

There are also two kinds of cherries, if not more; one was the choke cherry, the other bird cherries. Near the old farm by the highway in Sec. 36 of Avon Tp. we used to pick black haws from tall shrubs in 1880. The shrub may have been 6-8 feet and belonged to the Sloe (Viburnum) family. The fruit was like a plum, but flat, with black skin with, white kernel and sweet, mealy flash, very pleasant to the taste. I have not seen any for a number of years. How soon such things will be forgotten. Nobody picks berries today unless he wants to sell them.

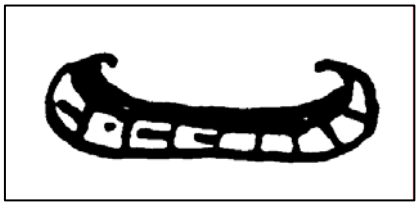
Here and there you might also find plum trees-wild ones; the plums were small, hard and sour. I do not know if any attempt was ever made to engraft them on tame plum trees, as was done to the wild grapes that grow on "Bunker Hill". The vines were several rods in length and wound themselves about small trees, thus forming a veritable jungle. About 1917 our pioneer, the late Rev. Cornelius Wittmann OSB (+1921), then 79 years of age

and almost blind, began regulating those vines and lived in hopes of getting a satisfactory yield. When he could no longer give them his attention, Rev. John Katzner, OSB (+1930) grafted them on a tame variety and produced a new variety which he called the ALPHA (why?), and which had some vogue in this and neighboring states. His achievement maybe read in the Minnesota Horticulturalist. As I have undertaken to write only a natural history of Collegeville - I do not intend to describe in what manner and with what success others have raised the Alpha grape. (As to pomiculture, see Rev. John K's article under chap. XL. of vol II in Mitchell's History of Stearn's County.)

A review of plant life here would be incomplete without some reference to the very largest kind of plants, i.e. TREES. What is called in some parts a forest, is here generally spoken of as a bush, as it is in Australia I am told. Thus the woods between here in St. Joseph use to be called - before my time, the "Indian Bush". The tallest trees formed hereabout were pines - they are all gone I think. The tallest ones, in the hollow behind the reservoir may have measured 60 feet. They have disappeared. Tamarack trees may still be found in wet places, but the wood has no use except for fuel, and it burns too fast when dry. Along the lakes also grew red cedars. Larch and spruce trees were also common. Very common around here was the oak, red, white and scrub oak. This tree has almost disappeared here; a variety of poplar, that springs up spontaneously after the oak goes. Large areas were covered with sugar maple trees, which the Indians and early settlers held in some esteem. In spring they use to cut a horizontal gash into the trunk or bole and collected the sweet, colorless sap, which was boiled in large pans over a fire and evaporated, leaving a deposit of soft sugar in the pans. This was maple sugar, some of which was put on the markets. The Indians [used] to pack it into small baskets made of birch bark. I do not think it was generally popular as it could not compete with cane sugar from the south. Is no longer made here as far as my knowledge goes. Indians still make it.

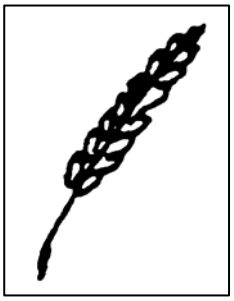
We have a variety of wood in known as iron wood: the trees are about 6 in. in diameter when in full growth. They resemble neither oak nor maple. It seems to grow side-by-side with the oak. The wood has a pale, reddish fiber and is very tough; it was used for making wagon poles and baseball bats I am told.

The best of our shade trees is basswood. The wood is light in color and weight. Peculiar beauty is given to our woods by the white-boled birch, which stands sometimes alone, sometimes in groups, in fine contrast to the green frondage around. In the moonlight they look like ghost trees. The birch was an important tree in the early days. The inner bark is cinnamon-colored and grows vertically; the outer, buff in color, with a white peal, which is removed, may be taken off in horizontal rings, cut into shape and was used for making canoes by the Indians. The sheets of birch bark, perhaps 2 X 4 feet in dimension, were sewed together with watab, a "thread" made of thin pine roots, and the seams covered with pitch to make the canoe water-tight. A canoe was from 12-30 ft. long, about 2 ½ feet wide, and turned up sharply at the front and rear. The rower did not sit, but knelt in the bottom of the craft and rowed with only one paddle. About



1878, some Indians from the White Earth reservation would still come down this way in the Spring to hunt, fish – and beg; **incidentally** also to sell moccasins adorned with bead work. The company or family had with them a canoe about 15 ft. long, which was strapped upon the woman's back on the march. Birch bark (was much sought for us as kindling material in default of wood or paper. When paper was still a rare commodity here, one would eagerly strip the bark off the "fire wood" in the "wood box" – or would go into the woods to strip some off the trees. It burnt slowly but surely, emitting a smell that permeated the air in the rooms – and your clothes too – all winter. Some of my fellow students, of an artistic turn of mind, would cut it into fanciful shapes, paint it and even use it in lieu of post cards and letters. – On the trunk of the birch grew a large fungus, called punk or spunk and used as tinder (sagatagan) by the Indians. One of the boys, George Langevin, of St. Paul, used to decorate the upper surface with paintings in oil. They would serve as handsome **basket** ornaments.

I have read somewhere that these fungi on the trees are a sight that the inside of the tree is rotten. Maybe so. Smaller "punk" growths may be found on other trees, either standing or rotting on the ground. Birches grow spontaneously. I do not know that any variety has been tamed. – In moist places on may still find willows; they do their share in draining marshes and sloughs ("sloos"). Of all our trees they are the earliest to put forth their leaves in spring – pale, yellowish or greenish leaves and white haired catkins, or "willow pussies." This is, I suppose, the American willow (*Salix discolor*). The catkins or "pussies," were used as substitutes for "palms" on Palm Sunday, as were also sprays of tamarack or cedar. The former were called **Palmkatzchen** by the Germans. – Near a willow patch at the head of our "Watab," we found what was called a "leather tree." It was rather a large shrub, but the trunk might be 1 or 2 inches thick. The peculiarity of the tree was that both trunk and branches were supple and could be bent in any direction. The bark or peel, was grayish and tough, and the wood, close fibred, was whitish, like cream. This tree is described by Macmillan (Minnesota Plant life, p. 332) as follows: "The leatherwood is a shrub from two to six feet in height; not uncommon along streams in woods and thickets. (It) has yellowish green twigs, with alternate, broadly oval, entire margined leaves. The bark is poisonous, acting as a violent emetic. The shrub may be known by the yellowish color of the flower and bark, the stamens alternately longer and shorter -–and the red stone fruits." – The bark may be poisonous, still I have often stripped it off the twigs, I never swallowed any of it and cannot say whether it a strong emetic. (Figure)



Nuts.

The only nut that grows about here is, to my knowledge, the hazel nut, unless you say that the acorn is a nut. The hazel is the *Corylus americana*; I don't know whether that is the shrub, or the nut, or both. The shrub grows to the height of 5 or 6 feet and the nut is wrapped up in a layer of thick, hairy leaves which cling tight to the nut, loosen their hold when dried. The shell of the nut before maturity is whitish, and turns a rich brown when ripe. The adjective or epithet nut brown is well known in English literature (nut-brown

ale; The nut Brown **[word]** Its kernel is almost spherical and rather of the shape of a bread loaf. I have picked many of these nuts and found some as large as ¾ in. in the greatest length of the shell. The kernel is as solid as cocoa nut or nearly so and quite delicious. When the nutting season came on, it was customary to pick the nuts, shell and all before the shrub became dry. In the process of picking it was advisable to wear gloves, as the juice from the shell or husk was acid stained the fingers – and stained white goods permanently. The nuts in their green husks were spread out on the ground, or on a roof to prevent larger animals from getting at them, and remained there exposed to rain and shine until they had matured, which was the case when the husks had turned brown as tobacco, and the nut was so loose that it could be easily removed. This nut was not commercialized here, as far as I know. Young folks delighted in picking them and spent many [hours] in the good old winter time, patiently cracking them either with their teeth (not false teeth), with a hammer or a stone. Nobody picks hazel nuts now.

The American Indian, in the popular mind, was a bloody savage, who, since he had nothing but water to drink (as a matter the Indians used to make jingobabo – a sort of beer, of the root of the fir tree, but late took to the white man's "**ishkotewabo**," or fire water, i.e. bad whiskey) assuaged his yearnings for some kind of comfort or solace, by smoking countless pipes of tobacco. True he did not, up here, have the tobacco that Indians and whites smoked in the South. Our Indians smoked a preparation made from the kinnickinnick shrub, and called their "tobacco" by that name. We made it out of the inner bark or rind of a sort of willow that I cannot identify, by cutting the aforesaid greenish rinds into small pieces and roasting them over a fire. When thoroughly roasted, the pieces were crushed into smaller bits and somewhat resembled tobacco. Kinnickinnick was sweetish to the taste when smoked, and a bit pungent and not very satisfying. After donning the toga of civilization, the Indians also adopted the white man's tobacco and pipe (Originally tobago was the pipe). They found that tobacco to be rather strong, so they mixed it with kinnickinnick. To see a real leatherstocking Indian preparing his smoke was a study in leisure. I recall an old "buck" who unconsciously demonstrated for us. First of all he carefully cleaned out his pipe, testing its draught by blowing through it several times. Then he produced a hunk of "plug" tobacco from a pouch at his belt and with his large knife deliberately cut off a few small slices, which he held in the cup of his left hand and ground smaller with his thumb of his other hand till it was fine enough. With this he mixed a small quantity of real tobacco i.e. kinnickinnick – the same crushing process as above. Then he calmly crammed the mixture into his pipe, set the latter between his teeth, picked up a bit of a dried twig, held it into the fire and began to smoke. That is to say, I assume that he did smoke, but there was no sucking, no puffing, no clouds of smoke, such as enveloped Governor **Wouter van Twiller** when he was "thinking." The Indian breathed and ate (or drank, inhaled, the smoke and, I suppose, gradually turned himself into a smoked Indian – so much for kinnickinnick. Today you do not find it here, except in the dictionary, where (perhaps) it is spelled more correctly than here. Once upon a time I thought it was the **cornsl**, or bearberry; that may be wrong. I wonder.

This reminds me that there is a kind, or several kinds, of "Indian tobacco" about here. "*Lobelia inflata*," in botany! A substitute for tobacco. Small boys used to smoke the

brown, dried seed husks of a tall weed that I cannot call by name any more. The seeds were stripped off the plant when they had been browned by the sun, and were smoked either in a pipe or stuffed into long cylinders of paper made by them for that purpose. Some cylinders were as much as a foot long, and different kinds of paper were used – newspaper, wall paper, packing paper, copy books, posters and what not. The longer the cigar, the prouder (and sicker) the smoker. The tobacco had a villainous smell and burnt the tongue – no matter; the pleasure was worth the pain, they thought. If a boy could smoke without turning himself inside out, he thought, he had crossed the threshold from adolescence into manhood!

There are other flowers and shrubs,- buttercup, cowslip (cow's lip?), tansy, catnip, a wild tiger lily and so on. I wonder if the sunflower is indigenous. It may have been brought up from the South. It used to be in every garden. By habit it is heliotrop; reverently keeps on looking into the face of the sun.

Last of all, there is the SUMAC (=pronounced shoe-mak here), too well known to need an introduction. During the entire summer it luxuriates in open places or along the edge of woods, but in fall its glorious crimson leaves form one of the chief beauties of our landscape. Apart from the color of its autumnal leaves, the sumac is not highly esteemed here. We try to keep it down; **succisa viresecit**. It is a perennial; the leaves dry or fall, but the root and stock remain to take on new leaves in Spring. Birds may take a fancy to it, especially to its berries – if that is what they should be called. To keep the memory of sumac alive, I shall quote Harriet Keeler: "Its long, pinnately compound leaves born in tufts at the head of the branches; the main stem is either horizontal or slightly curved upward, while the leaflets have a decided tendency to (to) hang down. These lift and sway with any passing breeze, and when the whole s crowned – as it often is – with a great thyrsoid panicle of bright red fruit standing out from the center of each leafy tuft, the affect is unique and beautiful. The little drupes which make the panicles are covered with crimson down which is charged with malic acid, sour but agreeable to the taste. They remain on the tree all winter and become the food of birds. In autumn all the sumacs are wonderful for the brilliancy of their coloring. They glow in scarlet and gold which sometimes deepens to crimson red orange. (H. Keeler: "Our Native Trees.) –

So much for the trees and shrubs. Young botanizers will find new things in the way of trees and shrubs, plants and flowers (I may have overlooked many); they must, however, remember that white men have been living here for the past 70 years and have introduced many foreign plants and flowers. The decorative arbor vitae on our premises, as well as the pines, spruce and firs in the environs are imported – some from Europe – and are doing very well.-

Notes on our flora:

A.) Sumac (*Rhus* ***coriaria*** - because used by tanners), "shrubs with pinnate leaves...large panicles of small stone-fruits, bright red in color in some of the varieties. The poisonous

varieties may be avoided by noting their gray, or white stone-fruits." (Macmillan: p. 310).

B) Cranberries (a variety of *Vaccinium*). "The two kinds found in the State (of Minn.) are both bog plants (bog-wort), with overly slender creeping stems having small, thick evergreen leaves, apparently disposed in two rows along the branches. In the small cranberry the berry is almost spherical, while in the large cranberry an oblong or (oval) ovoid berry is produced. Both species of berries are red or spotted and acid to the taste." (Macmillan: p. 357)

C) Columbine (our "honeysuckle"). It belongs to the crowfoot family; "is particularly abundant upon rocky hillsides...and along river gorges. The flowers are recognized at once by the spurs on the petal and stand with their mouths directed downward. The spurs are supplied with heavy glands at the tip, and the whole continuance is a machine for obtaining cross-pollination through the agency of insects." (Macmillan pp. 268-269) (The botanical name is *Aquilegia vulgaris*.)

D) Iris - Blue Flag – fleuer de-lis is a familiar object **[word],** in swales and marshes and is common throughout the State. The large blue flowers are borne on erect stems with leaves similar in appearance to those of the cat tail. The stems arise from woody tuberous rootstocks." (Macmillan.)

E) Lady's Slipper - Moccasin Plant (*Cypripedium*). The yellow Moccasin flower is the State Flower of Minnesota. "The only Minnesota orchid known to be poisonous to the touch are the lady's slipper, and especially in the autumn it is advisable to avoid handling them. The leaves and stems are furnished with two kinds of hairs, some pointed and apparently harmless, others with globular tips which secrete small quantities of oil....That the plants should be more poisonous while the seeds are maturing is possibly a device to discourage grazing animals from attacking it at this time." (Macmillan)

F) Tamarack - *Larix Americana* - hence a variety of the larch or **[word]**. According to Harriet Keeler (Native Trees p. 476)- tamarack will grow 50-60 feet high. It is regularly found in central Minnesota in swampy districts." The wood, which is described as light brown, very resinous, heavy, hard, strong, rather coarse grained, is used for fenceposts, telegraph poles, railway ties - and sometimes for Christmas trees.

G) Ironwood (Hop Hornbeam) “is usually found on dry gravelly slopes and ridges, often in the shade of oaks, maple and other larger trees.” “Te wood is light brown, tinged with red (iron), sapwood nearly white, heavy, tough, exceedingly close-grained, very strong and hard. Used for small articles like levers, handles o tools, mallets, etc.”

H) Fungi. Very pretty samples of shelf fungi (pore fungi) are abundant upon the birch trees of Minnesota, and this particular species is know as the birch tree pore fungus. (Macmillan p. 57.)

I) What I have called the Black Haw (**supra)** may be the Sheep Berry mentioned by Macmillan p. 390. Its “fruits are blue or black with flat disk-like stones.” (It may be considered impolite to explain why they are called Sheep Berries. a.)

FAUNA

Here again, I am venturing upon dangerous ground. Remember, I know little about zoology. So be patient and read.

Insects.

Undoubtedly there is a great variety of insects here; we are indifferent to them, except in so far as they may [be] useful or harmful to us. Some of them are so small that they can only be detected with difficulty. I shall eliminate from detailed mention certain insects that seem to be parasites to "civilized" man, such as the bed bug, louse, flea and cockroach; they can hardly be said to be peculiar to our district or even indigenous to the United States; they are cosmopolitan.
Early in summer a host of noiseless gnats will fly about your head – they are harmless i.e. don't bite. Their term of life is brief – a day?. Flies – the house fly-will be found wherever there is vegetable or animal life. That fly – the Queen of the Air: as John Ruskin calls it or her, is most common. The horsefly – larger, vulgar and noisy, is with us too; and the deer fly – brown, swift, it lights upon one's face or hands or neck without apology and stabs you with its **poniard**, causing a sharp, hot pain; it goes away (the fly does) and you will have a local red swelling unless it be kept down with cold compresses or "liniments." The sting is poisonous. During the light of summer these flies make a walk in the woods very uncomfortable; especially in the morning and evening hours it is advisable to remain out of the woods, or to wear a veil and gloves. Many a time I braved these flies unprotected, but I always paid for my bravery. The sting is poisonous.

Equally unpleasant are wasps, bees and hornets. They say these insects will not trouble you if you do not first worry them. In Latin grammar we learned: "**Noli irritare vespas**." Once I was stung severely by a wasp, although I am not conscious of having provoked him (her, or it!). The grammar may know but the wasp does not.

Our summer pest was the mosquito (mus-kee-to) – I say was, for its power has declined since the marshes where it bred have dried out. Still it is numerous even to this day (1926). Need I describe the mosquito? It is easier to feel than to describe. The word mosquito is Spanish and is the diminutive of mosca (Latin musca, German Mücke); hence it is smaller than a full grown fly. The average mosquito here is not much over a quarter of an inch in length; slender body, narrow wings, long legs and a sharp tongue. It – or rather she – since Father James Hansen, our many sided scientist (I am proud to say he learned everything here) tells me it is only the lady mosquito that stings, and that the gentleman mosquito cannot be induced to give pain to either man or beast. She does not approach stealthily as does the bed bug, but like a siren sings for you while hovering about you to select a spot for operation. The moment that the music stops you know she is drilling. You will soon feel the pain unless you slap her with your hand. She may be standing on the back of your hand or on the soft skin of your wrist. If you are a hero, you will calmly observe her intense devotion to her work as she is sucking your blood. She will drink and drink; you will see how her little body swells with the ruby beverage. It is then easy to conquer and slap her. Your other hand comes down upon her and on the

spot is a little red dab of blood – your own blood, and mingled with it are the ruined members of her body and wings. When mosquitoes were still very numerous, it was customary to build a fire called a smudge – little flame and much smoke. This would keep them off for a while. To keep them out of rooms, both windows and doors were protected by mosquito **barz** of large-meshed gauze – mosquito netting. Later fine wire netting came into vogue.

Among the insects that pursued and destroyed mosquitoes – using them as food stuff – was the mosquito hawk, or dragon fly (in German: Schneider!), with a long black body the shape of a match, but flexible as rubber and four antennae. These dragon flies made inexorable war upon the mosquito. Although harmless, they, too, were occasionally annoying as the[y] buzzed about. I suppose some bird persecuted the mosquito, and some cat persecuted the bird, and some bad man shot the cat, and another bad man shot the man. i.e. No crime remains unpunished!

All summer, on hot days you may hear the cicadas and see the little green grasshoppers in grain fields. These hoppers are not very injurious; they enjoy life for a little space, lay some eggs and die. The eggs lie in the ground until the sun of the next summer hatches them out. Crickets, too, may be seen, or rather heard; it is not easy to catch sight of one. Concealed somewhere in a room, they will drive you almost to extremes by their shrill chirping. And if you succeed in finding them, you will marvel how so small a black bundle of nerves can make such a loud noise. They say it does so with its wings.

When the lilacs and apple blossoms were out and the calices of the flowers were open you may hear and see the bumble bee, droning around the source of delight, and plunging his suction pump into the heart of the flower. Other, smaller bees, humming birds and insects will be there too, some for business, others upon pleasure bent. They do not all come for ambrosia and nectar; they are unconsciously hired as agents for the propagation of trees and flowers, and they draw their pay in honey. These are wild bees, their honey is not as sweet as that of tame bees. The bumble bee does not live in a swarm, he is a solitary and grows quite stout. He is somewhat clumsy in his flights; suddenly he will cease droning, and you will know that he has struck up against something.

Animals

About the middle of the 19th century, Minnesota – at least the northern part of it, was still haunted by the buffalo, or properly bison. They may still be seen in Yellowstone Park and elsewhere out West. They used to roam around in herds, and doubtless at one time moved about on our prairies. Hunters have cleared our State of them in order to get their fur and make fur coats and lap robes for themselves. You may see fur coats in Minnesota today, but they are not of buffalo pelt. I still saw men out this way wearing buffalo coats as long as modern overcoats – one animal with another animal's fur upon its back!

Several kinds of bear used to live in the woods, even around here. I never saw any alive in the wild state. Not many years ago, bears were shot in the woods of Stearns Co. At St. John's we had a pet bear – cinnamon bear I believe – as late as June 1869. He had the

freedom of the grounds and the house (the very house in which these lines are penned); he used to clamber up into the boy's dormitory and lie down in bed. One day he bit a small student, who died from loss of blood – the bear had bitten him in the throat; whereupon Father Wolfgang Northman shot the bear dead.

Years ago beavers had their habitat hereabout; traces of their work were formerly shown. I have not seen any beavers (Castora)(*Castor canadensis*).

Black squirrels. Numbers of them used to dwell in our woods. Not many are left.

Gray Squirrels, as large as kittens, are still very numerous and may be tamed. For years we had some in captivity; eventually they were let out – some took to the woods, others remained on the premises and created boundless delight for young and old. I had one that used to perch upon my table with his bushy tail gracefully spread upon his back; then would stick his nuzzle into my old style ink well, or crawl into my pockets. Object: peanuts. One day the window was open; Exit squirrel, back to savagery.

The red squirrel is smaller and objects to captivity; in fact he is hard to capture.

The gopher is our State animal or emblem; hence, Minnesota is called the Gopher State, and Minnesotans are called Gophers. The **red** gopher is as small as a red squirrel but has no bushy tail. He burrows in the ground, whereas squirrels live in hollow trees. We used to catch gophers in this way. We would pour water into the hole and when the gopher came out we would knock him on the head. Or we would make a sling and place it around the opening; the gopher would come out and strangle himself. They tell of a small boy who was holding a string that way. A kind old gentleman came along and asked what he was doing. "Trying to catch gophers." "How many have you got?' "If I catch this one and the two over there, I will have three." The gentleman may have thought of Benjamin Franklin's opinion of angling: "A line with bait on one end and a fool on the other!" In these parts, continual war is made on the gophers. I have never seen any in captivity; they would sooner die than be imprisoned. "Give me liberty or death."

Chipmunks are about as large as gophers but do not burrow. They live like squirrels, and resemble red squirrels, from whom they are distinguished by a broad, dark stripe running lengthwise on either side of their bodies. They are swift runners.

Flying squirrels are no longer numerous here; nor are pocket gophers; weasels still infest hen coops; skunks are still numerous; they are not so easily seen, but their penetrating aroma can be scented a long way. About 1858 one of our early Fathers caught one in the woods near St. Joseph. He brought it into the settlement, stroking it as he walked along. As he was entering the yard of the rectory, Rev. Bruno Reiss, OSB the pastor came out and asked: "What have you got there?" "I found this little cat in the bush." "Drop it or I will shoot it out of your hands." "Why?" "Because that is a stink cat." (German: Stink-katze.) So he dropped the cat, sorrowing. I have this from our pioneer, Rev. Cornelius Wittmann, OSB.

One may still see rabbits – jackrabbits and bunnies here. Some enjoy the flesh of these little animals, which would be more popular if they would remain out of our cabbage patch.

Timber wolves are no longer numerous – if any survive. 50 years ago they still haunted the woods between here (abbey) and Collegeville RR station. I saw one cross the Collegeville road ab[out] 1908 (A).

Deer (American Deer) were no unusual sight in the early days; they used to come down to the lake for a drink. Hunters have destroyed them. I never saw a wild deer hereabout.

Muskrats – here called "mush rats" – are not yet extinct. One may see their hives on the Lake. Indians used to say that if the hives were built high it was a sign that a severe winter was at the door. (?) Can a muskrat feel so far ahead?

Turtle, or "mud turtles", "snapping turtles." Some of the turtles are small and have a varicolored shell on the lower side- they are not eaten by us. The snapping turtles grow to be quite large, and are sought for. Their flesh when stewed is like that of chicken, though rather stringy. We used to have them in Lent. They lay numerous eggs (about 1 in. in diameter, round, with a tough, thin shell – Some eat the eggs. The latter are laid in holes dug by the turtle and are hatched by the sun. The small turtles, I find, are called Painted Turtle (*Chrysemis picta*), "painted " red, white and black on the under side. The "Snapping Turtle" is *Chelydra serpentina*.

Snakes are not very common; the principal one being the garter Snake (*Eistaenia sirtalis*, "harmless as a fly." There are several other kinds, but I cannot identify them. We have not rattle snakes (*Crotalus*) – at least not any longer. Among others, I know of a small copper colored snake about a foot long. Copperhead?

Frogs. There is the ordinary frog (*Rana*), the bull frog (*Rana catesbiana*), an oversized frog with a deep voice, and the leaf frog (***Hyla Rekoringi***). Before the marshes were dried up, we used to hear hundreds of frogs piping monotonously in the evenings in summer. In the day time they would be sunning themselves on the lake shore or on trees, or stumps lying in the lake or bays, basking as we say. Reminds me of the Bahamian song about lizards:

Oh, I wish I were a lizard,
A-basking in the sun,
Basking and a wishing
That the day's work were done.

. . . or something to that affect. I could never memorize well. Incidentally, we used to have lizards (*Lacerta*)in the well and elsewhere. One summer (1924?) the little frogs were so numerous that they came out on the lawn and into the rooms, even into the church. The nuisance was abated in a few days. I never saw anything like that.

Toads (*Bufo*) abound where frogs are numerous. We were made to believe that a toads secretions would cause warts, and that if you killed a toad, there would be rain. (It probably did rain somewhere.) People used to kill toads, without mercy.

Fishes. Our lakes had, and have, several varieties of fish: Muskelunge (Indian: **maskinje**, I think), and overgrown pickerel. I saw a few that were 4 feet long. Pickerel, edible, but not fancied much as the meat is watery and full of course spines; Bass, the prince of fishes in our waters; much sought for by people who like fish in Lent; Suckers, who swallow fish spawn and minnows; Sunfish, flat and bony, with toothsome meat; Bullheads with black, tough skin, no scales, and two tough tentacles, that may sting. We used to find clams, 3 inches long, and crabs; also hair snakes in the water. A curious kind of water bug are called the **Notonectidae**, so called because they swim very rapidly on the surface of the water. Also called backswimmers, boat flies. "A bold fellow, impatient and pugnacious, and much better able to shift for himself than for his little cousin." (I forget who that is.) "The name of "backswimmer" is a translation of the generic name (Noto-nectidae), referring to the fact that they swim with their backs downward and their heels in the air, as it were. Their keeled backs and oar-shaped legs make them look like tiny boats." (Miller: The Brook Book.) They are not fish, but I had no other place for them, so I put them here among the water animals.

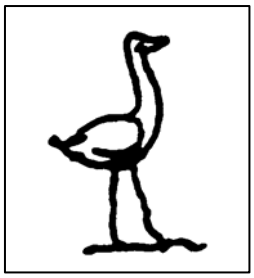
Surely, you know other water animals and so can build up on this if you care to do so. My knowledge is so limited in these matters.

Birds.

We have few birds that remain here all the year round. Birds migrate and consequently do not all remain long enough to require domicile. I do not classify poultry as birds – they cannot fly far enough for that. Besides, they are tame animals and not indigenous. The settlers brought them in. Chickens, geese, ducks, turkeys and domesticated fowls. If you can find some in the woods they have "flown the coop."

Blue Jay – *Cyanocitta cristata*. "This splendid fellow is the rascal of the bird community, the bully and tease of all creatures smaller than himself and, as far as actions are concerned, the "clown of the circus." His markings are unique. His blue is of the ultramarine color diluted with white; crest conspicuous and a deeper blue; a black band crosses the breast . . . He is also a robber, not infrequently attacking other birds engaged in nest building, drives them off and finishes the job to his own liking." (F. I. Mathews) What a bad bird! Despite his looks.

Catbird. *Galeocoptis carolinansi*. "The northern representation of the mocking bird. Colors rather somber He can (in his song) imitate anything from a (creaking) cartwheel to the song of a thrush." (Mathews). He can make noise like a cat – meow!



Heron. The Great Blue Heron (Indian: Aojidgak) – *Ardea herodias* – Herodion in the Psalms. Also Blue Crane. The latter is said to be a misnomer and properly belongs to *Gress canadensis*. It is the largest and most noteworthy bird or our northern marshes, flesh not edible. (Otto was the name of a pet crane – blue crane we had here in the '90's of last century. He was named "Otto" for **Otto Mayenberger** (**Bede,** OSB – B's nickname as a student was "the Crane" because he was long legged; exceedingly slim), whom he **(**the crane) followed everywhere as **fidus achates**. One day some one threw a stone at the bird and broke one of its legs, whereupon the bird was slain and buried. I had a picture of Otto M. and his "shadow," don't know where it is now.) The bird was about 3 ft. high to the top of its erect head.

Pheasants. Our woods was full of pheasants; much coveted by hunters ad fanciers of fine dinners. The meat was certainly delicious. They were timid birds, and were easily started. You could readily locate them by the drumming noise of their wings as they flew up. Scientific name: *[Phasianus cochicus]*.

Loons**. Uinator** (diver) **imber.** "Mantle black, spotted, with white, head and neck black with green and purple reflections; throat with two bands of white stripe, under parts white. Length very variable, ranging from 28 to 33 inches. When approached they utter a long, drawn melancholy scream (o-ooh), with a shrill (tremulous) loud sighing, rising note. Divers, short legs (like penguins). The flesh is dark, tough, and unpalatable, yet the young birds are frequently seen in the markets of New York and Boston." (Nuttall). When disturbed they will dive and swim under water for quite a distance and emerge at an unexpected place. People used to say that their loud, protracted scream foreboded rain, but the rain did not always come. We still have loons, though less plentiful than heretofore. Like the penguine its short legs are set far back on the body. They cannot walk but fly well.

Shite poke, the popular Western designation for the green heron (*Ardea virescens*). "Top of head and crest dark metallic green; rest of head and tail dark green; under parts brownish (green) ash. Length 16 – 20 inches." (Nuttall) who calls it the Green Bittern known in many parts much better by a contemptible and disgusting name" (i.e. shite poke, because when it flies up it emits a long stream of excrement.). This bird is not hunted and you will not find it on a bill of fare in a hotel.

Bob White – partridge – quail (*Colinus virginianus*) called so (Bob White) because of its whistle which consists of two notes, the first, one not, and the second a sliding note extending through a fifth up the scale, glissando. The call is very loud and shrill. You may see a family of them walking in the woods (Bobolink?).

Mourning Doves – (Tuttle Doves)(Carolina Dove) "Our variety is ashen in color, smoother. Characteristic is their call . . . the mournful call coming as it were, with a low and plaintive sigh (drawn inward as in weeping – agh – coo – coo – oo, repeated at

intervals of half a minute and heard distinctly to a considerable distance through the still and balmy air of the reviving season" (Nuttall). The lugubrious call (I cannot call it a song) inclines one to melancholy.

Cowbird (*Molothrus **ater***) "This disreputable character, parasitic in habit and degenerate in all moral instinct gets its name through its name through its fondness for bovine (company) society and its [reputation] from its abominable habit of laying its eggs in other birds' nests. It is not handsome either. A hood of dark snuff brown extends from the crown to the neck and breast, the general color otherwise is an iridescent black. It is a walker, not a hopper. It has no song – no mate to call – he is a polygamist, a bird of no principle, a "low down" character. He usually goes into a flock of other evil spirits just like himself, and their favorite resort is the cow yard or the pasture." It has the boldness to stand on the back of cattle and pick off insects.

Owls. Screech Owl, Horned Owl (*Megascopa asio*) – Plumage "mottled with black, gray and brown, ears tufted; iris yellow; bill and claws, horn color. Length 9-40 inches. The commonest owl we have, but so variable in color that the above slight description must not be regarded as universal."

Kingfisher (***Ceryle alcyon***). "Above, ashy blue; band of the same across the breast; remainder of under parts white – head large and crested, bill long and black. Length of bird 13 inches. Its haunts are brooks and river banks, where it may be seen stationed upon some overhanging bank, ready to plunge into the stream after its prey." We had a fish hatchery near the Watab some years ago, and the keepers had to have an eye on kingfisher. These birds would come and rob the young trout in the weirs**.** In order to furnish the birds with a suitable perch, a stout pole was set up and on top of it was a steel trap. Many a kingfisher was caught that way. I never saw a kingfisher seize a fish and cannot say how he disposed of it. Ate it up? Or carried it off?

Woodpecker. (Red headed W.) (*Melanerpes erythro-cephalus*). "Head and neck all round crimson; back is black to rump, which is white; wings black, with a broad white band; tail back. Length 9:75 inches. Migratory. The sound of his pecking on tree trunks resembles drumming." In our woods we may see tree trunks disfigured by their bills. They drill small round holes through the bark to find worms?

Robin red breast. Our herald of Spring. (*Merula migratoris*). The back is gray; the breast and belly chestnut brown." Here from March to October. They are favorites here; no one thinks of killing a robin. They nest near habitations and feed on rainworms. You will see them in the lawns, hopping about and spying for earth worms. How they detect the latter is a mystery to me, for the worms are in the ground. Now he has sighted or sensed a worm; he hops to the spot, digs in and draws the worm out, sometimes with considerable effort, it seems, and then devoured. When the young brood is out he (or she) coaxes them on to the lawn. They patiently follow, and when the elder robin has caught a worm, they all crowd around with mouths ever so wide open, while the elder thrusts the worm down into their gizzards. That is the way Divine Providence cares for the "fowls of the air." The old robins are not easily disturbed unless you come too near.

Then they will fly away – and come again. The little ones are quite trustful, as if they knew that a man would not hurt a baby robin! If you get too familiar with the babies, the old bird gets excited and shrieks hopping about as if looking for help. Robins are safe here. Where do they go when they emigrate? Probably to the south, and not very far. We ought to tag one – but first catch one alive! When full of good things the robin looks plump, **aldermanic,** prosperous. Vive le robin!

Pewee, or Wood Pewe (*Contopus virens*) – little fly-catcher – seizes its prey upon the wing. Is our variety the Phoebe? Their cry is pee wee.

Crow (*Corvus americanus*) "black and glossy, with violet reflections. Tail slightly rounded. Length 19:30 in? Cry: caw-caw, over and over singly or in chorus. They are also heralds of Spring. Are our crows ravens? They are walkers.

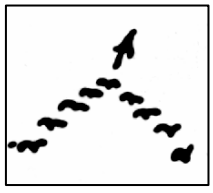
Baltimore Oriole (Aureola), colors black and a brilliant orange; the latter the color of the under side, i.e. breast and belly. Length 7:50 in. Here from May to September. "Its popular name was given it, because the black and orange of its plumage were the colors forming the livery of the first Lord Baltimore (in Maryland). (Grant) I used to think it was named for the city of Baltimore or environs. A.

Chipping Sparrow. "Chippy." (*Spizella socialis*) notably a bird found in man's society. One of the first birds to come and the last to go. It seems to me that they are here almost all the time. They are always hungry or pretend to be so. As soon as they see a hand outstretched with some bread crumbs on it, they will perch in the hand and pick them up, but will not suffer you to touch their little bodies. Chip-chip is their thin little cry. Great favorites here.

Snowbird – (Junco)(*Junco hyemalis*), common through the winter months, coming from the north late in September. Said to be heralds of snow. They are dark gray in color, small, rapid fliers.

Scarlet Tanager (***Pieranga erythromelas***) "general color scarlet; wings and tail black; here from May to October; a bird of gorgeous appearance.

Other birds. So common are Swallows, Sparrows, Martens, Thrushes, Blackbirds, Wrens, Wild canaries (yellow and gray color, have not much of a song), Humming Birds, that they need no description here.



When lakes were still abundant we used to see great flights of Wild Ducks and Wild Geese (Geese) flying above us on long V shaped flights. A bird at the front or apex led the procession and the others followed at apparently equal distances one from the other. The arrangement permitted all to see ahead. I do not know whether that is their reason [for] flying so, but I imagine it is so. Many a flight came down plunged into the water with a loud and fluttering of wings, leaving a long trail of **[word]**. Then they would sail about slowly, majestically with no visible motive power,

as if they were attracted by some powerful magnet, causing almost no stir in the water. They paddled under the water with their web feet. It was a charming sight. Then would come a hunter. If he came close enough they would all rise with great chatter and make formation for another trip. Sometimes one or the other would come down with a tail spin – dead or badly wounded. The flesh was toothsome, but a bit tough and racy or wild.

Addendum about <u>bugs</u>. – We have June bugs, fire flies with little lamps under their wings. Wood ticks, little bugs or ticks, with brown backs; about ¼ inch long. As you walk in the woods in summer you will constantly hear them dropping down into the dry leaves on the ground. If they chanced to fall upon you, they would silently work their way to some warm, soft part of your skin and eat their way in as far as their necks. Their bodies were too large to follow, and so they were "stuck in you." Eventually you would feel the pain and rub – rub; it only grew more annoying. In desperation you would uncover the spot where the tick had fastened itself to you. You tugged, usually with the result that you separated the body from the head which remained in your skin and caused an inflammation that gave thought for a couple of weeks. They say that if you pour kerosene oil upon the tick while it is in situ, it (the tick) will **put** and walk away. I had little success with that and had our pharmacist apply some medicaments, which gave relief. One such visit gave me trouble for a month as the tick had operated on the soft skin behind my right knee. It was such a teasing pain that I actually missed it after the wound had healed. We used to catch rabbits that were actually studded with them. What agony the rabbits must have suffered! Knowing that the ticks lived in the woods, I resolved not to go into the woods. Unfortunately however, some other people went into the woods and came back with a colony of ticks on their bodies or on their clothes. They (the ticks) then walked around in the rooms and found me, sure enough, and the results were the same as above. They never drew much blood out of me. Perhaps I did not have much.

Blood reminds me of Blood Suckers (Eng.: leeches; Fr. **Sangsuis**; German: **Blutigel**; the Latin name escapes me). We used to find bloodsuckers along the shores of our Lake, ugly, non-descript things like little brown sausages, without head or tail, like sausages. They were either all head or all tail. They horrified me so that I did not care to go swimming (an art which I never learned). To think that I might come out without any blood in my system gave me the creeps. People used to say they suck out only the bad blood. Doctors used to apply them to certain classes of patients and said it was painless. Maybe so, to the doctors. I never asked a patient!

With this I dismiss the animal creation of Collegeville. Abbot Peter Engel left a list of birds that he observed; it is a mere list without explanation. Rev. Lambert Thielen OSB, was also a lover of birds and could talk about them very interestingly. Likewise Father Herbert **Buerochinges et alic.** I was never a special observer of nature, was rather satisfied with its general appearance. I used to have a "bunch" of wild or tame flowers on my table in my room, and once had a squirrel for a short time. Now I have nothing of the sort, only keep a fly swat. Perhaps the patient reader will get an inspiration and keep his eyes open for flowers and birds and trees. Does not Joyce Kilmer write:

Any fool can make a poem –
But only God can make a tree
(or something like that).