

PAST STILL PRESENT

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ABUNDANT FOOD

**COME, YE THANKFUL PEOPLE, COME;
RAISE THE SONG OF HARVEST HOME;
ALL IS SAFELY GATHERED IN...**

This article first appeared in the *Archives Bulletin*, November, 1986, written by Sr. Virginia Volkerding C.P.P.S. [Editorial additions are in brackets.]

[In the harvest season when the fruits of so many laborers are gathered in] ...we have abundant cause to thank God for his generosity to us during the summer and fall and to reflect a little on our **Ottmarsheim** history.



Jina Lee - http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Comucopia_of_fruit_and_vegetables_wedding_banquet.jpg



Beggar Girls by Kamalolmolk, 1889
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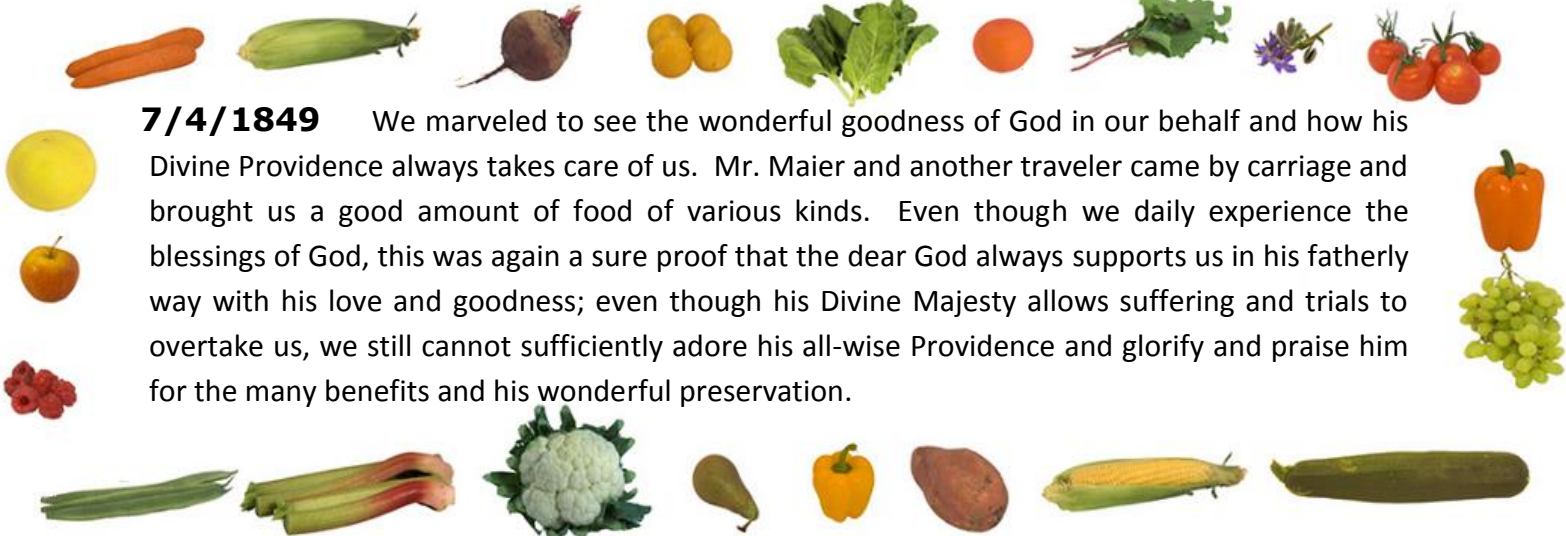
The Sisters were not only **evicted from Steinerberg in 1848**, but they were also at the point of starvation. They lived largely on alms but their resources were sadly strained when the **government began sending 30-40 poor people to them for handouts**.

At the end of August they left Steinerberg and headed for Blodelsheim in the Alsace. Instead they were guided by events to settle in **Ottmarsheim**. The people there provided them with a home and food. The days of starvation were over, for wagonloads of food began to arrive; the *DIARY* attests to that.

Following are several excerpts from the *DIARY* which describe the generosity of their new neighbors.

7/4/1849

We marveled to see the wonderful goodness of God in our behalf and how his Divine Providence always takes care of us. Mr. Maier and another traveler came by carriage and brought us a good amount of food of various kinds. Even though we daily experience the blessings of God, this was again a sure proof that the dear God always supports us in his fatherly way with his love and goodness; even though his Divine Majesty allows suffering and trials to overtake us, we still cannot sufficiently adore his all-wise Providence and glorify and praise him for the many benefits and his wonderful preservation.

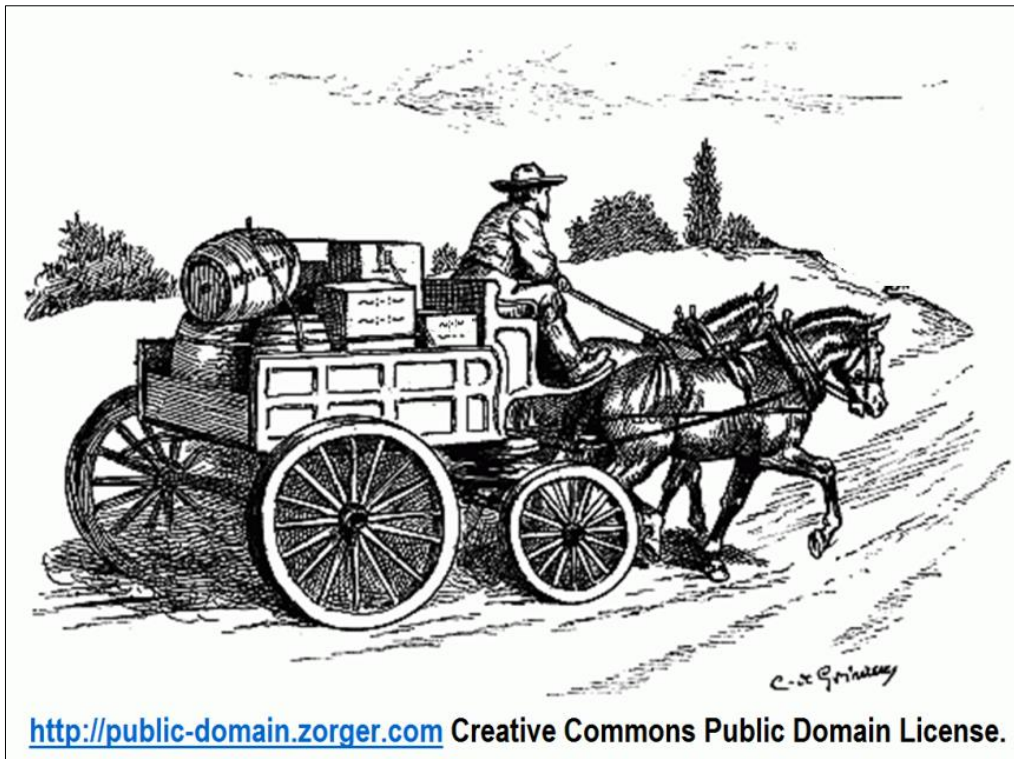


9/7/1849 Something very remarkable happened in our convent. For several days already, our Very Venerable Spiritual Mother M. Coelestine was concerned that we would be without butter and she would have to buy some. Since she had such a great trust in the **Child Jesus, she said to him before his statue that he should go somewhere and beg butter for us ...** Finally the Feast of Mary's Birth came, and because this is our main feast the Spiritual Mother wanted to give the sisters a special joy by setting out some pastry on the table; however, because there was no butter and in our circumstances we had to be sparing with money knowing that everything was expensive, the good Spiritual Mother realized that her wish might be frustrated. She had not, however, lost her trust in the Child Jesus . . . She went before the statue of the Child Jesus again and said to him, "Now, Little One, if you want the Sisters to have pastry tomorrow, you must bring some butter or they will not receive any." This day passed by but there was no butter. Finally, as evening came, a miracle occurred. Someone came and brought us **a whole bucket full of butter.** . . . This miracle caused us to marvel greatly.



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11/8/1849 The all-gracious Providence of God showed itself to us through St. Anne in an unmistakably wonderful manner. Very unexpectedly, people from **Blozen** [*location unknown, may have been in the vicinity of Colmar, but that seems an unlikely distance*] brought us **a wagonload of provisions pulled by two horses.**



What is still more remarkable was that a blind man whose name was Joseph had collected these provisions for us from the people, and besides this, both of the horses were blind. This Joseph, who was blind, came along with the wagon. He had already done us much good and said that in a few days another load would be coming so that through the winter we would have sufficient food. This miracle of Divine Goodness we ascribed to the Child Jesus.

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11/19/1850 Divine Providence was again wonderfully shown us when benefactors brought a wagonload of provisions drawn by two horses six hours away from here, that is, from **Blotzheim**. Pious young women had performed this good work. They gathered these provisions from the people at their place, and since he was making the trip, a good man, without charge, brought the provisions in his vehicle.



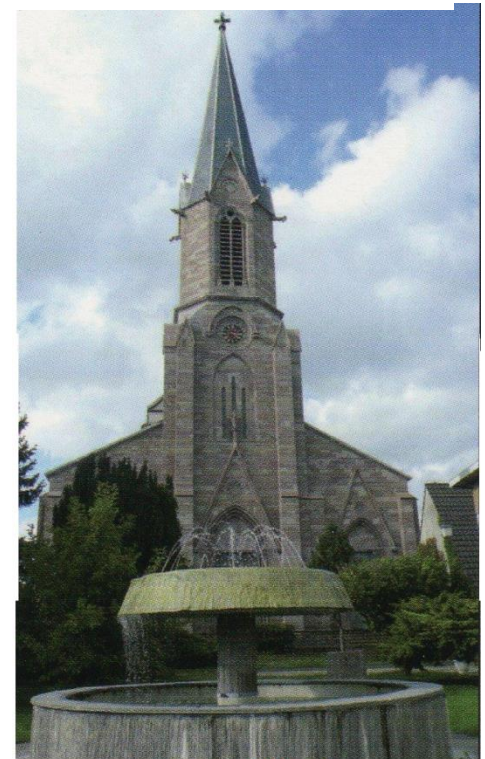
An old house in Blotzheim, Alsace, France
<http://fr.db-city.com/France-Alsace-Haut-Rhin-Blotzheim>



12/11/1850 The dear Child Jesus sent us again a wagonload of provisions from **Bartenheim**. A number of good, pious people provided it and had it delivered here through pure kindness and Christian love.

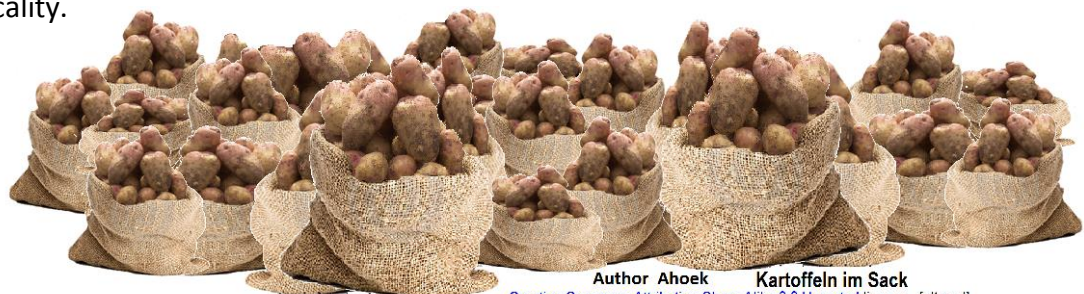
This also happened some days ago when a wagonload of provisions came from **Blotzheim**. Good pious people from there had also provided and brought these provisions to us. With these manifestations of the all bountiful Providence of God, we cannot sufficiently thank his Divine Majesty and praise the unending love that he as a Father is so wonderfully mindful of us poor creatures.

12/31/1856 The dear God has richly blessed us again during this year with our own planting as also through rich alms from goodhearted people who are eager to venerate and glorify the Precious Blood through their almsgiving. In late fall the man who had already come a number of times from **Blotzheim** brought us provisions such as **potatoes, vegetables** and the like, which children there had gathered for us, and they came along with the wagon drawn by two horses. These children had joy in bringing us the alms they had gathered, and we had great joy receiving them.



church in Blotzheim
http://www.info-brocantes.com/manifestation_49579.html

Moreover, we have received, in all, **twenty-two sacks of potatoes and also vegetables** from the people in our own locality.



Author Ahoek Kartoffeln im Sack
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12/31/1857 The people here in **Ottmarsheim**, as also in outlying villages, have been very kind to us, so that during this autumn alone we received as gifts fifty-five sacks of potatoes besides other vegetables and provisions, usually coming in wagons from **Bartenheim, Blotzheim, and Haessingen** [now called **Hésingue**]. These benefactors have been faithful to us from the beginning even until now.

Where are all these places?

The sisters traveled from **Steinerberg** (Switzerland) to **Blodelsheim** in the Alsace (France) crossing the Rhine River. [Blodelsheim is the town where *Magdalene Weber* (later, *Mother Theresa*) attended a mission as a young girl.] Blodelsheim did not welcome them, so they went on to **Ottmarsheim** where they stayed.

People in towns near and not-so-near brought food to the sisters--from **Bartenheim, Blotzheim, Haessingen** [now called **Hésingue**] and **Blozen**. [Blozen's location cannot be verified; it may have been in the vicinity of Colmar.]



Distances in miles (mi) [1st number is as the crow flies; 2nd number is by roads]

from Steinerberg, Switzerland to Blodelsheim, France: 75 mi, 105 mi

from Blodelsheim to Ottmarsheim: 7 mi, 7 mi

from Bartenheim to Ottmarsheim: 11 mi, 16 mi

from Blotzheim to Ottmarsheim: 13 mi, 18 mi

from Hésingue [Haessingen] to Ottmarsheim: 13 mi, 18 mi

from Blozen to Ottmarsheim: 18 mi, 25 mi [best guess]

<http://www.francedistancecities.com/distance-calculator.php>

<https://www.google.com/maps>

12/31/1858 So now we have again reason to say a thousand, thousand times thanks for the last year in which the dear God helped us so wonderfully in everything, for his goodness and mercy to us is without bounds. Where the need is greatest, there God's help is nearest, and this we experience daily. It is wonderful how the people here and in the surrounding area are so good and generous to us. This autumn, again, we received wagonloads of provisions. In all, **forty-four sacks of potatoes besides other vegetables were brought.**

The diarist **closed the year of 1858** with this statement:

The whole little convent was really in good condition in every respect; I wish it could stay that way. For what is better, sweeter and more

precious than peace, love, and unity, which we enjoy to the full. We are all one heart and soul. We just cannot sufficiently thank God for all the rich gifts and graces we have already received from his goodness. May the dear God continue to support us with his grace. **AMEN! AMEN!**

AMEN! THANKS BE TO GOD!

Translations of the *DIARY* by Sr. Marie Kleine

