



Hospital Sisters of St. Francis

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From: Brian C. Blasco

Director of Communications and Archivist – Assistant Coordinator of Community Life

Date: April 10, 2025

RE: Sister Aurelia Moellers, OSF

Birth	October 21, 1845, in Albersloh, Germany, and named Gertrude
Parents	Johanne and Elisabeth (Haselan) Moellers
Entered HSOSF	July 3, 1868
Profession of First Vows	July 23, 1870
Missionary to the USA	October 1875 at age 30

Assignments

East St. Louis, IL	St. Mary's Hospital	November 8, 1875	
Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	December 1875	
Lincoln, IL	St. Clara's Hospital	July 9, 1884	Superior/Administrator

Entered Eternal Life (age 49)

November 5, 1894, and buried in Calvary Cemetery (Springfield, IL)

East St. Louis, December 3, 1875

Praise to Jesu Christ

Dear Reverend Mother,

After we I am delighted to write you, Reverend Mother. But, where shall I begin? If I America? One place us, Reverend Mother, there on the tears not When the carriage slowly was out of sight of the church, it was a jolt through my heart. Oh, the separation is certainly very hard, and our dear God has asked for a good sacrifice. Yet, what I once promised our dear God, I shall not take back, because it is the most holy wish.

As far as the journey is concerned, Reverend Mother was no doubt informed by the first letters. I would only like to add: first, nobody had imagined such a voyage. Since I felt rather well and for that reason thought the seasickness would not affect me as much, yet it started right away and lasted till the end. The terrible vomiting and choking I cannot here describe. I could almost breath and we thought it had improved a little, then the storms followed again, that one had to cling to the beds and then again the vomiting and choking. Then the and diet as Reverend Mother knows. The praying gave the ship at least the breviary, not much, yet some stressprayers when everything rattled and burst. During the most violent storm were we ready to give up all hope, only Sister ^{Angelica} ~~Andress~~ trusted the dear God that he would not let us down. The nights were always so long and dawn did not arrive for a long time and then the discovery somewhat were prepared. I cannot omit, Reverend Mother, to describe our bed. It consists of a mattress of wood shavings, and a , a sea grass, 2 , 2 blankets, the all. But, it did not take long and it turned cold, so that one had to be cold in bed. Sometimes I woke up during the night because

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I was freezing. Then we received a third blanket and now it is somewhat better. we have to use our coats and skirts. When we have communion day, then we usually have to fast until because Mass does not start till 8:00 Uhr. Sun- and Holy Days Pastor has to read Hl. Mass, preach two times, and in the afternoon hold Priest Lectures and Vesper. So, we are not practicing idleness. We have not had sick people up till now, this is directed at a good When one considers how in former times one could do so much, but I think some time in the future it will change. In regard to our food supply, the first days we had Everything has to be bought at the store, that does not work so well. Later we received it donated from our district. St. Elizabeth's Day a young man came and asked what we needed, and then he brought in his cart things we had not even asked for, even a little ham and eggs and flour and more, just because he owned a store. Recently, we have sewed quite a bit for the church, and the English studies take a lot of time. Sister Henrietta thought we could fast more and especially go without the 2nd breakfast. She always preaches about self denial. I think, Reverend Mother, you will understand that we already must sacrifice enough. Our meals are already quite simple. At lunch we eat and in the evening left overs with a cup of tea. Seldom, Sisters think we could preserve and then she is that the Sisters receive too much.

We often said it is good that Reverend Mother is not here, she could not endure it. Should perhaps the voyage be better in the summer, Reverend Mother could possibly come to us, otherwise I would prefer you stay there and not die on the ship and expose yourself to this danger. Oh, if Reverend Mother had seen us, it was good that she did not know. When one sometimes wanted to go on the upper deck then dressing and undressing was so cumbersome and one needed time for that. We had help, one could not climb

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the ladder alone. Once the doctor came into the cabin and said we had to get fresh air. We answered we could not dress ourselves. Then he wanted to send us his female helper, who came but I was hardly out of bed, I had to return. It was like director K. said: all deportment ceases. We, like the poor souls, asked for redemption until then finally the 3rd of November the gates of America opened. Although we were weak and exhausted we felt better and thanked our dear God for saving us from this great danger. And at first the hearty reception by the Sisters and later by the Most Reverend Bishop let us forget all our hardships. Then we were together 3 - 4 days in Alton and we were quite well. There we had to separate and also part from our dear Sister Angelica, our good mother. This again was very hard and we were moved to tears. Sister Henrietta will report what happened next. Here we must face the poverty as we had not done in Germany. It was good that on the ship we bag of cake and cookies as a present, but they still are well packed. instead that they If one only sees the Will then it is quite enough, we really want to help ourselves. Sister Henrietta had not missed a meal on the ship. If all could do that, then it would be good. I think it will not stay the way it is now, we shall need our strength later on. Reverend Mother might know that I was quite good in caring for the sick but not for myself. Here the weather is so very unstable. Today it is warm and tomorrow very cold, quite unhealthy. Well, Reverend Mother, I have sacrificed my life to my dear God, I don't want to take it back. On the ship they told us the road to heaven was shorter in America and it appears to be true. I always pray to dear God he might protect our dear Mother Superior and our Motherhouse. I would like to

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Dear Reverend Mother I could not fail to tell you my heart . .
. I already feel better when I know that you know it.
A good way against homesickness is the English lessons and then
it still remains a little with me. Here almost everybody
speaks English and one cannot do without it. Already we have
studied a few pages in the book, it is quite difficult. We
have become children again.

To conclude I wish you with all my heart a Merry Christmas
and a Blessed and Happy New Year. Many greetings
to all Sisters also and thank you for your diligent prayers
for the

Your Obedient and Grateful Daughter

~~M.F.~~ *Sch Aurelia*

SR. AURELIA

*"If we had but known the wondrous worth
"Of the gentle smile we shall see no more,
"Of the soul that has fled the unfeeling earth,
"Of the heart whose labors are o'er;"*

The seventh Sister of the original twenty, Sr. Aurelia departed this life Nov. 5, 1894. A vigorous, active, Christ-like life fell prey to Tuberculosis at the age of forty-nine. She had been the first Superioress of St. Clara's Hospital of Lincoln where her services were of telling effect. Her humble, unassuming ways gained her a deep, warm spot in the hearts of her companion-Sisters, patients and the public at large; all became attracted by her magnetic, lovable disposition so that St. Clara's from its very beginning was a decided success, growing as time passed on, into larger proportions so that today it is justly regarded as an ideal hospital by patients and convalescents, the pride of the town. Sr. Aurelia came from Albersloh, born October 21, 1845, her maiden name being Gertrude Moellers. On July 3, 1868 she entered St. Mauritz a Postulant, became vested July 10, 1869, was admitted to the ranks of the Sisterhood together with Sr. Basilia in July 1870, renewing her consecration to God in Aug. '72 and Oct. '74 and left the Fatherland for America the following autumn. The latter years of her life Sr. Aurelia spent at the motherhouse edifying all by the scrupulous exactitude in the performance of duty observance of rules and deep seated piety. May the good Sister rest in God's holy Peace.

