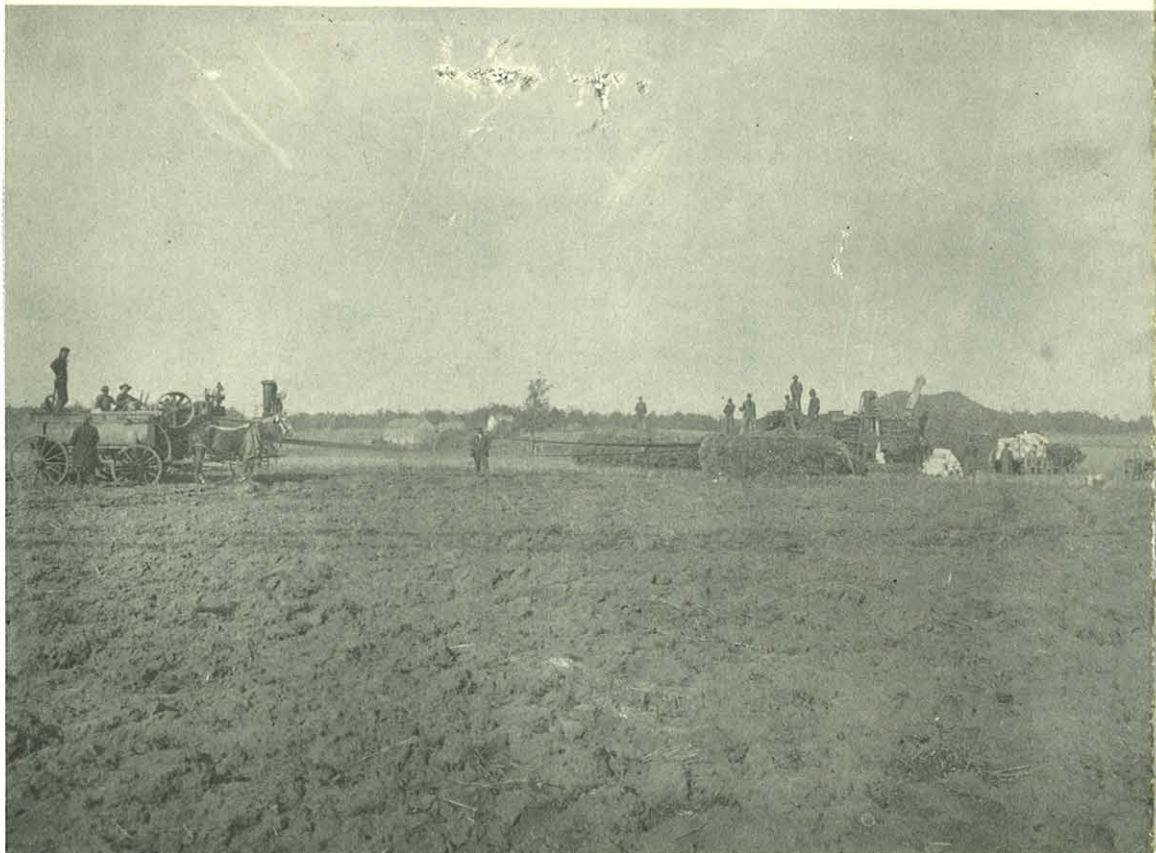




Eich family, maple sugaring

Thrashing



We did all our own sausage making, and rendered lard, thirty, forty gallons at a time. We used to butcher one beef, and four or five pigs at one time. It was a week's job. We had a six-horse gas engine on a saw rig, and we had to pour hot water through to warm it up, otherwise the meat we put through would freeze up on us. After it got good and warm, then we could put the meat through. We cut it in smaller pieces, and then put it through. You couldn't turn it by hand; it was much too hard. We had some trees out in the woods that ran like a "Y," and we put a heavy pulley across it. Then we put a couple of posts down below, and made a winch on there, that we turned with a rope. You had to have this for beef, to hang them high to cool off, and so that the dogs couldn't get at them. We butchered enough to last all year. We butchered our own chickens, too.

The observance of Rogation Days—revived in 1974—and special prayers for successful crops on other feast days were carefully observed by the pastor and his flock:

Rogation Days

Saturday the Feast of St. Mark, Rogation Day, 8:00 procession down the cemetery road up to the end of the school grounds. Rosary, High Mass. (*April 14, 1931*)*

On the feast of St. John, the Church has a special blessing for wine. If anyone wishes to have wine blessed they may bring their wine along to Mass and after Mass the wine will be blessed.

Thursday is a Mass in thanksgiving for a fruitful harvest. (*August 15, 1884*)*

This week is the Feast of Mary, Help of Christians. After the Mass there will be May Devotions. Please come diligently so that we can pray the Rosary in common to thank God for rain this week and also to ask for more favorable weather. (*May 12, 1888*)*

The Litany of Saints will be recited to plead for God's blessing upon this earth. (*May 25, 1888*)*

Pray for rain. We need it badly. (*August 3, 1941*)*

Before the High Mass, seeds, garden and field fruits will be blessed. (*August 18, 1890*)*

The priest passed on God's graces:

Blessings

Don't forget the Blessing of Herbs on August 15. The import of the prayers is that God may give effect to the medicinal properties of these plants; e.g., sage, carrots, chamomile flowers, etc. Therefore, bring flowered or medicinal plants. (*August 6, 1930*)*

Before high Mass today, I shall bless the herbs and flowers brought here to the Communion rail. This old Catholic practice recalls the odor of sweet-smelling flowers that remained in our Blessed Lady's tomb after her being taken into heaven. In time of storms or other dangers, some of these materials are burned as a kind of offering to the Blessed Virgin to obtain her help or protection. (*August 15, 1948*)*

One storm which raised havoc throughout the Collegeville area was the cyclone of June 27, 1894. *The Record* of June 1894 reported:

*Cyclone
of 1894*

At 8:30 this evening a violent cyclone struck this place and in the space of a few seconds changed a scene of romantic beauty into one of ghastly desolation. The cyclone formed somewhere south of the lake and took a course straight for the University. After wrecking the laundry, the voracious funnel struck the south end of the Industrial School, taking off the roof and throwing out the western wall of the second floor. The pupils had just gone into their dormitory and were soon hustled into the main building. The wind tore out by the roots the beautiful trees before the house, rippled up eaves, battered the weather station, demolished chimneys and windows, destroyed the roof lights of the photography gallery, swept off the roof and walls of the bakery, wrecked the engine house, hen house, pig pen, slaughter house, smoke house, shoeshop, carpenter and blacksmith shop, and the beautiful barn. The extent of the damage cannot be realized fully at this moment. \$30,000 is a low estimate. All the buildings were of brick.

No lives were lost, and no serious injuries sustained.

The cyclone continued its course through the timber for a mile or more, mowing down trees and carrying away farm houses. No one is reported missing.

For the first time in its history, St. John's has gone through the distressing ordeal of a cyclone. Storms in previous years effected some damage as, for instance, that of July 25, 1882 at 4:00 p.m., which carried away the entire tin roofing of the church and destroyed much good timber in our forests, but none could compare with that which came upon us on this sad evening.



1934 storm



*Monastery after
1898 tornado*

Cutting logs for cabin, 1974



We have reason to be thankful to God that we mourn not the loss of any member of the house or anyone connected with it.

Parishioners found hens and sausages from St. John's on their property, in some cases miles away. The next day the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* reported:

Terrible cyclone struck St. John's University at Collegeville at 8:30 p.m., totally wrecking the Industrial School and all the outbuildings, such as bakery, barn, carpenter shop, slaughter house, engine house, laundry, and shoe-shop. Roof of the main building is badly damaged and countless windows broken. Damage about \$30,000. Happily no lives lost.

The homes of parishioners Sebastian Meyer, Peter Rau, and Alois Himsl were damaged. Barbed wire fences, shrubbery, and some cattle were destroyed.

Fr. Abbot Alexius Edelbrock, OSB, then in New York wrote:

Job said, "God gave and God took away: the name of the Lord be praised." There was a time when those buildings were not there. I am ever so much pleased that no one was hurt. It would afford me great pleasure to help you but you know my inability. There is power in unity and if each one will do his duty the buildings may rise anew and on a grander scale. You and St. John's have my sympathy and best wishes. Don't lose courage.

Storms, such as the "blizzard of the century" in January 1975, all but cancelled church services. The winter of 1975 must have been as snow-filled as the winter of 1895:

Blizzards

Note: Because of the great snowstorm which blew all day Wednesday after it had snowed heavily all day

Tuesday already, it blocked all the roads so that people hardly got through after the storm had let up. As a consequence there were very few people in church. (March 29, 1895)*

Gypsies The parishioners were subject to more than just storms. Occasionally, especially between 1928 and 1938, gypsies passed through Stearns County and the parish. Catherine Huschle told this story:

One day I saw a caravan of gypsies coming, and from the talk I know what that meant: "Be careful when gypsies are around." So I took off, I ran, I ran, I ran, across the road to the schoolhouse. I slammed the door and was so winded I could not talk. The schoolteacher just asked "What's wrong, what's wrong?" I just had to point and she looked and knew.

We always heard that it was better to keep the gypsies happy, so we fed them. In a short time the gypsies passed out of the existence of this parish, they moved on, never to be seen again around here.

Mrs. Tony Wasner reported a similar experience with gypsies:

I remember so well, when I was in the first grade that gypsies came along here and we would watch for them, and we were deathly afraid of gypsies. They used to stop and want to park there or want water. Many times this one school teacher (she might not want me to mention her) was just as afraid of the gypsies as we were. We had two outhouses here, I remember real well, and when we saw them come, we all packed into these two outhouses, the boys in one, and the girls and the teacher in the other, and we would lock the doors because we were so afraid of these gypsies. There was no road, we walked across the field to the school.

They would steal from you, steal your food, and they wouldn't harm you in any other way. I do remember that many times that we would lock the door to the school when we saw them coming, and all stayed inside. But there was no way to close off the windows; if they wanted to come in and look in, they could see in. This way if we had packed into the outhouses they could see that the school was empty. There weren't that many kids, we could all get into them! I would say that there weren't more than fifteen or sixteen kids in that school. They were only from that area. Not Flyntown, because it wasn't there yet. The only other school was the brick one, and the one down by Robert Pflueger's.

When a family experienced sickness or death, parishioners and neighbors contributed their help and sympathy:

Home remedies

My sister swallowed a bunch of pills and I had to run and get Mrs. Heckner. She asked if I had any milk at home, I said, "Yes." "Get that fresh milk and force it down her." When she put down as much milk as she could she then took a feather and tickled her throat and the whole works came up. We could not run to the doctor every time.

I read in the mailbox that someone wanted a remedy for skin itch and skin infection. So I'd like to recommend *Stinkkatzenoel* (skunk oil) to him. It's true, one can get it in the drug store, but it is expensive and one never gets the real thing either. Therefore, it is better if one has the opportunity to hunt for himself such a perfumed animal, skin it, and then fry the fat out. The fat heals good and quickly. I even healed *Salzfluss* (ring worm) with it. Our child had a large *Grindflecken* (cradle cap) on his forehead. The *Grind*

always came back after a few washings and cleanings until I rubbed in some skunk oil a couple times. At that the *Grind* healed and stayed away.

Diphtheria

Diphtheria brought terror to the parishioners. Patients suffered and hoped that they wouldn't contaminate their family, friends, or neighbors. No one ever really gave too much thought about going to the hospital; it was too far and unheard of. The doctors came to the house. George Klein recalls back in 1918 when he had diphtheria:

There was this French doctor who came over and looked at my throat and said: "You have it, but you'll be okay." He gave me a quart of whiskey and left.

However, some were not as lucky:

Henry died of diphtheria, he was buried at night. John dug the grave, but everyone was scared to dress him up for the burial. John said: "I will dress him up, I am not scared."

This past week the two sons of John Deisenrieder died, the one on Friday evening, the other on Saturday. Because they died from a contagious sickness, they may not be buried publicly.

Funerals of those who died an easier death were social events. The neighbors came to the house where the body was laid out to sit, talk, reminisce, and give comfort to the living. Loyal friends would sit up all night, visit, and sip a few drinks. Some funerals became happy gatherings of sad people. Funeral homes were not necessary for years as the parishioners felt that the deceased should spend the night before his burial in his own home. Friends considered that the only thing to do was to spend one last night with the

one they loved and to pray the Rosary for him. The Rosary was not led by the priest, however, but by a member of the parish. For thirty-five years Sebastian Meyer led the Rosary until his own death in 1951, at which time George Klein led it.

Horses were common to the Colledgeville scene until the late 1930's, both for work and travel. When the parishioners traveled to Mass in carriages, besides renting a pew they also rented a stable from St. John's for the horses to stay during Mass. Horses may not have been as dangerous as cars, but Steve Sauer reported:

*Horses and
buggies*

One day we had a horse run away. After Mass, on the way home, something broke on the buggy and the horses started to run. I could handle them then, but my father quickly grabbed for the lines and he was over two hundred pounds; he knocked me off and then he fell off the buggy, too. He always told me not to give the horses so many oats.

Two seated buggies caused other problems, as Frank Merdan recalled:

We had a nice, two-seated buggy, the kind we used to go to church in. We always wanted to have it nice and clean. Right in front of the house, was a pot hole, so we just backed into it. The hind seat was loose but I didn't know it. So I went on top of the buggy, and took a pail of water, and held on to the seat, and I fell down head first.

Mrs. Gertrude Meyer described what it was like going to church in the winter with the horses:

A farmer's barn stood on the north side of St. John's where the road turns off around the new gymnasium. The father or older son of the family would drive to church to let the rest of the family off. Then he would



Matthew Reisinger's alpha grape vineyard in 1920's

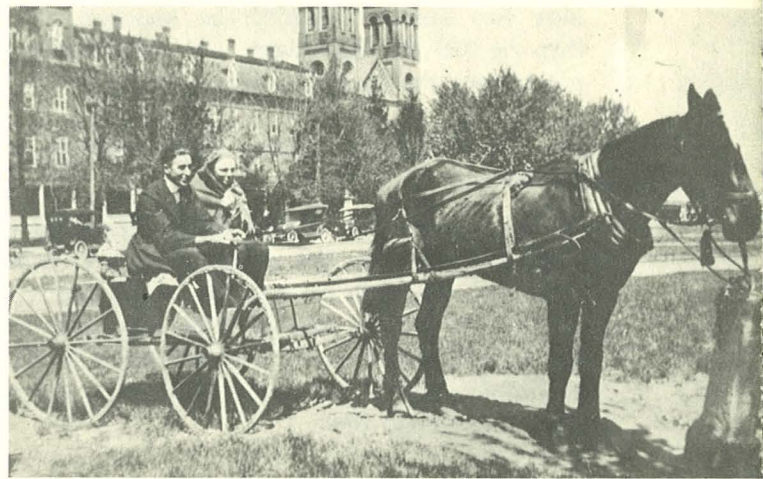


George Gill with hands full of bees

Horse and buggy days at St. John's



Steve Salzer at well

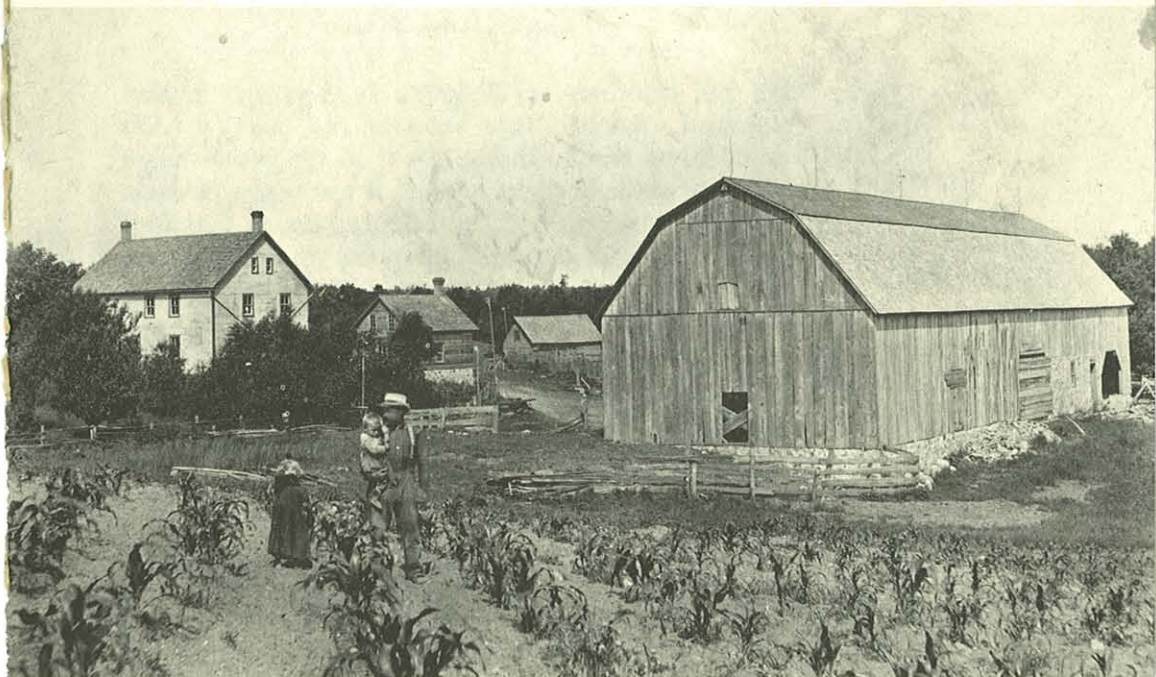


Louis Neussendorfer and team



*Log house built in 1890, by Sebastian Meyer,
possibly the oldest house in the area*

Matthew Reisinger homestead after remodeling in the early 1900's



drive to the "farmer's barn" to unhitch the horses and put them in the barn. At the end of services he would go back to hitch up the horses and drive to church to pick up the family members. Some people lived far away from church.

Wolves

One morning we were crossing to catechism; it was winter and it was pretty cold. We were crossing a big field by Himsl's and in the field was a big strawstack in which wolves slept. Three wolves came out right in front of us and we were pretty cold that morning. They showed their teeth; we didn't know what to do, so we hollered and they ran away. After that we went into Himsl's.

Walking

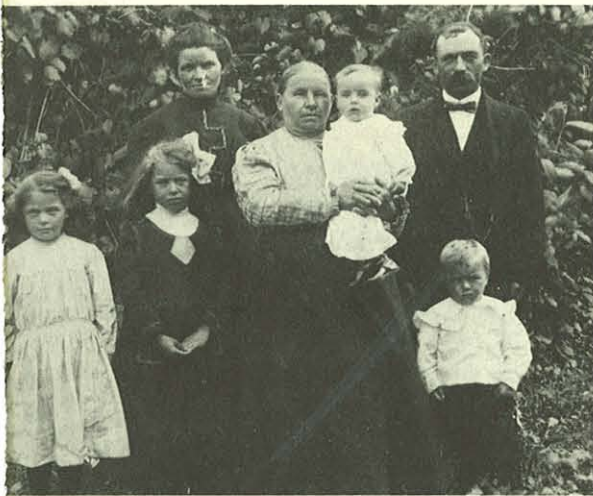
Walking, perhaps more than buggy rides, was the usual way to visit the neighborhood or go to school or church. For Mrs. Frances Studniski, who still farms in the parish, walking was "a way of life":

Walking, walking, walking. That was the way of life. It was easier then, because they were used to it. Five miles walking is still today five miles of walking; time has not changed that.

We had catechism on Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon. Sunday high Mass in the morning. We would bring our lunch and eat it in the power house with one of the brothers because it was warm in there. Then we would go back to the catechism in the afternoon. Then after catechism the priest would make sure that we all went to Vespers at 3:30. It was getting dark by then so we could go home.



*Henry Eder
family*



Michael Fruth family



Mary and Catherine Huschle

Fortieth wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Reisinger

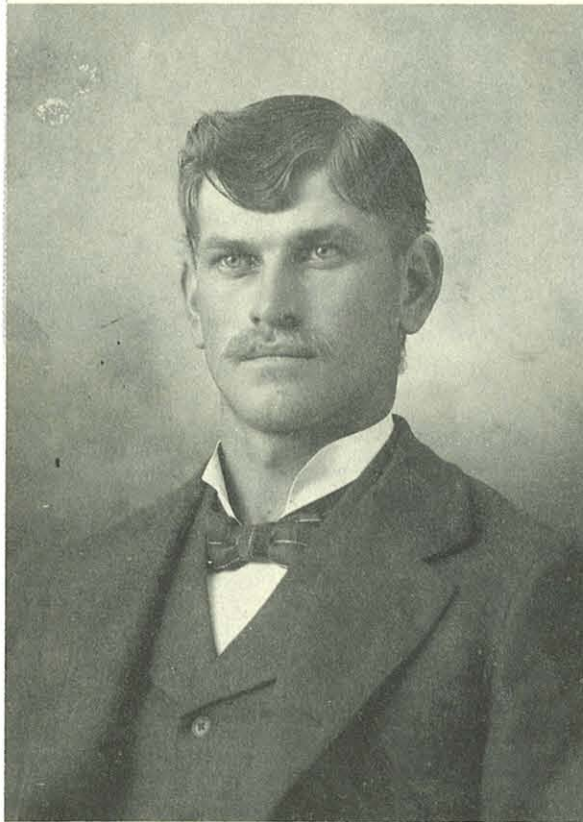




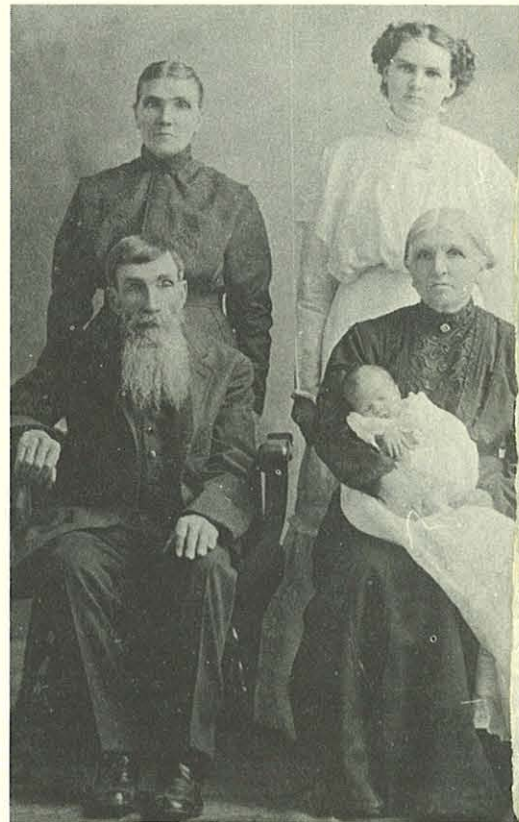
*Matthew Reisinger (great-grandfather),
Cecilia Neussendorfer (grandmother),
Bernadine Braeger (mother), and
Beverly Braeger (daughter)*



*Bloch baby wearing baptismal
dress worn by 35 other
Gillitzer grandchildren*



Alois Sauerer



*Peter and Philomena Eich (great-grand-
parents), Theresa Gretsches (grandmother),
Mary Brinkman (mother), and Andrew
Brinkman (son) in 1910*



*Michael Fruth (great-grandfather)
George (grandfather),
Robert (father), and Ernest Fruth (son)*



Cecelia Reisinger, age two

*George Klein (great-grandfather), Roman Klein (grandfather),
Donald Klein (father), and Troy Klein (son)*

