

Amazing Archives
The future of our past is ever present

Let me begin by apologizing for not writing last month. I didn't forget my church family, just the date.

Our third pastor was Rev. Alexis Dony. He served from 1842-1849. During this time, Belleville's first library, which was located in a private residence, was relocated to our church building. German Protestants lovingly donated their collections of books and music to share with the community.

St. Paul was the 'rock' for other historical 'firsts' in Belleville. Our first church was the building for Southern Illinois' first parochial school and Belleville's first school. All denominations of children were allowed to attend.

We were the home for Saegerbund, Belleville's first singing society. Although small in size, our first church became a community place where many of Belleville's residents gathered for events other than church services.

Belleville's population was about 400. Services were well attended even though there were no interior walls, foundation, Flooring or heat source. The school children sang 'Lord God We Praise Thee' the first winter. You can imagine the difficulty of singing in an unheated, uninsulated room.

As time marched on, we learned from mistakes, and things got better. What happened? You will have to wait till next month for the answer.

In Service to God,
Jo Ann Elmore.