

There were choke cherry trees hanging over the piles of ties— and in season we sat on the tie pile and ate choke cherries until we really couldn't talk. If you've ever eaten them, you'll know.

Carol Borman has done a remarkable job of compiling the history of her family. It can be found in the resource center at the Stearns County History Museum.¹⁰ Carol is the wife of Donald Borman and she has a brother, Bob Zabinski, who is also a parishioner. His wife is Nancy (Yaeger). Bob was president of St. Mary's Parish Council in 2002-2003.

XAVIER BRAUN DESCENDANTS GATHERED TO TELL THE STORY OF THEIR FAMILY

"Xavier Braun was born in Alsace-Lorraine, Germany, April 16, 1813. He was reared in his native province, and as a young man served in the German army. In 1846, with his wife, Magdalena Lindel, and his two children, Mary and Theofiel, he came to America, and took up farming in Missouri. In 1853 he came to Stearns County, and made a claim of one hundred twenty acres in sections 25 and 26, St. Cloud Township. . . He secured his land at \$1.25 an acre. He erected a log cabin, and went through many interesting experiences incident to pioneer life. In 1866 the log cabin was replaced with a frame structure.

*Mr. Braun was respected by all who knew him. He died February 29, 1904; his wife died June 12, 1912." It is also reported that Mr. Braun assisted at the first mass ever read in St. Cloud."*¹¹



Xavier Braun and his wife, Magdalena (Lindel) and six of their eight children: Lizzie Cook; Xavier, Magdalena; Center, Mary Frisz; Top, Barbara Doerner, John, Frank, Greta Ernst. SHMA (Wm. B. Mitchell, *History of Stearns Co.*)

According to the History of Stearns County by William Mitchell, an item reports: "On May 30, 1875, Bishop Rupert Seidenbusch was consecrated in St. Mary's church and resided at the parsonage for a year, until he purchased an Episcopal residence. Five months later Abbot Alexius Edelbrock received abbatial benediction (elevated to abbot) in the same church. The preparations for all these great functions engaged much of the pastor's time. Early in 1876 he organized a society for the support of the church. It was called the St. Joseph Church Society and its first officers were: President, Xavier Braun; vice-president, J. H. Billig; treasurer, F. Battenburg; secretary, G. Hagedorn."

One of Xavier's sons, Frank had a large family. The oldest was Rose, who married Alphonse Fischer and they farmed one hundred sixty acres in Mayhew Lake, north of St. Cloud. The Fischers had seven children, among them Cyril who married Mae Heim. Cyril and Mae had seven children. Their son, Jim Fischer married Irene Ernst, and they are the parents of Rosanne Fischer of St. Mary's Parish.



Gen Ernst, Vic Doerner (son of Barbara Braun and Edward Doerner), Madaelin Brown and Isabel Cook. Confirmation Day, ca 1890.

(Photo courtesy of Gertrude Doerner Krebsbach, a descendant of Xavier, a present day member of St. Mary's.)

Rosanne, the great great grand daughter of Xavier, brought four Fischer brothers and sisters together to share memories of growing up in the parish. None, except Rosanne, is currently a member of the parish, but they all grew up there, attended St. Mary's School and received the sacraments. They are Jim and Irene, Marge (Fischer) and Bernard Kersting, Doris (Fischer) whose husband is Elred Wicker, and Eugene, whose wife is Joanne (Meyer.). Rosanne has three children, Abraham Pineda-Fischer, Laura Pineda-Fischer, and Francis Pineda-Fischer, who were not present at the gathering.

The Fischers had many stories to tell of old family memories, and reminisced about the old days at St. Mary's. Take, for instance, the family reunions at Alphonse Braun farm on the original Xavier Braun homesite, where they sang more verses of "Schnitzelbank" as more beer was passed around. And how Frankie Fischer in first grade couldn't pronounce his f's so when asked his name he said "Prankie Pischer" and the nun scolded him and kept him after school. This story still sets the family to laughing until they are teary-eyed. Marge Kersting told about the Harmonica band that Sister Alvin organized and directed in seventh grade. They shared pictures of the Boy Scouts preparing for a camping trip with a money-raiser, and class pictures with the boys in short trousers, the girls in cotton dresses of the thirties. And

the large classes of forty-five to fifty children. Eugene told about Msgr. Lorusung who, in the forties taught a class in agronomy to the eighth grade boys, and then, had them plant trees in the rectory and school yards. And he recalled how he appeared, dressed in cassock with its pink buttons down the front and biretta topped with a matching pink pom pom. He made an impressive figure as he passed out the report cards.

Although she grew up in Minneapolis, Rosanne visited her grandparents, Cyril and Mae often, and knew her cousins, aunts and uncles. "I have wonderful memories of the colored fountain in the center of Lake George and our time spent paddle-boating on the lake and skating on it in the winter. I also remember going to Mass with my grandmother at St. Mary's. We used to walk through a tunnel that brought us under Division Street and up over to the other side near the church. My Grandpa Cyril was very active in the Knights of Columbus."

There was talk of the depression years and Bernard Kersting said he had heard too much about those years from his mother. They all agreed that they got sick of rice pudding and homemade noodles. "Even though ground beef cost only five cents a pound, who could afford it!" Doris Wicker described the washtubs full of beans or onions or tomatoes that had to be put up in the fall. Gene recalled the annual parish report that listed the parishioners and the amounts of their yearly contributions. Jim sold Catholic Digest on the steps of the

church between masses for ten cents a copy. There were rules, such as no dancing or partying on Saturday nights - this was the time for preparation for Sunday. But there was some controversy about whether this was the bishop's or the parents' rule.

The church then, in the 1940's, had two side altars, and Gene recalled that three masses might be going on simultaneously as he served at one of the side altars. He said that when they served for a wedding the altar boys held a white rope across the aisle at the entrance to remind the groom that they should tip the boys, or they would hold the bridal couple back in the church. Knights of Columbus, Christian Mothers, Corpus Christi processions, Rogation day processions in the spring, they remembered them all.



Rosanne Fischer, Great Granddaughter of Xavier Braun. She is coordinator of education for the St. Cloud Diocesan Mission Office and President of the St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council. (SMCA)

Rosanne, has always felt an affinity to St. Cloud with her grandparents and relatives here. She graduated from the College of St. Catherine and has lived and worked in various places, which include Alaska, Chicago and Nicaragua, but when it was time to come home, that was to St. Cloud. She has roots not only on her father's side, but her mother's as well. Two of her maternal Grandmother's brothers are members of St. John's Monastery, Fr. Michael Marx, who edited "Worship" Magazine for many years, and Fr. Paul Marx, who is still involved in the organization he founded, Human Life International. Two of her grandmothers' sisters joined the Benedictine monastery, S. Ann who resides at St. Scholastica, and S. Virgene, who helped found a Benedictine Monastery in Utah. Rosanne is very active in the life of St. Mary's parish. She was elected President of the Parish Pastoral Council in 2003. Professionally she is coordinator of mission education for the Diocese at the Mission Office, next to St. Mary's.¹²

Going on one hundred and fifty years since he came to St. Cloud, Xavier Braun lives on.

RICHTERS

ARMELLA SCHIMNICH'S FAMILY DESCEND FROM EARLY RICHTERS

Armella (Stockinger) Schimnich (Mrs. Philip) of Sauk Rapids, has done a great deal of research into her family history and has carefully recorded it, along with pictures and clippings that she has preserved. Armella lives in Sauk Rapids with her husband Phillip. Her parents were Francis X. Stockinger and Ophelia (Tillie) (Richter). Armella's and Philip's daughter, Kaye, has been an organist and music minister at St. Mary's and a parishioner for many years.

Armella tells of John P. Richter, her grandfather, who was born in St. Cloud April 3, 1860, the son of John F. and Elizabeth (Noel) Richter, natives of the Rhineland in Germany, who came to American in the 1850's. They came via