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Indianbush: Where Was It? (St. John's first location in Collegeville)

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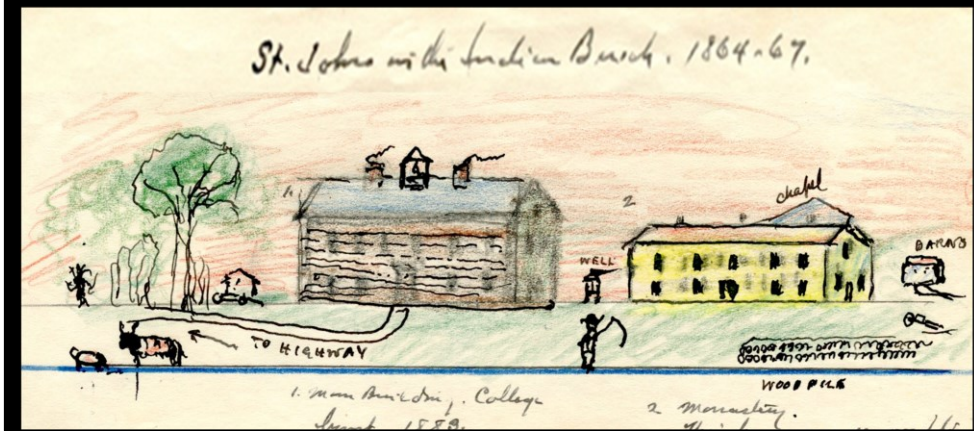
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150 years ago
the monks left “Indianbush”...
but *where* was it??

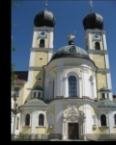


Saint John's in the Indian Bush, 1864-1867 – drawing by Alexius Hoffmann in the SJAA

Chronology

170 years ago:

1846: Monks leave Metten, Germany



160 years ago:

1856: Monks arrive in St. Cloud



1864: Monks move to “Indianbush”



150 years ago:

1866: Monks move to “Lake St. Louis”

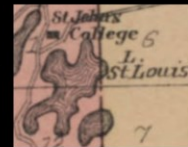


Image 1: Saint Cloud Priory, 1856, drawn by one of the first students, Henry Emmel - SJU & SJA Archives, Ascheman Sesquicentennial photos LP096.1857.sketch

Image 2: 1896 Plat Book of Stearns County, Collegeville Township, p. 7

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/stearns/id/389/rec/1>

(sharper image on p. 43

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/compoundobject/collection/stearns/id/389/rec/1>

)

Chronology

1864: Monks move to “Indianbush”

Some lands had been taken up several years before a few miles west of St. Joseph--in the Indian Bush--and here Prior Othmar built a monastery and college. The buildings, of which not a trace remains, stood in the field about half a mile west of what is now Collegeville station on the Great Northern R.R. They were solid log structures, two stories high. Here the college resumed its activity in 1864 with a small class of students.

Text from a 1923 *St. Cloud Times* article by Alexius Hoffmann OSB

Box 2566:2 SJU and Abbey Article for the *Saint Cloud Times* in Sept. 1923 by Alexius Hoffman

Most of the land in the immediate vicinity of St. Cloud had been claimed, but there were still some large tracts available because of the dense forests that would have to be cleared before beginning cultivation. So it was that the monks were able to claim 1280 acres of land in an area two miles north of St. Joseph, fourteen miles west of St. Cloud. This whole region was--and much remains today--covered by beautiful forest and dense underbrush, all of which had earned it the name of "The Indianbush."

The Fathers had secured land at and near the present site of Collegeville, twelve miles west of St. Cloud.

"The Fathers had secured land at and near the present site of Collegeville, twelve miles west of St. Cloud."

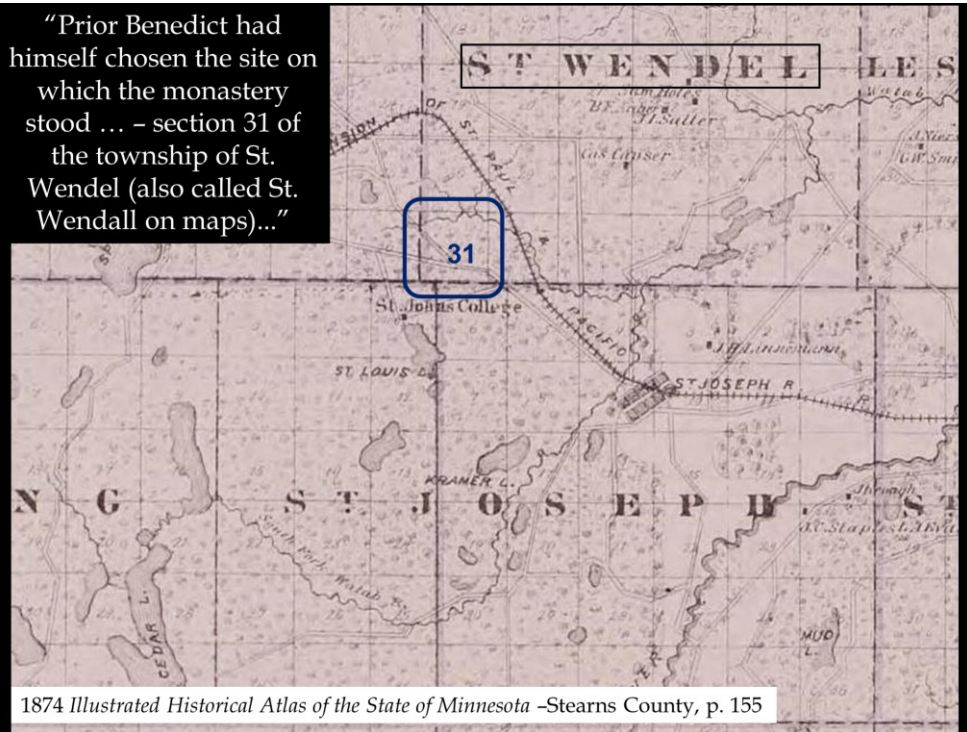
Several lay-brothers were set to work clearing the land and a small monastery was built about one quarter of a mile west of Collegeville station.

"Several lay brothers were set to work clearing the land and a small monastery was built about one quarter of a mile west of Collegeville station."

Top: Text from *Scriptorium* v. 13 n.1 April 1953 "The Brothers of Saint John's Abbey, Formative Years: 1856-1866" article by Br. Thomas Whitaker, p. 55
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/4036/show/4009>

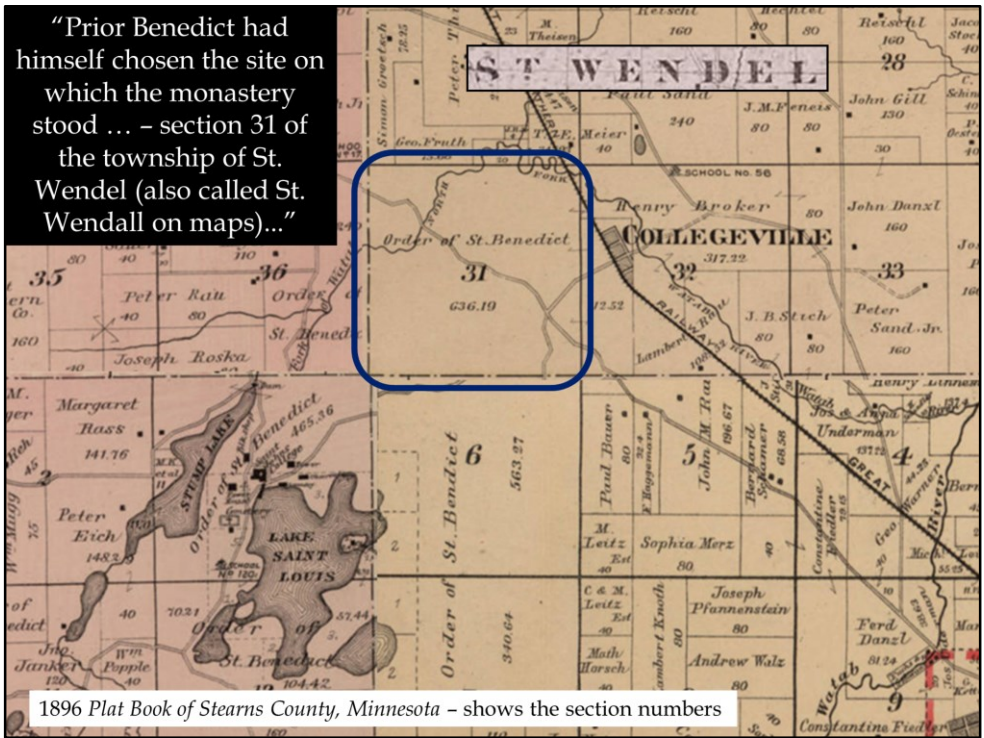
Bottom: Alexius Hoffmann's 1907 account in pencil, SJAA D35 f3

“Prior Benedict had himself chosen the site on which the monastery stood ... – section 31 of the township of St. Wendel (also called St. Wendall on maps).”



[Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota: A Sketch of Its History, 1857-1907](http://www.csbsju.edu/sju-archives/sjuhistory/booksaboutstjohns/hoffmannbook/hoffmannchapter1) by Alexius Hoffmann, OSB, Chapter 1 <http://www.csbsju.edu/sju-archives/sjuhistory/booksaboutstjohns/hoffmannbook/hoffmannchapter1>

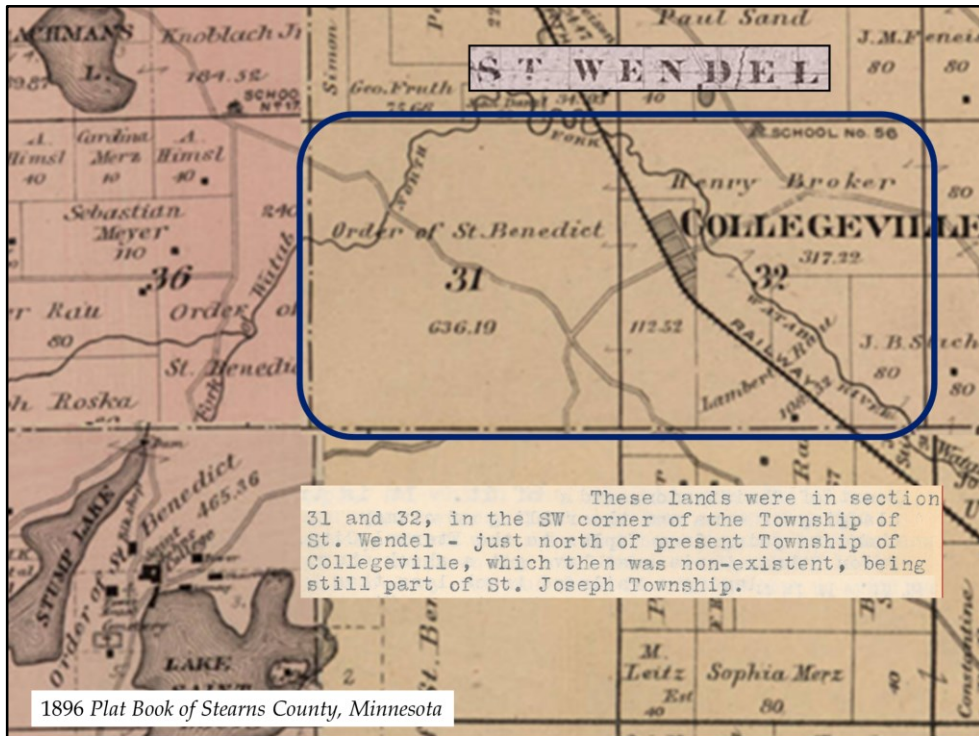
Map: 1874 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota* –Stearns County, p. 155
<http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/mhs/id/1020>



[Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota: A Sketch of Its History, 1857-1907](http://www.csbsju.edu/sju-archives/sjuhistory/booksaboutstjohns/hoffmannbook/hoffmannchapter1) by Alexius Hoffmann, OSB, Chapter 1 <http://www.csbsju.edu/sju-archives/sjuhistory/booksaboutstjohns/hoffmannbook/hoffmannchapter1>

Map pieced together from township maps in 1896 *Plat Book of Stearns County, Minnesota*

- p. 26, Saint Wendel <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/320>
- p. 27, Avon <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/321>
- p. 43, Collegeville <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/337>
- p. 44, Saint Joseph <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/338>



Text: Alexius Hoffmann's *Annotations and Corrections to Moosmueller* p. 1-2, from Abbey Archives D35 folder 2

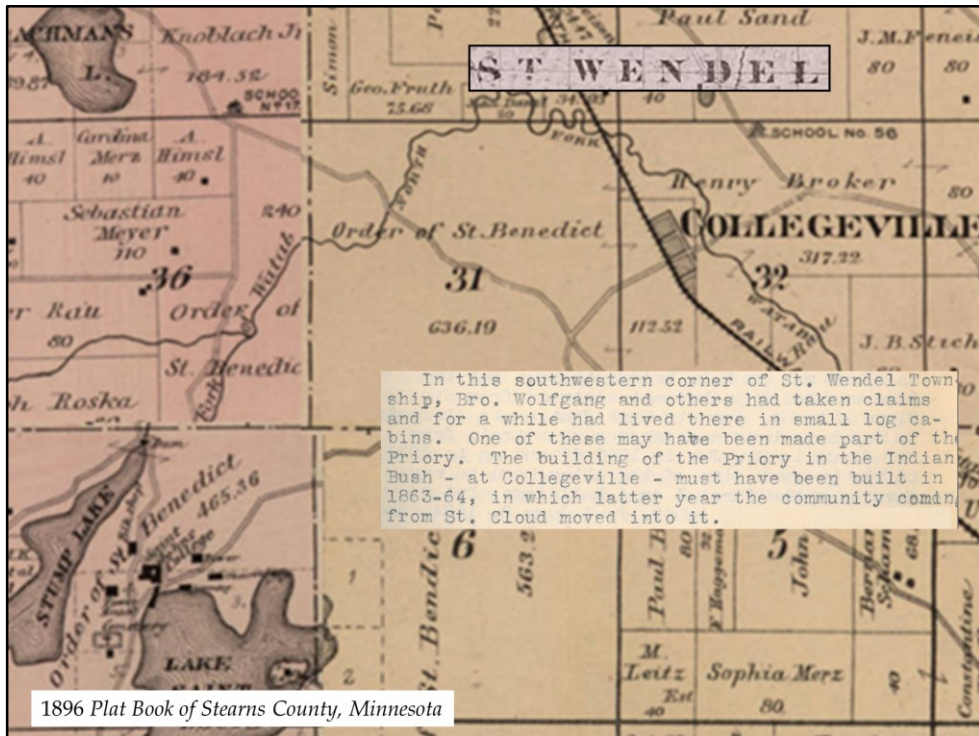
Map pieced together from township maps in *1896 Plat Book of Stearns County, Minnesota*

p. 26, Saint Wendel <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/320>

p. 27, Avon <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/321>

p. 43, Collegeville <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/337>

p. 44, Saint Joseph <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/338>



Text: Alexius Hoffmann's *Annotations and Corrections to Moosmueller* p. 1-2, from Abbey Archives D35 folder 2

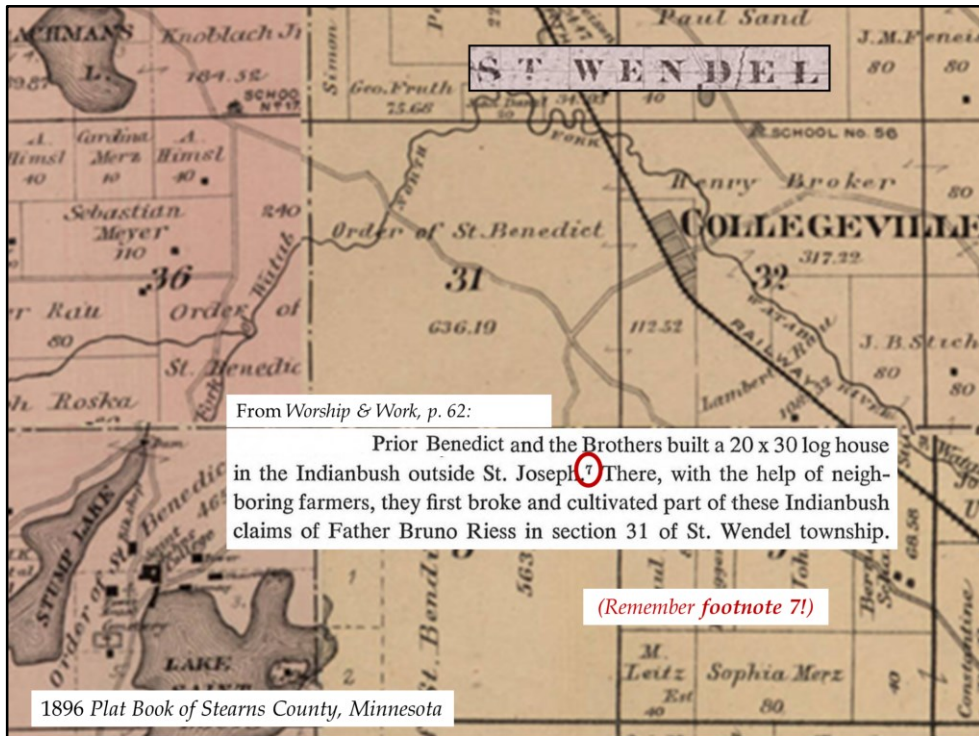
Map pieced together from township maps in *1896 Plat Book of Stearns County, Minnesota*

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p. 43, Collegeville <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/337>

p. 44, Saint Joseph <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/338>



Text: *Worship & Work*, footnotes to Chapter 3, footnote 7

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11518>

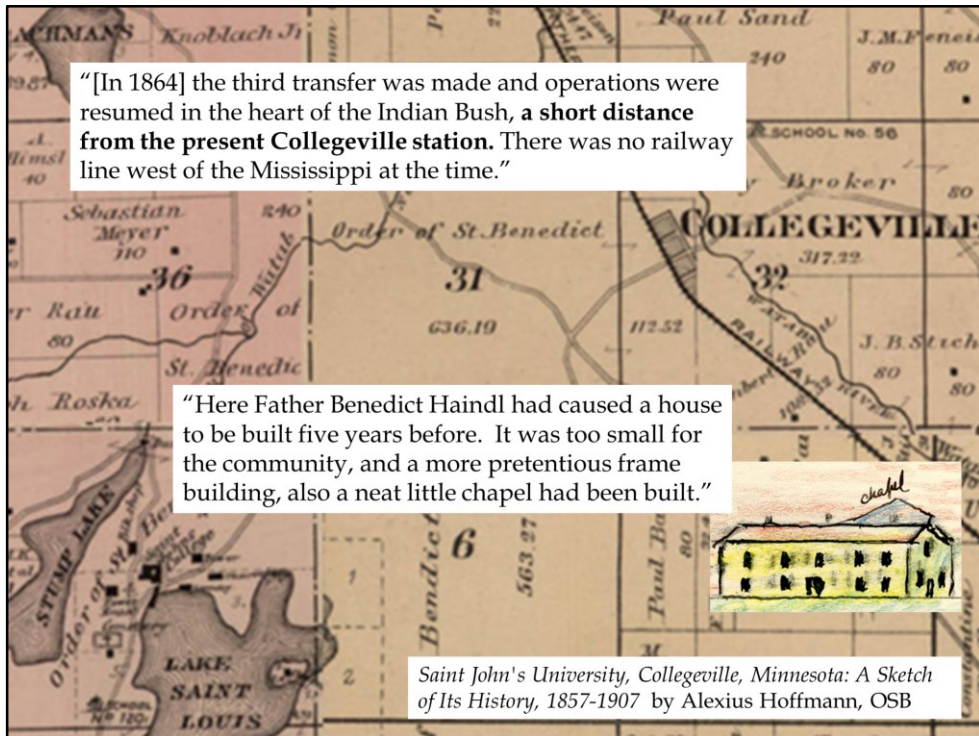
Map pieced together from township maps in 1896 *Plat Book of Stearns County, Minnesota*

p. 26, Saint Wendel <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/320>

p. 27, Avon <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/321>

p. 43, Collegeville <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/337>

p. 44, Saint Joseph <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/338>



[Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota: A Sketch of Its History, 1857-1907](#) by Alexius Hoffmann, OSB, Chapter 1, p. 14-15

<http://www.csbsju.edu/sju-archives/sjuhistory/booksaboutstjohns/hoffmannbook/hoffmannchapter1>

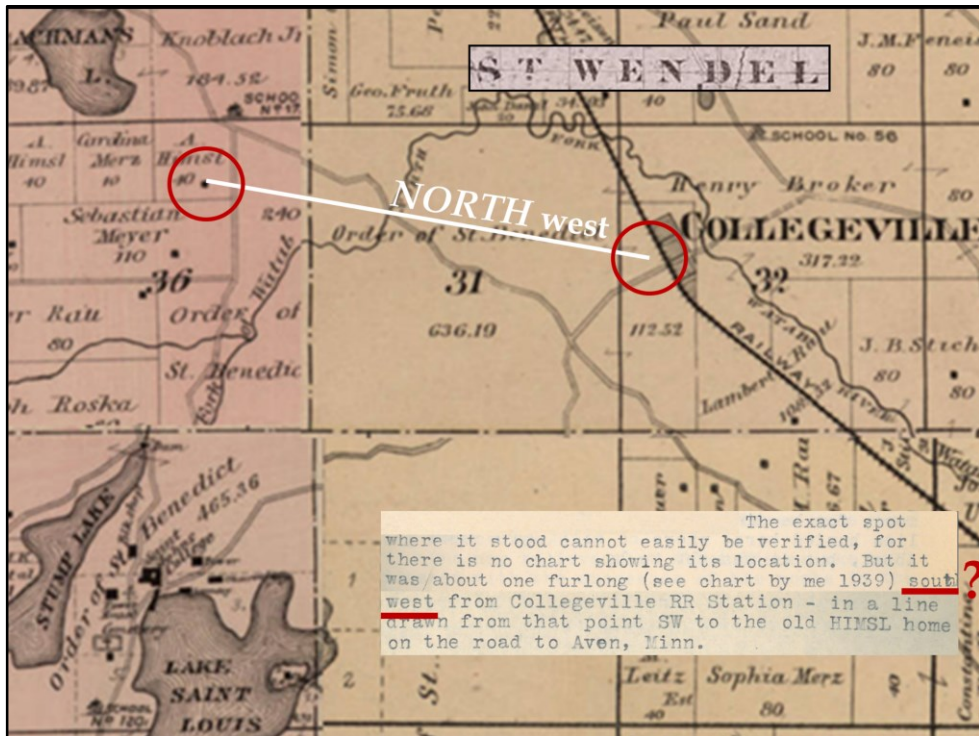
Map pieced together from township maps in 1896 *Plat Book of Stearns County, Minnesota*

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p. 27, Avon <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/321>

p. 43, Collegeville <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/337>

p. 44, Saint Joseph <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/338>



Text: Alexius Hoffmann's *Annotations and Corrections to Moosmueller* p. 1-2, 1939, from Abbey Archives D35 folder 2

"A **furlong** is a measure...equal to one-eighth of a **mile**, equivalent to 660 **feet**, 220 **yards**..." [Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Furlong>]

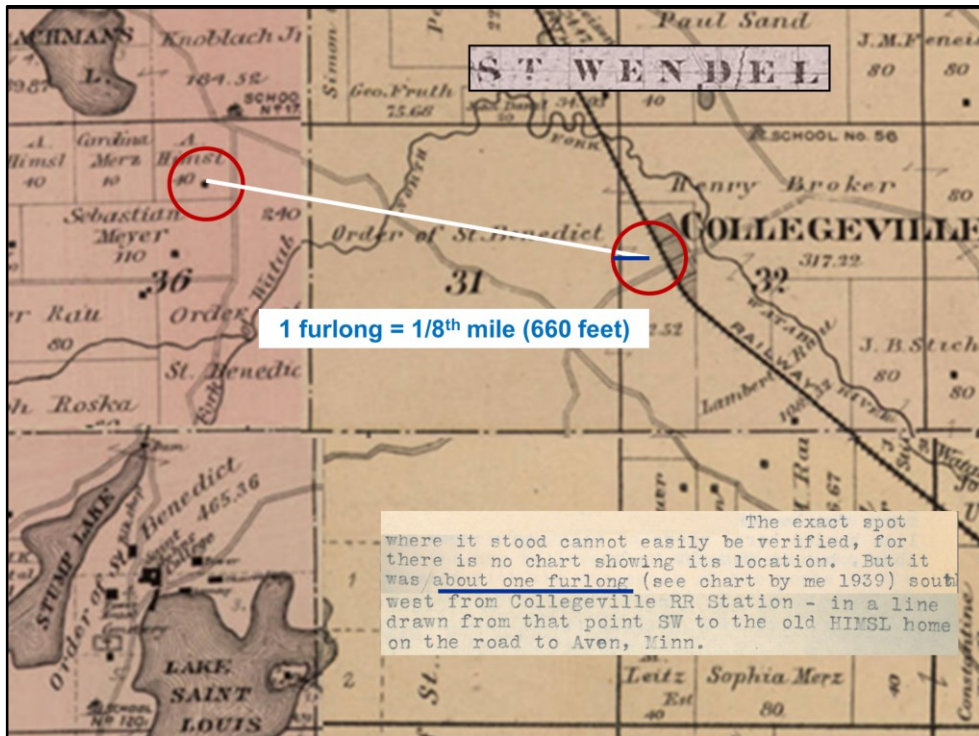
Map pieced together from township maps in 1896 *Plat Book of Stearns County, Minnesota*

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p. 27, Avon <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/321>

p. 43, Collegeville <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/337>

p. 44, Saint Joseph <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stearns/id/338>



Text: Alexius Hoffmann's *Annotations and Corrections to Moosmueller* p. 1-2, 1939, from Abbey Archives D35 folder 2

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Map pieced together from township maps in 1896 *Plat Book of Stearns County, Minnesota*

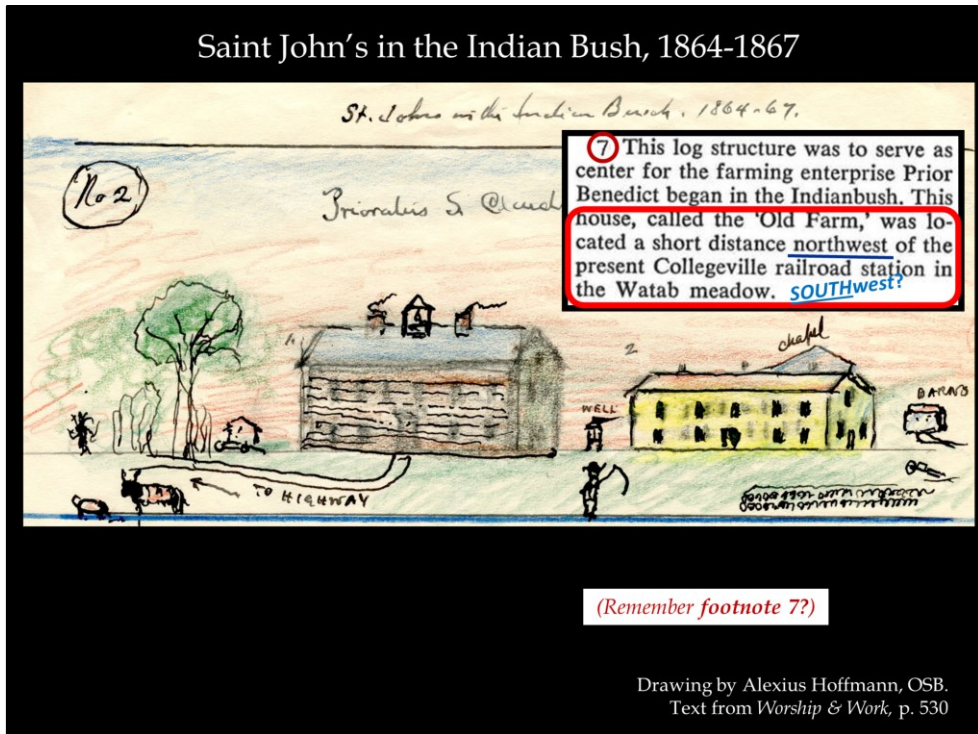
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Saint John's in the Indian Bush, 1864-1867



Saint John's in the Indian Bush, 1864-1867 – drawing by Alexius Hoffmann in the SJAA

Upper right text: *Worship & Work* p. 530 footnote 7

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11518>

Lower text: *Worship & Work*, p.78

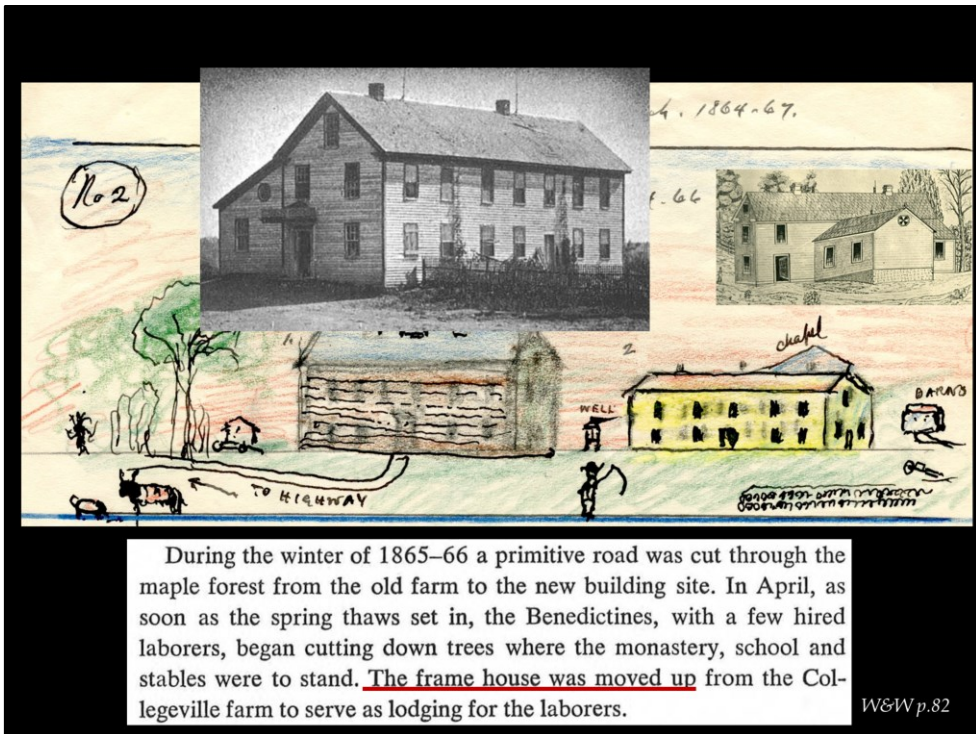
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11004>



During the month of January Prior Benedict began clearing away the forest on the site of the present monastery buildings. He had selected this location some time in 1865 (although Father Eruno also claims to have selected it much earlier). The site was preferred to the farm in the Indian Bush, chiefly on account of the Lake.

Drawing from the Abbey Archives

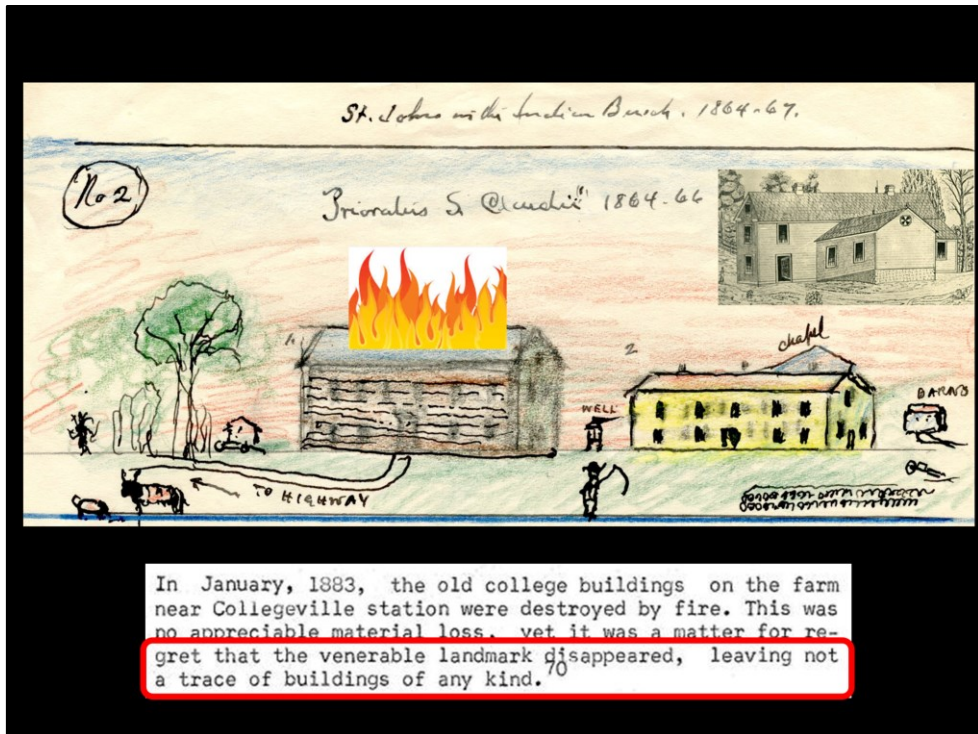
Text from SJU and Abbey Box 2566 f2, 1866 Legal Length Document by Hoffmann, p. 1.



Saint John's in the Indian Bush, 1864-1867 – drawing by Alexius Hoffmann in the SJAA
Text from *Worship & Work*, p. 82.

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11008>

Photo 19 from *Worship & Work*, where it is mis-identified as the present Collegeville station. <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/10956>



Saint John's in the Indian Bush, 1864-1867 – drawing by Alexius Hoffmann in the SJAA Text from *Scriptorium* Dec. 1954 v.14 n.1. "The Brothers of Saint John's Abbey, the Building Era, Part II" article by Br. Thomas Whitaker, p. 43:
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/3538/show/3452>

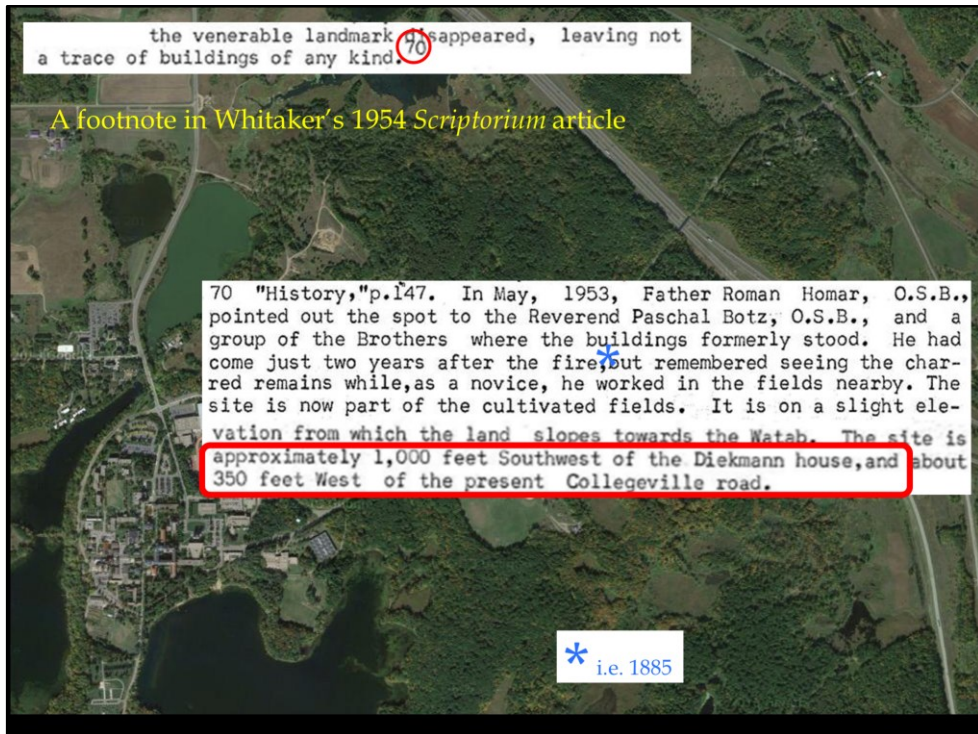


Image from Google Maps. Text from *Scriptorium* Dec. 1954 v.14 n.1. "The Brothers of Saint John's Abbey, the Building Era, Part II" article by Br. Thomas Whitaker, p. 43: <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/3538/show/3452> and p. 44 <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/3538/show/3453>

Fr. Roman Homar was professed in 1886, ordained in 1890, and died in 1959 (according to SJA list of *Monks of SJA*).

So...where was *Indianbush*??

- “About **half a mile west** of what is now Collegeville Station” (Hoffmann, 1923, *St. Cloud Times*)
- “About **one quarter of a mile west** of Collegeville Station” (Hoffmann, 1907, pencil notes)
- “**One furlong [1/8 mile, 660 feet] south west** from Collegeville RR station” (Hoffmann to Moosmueller, 1939)
- “**1000 feet SW** of the Diekmann house and about **350 feet West** of the Collegeville road” (Whitacker, 1954)

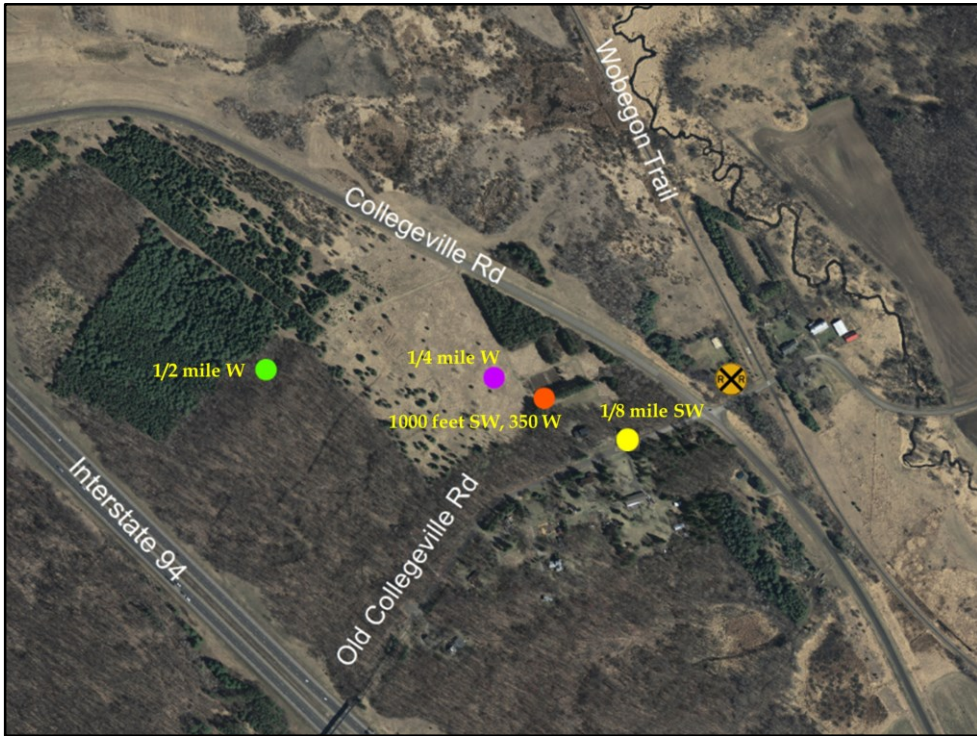
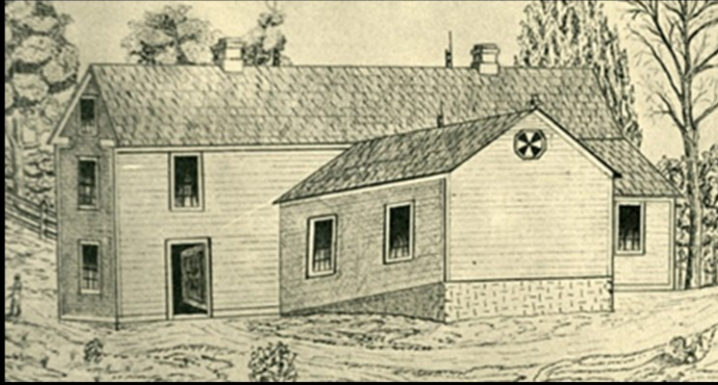


Image from Google Maps, with markings by GIS student Maria Friedges, April 2016



Remember: The frame house was moved up from the Collegeville farm to serve as lodging for the laborers.

“The frame house and chapel
were taken apart
and transported to the new site.”

In January, 1883, the old college buildings
near Collegeville station were destroyed by fire.

Drawing from the Abbey Archives

Top text from *Worship & Work*, p. 82.

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11008>

Text in quotes from [Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota: A Sketch of Its History, 1857-1907](#) by Alexius Hoffmann, OSB, p. 16 <http://www.csbsju.edu/sju-archives/sjuhistory/booksaboutstjohns/hoffmannbook/hoffmannchapter1>

Bottom text from *Scriptorium* Dec. 1954 v.14 n.1. “The Brothers of Saint John’s Abbey, the Building Era, Part II” article by Br. Thomas Whitaker, p. 43:

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/3538/show/3452>

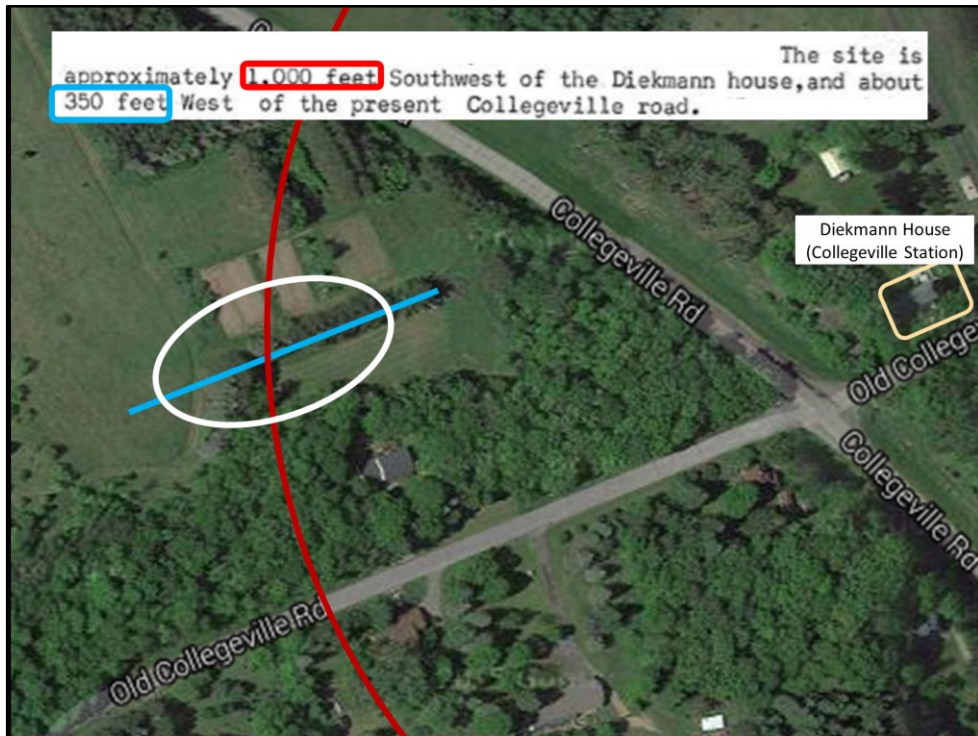
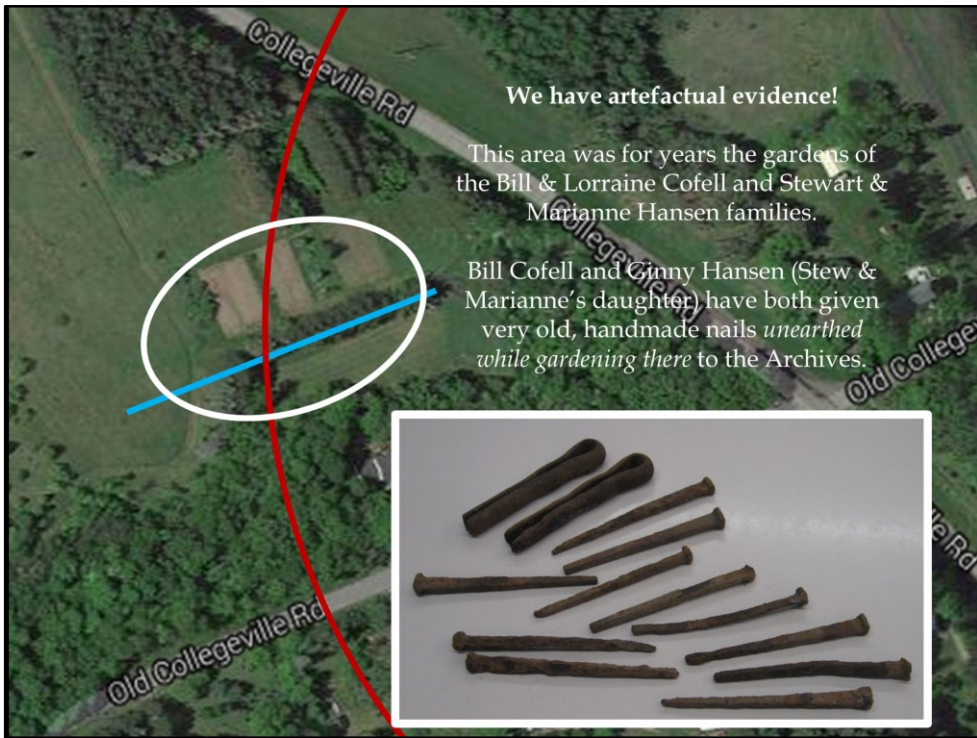


Image from Google Maps. Text from *Scriptorium* Dec. 1954 v.14 n.1. "The Brothers of Saint John's Abbey, the Building Era, Part II" article by Br. Thomas Whitaker, p. 43: <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/3538/show/3452> and p. 44 <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/3538/show/3453>



We have artefactual evidence!

This area was for years the gardens of the Bill & Lorraine Cofell and Stewart & Marianne Hansen families.

Bill Cofell and Ginny Hansen (Stew & Marianne's daughter) have both given very old, handmade nails *unearthed while gardening there* to the Archives.



Image from Google Maps.

Photo by SJU Archivist. Old nails found in Cofells' garden on Saint John's land.

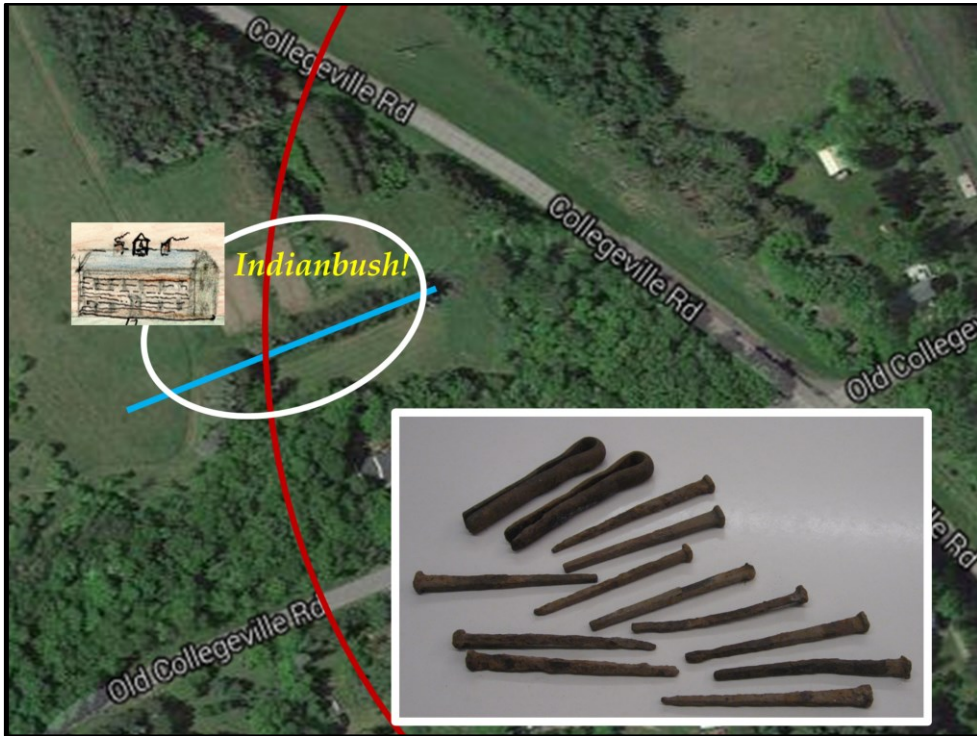
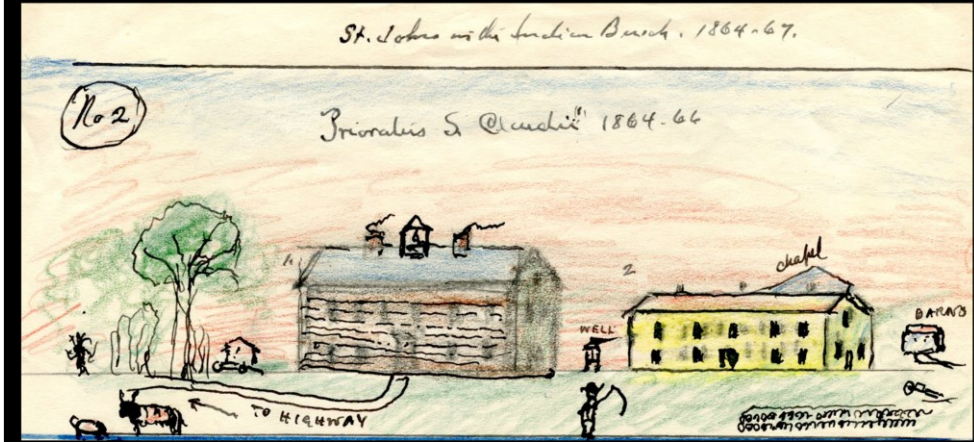


Image from Google Maps.

Photo by SJU Archivist. Old nails found in Cofells' garden on Saint John's land.

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from resources in the
Saint John's University Archives and the
Saint John's Abbey Archives
by Peggy Landwehr Roske, CSB/SJU Archivist.
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Saint John's in the Indian Bush, 1864-1867 – drawing by Alexius Hoffmann in the SJAA