

NEWSLETTER

April 2022



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UGRR CEREMONIES COMING – METAMORA. Mark your calendar for May 15! The Metamora Association for Historic Preservation will be joined by the Underground Railroad (UGRR) conductors' great-great granddaughter, Linda Kern Moore, in honoring brave UGRR conductors. The ceremony will be held at Oakwood Cemetery, Metamora at 1:00 on May 15. Special markers honoring Linda's conductors g-g-grandfathers, George Kern and Norman Dutton, will be dedicated. More exciting news regarding Metamora's active UGRR participation is forthcoming. Be sure to stay tuned!!

ROANOKE – On May 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the Roanoke Park Building, Linda Kern will present her program about her great-great grandfathers. Sponsored by the Woodford County Historic Society, the public is invited.



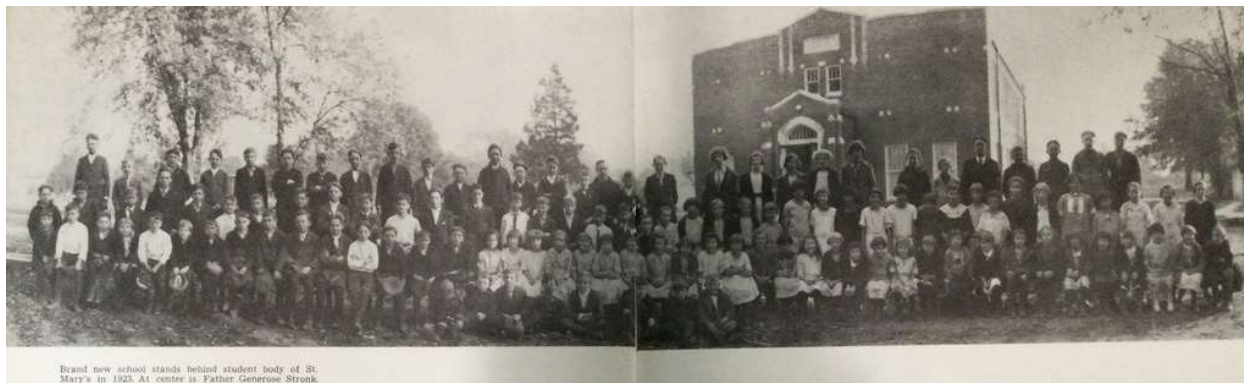
Church and monastery in about 1880. Note that front steeple is atop roof. In 1881 it was removed and rebuilt.



Residence on W. Partridge St. which was first school.



School which stood opposite church from 1890 to 1923.



Brand new school stands behind student body of St. Mary's in 1923. At center is Father Generose Strunk.

Thanks to Ron Wagner for contributing these historical pictures of St. Mary's in Metamora. Lots of familiar names...can you find any of your ancestors?

We're still looking for ANY links of St. Mary's to the Underground Railroad. However, a lot of UGRR activity took place before St. Mary's was built in 1863. The first services were held at the end of 1864.

Generally, many "conductors" on the UGRR were Congregationalist (linked to the Quakers) and Presbyterians.

German classes ended in the early 20th century when Irish sisters were transferred to St. Mary's.

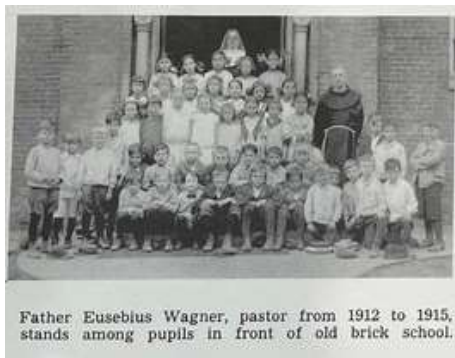


Group photo taken in 1886 is oldest known picture of St. Mary's school children. In background is wooden school which stood where sisters' convent now is located. Shown are (left to right, bottom row): Emil Giehl, James Fitzgerald, George Volz, Edward Somers, Ferdinand Nauman, Joseph Grieser, Frank Nauman, Joseph Brauning, Otto Mignot, Ferdinand Miller, Joseph Holzinger, Michael Theena. Second row (left to right): Lawrence Nauman, Maggie Knoblauch, Eva Knoblauch, Cozy Berkman, Eda Bolle, Lillian Theena, Carrie Knoblauch, Carrie Theena.

Mollie Holzinger, Stella Frantz, Otto Wiltz, Nickie Knoblauch, Leo Noirot, Henry Holzinger. Third row (left to right): Minnie Mignot, Lizzie Eckstein, Florence Holzinger, Theresa Giehl, Josie Knoblauch, Josie Holzinger, Josie Bloutz, Eva Getz, Cecelia Theena. Top row (left to right): Sister Philip, organist and teacher; Ella Theena, Minnie Brauning, Eva Frantz, Katie Knoblauch, Josie Holzinger, Katie Gangloff, Mollie Schultze, Lydia Staudemeyer, Mollie Giehl, Anna Klug, Louisa Holzinger, Rosie Holzinger, Sister Ludivicka, teacher.



Boys and girls stream out of school door in about 1908.

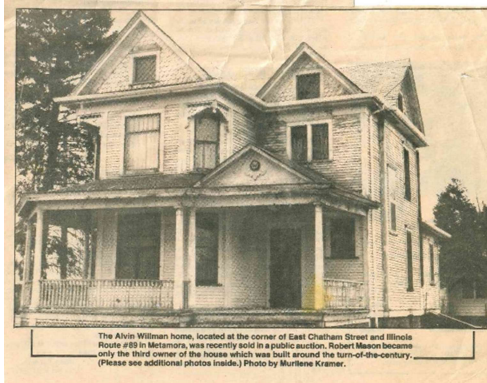


Father Eusebius Wagner, pastor from 1912 to 1915, stands among pupils in front of old brick school.



St Mary's Facts –

- The largest migration of German Catholics was around the 1840's and 1850's.
- The old brick St. Mary's school began construction in 1890. Peter Schertz sold the land for \$400.
- In 1862, Metamora was the home of the Christian, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist-Episcopal churches – with St. Mary's coming in 1863.
- When St. Mary's bought the land the church sits on, they did it in the office of Adlai Stevenson.
- Because so many members were German, the church was often referred to as the "German Catholic Church of Metamora."
- The German language was used in the church and school almost exclusively into the early 20th century.



The Alvin Willman home, located at the corner of East Chatham Street and Illinois Route #89 in Metamora, was recently sold in a public auction. Robert Mason became only the third owner of the house which was built around the turn-of-the-century. (Please see additional photos inside.) Photo by Murlene Kramer.

This picture of the Alvin Willman/Curt Breitbarth home on East Chatham appeared in the January Herald after it was purchased at auction by Mason Funeral Home. It is a Briggs home. Other Briggs homes included "Bertha Snyder, Dr. J Knoblauch (Mason's), E.E. Springer, Mrs. Heining, J.C. Irving, J.C. Snyder, and W.K. Briggs."



Karl Burmeister furnished these 1982 pics of the removal of the railroad tracks in Lowpoint.



Railroad Aftermath

Railroad ties, compressed in apparent proximity by a telephoto lens, await removal along the former right-of-way of the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio railroad spur north of Metamora. They are being sold by a private firm.

Photos By Tom Carter

A tie-sorting operation has been established at a commercial stockpile setup along Route 89 just north of Metamora.

Thanks Karl!

The Breitbarth home above was originally built for Mrs. Lena Wagner by her son, J.R. Wagner, who was in the grain elevator business. No one is quite sure when the home was actually built, but its architects were the Briggs Brothers. The Briggs Brothers were the builder of at least 10 homes in Metamora. Edwin C. and William K. Briggs began building in Metamora before 1900 and worked well into the 20th century. They are best known as the wood finishers of the 250-room Biltmore House in Asheville, N.C.

Old Schlipf Sign. Ace Newsletter Staff reporter Larry Hagemann found that Oscar Callender (1879-1950) may possibly have been the sign painter who painted the "Hot Point" sign from the Burmeister residence (the old Schlipf home.) Oscar lived in Washington and is buried in Peoria.

Two Digit Phone Numbers. The phone number on the old Schlipf sign was still only 2 digits. We haven't found anyone who knows the history of these numbers, but octogenarian Bob Remmert remembers when phone numbers were 2 digits with an additional letter.

Dating the Old Valentine Photo. Joe Theena operated a hardware store, which he bought from Frank Giehl, Jr., after selling his butcher shop. Joe later sold it in 1932. J.C. Irving was pictured and died in 1927. Elias Grove, also pictured, retired as a mail carrier in 1927. So, the picture was most likely taken in the early to mid-20's. Larry wonders why the wives weren't invited!

Contact Us

Questions, Ideas - Love to hear from you

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