

Sublimity: Shared Visions in a Rural Community

by Beth VanVeen

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The name Sublimity implies tranquility and peace, which is what many of the settlers who came to the Willamette Valley were searching for. In 1852, six years before statehood was established, Sublimity received its official name. The name Sublimity was selected by James Denny because of the “fine vista and sublime scenery” in the hills around the town.¹ There are three groups that have left a lasting impact on Sublimity, the first settlers who shared the yeoman vision, the wave of German Catholics who arrived in the 1870s and left the longest lasting impact on the town, and the Sisters of the Precious Blood whose ideals demonstrate their dedication to faith as well as the ideals of the communitarian spirit. Each of these groups had a shared vision; they worked together, worshiped together and did virtually all of their activities together. They relied heavily on each other for support in order to build a thriving community. Without each other’s mutual aid, these groups would not have had much of an impact; they shaped the town and helped to contribute to the ideals, which gave the community its strength. The people that made up these three groups were searching for identity and purpose within the structure of the group they were a part of. The communitarian spirit held each of these groups together, yet each group held a different set of values and principles, which shaped the way in which they lived, these values fostered their ability to thrive and contribute to the lasting ideologies that shaped the town of Sublimity.

The first section of my paper will explore the ideals of the frontier and how it came to be

that these groups arrived here. Each of these groups played an important role in the development of Sublimity, not only as residents but also as people who laid the foundations for generations to come. These groups left behind a value system that would be practiced by their children and grandchildren, the ideals of worship, spirituality and commitment to community over one’s individuality. The evidence left behind from these groups suggests that communitarian was not only a necessity for survival but also a shared value by each of these groups.

I will first provide the detailed narrative of each of these groups, which demonstrates their value system as well as their ideals of community. The second half of my paper will be more of an expansive analysis of these three groups.

The first group I will focus on will be a group of settlers who had ties to the South and shared the yeoman vision of using a small amount of their land to sustain themselves and preserving the rest for their future generations. The second group, the German Catholics arrived in the 1870s and their lineage served as a force that preserved the ideals practiced by their children and grandchildren. The third group was the Sisters of the Precious Blood who made their way to Sublimity via Oregon’s Jordan Valley and resided in Sublimity from 1885-1891; the Sisters later became the Sisters of St. Mary. Their ideals were similar to the German Catholics and were able to be carried on because their environment fostered their belief system. Though there were other groups who had an impact on Sublimity these three shared a similar set of values that helped to

¹ www.henrystrobel.com/saintboniface

establish the community's foundation and ideals; even though two of them eventually diminished, they had a large impact on the shaping of the community.

One thing that should be noted is that I rely heavily on Dean Mays book *Three Frontiers*, which provides useful data on the early settlers of Sublimity. It should be noted that Dean May does not separate these German Catholics as its own group, implying that their arrival had minimal impact on the town. I however see the arrival of the German Catholic population as quite significant in that their legacy is what has shaped this town and their descendants are large part of the population today.

The second part of my paper will explore and analyze the marked differences in each of these groups. I will then discuss the values and beliefs of these groups and why they survived or diminished. I will look at the impact that modernity had on each of these groups as well as their resistance to it. I will also explore the common threads that led to the lasting impact on the ideals of community.

The settlement of the expansive frontier provided new opportunities for each of these groups. Fredrick Jackson Turner stated that the frontier was "the meeting point between savagery and civilization."² The frontier provided one with the opportunity to begin life again in a new environment that was not confined to eastern ideals. Each of the groups that came west had hopes of a new life that allowed them to live out their ideals in a rural setting. The frontier also provided economic opportunity as well as to make oneself a prosperous through the expansive terrain of the west. Though the newcomers to the West were not always looking for economic gain. The first settlers of Sublimity who were principally yeomen farmers were looking to escape the hierarchy of the planter class, while the Sisters as well as the German Catholics were searching for a place in which they could practice their faith. Culturally, the frontier allowed the

² Turner, Fredrick Jackson, *The significance of the Frontier in American History* (New York, Ungar, 1963) p. 28

German immigrants to resist assimilation. The frontier provided an environment that was more conducive to resistance than the environment in the east. The frontier gave each of these groups an opportunity to settle and eventually create a new culture for themselves and their families, which was nurtured and maintained by the communitarian spirit. The first groups of settlers to Sublimity held the ideal of communitarianism within their kin/neighbor groups, which served to nurture their survival on the frontier.

In 1853, a group of 98 members of the United Brethren in Christ Church, which opposed slavery and secret societies, came by ox train from Indiana, arriving in the Willamette Valley near Albany in September. They established churches and schools there and later John F. Brewer, in search of more land for the members, came to the Sublimity area.³ Sarah Hunt Steeves *Book of Remembrances* indicates that there were people living in Sublimity (formerly known as Hobson Corners) as early as 1840.⁴ The town was merely a trading post at this time and developed though the arrival of a diverse group of settlers and the Protestant group United Brethren⁵.

The first group of settlers that came to the untamed frontier were looking for farmland that would sustain them and their families for generations to come.⁶ Dean May indicates that those who settled around Sublimity were principally yeoman farmers from the Ohio, Mississippi and Missouri river valleys, with roots in the Old South. The 592 persons living in the

³ www.henrystrobel.com/saintboniface

⁴ Steeves, Sarah Hunt. *Book of Remembrance of Marion County, Oregon, Pioneers, 1840-1860*. Portland: Berncliff Press, 1927, p. 3

⁵ There is not a lot of evidence about the United Brethren and their religious contributions to the community nor is their much evidence suggesting that they held a communitarian set of beliefs. The only obtainable evidence I have found on this group of Protestants has to do with the Sublimity College that they established which is located in footnote 8

⁶ May, Dean L. *Three Frontiers: Family, Land, and Society in the American West, 1850-1900*. Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Modern History. 1st paperback ed. Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997 p. 39

small farming district of Sublimity in 1860 had been born in twenty-four of the then thirty-three states and in four foreign countries.⁷ Some 80 percent of those who lived in Sublimity in 1860 were people who had roots in societies long dominated by an agricultural planter class jealous of its accustomed right to control the wealth, politics, religion, and social life in the region.⁸ The yeomen that came to Sublimity were leaving the social hierarchy of the South with the planter class at the top and the yeomen at the bottom. These men wanted to control their wealth rather than have it be controlled by the aristocratic planter class. These yeomen were able to create a space for themselves, which allowed them to leave behind the social hierarchy that had for so long dominated the south.

These yeomen did however retain some of the ideals of the south. Their ideals consisted of “production and consumption focused on the household, in which kinship rather than marketplace mediated most productive relation, in which general farming prevailed and family self-sufficiency proved the fundamental concern.”⁹ These ideals helped to create and foster the settlement pattern of the first settlers.

The yeoman vision was one in which the early settlers bought large tracts of land and farmed small percentages of it in order to preserve this land for their future generations. They were not looking for the economic opportunity that was associated with the many settlers traveling west. They were looking to escape the hierarchical patterns of the south. Dean May states that these men saw their land as a “trust” reserving it for the day when a future generation might need it.¹⁰

Men from the aristocratic planter class had no reason to come to Oregon because slaves essentially were not wanted here. Provisional territorial governments in 1843-44 barred both

slavery and free blacks from Oregon.¹¹ Through the Oregon Land Donation Act, these yeomen could survive and prosper; the Act allowed settlers to gain access to large tracts of land, 640 acres if you were married and half of that if you were single. Oregon became an ideal place for both the yeomen of the South and the United Brethren, who opposed slavery.

The early settlers of Sublimity performed virtually all the important rituals of life, including schooling, production, exchange and provision of welfare services within their kin/neighbor groups.¹² Without the reliance on mutual aid, the settlers on the frontier would have not been able to succeed. These groups operated in what May classifies as “kin/neighbor” networks; they tended to congregate and live in small family clusters relying heavily on each other for support. Most Sublimity residents followed the old southern pattern of forming in their new setting what historian Robert Kenzer called “isolated, self contained, rural neighborhoods.”¹³ Their social networks were often their kin and they relied heavily on each other for mutual support. Sarah Hunt Steeves demonstrated this in her *Book of Remembrances*; when a threshing crew got together it consisted of about 30 men from the community who would work from six am until sundown with an hour-long break for lunch.¹⁴ This account of the threshing crew is essentially a story of a community coming together to help one

¹¹ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 43

¹² In 1857 after three years of growth the United Brethren settlement decided to establish a school in keeping with their ideals of education. Sublimity had become a natural center for settlers, and the United Brethren decided to locate their school here. On January 14, 1857 a bill was introduced in the legislative assembly at Salem The United Brethren valued education and in 1857 opened Sublimity College. The College lasted less than a decade and was known for its academics especially Latin. The first teacher and headmaster of Sublimity College was Milton Wright father of the Wright brothers. During the Civil War the College virtually died out with a short revival in 1865 though 1870. Sublimity College later shut down in 1870 permanently because of competition of the public school system and the loss support from United Brethren churches from the East. May, Dean L. *Three Frontiers* p.107

¹³ May, *Three Frontiers* p.107

¹⁴ Steeves, *Book of Remembrance* p. 340

⁷ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 41

⁸ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 44

⁹ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 47

¹⁰ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 279

farmer out in the hopes that he would prosper. Steeves made careful notes about how each person held an important position in terms of the process of the threshing. For example, Steeves states that several young women and neighbor girls got together in the house to cook for the men. In three days, the men consumed two whole muttons, a quarter of beef, several luscious hams, over fifteen dozen eggs, thirty one generous loaves of bread, eighteen cakes and seventy two pies, besides hundreds of biscuits, vegetables and other trimmings.¹⁵ In this short account it becomes apparent that it was a necessity for these small clusters of people to rely on mutual aid in order to thrive. This first group of settlers in Sublimity and its surroundings relied heavily on the communitarian effort of one another within their kin/neighbor networks; this ideology was not shared by the next wave of German immigrants who relied more on the community as a whole rather than the kin/neighbor networks of the first settlers.

The first settlers of Sublimity were married and had children; they did not however live as a nuclear family. As indicated by census records many of these settlers had other people living with them that were not born into the family. The census of 1870 for example, indicates that several of these families had people who lived with them that were not their natural born children. These people were teachers, farmers and most often laborers.¹⁶ As indicated in the census many of these families had adopted children who had different last names. One family, The Ezra Weston family, had a 62-year-old imbecile living with them as well as an 18-year-old laborer; both of these held different surnames than the Weston's.¹⁷ As indicated in the census of 1850, W.W. Sanders resided with L.M. Goof and W. Smith, who worked respectively as wheelwright, carpenter and blacksmith.¹⁸ They resided in one

household and were not farmers, as the majority of the people in the Sublimity precinct were in 1850. The 1860 census indicates that a full half of the eighty-two couples with children had taken others into their homes.¹⁹ Dean May breaks down the 1860 census to argue that the households of Sublimity stretched themselves to provide a wide range of social services.²⁰ They took in orphans, sheltered young working adults without families, and cared for the aged and infirm.²¹ The social world of these people did not extend far beyond their neighbor/kin clusters.²² The 1860 census indicates that this ideology of taking of others within the home raised the average household size to 6.1.²³ Furthering the idea of communitarianism in the self contained rural neighbor/kin clusters, which was the settlement pattern of the first residents of Sublimity.

In transitioning to the next group, the German Catholic immigrants, it is necessary to look at the significant role that religion played in this group. Religion did not serve as a major factor in the lives of the first settlers. The other groups - the German Catholics and the Sisters of the Precious Blood placed religion as the focal point in their lives in contrast to the settlers who did not.

The first settlers of Sublimity became consumers of religion rather than initiators.²⁴ The first settlers practiced religion in their homes, among their family and kin networks. May asserts that there is no evidence that supports the idea that religion was a major agent in forming a sense of community.²⁵ The arrival of the German speaking Catholics had an impact on the settlers who were for the most part American born, and who practiced the Protestant faith. May states that in 1860 only one head of the household, Frances Henline, was from a German speaking country. Another joined the population by 1870.

¹⁵ Steeves, *Book of Remembrances*. 340

¹⁶ Marion County Census 1870 Extracted by Robert Marsh and Pam Roach Published by Willamette Valley Genealogical Society Salem Or. 2002

¹⁷ Because the sumames are different, I cannot conclude that these people were of any relation. 1870 census

¹⁸ 1850 census property of Greta VanVeen

¹⁹ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 115

²⁰ May *Three Frontiers* p. 115

²¹ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 115

²² May, *Three Frontiers* p. 115

²³ May, *Three Frontiers* p.115

²⁴ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 185

²⁵ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 185

But by 1880 there were ten families headed by a parent born in Germany, Bavaria, Prussia, Austria, or Switzerland, including a Catholic priest, Fr. Stampfl. Six other families from Luxembourg, Belgium and Bohemia were probably Catholic and spoke German or Flemish. The new arrivals caused considerable consternation among the people who considered all faiths but Protestantism suspect.²⁶ In the culture of the early settlers, the scattered settlement pattern, and the topography combined to inhibit organized religion.²⁷ The early settlers were a group with varying faiths and religious practices; they valued faith, yet they did not place faith at the center of their lives. However, faith sustained the German Catholics, as it was the center of their existence.

The wave of German immigrants that arrived in Sublimity in the 1870-80s has had the largest impact on the community, because the values that they shared lasted within the community for over 100 years as their ideals were preserved by their descendants. They, too, relied on each other for mutual aid, but they tended to operate as a group, rather than in kin/neighbor networks. This group migrated from the states of Ohio, Minnesota, and Wisconsin and was formerly from Germany. Settlers came by various routes. An example is the Vincent Pietrok family who came from Germany via St. Paul, Minnesota and homesteaded in Linn County near Stayton. The Pietrocks were early members of St. Boniface church in Sublimity.²⁸ They did not have the yeoman vision that was central to the first group of settlers; rather they placed their Catholic faith as central in their lives. This group like the first settlers were mainly farmers. If this “yeoman vision” had disintegrated then there must have been a driving force that sustained as well as maintained the communitarian spirit; the ideal of community was centered on abundance of land and family as well as social cohesiveness and volunteerism, which was directly connected to the people’s common faith.

²⁶ May, *Three Frontiers* p .202

²⁷ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 210

²⁸ www.henrystobel.com/saintboniface

The first Catholic services were held in private homes, and later in a leased building. There were only about five Catholic families in Sublimity at the time they asked Archbishop Blanchet for a missionary priest, and in 1879, Father Peter Juvenal Stampfl arrived.²⁹ He was a German via Minnesota and encouraged Midwesterners to immigrate, this greatly attributed to the large influx of German Catholics.³⁰ The Catholic residents of Sublimity were only able to hear mass every other week or once a month. Mass was said and sacraments were administered by visiting priests. Generally a priest would travel from nearby Gervais, a French Canadian settlement, on horseback to say mass for the Catholics of Sublimity.³¹ In 1880, Fr. Stampfl purchased the 20-acre Sublimity property and college from the United Brethren for four hundred dollars and converted the college into a church.³² It was not until 1884 that Sublimity received a resident priest, Rev. Werner Ruettimann, also a young Swiss priest from Gervais.³³ The young priest also took up residence at the college. This building later served as housing for the Sisters of the Precious Blood (the Sisters were part of the third group I will discuss later in my paper) until a formal convent could be constructed. Fr. Werner Ruettimann served as the resident pastor for four years. By the time Fr. Werner arrived there were twenty Catholic families living in Sublimity.³⁴ There were eleven other priests who came to Sublimity and served as visiting pastors, some who stayed less than a year. It was not until 1895 that Sublimity was to receive the Rev. Anthony Lainck who remained the parish priest until 1927. The years in which Fr. Anthony was the parish priest were referred to as the “golden years of St. Boniface.” St. Boniface Church was erected and dedicated in 1879 and named after St. Boniface,

²⁹ www.henrystobel.com/saintboniface

³⁰ Schmid *Sublimity; The story of an Oregon County side* p.77

³¹ Schoenberg and the Sisters of St. Mary. *These Valiant Women* p. 111

³² www.henrystobel.com/saintboniface

³³ www.henrystobel.com/saintboniface

³⁴ www.henrystobel.com/saintboniface

born in 1680 who was the first to bring Christianity to the Germanic peoples.³⁵ The church remains today and is the second oldest church in the archdiocese of Portland.³⁶

Through family histories, the values of the German Catholic group become evident. The values of faith, family, and land are the core of this group's value system. The family histories I was fortunate enough to obtain from Vera Boedigheimer paint a portrait of the life of a family of settlers on the frontier. The Kintz family migrated here from Ohio in 1887 and established themselves in the town of Sublimity. Their lives were centered on their faith, their family and their community. John Kintz was a farmer who farmed to feed his family; he supplemented his income with carpentry in order to make a small profit.³⁷ John Kintz was the first mayor of Sublimity, when the town became incorporated in 1903. The communitarian effort was not lost on the Kintz family. The butchering of hogs and beef was a family affair with the Kerber, VanHandel and Zimmerman families helping each other.³⁸ John Kintz built his own home as well as helping build the St. Boniface

³⁵ *Let Us Remember*, St. Boniface centennial ed. Raymond Heuberger printed by Your Town Press, Salem, Oregon 1979

³⁶ Education was also vital to the first and second groups of settlers to Sublimity. In 1888 the Sisters of the Precious Blood opened the first parochial school in Marion County, in a new one-room schoolhouse built by Joseph Spenner. Half the day classes were taught in German, half in English, as many of the settlers spoke only German. There were two schools private and public, both were taught by Sisters, which did not pose a problem until 1923. Students, generally only attended school until approximately fifth grade. In 1939 a new school replaced the old school built in 1888 and was known as St. Boniface high school. St. Boniface high School remained until Regis Catholic High School was built in 1963. In 1973 the scarcity of nuns and high staffing costs forced St. Boniface to close its grade school as well and School District 7C leased the former St. Boniface high school for \$10,000 annually for use as Sublimity Middle School. If parents wanted their children to have a Catholic education they had to drive or bus their children to nearby Stayton.

www.henrystobel.com/saintboniface

³⁷ Kintz Family History property of Vera Boedigheimer

³⁸ Kintz Family History

church in 1889.³⁹ John and Agatha Kintz had eight children, these children played an integral role in helping maintain the family values that are synonymous with this group. Children valued their parents position of communitarianism as demonstrated when the oldest daughter Mary postponed her wedding for two years to stay home and help her mother with her newborn sister who was born when her mother was 45.⁴⁰ John and Agatha had 264 descendants in 1987, when this personal history was written by Vera. Forty-four were married in St. Boniface Catholic Church and over twenty-seven have been buried in the cemetery. Vera was also able to give me the family history of her deceased husband Red Boedigheimer who also came from a large Catholic family and whose family values were similar to the Kintz family.

The Boedigheimer family were descendants of Bruno and Maria (Bauhaus) Boedigheimer, who followed Fr. Albrecht from Rush Lake Minnesota to the Jordan Valley in 1866 and eventually resided in Sublimity⁴¹. Bruno and his wife had seven children as well as the six children of his brothers Franz, along with his wife, who died of cholera, leaving Bruno and Maria with 13 children. Bruno and his wife had two more children when they came to Oregon and also an adopted daughter, totaling 16 children they raised together. There are many similarities between this family history and the family history of the Kintz's. They both had very large families whose lives centered on children, farming and

³⁹ Angeline Kintz was the fifth child of John and Agatha, and had one daughter Vera, the woman who wrote this family history. What is unique about Vera was that she was born in the same house and room that her mother was born in. Vera told me that she has only moved once in her life and that when she did it was a half a block away. Vera indicated that the Catholic Church was a very important part of her life growing up, as it is still important for her today. She is known by some as the "town historian" and works hard at preserving the history of her family as well as the history of St. Boniface parish.

⁴⁰ Kintz Family history

⁴¹ Note that the Bruno Boedigheimer family was part of two of these groups. The settlers of Sublimity as well as the group of families who followed The Sisters of the Precious Blood to the Jordan Valley.

their Catholic faith. This family history indicates that playing an active role in church was also very important to both of these families. Vera indicated to me, as had others in the community, that a man was measured by how much land he had as well as by the number of children he produced. Land and family were seen as symbol of status in the community. Bruno's seventh son Ignatius had thirteen children, he and his wife raised these children on the 80 acres that Bruno had left Ignatius in his will. This property was known as "Boedigheimer Ranch," which is located on Boedigheimer road about a mile outside of Sublimity. This parcel of land, which was originally 160 acres, was to be split between two of Bruno's sons Bruno Jr. and Ignatius. Three of Ignatius's children married three children in the Fery family; two of Bruno's daughters married two Lindemann brothers.⁴² I found this to be a common thread in these family histories. Vera indicated that it was not unheard of for two first cousins to get married. From these family histories, I found the importance of faith and the central role it played in these families to be a recurrent theme.

The diary of Joseph Ripp indicates that the communitarian value system was essential to the community's livelihood. The Ripp family came to Sublimity from Nebraska in 1903.⁴³ Joseph was a teacher, a printer, and a breeder of rabbits, which he sold nation wide as breeding stock.⁴⁴ The diary dates from 1904-1920 and offers a unique glimpse into the lives and the social activity of the Ripp family. The focus of the Ripp family's social activity often takes place after or during religious gatherings. The gatherings could be a picnic at Aunt Mary's with Catholic school children or a social visit from friends after devotions or Vespers. This diary indicates that many social affairs were centered on faith. Social activity also revolved around Joseph's fathers work as a woodcutter, his father also made

money selling "capuchin drops."⁴⁵ Joseph's father was very versatile in his work; he also sold slippers and tassel hats as well as grubbed for people in the community (the definition of grubbing is to clear the land of roots and stumps). This extensive diary paints a portrait of a community that was close knit and predictable in their ways. The social activity generally involves the same group of people and often the activity includes helping a fellow neighbor sow oats or pick hops. The social gatherings were generally held in homes or affiliated with the Catholic Order of Forester's. The activities included dances and meetings held at the C.O.F. Hall. The Catholic mass was also important and often people would drop by for a visit after high mass on Sunday. The diary suggests that the people in the Ripp family's social circle all held the same value system. One, which favored mutual aide, hard work and dedication to faith. One value that is not indicated in the diary is the importance of financial support to the church.

The families of German settlers prided themselves on the financial support they gave to the church. The will of Bruno Boedigheimer indicated that he gave \$100 to the church so that masses would be said in his name after his death.⁴⁶ The Boedigheimer family name is also etched in one of the stain glass windows of the church. In reading these family histories, it becomes apparent that one's involvement and financial contribution within the structure of the church may have also been a symbol of status. Vera indicated that this may have been true to an extent, but that "in those days that was what you did, you gave money back to the church, because there were no other charitable organizations to give to."⁴⁷ Whether people gave money to the church for status or whether they gave money because that was the common practice, the

⁴² History of the Boedigheimer family property of Vera Boedigheimer.

⁴³ www.henrystobel.com/saintboniface

⁴⁴ www.henrystobel.com/saintboniface

⁴⁵ I have looked and do not know what capuchin drops are; they may have something to do with preventing disease in livestock specifically rabbits.

⁴⁶ From the will of Bruno Boedigheimer dated Feb 28-1907 from the family history of the Boedigheimer family property of Vera Boedigheimer

⁴⁷ Boedigheimer phone interview 4/3/08

evidence suggests that the role of the church remained central to their lives.

The Kintz and Boedigheimer families were typical of the German Catholic settlers. Most residents of Sublimity had very large families, particularly within in the Catholic community. The Ditter/Hottinger family had seven children, the August and Mary Hendricks family had ten children and Joseph and Elizabeth Susbauer family also had ten children. The 1880 census indicates that the families of German descent had large families. The John Sheridan family had eight members. The Sheridan's also lived in a nuclear family, rather than a family of mixed kin and borders that was synonymous with the yeoman farmers, The George Neibert family who immigrated from Bavaria via Wisconsin made up a total of ten family members.⁴⁸ All of the children in the Neibert household belonged to George and Ursula, which indicates a trend toward the nuclear family. The census indicates that the shift from smaller families to larger ones coincided with the arrival of the German Catholics. In comparing the 1870 census to the census of 1880 one can virtually trace the impact that the influx of German immigrants had on the community in a ten-year span.

These large Catholic families became involved with the St. Boniface parish. In the St. Boniface Archives, one can trace the lineage of these families as well as their involvement in organizations affiliated with the church. These organizations include the Knights of Columbus, the Catholic Order of Forester's and the St. Boniface Society. This Society was started by a group of parishioners of German descent in 1916, with the aim of defending religion and their social and cultural ideals.⁴⁹ These organizations served as a place in which men and women of the community could reaffirm their values and create a sense of commonality with those who shared their beliefs. These social relationships helped to build a bond between residents that was outside

⁴⁸ Marion County census of 1880

⁴⁹ Schmid, *Sublimity; the Story of an Oregon Countryside* p.121

the church, yet connected to the church and their religious beliefs. In participating in group activities that were faith centered, this community was building strength, not only in their faith and communitarian ideals, but also as the dominant group, that would maintain the social structure of the community for many years to come.

Among German Catholics it was not uncommon for many families to have a nun or a priest in the family. Carol Zolkoske shared with me that this was seen as a symbol of status.⁵⁰ In looking over the descendants of the first Catholic residents of Sublimity it is not uncommon to see families with a priest and a nun or both from the same family. Zolkoske shared with me that it was common for a mother to tell her daughter when she was very young that it was her calling to join the convent.⁵¹ She also shared that it may have been a financial issue as well, with families of this size it was difficult to support this many children and a child that could be taken care of financially by the church it would help to take the burden off the parents.⁵² The family of Mathies and Bernadine Schmid had eight children; two became priests and two became nuns.⁵³ It is clear that the parishioners of St. Boniface placed values on the ideals of the church, so much so that they wanted their children to be a part of it. This served as a reminder that their faith was the innermost value in their lives. The value of church took precedent in these people's lives, family and land also served as a vital part of the German Catholic settlers. The church served as a social base that connected family and friends, it served to maintain the social cohesiveness that surrounded this group.

There were many factors that served to keep the German Catholic community interconnected over the years. Don Porter, a member of St. Boniface church and active in the

⁵⁰ Zolkoske , phone interview 4/1/08

⁵¹ Zolkoske ,phone interview 4/1/08

⁵² Zolkoske phone interview 4/1/08

⁵³ *Let Us Remember* St. Boniface centennial ed. Raymond Heuberger printed by Your Town Press, Salem Oregon 1979 p.63

St. Boniface Archives shared with me that the priests of St. Boniface would encourage parishioners to sell their land only to Catholics moving to Sublimity.⁵⁴ Another force that served to maintain cohesiveness in the community was German descent. During WWII there was a lot of anti-German sentiment in the States, which impacted the residents of Sublimity. Vera Boedigheimer shared with me that during her youth she was ashamed to say that she lived in Sublimity, because it was known as “Krautville.”⁵⁵ Others have expressed similar memories, Raymond Heuberger stated that during WWII there were signs outside of town warning people that they were about to enter Krautville.⁵⁶ These factors served to unite the community and bring them closer together as a whole group.

For many years the German Catholic community was run by an hierarchy, put into place by the large Catholic families in the town; this hierarchy was preserved by their descendants. Many of the residents that I have spoken to claim that it used to be very difficult for people to move into Sublimity, that the hierarchy of the town kept it that way. The Catholics in Sublimity liked their town small and were resistant to growth; they also liked their residents to be Catholic. Prior to the 1970s residents claim that it was nearly impossible to buy a home in Sublimity. The only way one could live here was if someone died. The community resisted expansion and remained a predominantly Catholic community for 100 years. The community maintained their interconnectedness, which served to continually foster their communitarian spirit in turn nurturing the ideals of faith, family and social cohesiveness within the community. The same Catholic Doctrine practiced by the German Catholics was practiced by the Sisters of the Precious Blood who would eventually become a part of the framework of the Sublimity community.

The Sisters of the Precious Blood had a shared vision as, much like the residents of

Sublimity, their faith remained central. The Sisters followed a charismatic leader who started them on a very interesting trek that led them to Sublimity and also to their own eventual freedom. The 1840s was a time of revolution in Europe; governments were breaking up monasteries in France and Germany. The government wanted to limit the power of the bishops; the result was that the bishops began to bend to the government's will. The impact was that many Germans began to immigrate to Ohio where they felt they could practice their faith without the mistrusted authority of the government or the bishops.⁵⁷ Other contributing factors were cheap land in America as well as the poor conditions in which they were living. In Germany farmers were unable to divide their land for their children, taxes were very high, the economic conditions were poor, and the threat of the conscription act was also a contributing factor to Germans immigrating to America. This was an opportune time for the charismatic figure Joseph Albrecht.

Joseph Albrecht was born January 6, 1800 at Schuttertal, a small village and pilgrimage place near Lahr in the Grand Duchy of Baden, an independent country in what is now known as the Black Forest of West Germany.⁵⁸ He met and married Anna Marie and they had one daughter Rosa. Somewhere between 1830 and 1833 he met Father Francis de Sales Brunner, a member of the Society of the Precious Blood. Fr. Brunner had a profound effect on Joseph's life.⁵⁹ It was Fr. Brunner who eventually convinced Joseph to leave his wife and daughter and join the priesthood. Father Brunner was called by Bishop John Baptiste Purcell of Ohio to come to America because there was a great need for priests and nuns at this part of the country.⁶⁰ Joseph and his

⁵⁴ Personal conversation with Don Porter 4/1/08

⁵⁵ Boedigheimer, Vera personal interview 3/28/8

⁵⁶ Heuberger, Raymond personal interview 1/11/08

⁵⁷ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Ed. *Centennial History of Our Lady of Lourdes Jordan Ore. 1885-1985*. Stayton, Ore: North Santiam Newspaper, 1985. p.3

⁵⁸ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Ed. *Centennial History* .p.3

⁵⁹ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Ed. *Centennial History* .p.3

⁶⁰ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Ed. *Centennial History* p. 6

wife eventually began the conversion process; he joined the priesthood, she became a nun and their daughter a novice. Anna Marie began the process of joining the sisterhood before Joseph, as he was at first resistant. When Joseph did go to the monastery he was troubled by the younger brothers laxity in following the guidelines established by St. Gaspar del Bufalo who established the Society of the Precious Blood in Italy in 1815.⁶¹ As a priest, Father Albrecht became very rigid in his belief system. In 1854, he started the priestly duties as the pastor of newly constructed parish at St. Joseph in Ohio. His charismatic personality was one in which drew people to him; he employed the tools of persuasion and had a strong psychological influence over his parishioners. This behavior was demonstrated when he was saying mass and a group of young women showed up to mass with adorned hair and in hoop skirts. Fr. Albrecht gave the young women a lecture on vanity and pride and forbade them to wear this type of frivolous clothing to his church where women were expected to show up in black dress. He warned them not to show up again or he would drive them out of his church.⁶² When the young women did show up at vespers in the same attire, Father Albrecht marched to the pulpit, read a passage of scripture condemning vanity and dress and chased the girls out of the church with a hickory stick.⁶³ This of course got back to the Archbishop and Father Albrecht was to apologize, rescind these rules, and allow more social freedom in his parish. He failed to do any of these and his church was shut down and his priestly faculties were suspended.

Fr. Albrecht decided to take action that would eventually cause more damage. At this point, He had a few followers who were

⁶¹ Fr. Albrecht was financially well off, he was able to help pay for the building of the parish as St. Joseph's in Ohio which had been destroyed by a fire. Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Ed. *Centennial History* p. 6

⁶² Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Ed. *Centennial History* p. 6

⁶³ Duman, Linda; Bentz, Barbara; Moys, Fr. Gregory, Ed. *Centennial History* p. 7

dedicated to the Society of the Precious Blood and believed that Fr. Albrecht's suspension was unjust. This group, along with Fr. Albrecht, decided to move to Minnesota and establish a new congregation; before they left Fr. Albrecht wrote a letter to the Bishop apologizing for his actions and asking for his "restoration and the necessary papers to leave the diocese."⁶⁴ Father Albrecht was never reinstated, he left without the Bishop's approval, and in 1868 the group of followers, including fifteen Sisters and fifteen Brothers of the Precious Blood who left for Rush Lake Minnesota.⁶⁵ It should be noted that in 1866, the Sisters of the Precious Blood did not take the three religious vows to the order: poverty, chastity, and obedience, but just one vow of fidelity which was to include the ideals of all three; and of the fifteen Sisters who left to follow Fr. Albrecht only six had even taken that vow.⁶⁶ The others were novices and were free to leave the order if they wished.⁶⁷ Sister Pulcheria states in her diary that "these people had a firm conviction in the rightness of Fr. Albrecht's course of action; and that he made use of their simple faith in himself, as a priest of God to deceive and mislead them."⁶⁸ Fr. Albrecht took advantage of his follower's naivete and led them to believe that he was a just man who was leading them to a place in which they could practice their faith.

At Rush Lake the Precious Blood Institution was to be self-supporting, which was Fr. Albrecht's intention when he created the Rush Lake Foundation in 1866. On the 700 acres, the group formed a compact social unit, which intended to keep itself German in language and social customs as well as Catholic in faith.⁶⁹ This

⁶⁴ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Ed. *Centennial History* p. 7

⁶⁵ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened And Not By Chance*, 1960, Property of Carol Zolkoske of Sublimity, Oregon, p.12. Please note that in some sources the number of followers of Fr. Albrecht differs as well as the dates in which they arrived in Oregon.

⁶⁶ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p. 21

⁶⁷ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p. 21

⁶⁸ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* P.23

⁶⁹ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p. 24

would be the group's intention later as they made their way to the frontier in Oregon. Life continued at Rush Lake and Fr. Albrecht was persuaded to seek reconciliation from Bishop Thomas Grace for the wrongs he had committed at St. Joseph in Ohio. Fr. Albrecht walked the 200-mile trek to see Bishop Grace and when he found the Bishop to be gone he became infuriated believing that the Bishop had purposely avoided his visit. He walked back to Rush Lake more obstinate than before. At this point he began hearing confessions and saying mass, this became one of the factors that led to his excommunication from the church.⁷⁰ Another factor leading to his excommunication was that he denounced Bishop Grace from the pulpit. In November 23, 1871, Fr. Albrecht was excommunicated from the church, which meant that he was prohibited from offering divine worship or offering the sacraments.⁷¹ Most of the residents of Rush Lake were unaware of this decree. Many of the parishioners had fallen away, but a loyal few believed that the priest was suffering persecution because he had tried to correct the sins of the church.⁷² In terms of the sacraments, Fr. Albrecht told his parishioners that the sacrament of confirmation was of no interest to them; also matrimony was discouraged and all were encouraged to become religious as "the end of time was fast approaching."⁷³ In essence, he wanted to have his followers become brothers or sisters; this would allow him to avoid offering the sacrament of matrimony. A bishop can only offer the sacrament of confirmation, so it is understandable why Fr. Albrecht wanted to avoid having this sacrament offered to his followers, as it would attract attention to him and the fact that he had been excommunicated.

⁷⁰ *Not with Silver Or Gold :A History of the Sisters of the Congregation of the Precious Blood, Salem Heights, Dayton, Ohio, 1834-1944.* Dayton, Ohio: Sisters of the Precious Blood, 1945. p. 204

⁷¹ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p. 33

⁷² Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p.34

⁷³ Confirmation is a rite of passage in the Catholic Church and is one of the seven sacraments. The sacrament of Confirmation can only happen once in a lifetime unlike the sacrament of confession, which can be as frequent as one wishes. Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p.35

In 1879 Fr. Albrecht became seriously ill and before his death he summoned three men from the parish. These men Anton Bender, Christof Silbernagel and Victor Eifert were named trustees of the convent and parish. Fr. Albrecht died March 4, 1884 and his remains were buried under the altar of the rebuilt church at Rush Lake. The trustees decided that they would move west after Victor and John Eifert and John Bender had given a good report about Oregon.⁷⁴ The trustees felt that heading west was a good idea because no bishops there would know them.⁷⁵ Before the move to Oregon, the followers of Fr. Albrecht decided to remove his remains and bring them out along. When they exhumed his body they found that after four months his body remained intact except for a missing ear; they were convinced that Fr. Albrecht was a saint.

In appointing these trustees to the group, an important change occurred. These men had no religious authority. They believed what ever Fr. Albrecht told them, as their faith in this man never wavered. They did not questioned the legitimacy or authority of the priest. They were not educated in church doctrine and had no idea that they were doing anything unorthodox; nor were they aware of the excommunication. They knew that they wanted to get away from the bishops as Fr. Albrecht had deeply mistrusted their authority. In coming to the frontier they were searching to create a new identity for themselves, though their heretical practices were eventually noticed and addressed by the clergy in Oregon.

On July 31, 1884 the Great Northern left for Scio, Oregon; aboard the train were the followers of Fr. Albrecht, with his dead body hidden in a vegetable crate.⁷⁶ The group was searching for a place in which they could practice

⁷⁴ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Ed. *Centennial History* p. 11

⁷⁵ In 1879, the convent, chapel and barn connected to the convent burnt down, it was believed but never proven that the fire was not accidental. Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p. 51

⁷⁶ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Ed. *Centennial History* p. 13

their religious beliefs. They came to Scio and later the Jordan Valley, which is approximately 20 miles south of Sublimity. Once there, Bruno Boedigheimer purchased 361 acres from D. L. Curl for the group to build their convent.⁷⁷ The Society of the Precious Blood, along with the trustees named by Fr. Albrecht, camped out in log cabins until permanent homes could replace them.⁷⁸ The Sisters slept in a cabin with Fr. Albrecht's body above them in a coffin in the rafters until a shrine could be built for the dead priest. When a shrine was built for the deceased priest his body was placed in a twelve by fifteen foot glass coffin so that his followers could venerate his body.⁷⁹

The group was an intentional community living a semi-cloistered life; their intent was to create a German community such as the one at Rush Lake and visitors were strongly discouraged. This artificially created community intended to use their German language and customs, as they had in their homeland. All recreation was prohibited and when the group was not engaged in manual labor they were in prayer, though they were still without the spiritual leadership of a priest. The three lay trustees dictated the way in which this group was to live though it pained the Sisters and Brothers not to receive the sacraments or to attend mass.⁸⁰ Fr. Dominic Faber, of Portland came to visit the colony and criticized the followers because he found the three trustees governing the convent both spiritually and financially, at which point the trustees banished him from the Jordan colony.⁸¹ One must keep in mind that the trustees had grown to question the authority of the church and to believe that their salvation did not lie in the reception of the sacraments, but in the denial of

⁷⁷ Deed Record of the purchase of land from D.L. Curl property of Vera Boedigheimer

⁷⁸ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Eds. *Centennial History* p. 15

⁷⁹ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Eds. *Centennial History* p. 15

⁸⁰ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Eds. *Centennial History* p. 17

⁸¹ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Eds. *Centennial History* p. 18

material goods and practices.⁸² The trustees had complete control over the entire group; Sister Emma Bleily and brother Joseph Boedigheimer began to see that "the religious life of the people was to be wrecked on the rocks of heresy."⁸³ Brother Boedigheimer was able to get Fr. Werner Ruettimann, resident priest of Sublimity, to come to Jordan to offer mass. Fr. Ruettimann agreed; he then saw that the people had not received the sacrament of confirmation so he arranged for Archbishop Gross to come and offer this sacrament to those who were ready to receive the grace. Also, it should be noted that the Bruno Boedigheimer family supported the Archbishop and Fr. Ruettimann and began holding secret masses in their home. The Sisters would sneak to the Boedigheimer home to be a part of the mass.

When the Archbishop saw the state of affairs in the Jordan Colony he explained to the Sisters that they were not "religious in the eyes of the church."⁸⁴ He further explained that these women, though they dressed as Sisters and wore the habit, "had not entered a canonically erected novitiate, had not been received by a legitimate superior; and had not been examined by ecclesiastical authority."⁸⁵ In other words, they were not a legitimate group of the order of Precious Blood and Fr. Albrecht had misled them into thinking this way. He offered them the opportunity to take their vows and become legitimate nuns; their services would be welcomed elsewhere. Nine of the Sisters and three of the brothers left the Jordan Colony, many without the approval of either their parents or the trustees. They were to go to Fillmore to live with the Benedictine Sisters for temporary housing until they could be moved to a convent in Sublimity, where they remained for six years. After the departure of the Sisters and the Boedigheimer family from Jordan, the colony began to deteriorate. By 1892, the Society of the Most Precious Blood consisted of thirteen

⁸² Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Eds. *Centennial History*

⁸³ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p.50

⁸⁴ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p. 53

⁸⁵ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p.54

families who began to be dissatisfied with the management under the trustees. The few Sisters who did not leave for Mt. Angel were to live in Jordan until 1900 in a life of poverty dominated by the trustees.⁸⁶ In 1894, Anton Bender one of the lay trustees finally gave in to the Archbishop's wishes and deeded the church buildings and surrounding property over to the Archdiocese.⁸⁷ The story of the Sisters is important because it fosters the ideals of faith and the courage that it took for these women to dedicate their lives toward fulfilling what they felt God had chosen for them.

These nine women made a large impact on the community of Sublimity, as it was there that they were able to practice their faith as well as share their values with the community. The Sisters wanted to remain followers of the order of the Precious Blood rather than join the order of Benedictine Sisters in Fillmore, so they moved into the former Sublimity College, which was purchased by the Archdiocese. The old college became a convent, which was named Maria Zell.⁸⁸ While in Sublimity, the Sisters were very poor and often were without food, but the community provided for them. Because of the Sisters' financial problems Fr. Werner and the archbishop convinced the Sisters to go on a "begging tour".⁸⁹ Two of the Sisters were given 100 dollars from Bruno Boedigheimer and sent out to obtain funding for their new convent. Their travels took them through the eastern United States where they were able to gain monetary

⁸⁶ From 1886-97 the parishioners in Jordan had no pastor and the records indicate that the priest from Sublimity performed Baptisms, marriages and burials. Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Ed. *Centennial History* p. 17

⁸⁷ The story of the Jordan colony and the Sisters of the Precious Blood was something that the residents of Jordan did not speak about for nearly 100 years. There were families that were torn apart by the actions of these nine women who chose to take their vows and leave the colony for a new life in the sisterhood.

⁸⁸ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p. 64

⁸⁹ Schoenberg and Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon. *These Valiant Women* 120

support.⁹⁰ In 1888, the Sisters opened the first parochial school in Marion County, in a new one-room schoolhouse built by Joseph Spenner.⁹¹ The school was a necessity because at this time, waves of German Catholics were moving to Sublimity. In 1891 the Sisters were asked to move their convent to Beaverton to provide teachers for an orphanage.⁹² There, too, they had better buildings and 600 acres of land. Father Fessler left with them to help manage. They soon had a barn built, and two Sublimity men volunteered to drive their cows to Beaverton.⁹³ In 1894, the Sisters began the construction of a new motherhouse in Beaverton, and in 1905 changed their name to the Sisters of St. Mary, known today as the Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon. The St. Boniface convent remained active and continued to house the Sisters who were teaching in the schools. The Sisters, like the German Catholics of Sublimity put their faith as central to their lives. Although the Sisters and the followers of Fr. Albrecht were an intentional community they shared many of the same values and ideals as the German Catholic residents. Both groups were searching for a place in which they could nurture their ideals of faith. As these groups became one it became evident that the frontier provided both of these groups an opportunity to live out the communitarian vision, thus allowing them to put their faith at the fore front of their lives.

These women helped to contribute the culture of the Sublimity, with their ideals of faith. Their ideals of poverty, chastity, and obedience set the standards for the future Sisters who were to join the convent in Sublimity. Another way in which they contributed was to bring more Catholic followers to Sublimity and St. Boniface parish. The Bruno Boedigheimer family who totaled eighteen chose to follow their daughter Aurelia to Sublimity.⁹⁴ The Boedigheimer family

⁹⁰ Schoenberg and Sisters of St. Mary of Oregon. *These Valiant Women* 123

⁹¹ www.henrystobel.com/saintboniface

⁹² www.henrystobel.com/saintboniface

⁹³ www.henrystobel.com/saintboniface

⁹⁴ Vera Boedigheimer personal interview 4/8/08

had a tremendous impact on the community. They brought wealth as well as the ideals of faith and family to the community and their descendants continued to pass on these ideals. With the arrival of the Boedigheimer's and the Sisters the town became even more centered on Catholicism. In this, the structure of the town was shaped, which served to form the Catholic hierarchy, which remained in place for years to follow. The town came to value the principles that were embedded by the Catholics. The Sisters were the embodiment of the value system that would come to serve as the driving force, which maintained the community's ideals. The Sisters position within the community fostered this value system, though the Sisters only remained in Sublimity for six years, their ideals of faith came to be a part of the framework. These women served to nurture the idea of the communitarian spirit in their relentless effort to serve. They served as educators as well as the women who laid the foundation upon which other women of the community would come to join the convent. They opened a space for young women to serve the Lord as well as the community. They nurtured the ideals put into place by the German Catholics as well added to the shared vision of faith that was so valued by the community.

The settlement pattern of the Sisters in Jordan was much like that of the yeoman farmers of Sublimity. As they lived in a small self contained group. They built their homes in a small radius around the Church and convent.⁹⁵ Like the yeoman they farmed only what they needed, their values of hard work were secondary to their religious beliefs. The idea of hard work carried on to Sublimity where the Sisters often had to pick hops in the autumn to gain money for the necessities in the convent in Sublimity.⁹⁶

Archbishop Gross saw a pressing need for an institution to care for the orphans and deserted children in the diocese⁹⁷. A few of the Sisters

took residence in Beaverton and carried on their ideal of hard work at the orphanage in Beaverton, while the other Sisters remained in Sublimity. The Sisters like the other two groups put their community and those in need before themselves.

I will now shift focus and take a combined look at all of these groups and what led to their decline. I will begin looking at the first group of settlers. There are two arguments about why this group disintegrated from Dean May and Mark Schmid. Schmid claims the town became deserted as a result of the civil war. There are varying arguments on the disintegration of the first group of settlers. The first being the impact of the Civil War on the community of settlers. Dean May indicates that 39 percent of the 1860 households were born in slave states. This in turn caused tensions among residents; yet, Mark Schmid argues that the civil war essentially created depopulation.⁹⁸ Mark Schmid claims Sublimity was soon deserted, houses became vacant and neglected, money was scarce and prices were exorbitant.⁹⁹ May indicates that 38 percent of Sublimity's household heads were still there in the 1860s through the 1870s indicating that Schmidt may have been exaggerating the towns state of affairs during the war.¹⁰⁰ This is significant because Schmid later argues that the German Catholics resettled the town and moved into the houses abandoned by the early settlers, who went to fight in the war. Schmid is claiming that the Catholics arrived to a virtually deserted town and the settlers were essentially gone without further mention of them in his book. I am not denying the idea that the Civil War impacted the community and caused great tension, but I believe that it is not the sole cause of the early settlers demise, though it may have been one of the contributing factors in the disintegration of the first group of settlers. May also indicates that the war had less of an impact on the community

⁹⁵ Duman, Linda, Bentz, Barbara, Moys Fr. Gregory Eds. *Centennial History* p15

⁹⁶ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p. 66

⁹⁷ Sparkman, Sister Pulcheria. *And So It Happened* p. 67

⁹⁸ May, *Three Frontiers* p 202

⁹⁹ Schmid, *Sublimity; the Story of an Oregon Countryside, 1850-1950*. St. Benedict, Or. Library Bookstore, 1951, p. 20

¹⁰⁰ May, *Three Frontiers* p 202

than the arrival of the German Catholics who migrated here in the 1870s -80s.

May argues that the first settlers ideals disintegrated as a result of commercial farming. By the 1870s the “yeoman vision,” in which the early settlers bought large tracts of land and farmed small percentages of it in order to preserve the land for their future generations, had disintegrated. These men saw their land as a “trust,” reserving it for the day when a future generation might need it.¹⁰¹ They were at first conservative in their land use, but modernity changed that¹⁰². May states that the yeoman vision was unable to with stand modernization because it was built on a limited set of social relationships and was tied to a particular economic notion, the sense that family and land were mutually supportive and inseparable.¹⁰³ In essence he is claiming that the yeoman vision was replaced by the desire for wealth rather than providing for one's own kin for future generations. The move toward modernity in terms of the yeoman vision was also replaced by a new ideal, commercial farming. By 1895 average production per farm increased and the land was being used more efficiently. The median farm was 115 acres by 1890, 37 percent of what it had been in 1865; almost half the land claimed was being tilled, whereas in 1865 only a tenth was.¹⁰⁴ The desire for land coupled with the move away from kin/neighbor relationships was one of the factors that led to the demise of the yeoman vision.

While I agree that the civil war and commercial farming as well as the loss of the yeoman vision were critical to the disintegration of the town, there were other factors that contributed as well. The German Catholics came to dominate the town, and their ideals replaced those of the yeoman from the south. The settlement pattern of the German Catholics had an impact as well. They did not settle in the kin/neighbor clusters that the first settlers did. As

the dominant group, it was their ideals of faith, family and land that came to replace the notion of only farming a small percentage of the land and reserving it for future generations. The German Catholics farmed large tracts of land, though they still did pass it on to their descendants, which is demonstrated in the will of Bruno Boedigheimer. For many years the German Catholic farmers passed land on to their children in the hope that they would continue farming it. It was the German Catholics ideals of faith as the dominant force in their lives, which served to eliminate the ideals of the yeoman vision.

One other factor to consider when looking at the demise of the first settlers is their settling pattern in kinship clusters. Robert Hine states that kinship can never be the same as community. Kinship is not voluntary whereas community can grow from the least bit of willing participation.¹⁰⁵ Communities as a whole usually have a shared vision, while those isolated from the larger community cannot participate in this shared vision. In the kin/neighbor clusters the early settlers were able to create a shared vision in their kin networks and neighborhoods, but there was not a sense of community as a larger group. For two reasons - the kinship networks and those participating and living within may have not had the shared vision of the relatives. It was not a voluntary shared vision, but rather a forced vision that those living in the home were to adhere to. This vision also existed in an isolated environment, which may not have been supported by the community as a whole. In the isolated kin/neighbor groups one could create a communitarian ideal, but it may not survive outside of the kin/neighbor cluster. These factors had a large impact on the first settlers of Sublimity, yet they served to help the German Catholics and the Sisters to flourish.

In opposition to the first settlers the Sisters and the German Catholics thrived in their communitarian efforts. I will explore the German

¹⁰¹ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 279.

¹⁰² May, *Three Frontiers* p. 280

¹⁰³ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 280

¹⁰⁴ May, *Three Frontiers* p. 262

¹⁰⁵ Hine Robert. *Community On The American Frontier Separate but Not Alone* University Of Oklahoma Press Norman 1980 p.27

Catholics decline, but first I would like to contrast their values with the first group of settlers. I also look at the Sisters as a part of the Sublimity community rather than the Jordan colony; as it was in Sublimity that they began to thrive as their own separate group. Both the German Catholics and the Sisters took on the same value system, which connected them to their perceived communitarian ideal. The real beginning of a community is when its members have a common relation overriding all other relations.¹⁰⁶ These two groups fostered the idea of community over individuality. They sought to preserve this common faith that connected them with each other. This differs from the first settlers who did not have the common base of faith to connect them outside of their kinship networks. The German Catholics and the Sisters social units were led by a greater purpose, one that served to guide and dictate their lives. Their religious beliefs created an inter connectedness that served to maintain unity within their groups. In the case of the German Catholics, one must look at the family ideal. These families were generally nuclear, which means that the children were born into the ideologies of their parents. Like the first settlers these children were born into a system in which they did not have a choice to be a part of the community ideal. Yet, for practical reasons they did not go against the ideals set forth by their parents. As faith was central in these family's lives it became central to their children. They attended Catholic school, their peers were of the same faith, and their social activities were connected to their church. Faith as central was constantly reinforced in the lives of the German Catholic children. The Sisters did not have children, yet their ideals were passed onto the children they taught in the schools as well as the younger women joining the convent.

I will now transition into the decline of the German Catholic group. Modernity did eventually impact the German settlers of Sublimity, though their ideal of faith as central to their lives remained for the next 100 years. The town did expand over the years, but it seemed to

¹⁰⁶ Hine Robert. *Community On* p.25

have mostly Catholic residents, the idea being that Catholics could develop and maintain this Catholic identity through community. This ideal of preserving one's faith in the community could not last forever and modernization greatly impacted the interconnectedness of the community. According to Evangeline Ripp, it was in the early 1970s that the first subdivision in Sublimity was built.¹⁰⁷ Many of the residents that I have spoken to claim that it used to be very difficult for people to move into Sublimity and that the hierarchy of the town kept it that way. The Catholics in Sublimity liked their town small and were resistant to growth; they also liked their residents Catholic. Evangeline stated that when they began building the first subdivision she remembered the community's concern over whether or not the new residents would be Catholic.¹⁰⁸ As mentioned earlier residents claimed that the only way one could buy a home in Sublimity was if someone died. For many years there was no expansion in the town due fact that it was resisted in the hierarchical ranks in the community. Ironically, there was a surge of growth in 1973 attributed to the construction of a sewage collection system. Each year has shown growth other than 1982¹⁰⁹. Carrie Corcoran who is an employee at the Sublimity City Hall, stated that the expansion of the sewage collection system allowed for expansion within the urban growth boundary of Sublimity.¹¹⁰ With expansion came more subdivisions, which was and still is at present a source of contention for residents. Corcoran claims that many farmers still hold on to their land with the idea of giving it to their children in the hopes that they will farm it. Corcoran stated that often the children who inherit this land sell it to make a profit and the land is then sold and divided for housing development. or other uses.¹¹¹ Sublimity did remain a small, predominantly Catholic

¹⁰⁷ Ripp, Evangeline personal interview obtained 4/1/08

¹⁰⁸ Ripp, Evangeline personal interview obtained 4/1/08

¹⁰⁹ www.cityofsublimity.org/

¹¹⁰ Corcoran Carrie employee at Sublimity City Hall phone interview 4/2/8

¹¹¹ Corcoran Carrie employee at Sublimity City Hall phone interview 4/2/8

community for nearly a decade, with the ideals of faith and family preserved for future generations. This community became very appealing to residents who wanted to live in a small town. Through the expansion of the 1970s and beyond, the ideals of faith, family and land have begun to diminish. Sublimity may no longer be regarded as a Catholic community. The community has become similar to the very first settlers to arrive to Sublimity. The residents are very diversified in their beliefs and values. There are many residents who are interrelated, but not to the degree that the German Catholic settlers were. There seems to be no social hierarchy based on last names or how much land one has or how much one contributes to his or her church. Though many residents are from German descent it is no longer the prevailing majority.

The ideals of family, faith, and land are no longer the sole ideals of the community, though there are many working to preserve these ideals as well as the history of the community and St. Boniface church. According to the 2000 census there were 2,148 people, 686 households, and 509 families residing in the town.¹¹² The average household size was 2.67 and the average family size was 3.14.¹¹³ This data indicates that the large families are a thing of the past. St. Boniface still remains the only church in Sublimity and there are currently 300 parishioners. There are various denominations in the city of Stayton and surrounding area.

There are common threads that tie these three groups together. They came to the frontier and two groups, the Sisters of the Precious Blood and the first wave of German Catholic immigrants centered their lives on their faith. The other group, the first settlers to Sublimity focused their attention on the yeoman vision. The German Catholics and their ideals came to replace this yeoman vision and seemed to be able to resist modernization through the Catholic hierarchy in the town. Surprisingly, it is the Sisters who were able to maintain their ideologies, which are still

practiced by the Sisters of St. Mary. This group came west under poor circumstances, yet were able to hold on to their value system because they were living in an environment that was conducive to their beliefs. They did not have to resist modernization like the German Catholics nor did they have to resist the diminishing ideals of the yeoman vision. The Sisters were in a space in which their beliefs were not challenged, their faith supported and their preservation of ideals praised. This environment allowed them to continue to practice their belief system of poverty, chastity and obedience; there is little doubt that these women struggled more than the others, yet their faith never wavered. All of these groups held the communitarian ideal yet, it surfaced in different ways. The yeoman focused their communitarian efforts on those within their kin/neighbor networks, while the German Catholics operated as a larger group within the church and community structure. The Sisters communitarian efforts were practiced within the convent as well as extended into the community. The Sisters and the German Catholics transcended the boundaries of the yeomen vision by extending their value system into the community. The communitarian ethos that these groups displayed helped to nurture the community for future generations. The attitudes, habits, and beliefs that these groups displayed served to nurture the idea of the shared vision of putting one's community first and self second within the small town of Sublimity.

¹¹² www.census.gov/

¹¹³ www.census.gov/

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