

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Children of Wilhelm Steffen and Angela Dillschneider Steffen

See Chapter Eight Pages 51 and 52

Continued:

JOHN STEFFEN, the fifth child of Wilhelm and Angela, will be recorded later in detail since John was my Great Grand father.

ANNA MARIA STEFFEN

Anna Maria Steffen, b. 17.03.1843 was the sixth child of Wilhelm Steffen and Angela Dillschneider. Anna appears in the Losheim family book when they emigrated from Germany in 1852. Although the Losheim book does not record her place of birth, she may have lived in the nearby village of Waldholzbach in her childhood days. (Anna Maria is also recorded in some records as Maria Anna and listed in Wilhelm's will in Chapter 12, as Mary Steffen.)

Sometime before the age of twenty four, Anna Maria chose the Religious life for her vocation. On Nov. 29, 1867 Anna was invested as a Franciscan Sister in Oldenburg Indiana. During the twelve years she lived in Four Mile, there is no record of a Franciscan pastor having served here. We can only wonder who or what influenced her to recognize her vocation and join this order in Indiana.

Sister Cornelia (Anna Maria Steffen) professed final vows 26 Jul 1869. For many years she taught children in Catholic Schools. She was known to be especially gifted and successful in her teaching skills. It is said that several years before she died Anna became "disturbed in mind". Perhaps she had Alzheimer's disease or some form of dementia. She died May 26, 1919, 52 years after entering the Convent.

Being so far away from her home in Alexandria, KY for all those years before her death, I wonder if any Steffen family members ever visited with her or were able to attend her funeral.

Father Franz Joseph Rudolf from Alsace is considered to be the founder of Oldenburg. He was appointed Pastor in 1844. A log church of St. Mary was erected for worship soon after Father arrived in this country. In 1848 the “Old Stone Church” was completed. The church still stands today, although it has been altered several times through the years. The old stone work portion of the church is not unlike the stone buildings here in Camp Springs.

By 1851 a school was needed so Father Rudolf requested teachers from the Sisters of Saint Francis. Twenty five year old Sister Theresa G. Hackelmeier of Vienna, Austria arrived to establish the Motherhouse of the Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Francis. The Academy of the Immaculate Conception was opened in 1852.

Mother Theresa died at the age of 34 in 1860 just 7 years before Anna Maria Steffen dedicated her life to the service of God.



Immaculate Conception Convent, Oldenburg Indiana – 2005 Photo by dab

In the Saint Francis Cemetery at Oldenburg Indiana Sister Cornelia Steffen was buried May 1919. She joins so many other women who also dedicated their lives to service as a Sister of Saint Francis.



Saint Francis Cemetery – Oldenburg, Indiana.

Photo by dab



Photo - St. Mary Church Diamond Jubilee Celebration booklet – 1935 - Alexandria KY.



Photo by dab

Anna Maria Steffen did not travel alone to Indiana. Another of Peter Steffen's granddaughters joined the Order of Saint Francis with her. Her half cousin Anna Steffen at the age of 21 was invested as Sister Mary Susan 29 Nov 1867. She was recorded in the Order's books on the same day and listed just before Anna Maria. They both took their final vows on the same day in 1869.

Anna Steffen b. 14 Dec 1846 was the oldest child of Nicholas Steffen, 1820 and Elizabeth Heck 1828. (See Page 62 Chapter Ten)

Anna Maria's father Wilhelm Steffen 1809 and Anna's father Nicholas Steffen 1820 were half brothers, both sons of Peter Steffen 1782.

Sister Mary Susan died 23 April 1943 at the age of ninety-six. Sister Susan was also buried in the cemetery of Saint Francis in Oldenburg Indiana.



Photo by dab

From the Obituary book of the Convent we learn a little more of the life of Sister Susan.

“Being in poor health, resulting from an operation in 1892 Sister could not be sent on Mission. For thirty six years her condition confined her to the Sick Department. During those long years she was ever cheerful and contented. She delighted in singing German Songs, Sacred and others, even to her last day. One of her favorite songs was “My father and Mother were Irish”, although we know she was not a daughter of ST. Patrick. Usually restless and nervous, her hours before death were calm and peaceful.” Resource - a letter to Dianne Davidson 1977 and a letter to this writer from the Archivist, 2005.

Sister Cornelia and Sister Susan were part of our Steffen family. We can be proud of their contribution to their service to God as Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Francis.

NICHOLAS STEFFEN

Nicholas Steffen b. 14.11.1845 in the Saar Region of Germany was the seventh child of Wilhelm Steffen and Angela Dillschneider. Nicholas was 26 years old when he took his 20 year old fiancée, Mary Messmer as his bride 8 Aug 1871. According to St. Mary's Church records in Alexandria, Mary was born in 1851 with no month or day recorded. The church records show Nichlaus was born 11/10/1844 and died 7/4/1896 at the age of 51 years. (You can see there is a discrepancy between the dates of German and American church records.)

Mary Messmer Steffen lived to be 87 years old and died 12/30/1933. The witnesses to the wedding of Nicholas and Mary were cousins, Guliel (Latin abbreviation for William) Neltner and Marg. Steffen.

Family surnames either related by marriage or direct descendents of this marriage include the following:

SIMON, FUTSCHER, LLOYD, GREIS, MURRAY, HILDEBRAND, KINSTLER, BOGGS, PEARMAN, EWALD, BURKHARDT, SEIBERT, AMBERGER, GEIMAN, SAELINGER and many, many STEFFENS.

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