



### **Sr. Clara Houck**

Pictured here, Sr. Clara Houck, whose long journey to Oregon began with serving as a maid to Albrecht in Europe before accompanying the group recruited by Sr. Mary Ann Albrecht to Ohio. As a Sister of the Precious Blood, she traveled to Wisconsin and Minnesota before finally arriving in Oregon. In Oregon she lived in Jordan, Mt. Angel, Sublimity and Beaverton. She lived to see the young community grow and when the Sisters moved into the new convent at St. Mary's in Beaverton, no Sister was happier than Sr. Clara, who died at age 85 in 1905. According to the Reminiscences of Sr. Cecilia: "She was exact but motherly. She kept us contented and happy by keeping us prayerful. She had a great devotion to our Blessed Lady and was continually fingering the beads. When she would give us an instruction she used no book but spoke straight from her heart. She was a woman of great experience."

### **Sr. Benedict Arnold**

Not pictured here is another Precious Blood Sister from Ohio who was one of the foundresses. Her name was Theresa Arnold (and was given the religious name of Benedict – what were they thinking?) She desired a more contemplative life and left in 1894 to join the Adorers of the Precious Blood, a contemplative community in Portland.



### **Mother Wilhelmina Bleily**

Emma Bleily was 8 years old when the group left Ohio. She had been placed at Himmelparten for education. She wanted to leave with Fr. Albrecht's group because her friend Julia Boedigheimer's family and her favorite teacher were leaving. In time she had to leave her favorite teacher Sr. Rosa Wahl in Wisconsin, and her dear friend Julia died in Rush Lake.

Her memoirs reveal her sterling character and lovable personality. On March 25, 1887 Emma received the name Sr. Wilhelmina, in honor of our founding archbishop William Gross. On the same day she was elected the superior general and she wrote "I begged on my knees that he (the Archbishop) would appoint someone else but he replied that it was the will of God that I should take this office and that God would help me. Her three years in leadership were difficult and challenging. Later on, she had charge of the gardens – flower and vegetable – and she did beautiful embroidery work. As Sr. Celestine stated in her work, *The Dawn*, we always felt that great deference was shown to Sister Wilhelmina, even though her work was humble and laborious, but not until we were many years in the convent did we accidentally learn that she was the first Mother and the natural leader of the foundresses of our community.



### **Sr. Josephine Eifert**

Sr. Josephine was the daughter of one of the trustees in Jordan. She worked at St. Mary's Orphanage and was the first member of the community to die – in 1897. The Sisters who knew her speak about the beauty of her character, the years of patient suffering and her gladsome toil for the orphans.



### **Sr. Cecilia Boedigheimer**

According to those who knew her, Sr. Cecilia was dear and many stories abound of her use of the English language. She served as sacristan for 40 years. When it came time for the first profession of Sisters in the community on March 25, 1887, the five oldest pronounced vows and the five youngest became novices. Sr. Fidelis tells us that Sr. Cecilia indicated that all of them felt badly that only five were considered foundresses, and the other five were novices.

However, in recent years, we have a broader notion of those we consider the foundresses!



### **Sr. Gertrude Silbernagel**

Sr. Gertrude was hard working, serving as a housekeeper for many years and she was generous – offering to change your veil strip, not a simple task, when needed. She was always interested in what the teachers were doing and she loved the students. She and her sister Sr. Johanna were daughters of one of the trustees in Jordan.



### **Sr. Aloysius Bender**

Sr. Aloysius is yet another daughter of a trustee in Jordan. She was also the great-aunt of our Sr. Betty Bender and she was an avid quilt maker – without sewing machine or quilting frame! She was cheerful and energetic. For a number of years she served as superior at St. Mary's Home. These were the hard pioneer years; years before the Home received State aid. Often Sister Aloysius would wonder from whence food for the many hungry little mouths would come. But she knew that by prayer, toil, and begging, all the children were properly

clothed and fed.



### **Sr. Rose Eifert**

Sr. Rosie, as she was affectionate known, was just that “rosie”. She was loved by all because she loved everyone, without exception. When orphan boys who had grown up and returned to St. Mary's Home they would always ask to see Sr. Rosie and seems to please to reminisce with her about their childhood at St. Mary's.



### **Sr. Johanna Silbernagel**

Sr. Johanna was the youngest of the foundresses, just 17 years old when she became a novice. In spite of her youth, her resolute will proved an asset during her years of serve at the Home and during the 17 years she served on the Sisters' Council. With Sr. Johanna we have the fifth daughter of a trustee. Given their German background, it was indeed a challenge for the Sisters to go against and away from their fathers.

All of these Sisters with the exception of Sr. Clara Houck and Sr. Benedict Arnold entered the Precious Blood community while they were living in Rush Lake.



### **Sr. Magdalene Giebler**

Sr. Magdalene is the only one of this group who had not joined the Precious Blood community in Rush Lake. As the first candidate from Oregon, she entered at Christmas in 1886 and became a novice with the first group of novices on March 25, 1887. She was hard-working, tending the large garden at the Boys' Home and working in the kitchen. (Just like Sr. Ruth Etzel, she too had a wagon!)