

St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Parish

No. 27 of a Series on Our Parish's First 100 Years

1910 - 2010



On January 18, 1928, St. Charles hosted a community-wide Father and Son banquet in the church hall. Fourteen local organizations united in putting on the event, which was attended by about 400 men and boys. The idea of the banquet was to establish a better understanding of father and son relationships in a successful home and an increasing community consciousness. The ladies of St. Charles provided a splendid dinner putting everyone in the best of humor and Carl Treichel, a Burlington high school teacher and former BHS football coach, acting as toastmaster, kept them that way with his numerous stories and the snappy way in which he kept the program moving. Glenn F. Thistlethwaite, head football coach at the University of Wisconsin, was the main speaker. Other speakers included St. Charles parishioner, Dr. J. F. Bennett, representing the fathers; BHS student Stanley Jung; and Rochester-born circuit court judge Ellsworth B. Belden, president of the Racine Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

In a spelling bee contest sponsored by the Milwaukee Journal in March, St. Charles' seventh grader, Florence Isferding (later Mrs. Russell Kortendick), won the school championship and represented St. Charles in the Racine County and City spelldown. Marie Schiller (later Mrs. Charles Brenton), who represented St. Mary's grade school, won second place in the county-wide contest.

For its 1928 play, the St. Charles Alumni association selected "The Thread of Destiny," a play of Civil War times. The play, with Ralph Spiegelhoff as coach and general director, was enacted in period costumes, with a cast of twenty-five taking part. Through three acts of a smoothly finished production, said the Standard Democrat, the youthful players succeeded in a pleasing interpretation of customs and manners of a time past. Sparkling moments of fun and humor were enacted equally as well as the more thoughtful scenes. Evelyn Spiegelhoff and Robert Wagner played the lead roles. According to the paper, the characterizations were well done, as were those of the entire supporting cast; and the acting throughout displayed a sincerity of interpretation that spoke well for the spirit of the large cast.

Romana Weinman and Loretta Ebbers were in charge of stage arrangements, Marie Wagner and Romana Weinman had charge of costumes, Art Kayser presided in the make-up room, and Philip Klein was property assistant. Loretta Ebbers, accompanied by Lauretta Uhen, opened the play singing an old-fashioned Minuet. Old time favorites and martial tunes were played between acts by Jack Hertell at the organ. An appreciative audience, which included former St. Charles pastor, Rev. Philipp Dreis of Sheboygan, filled the Orpheum Theatre (also known as the opera house) to capacity.

On May 9 Father Hillenbrand went to Union Grove where, with other area priests, he assisted Archbishop Sebastian G. Messmer who confirmed a class of twelve residents of the Southern

St. Charles' Alumni

Present

"The Thread of Destiny"

at

Fischer's Orpheum Theatre
Burlington, Wis.

Monday, April 9

Opening Song, Minuet Miss Loretta Ebbers
Scene—Virginia.
Time—The Civil War.
ACT I—Garden on the Montgomery plantation near Richmond,
April, 1861.
ACT II—Hall at Montgomery home, May, 1864.
ACT III—Grounds of Montgomery plantation, six weeks later.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Fanny, a slave on the Montgomery plantation ... Elizabeth Heintskill
Geo. Washington Johnson, a slave on the Bailey plantation ... William Ewald
Betty Montgomery, the Little Colonel ... Dorothy Ebbers
Edith Sherman, the northern cousin ... Margaret Warren
Mrs. Montgomery, a true Virginian ... Amanda Henningfield
Colonel Montgomery, owner of Montgomery plantation ...
Virginia Montgomery, the elder daughter ... James Mangold
Beverly Montgomery, a Confederate scout ... Evelyn Spiegelhoff
Sally Ann ... Evelyn Hoffman
Laura Lee ... } The Fairfax twins ... } Ruth Beix
Tom Randolph, a southern gallant ... } Arthur Ebbers
Martha, a southern girl ... } Irene Richter
Susan, a southern girl ... } Genevieve Huth
Jane, a southern girl ... } Catherine Bauman
John Merivale Morton, of the north ... } Oswald Wagner
Marcella, a southern girl ... } Mary O'Neill
Marion, a southern girl ... } Grace Marck
Mammy Dinah, a faithful servant ... } Bernice Ebbers
Peyton Bailey, owner of Bailey plantation ... } Robert Wagner
Uncle Billy, the Colonel's body servant ... } Ralph Bauman
Louise Lawton, a federal employe ... } Eleonore Eckert
Ralph Francis, who did not go to war ... } Francis Cook
Madge Young, a thoroughbred ... } Florence Wagner
Jim Rogers, a Union scout ... } Francis Reuschlein
Miss Melissy, of an inquisitive nature ... } Catherine Steinhoff

Coach and Director, Ralph Spiegelhoff

Accompanist, Miss Lauretta Uhen

Old Fashioned War Time Favorites Jack Hertell at the Organ

Hairdressing by Partee Beauty Shop

Flowers and Plants by Courtesy of Burlington Floral Co.

Wisconsin Colony. The confirmands were sponsored by Assistant Steward B. J. Mottard and his wife and made up the first class ever confirmed at that institution.

Five Burlington schools, including St. Charles, joined in observing National Child Health week in May. The students participated in a May festival, the first of its kind ever held in Burlington. The outdoor pageant, held at Athletic Park (now called Beaumont Field) in mid-May, exemplified the spirit of good health. The program included a calisthenics drill by St. Charles' second graders. School nurse, Myrtle Rimert, a St. Charles parishioner, directed the festival, assisted by the public school teachers and the Sisters. Merchants in the city co-operated in spreading the good health idea by specially arranged window displays and the American Legion offered prizes for the best health posters designed and made by school children. Ruth Wagner of St. Charles school won one of the three prizes.

The St. Charles students also participated in the community's annual Memorial Day observance. As in previous years, the children joined the procession to St. Mary's Cemetery and helped decorate each veteran's grave with a red geranium. In the program at the Lincoln monument, Francis Reuschlein, a 1925 St. Charles graduate, read the Gettysburg Address.

Mother's Day was picked by the Daughters of Isabella and the Woman's Catholic Order of Foresters as a fitting day to have their 1928 annual Communion Mass. All members met at the Knights of Columbus hall that morning and in a body, headed by their respective leaders, marched to St. Charles where the 7:30 Mass was read by their chaplain, Father Hillenbrand. Rev. Stephen Klopfer of St. John's Institute for the Deaf at St. Francis gave the sermon. A special choir under the direction of Lauretta Uhen, which was composed of about thirty members of both organizations, sang appropriate hymns to Our Blessed Mother.

On May 30 at Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Burlington native John M. Rueter, who had studied at St. Paul seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, was ordained a Catholic priest. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Rueter, and his sister and brother, Marie and Andrew Rueter, traveled to Sioux Falls to witness the ordination. Father Rueter returned to Burlington with his parents to say his first Mass at his home church, St. Mary's, on June 7.

St. Charles' annual graduation exercises were held in the church on Wednesday evening, June 13. The previous day, the eighteen members of the 1928 class made a trip to Milwaukee and St. Francis accompanied by Father Hillenbrand and several of the teachers. Father Hillenbrand delivered the graduation address and presented the diplomas. The class chose "Always Faithful" as its motto, and the American Beauty as the class flower. The graduates were:



Arthur Bauman (r1, #10)	Frances Isferding	Ruth Merrick	Norma Scheel
Robert Beix (r1, #6)	Catherine Itzin	Edward Meurer (r1, #4)	Alice Sobbe
Elizabeth Cunningham	Rosella Kornhoff	Marcella Prasch	Ruth Wagner
Anna Floryan	Alma Krift	Catherine Roter	John Weiler (r1, #1)
Mary Floryan	Eva Lohaus		

One of the class members, Mary Floryan, won first prize - a life subscription to Good Counsel magazine - in an annual school competition conducted by the Augustinian Fathers of Staten Island, New York. Her composition was on the "Life of St. Rita." Father Hillenbrand also announced the penmanship and attendance awards. Those having perfect attendance were Catherine Itzin, Francis Koenen, Albert Itzin, Martin Itzin, Eugene Naber, Norbert Ebbers, Helen Zabler, LeRoy Zabler, and Herbert Koenen. A number of St. Charles students also won prizes in the nature study work sponsored by the conservation committee of the Woman's Study club.

Reaffirming their faith in the Christian religion and expressing their devotion to the Roman Catholic church, over 200 alumni of St. Charles school banqueted in the hall on June 18 after a solemn Benediction service in the church where they had learned to worship God in childhood. Rev. Philipp Dreis of Sheboygan, founder of the association, was guest of honor at the banquet and his presence lent much to the spirit of good-fellowship that pervaded the evening's gathering.

Catholic parochial schools throughout America were declared to be the agents of good citizenship and high-minded patriotism by the after-dinner speakers. Father Dreis praised Catholic schools as tolerant and wholesome institutions of learning and said that the spiritual things they taught made them precious. He expressed his love for the St. Charles congregation and for all the people of Burlington. He said that he was going to establish an alumni association at his parish in Sheboygan to be built on the lines of the St. Charles association.

The Dominican Sisters who taught at St. Charles received credit from Father Hillenbrand for much of the success of the church school. He also thanked members of the cast of the alumni play and mentioned Ralph Spiegelhoff and Margaret Kolars, in particular, for coaching the production. Florence Wagner, as toastmistress, introduced the speakers who, in addition to the two priests, included Ralph Spiegelhoff, retiring president of the association, Harold G. Reuschlein, Herbert J. Wagner, Joe Surges, who welcomed the 1928 graduates, and Frances Isferding, president of the 1928 class, who responded.

Copies of a directory listing the names, graduation dates, occupations, and spouses of association members, were distributed. The Sister Mary Hermana Trophy, awarded annually to the class five or more years out of school with the largest percentage in attendance at the banquet, went to the class of 1920.

Loretta Ebbers sang two vocal solos, Arthur and Everett Reinardy played a violin duet, and community singing was led by Harold Reuschlein. At the business session preceding the banquet, Oswald Wagner was chosen president for the new year, with Evelyn Spiegelhoff, vice president, and Evelyn Bauman, secretary and treasurer. Of the many alumni who came from a distance to attend, Mrs. Carl Krug (nee Marie Meyers) of Newark, N. J., came the greatest distance. Both she and Mr. Krug, who was born in Lyons, were present. After the banquet the attendees held a party and dance at the Knights of Columbus hall. Music was by the Kayser orchestra.

"The future welfare of this nation depends upon the religious training of the youth of today" was the keynote of a largely attended meeting of Catholic women of southeastern Wisconsin held at Delavan in July. It was a meeting of the Burlington Deanery of the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women and the program was under the jurisdiction of Mrs. William A. Rose, of St. Charles, chairman of the deanery. Women were present from Burlington, Delavan, Elkhorn, Lake Geneva, Waterford, Kansasville, Brighton, and New Munster. In addition to Mrs. Rose, those from St. Charles who attended included Mrs. Mary Beller, vice president; Mrs. Michael J. Cunningham, director; Mesdames A. T. Spiegelhoff, William Wagner, John McCourt, Charles Beix, Louis Rein, Joseph M. Christien, William Itzin, Reinhard Mangold, and John Degen; and Misses Mary Kelly, Catherine Christien, and Cecilia Rose. Rev. Hillenbrand, spiritual advisor, also attended.

Father Hillenbrand and several of the same women attended the yearly conference of the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women held at the Holy Angels academy, Milwaukee, in October. Rev. Dreis, former pastor of St. Charles, delivered the sermon at the opening services of the conference. The work of the Burlington women in diocesan activities was given recognition again at the conference. Mrs. Beller was re-elected vice president of the council; Mrs. Fred Ebbers was appointed director; and Mrs. Rose was named again to serve on the deanery board.

St. Charles school opened the first week in September with an opening attendance of 197 pupils. On account of Tuesday being children's day at the Walworth County fair, regular work began on Wednesday. On Sunday, October 7, a 50-foot flag pole, the gift of the Holy Name Society to the school, was dedicated at ceremonies conducted by Father Hillenbrand following the 8 o'clock Mass. A fine new flag, donated by the Alumni association, was raised to the top of the pole by first grade pupils, Jack Bennett and Regina Lynch.

St. Charles' activities during the fall and Christmas seasons of 1928 were similar to those of the past years. The ladies of the parish held an apple pie and doughnut sale and card party just before Thanksgiving; and the St. Agnes Sodality had its Christmas gift sale and card party the first Monday in December. Christmas day Masses were offered at 5, 8, and 10 a.m., with special Christmas music at the 5 a.m. Mass. To help the conservation committee of the Woman's Study Club purchase and plant a living Christmas tree for the community, the school children were asked to make monetary contributions during the holiday season.

In January 1929 Sister Mary Hortense, who had taught the seventh and eighth grades of St. Charles school for nine years left for St. Cloud, Minnesota, where she was to be a member of the faculty of the College of St. Catherine. Burlington's second Father and Son banquet, sponsored by many community organizations, was held January 30 at St. Charles hall. Father Hillenbrand was chairman, with other St. Charles parishioners on various committees. At the congregation's annual meeting in January, reports for the fiscal year were heard and William Wagner was re-elected secretary and L. Reinhard Mangold, treasurer, for the coming year. The St. Ann's Society and St. Agnes Sodality also elected their officers for the new year during their January meetings.

In mid-February the Burlington papers reported that, while definite plans had not been announced, there was every reason to believe that Burlington would be the home of a large college which the Franciscan Fathers would establish on the Mrs. Theresa Baumeister and Anton Kipp farms at Bellwood. The land, on which a Milwaukee real estate firm had made a payment, was perfectly located for such an enterprise. There were some 90 acres in the Baumeister tract and some 74 in the Kipp tract, with the land lying between the interurban railway and the Fox river east of what was known as the Bellwood road. A week later it was confirmed that a graduate school to cost \$250,000 would be erected by the Franciscan Fathers during the coming summer. The announcement was received with a great deal of pleasure in Burlington as it meant another addition to the long list of advantages the city had to offer.



Also in February, it was announced that Rev. Harland J. Kuehn (pictured at left) had been named as assistant to Father Hillenbrand - the first assistant pastor assigned to the parish. Rev. Kuehn, a native of Lake Mills, had been ordained in February 1928 and for the past year had been assistant at St. Bernard's at Wauwatosa where he had made a host of friends.

(to be continued)