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Saint John's First Abbot's 1866 Election

Peggy L. Roske

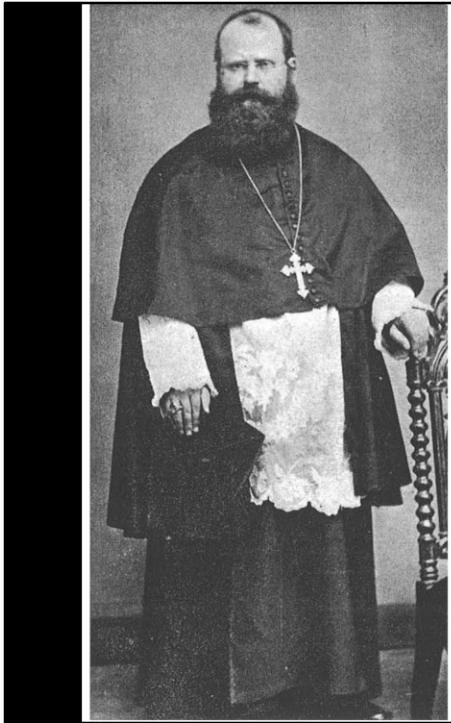
College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, proske@csbsju.edu

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The Election of Rupert Seidenbusch, St. John's First Abbot

aka the

ABBOT OF INDIAN BUSH
FR. COLMAN BARRY, O.S.B.

Photo from *Worship & Work*, p. 35 <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,10954>

"Abbot of Indian Bush" by Colman Barry, OSB

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,2112> *Scriptorium*, Christmas 1944, v. 5 n. 1, p. 49-61. Chapter 4 of his later work, *Worship & Work*, also has this title.

Monks' Migration

170 years ago:

1846: Monks leave Metten, Germany
and go to Latrobe, to St. Vincent's

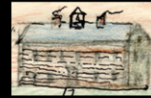


160 years ago:

1856: Monks arrive in St. Cloud



1864: Monks move to "Indianbush"



150 years ago:

1866: Monks move to "Lake St. Louis"
and elect their first Abbot

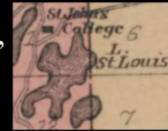


Image 1: Saint Cloud Priory, 1856, drawn by one of the first students, Henry Emmel -
SJU & SJA Archives, Ascherman Sesquicentennial photos LP096.1857.sketc h

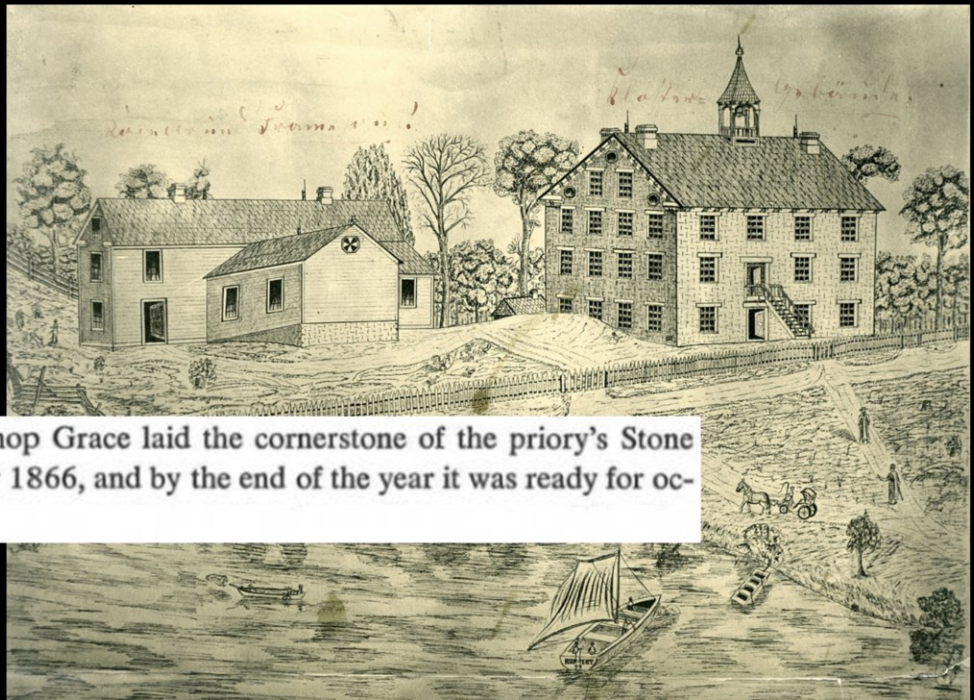
Image 2: 1896 Plat Book of Stearns County, Collegeville Township, p. 7

<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>)

July 19, 1866



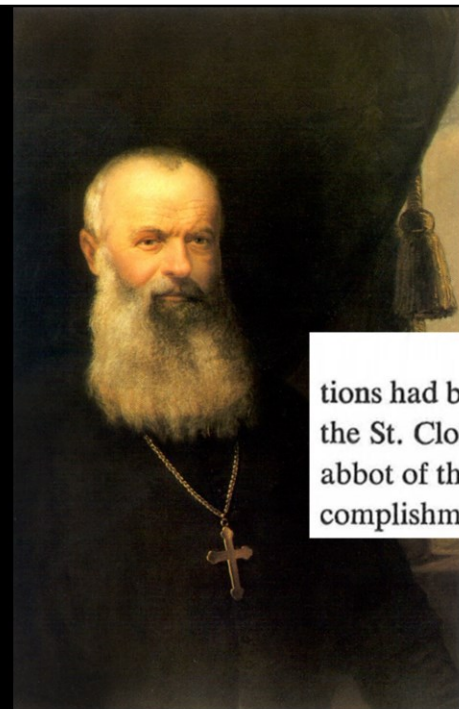
Bishop Grace laid the cornerstone of the priory's Stone House on 19 July 1866, and by the end of the year it was ready for occupancy.

Worship & Work, p. 83

Drawing from the Abbey Archives

Text from *Worship & Work*, p. 83

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11009>



Boniface Wimmer was in Europe, lobbying to have the St. Cloud Priory upgraded to be an Abbey.

The main objection was that the buildings were not adequate.

Wimmer maintained that:

this deficiency would soon be supplied, since the foundations had been laid and there were no debts. The cardinals decided that the St. Cloud Priory should be advanced to abbey status, and that the abbot of the new abbey should be elected for life. This was a major accomplishment in Wimmer's life

June 4, 1866:

The cardinals of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith approved Wimmer's petitions.

Portrait at left from a painting in the collection of St. Vincent's Archabbey, Pennsylvania.

Text from Worship & Work, p. 83-84

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11010>



August 3, 1866:

An Apostolic Brief was issued
by Pope Pius IX:

"Finding that this priory, both by reason of the
number of religious belonging to it...and by
reason of the adequacy of its resources ...we
raise the Priory to the rank of an Abbey."

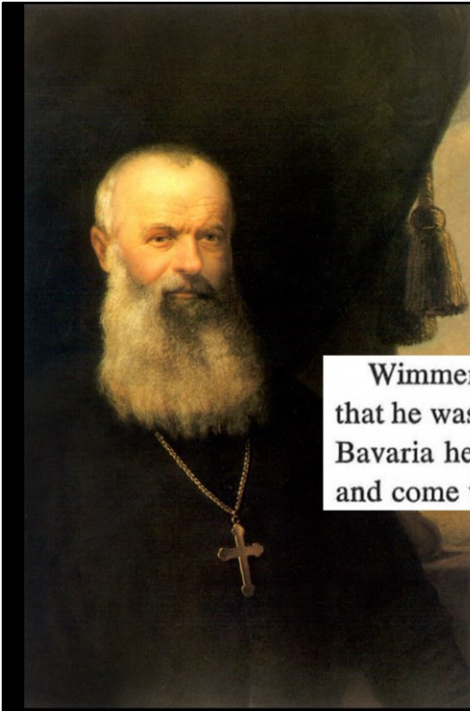
An 1870 German drawing shows Pius IX as
"Papst und König" -- "Pope and King"

Image from

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Pius_IX#/media/File: Pio9pepeking.jpg

Text from *Worship & Work*, p. 84

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11010>



Wimmer rushed the good news to Bishop Grace and informed him that he was leaving Rome immediately. After short stops in France and Bavaria he planned to return to the United States as soon as possible and come west to preside over the election of Minnesota's first abbot.

Worship & Work, p. 84

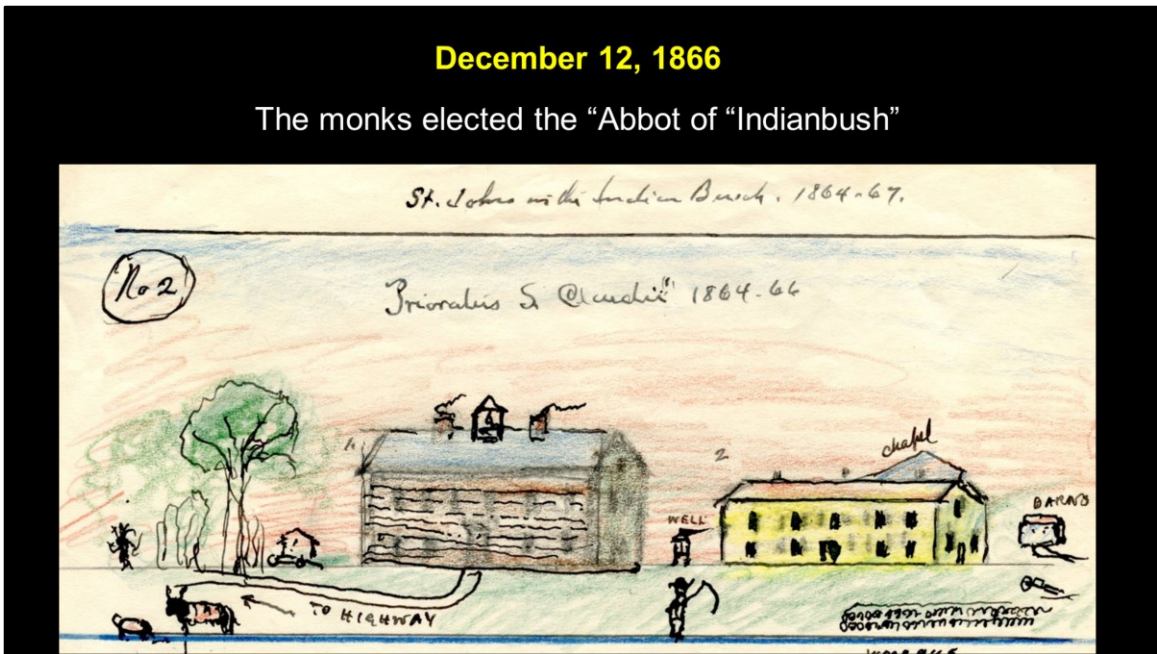
Portrait at left from a painting in the collection of St. Vincent's Archabbey, Pennsylvania.

Text from *Worship & Work*, p. 83-84

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11010>

December 12, 1866

The monks elected the "Abbot of "Indianbush"

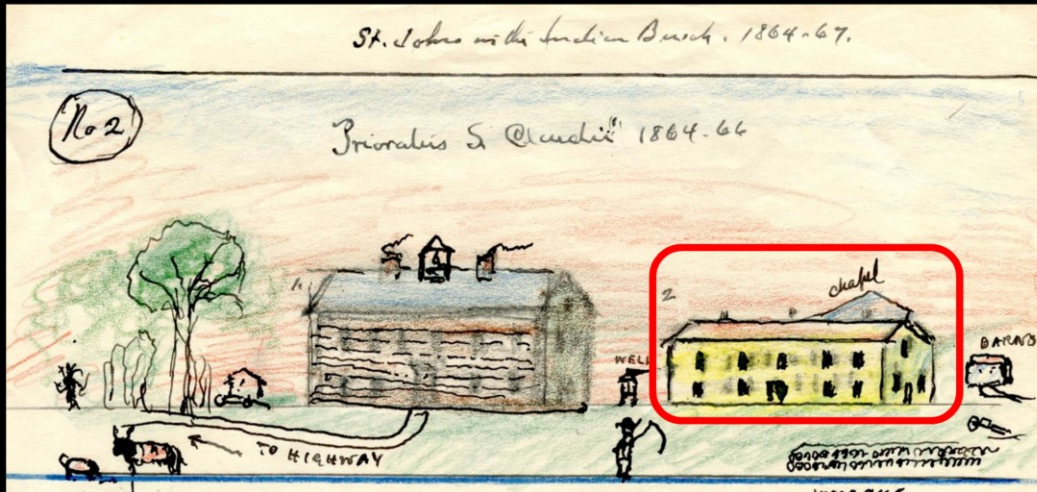


Saint John's in the Indian Bush, 1864-1867 – drawing by Alexius Hoffmann in the SJAA

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>

The first election of a Benedictine abbot in the United States was held on a cold winter day of 12 December 1866 at the Indianbush farmhouse.

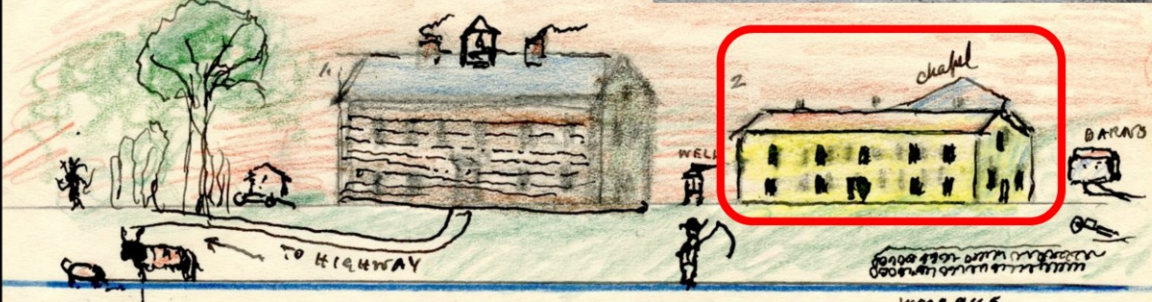
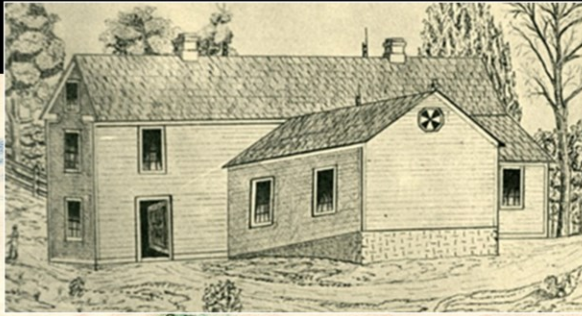


Saint John's in the Indian Bush, 1864-1867 – drawing by Alexius Hoffmann in the SJAA

Text from *Worship & Work*, p. 93

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11019>

...the same building known as the "Frame House,"
which was later moved to the shores of Lake Sagatagan



Saint John's in the Indian Bush, 1864-1867 – drawing by Alexius Hoffmann in the SJAA
Inset drawing from the Abbey Archives
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>



“Minnesota's Benedictines had been notified of the election and nine capitulars were there in person, while three were represented by proxy vote.

They were about to exercise an ancient right, handed down for centuries in the Benedictine family, of electing a spiritual father to govern their religious community.”

Worship & Work, p. 93

Portrait at left from a painting in the collection of St. Vincent's Archabbey, Pennsylvania.

Text from *Worship & Work*, p. 93-94

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11019>

The electors:

1. Prior Benedict Haindl, administrator during the interim
2. Frater Joseph Vill, solemnly professed deacon
3. Fathers Meinulph Stuckenkemper and
4. Anthony Capser came out from St. Cloud, picking up
5. Father Wolfgang Northman at St. Joseph.
6. Fathers Cornelius Wittmann, a former prior, and
7. Anschar Frauendorfer drove over from Richmond and St. Augusta.
8. Another former prior, Othmar Wirtz, assistant at Assumption Church in St. Paul, carried delegation to act as proxy for
9. *The pastor, Clement Staub.* With Father Othmar came
10. Father George Scherer of Waconia.
11. *Father Eberhard Gahr at Shakopee had appointed a proxy, as had*
12. *Demetrius di Marogna, the community's first prior, who had gone to Florida for the winter because of rapidly failing health.*

Worship & Work, p. 93-94

Portrait at left from a painting in the collection of St. Vincent's Archabbey, Pennsylvania.

Text from *Worship & Work*, p. 93-94

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11019>



“Abbot Boniface then led his nine monks into the main room of the frame farm house and opened the chapter meeting according to the ancient forms of the Bavarian Benedictine Ritual.

Abbot Wimmer gave an opening address on the importance of the occasion and the achievements of the last ten years which they had accomplished in spite of trials and hardships.

He admonished his assembled sons to choose as abbot one who was outstanding in wisdom and virtue as well as zeal for the advancement of the kingdom of God and the good traditions of the Benedictine Order.”

Worship & Work, p. 94

Text from *Worship & Work*, p. 94

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11020>



“Then he stated that if Minnesota's Benedictines could not arrive at a choice of one of their own members, they were free to elect any monk of the American Cassinese Congregation, and in particular any member of the motherhouse at St. Vincent.”

Worship & Work, p. 94

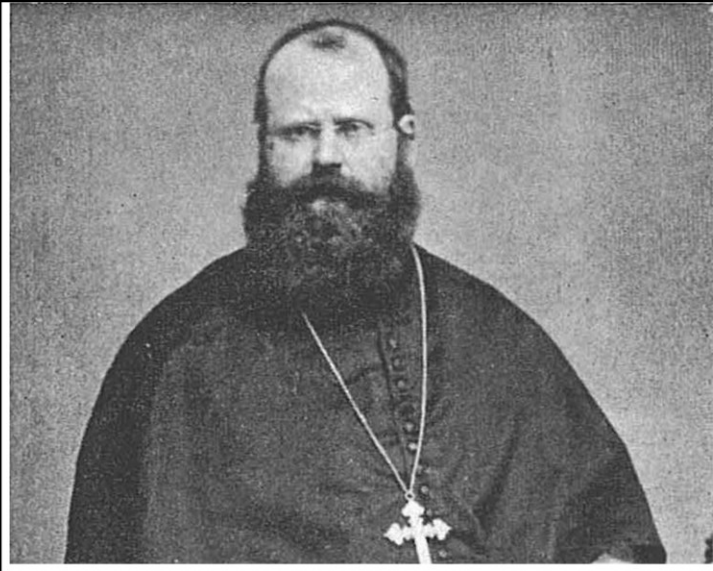
Text from *Worship & Work*, p. 94

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11020>

St. Vincent's Archabbey, LaTrobe, PA; Conrad Glatzmaier's depiction of Saint Vincent's Abbey in 1878

From Matt Heintzleman's blog, "Books from the HMML Basement"

http://booksfromthehmmlbasement.blogspot.com/2012/01/benedictines-and-their-books-part-2.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+BooksFromTheHmmlBasement+%28Books+from+the+HMML+Basement%29



“Abbot Boniface solemnly proclaimed him to be canonically elected.

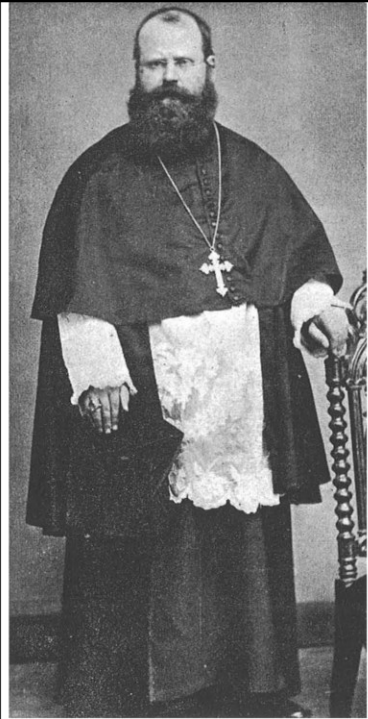
The acts of the chapter were subscribed and prepared to be sent to Rome for approval. ”

Ruperto Seidenbusch

Photo from *Worship & Work*, p. 35 <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,10954>

Text from *Worship & Work*, p. 94

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/11020>



ABBOT OF INDIAN BUSH

FR. COLMAN BARRY, OSB.



THOSE nine Benedictine pioneers who gathered at the old Collegeville farm December 12, 1866, were about to make their most signal decision since the beginnings of the Minnesota foundation ten long years before. For in June of that year Abbot Boniface Wimmer had written from Rome that the Congregation of Propaganda had acted on his request and agreed to raise their St. Cloud Priory to the status of an abbey, independent of the mother house, St. Vincent's in Pennsylvania.

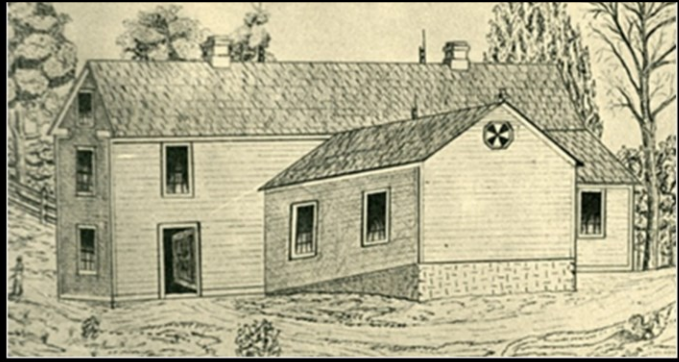
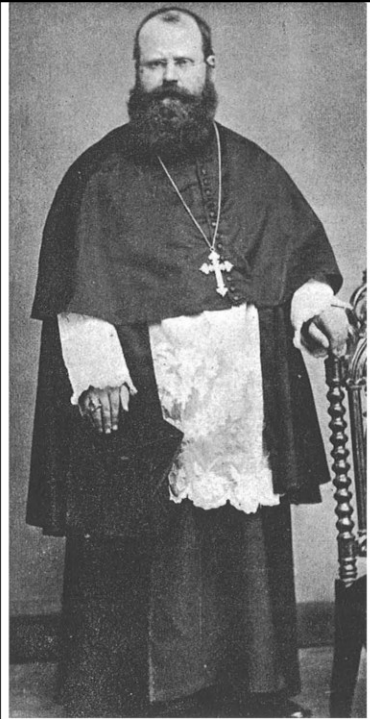
And now they were together to choose their first abbot; Abbot Boniface had come in person to preside over a chapter he had dreamed about and planned for since coming to America. The sown seed had taken root and persevered. His first mission had come of age.

Prior Benedict Haindl, administrator during the interim between priory and abbey status, had made the arrangements for this chapter, with the help of Father Joseph Vyll, solemnly professed deacon, who was going to make his first capitular decision that day. Fathers Meinulph Stukenkemper and Anthony Capser came out from St. Cloud, picking up Father Wolfgang Northmann at St. Joseph; former Prior Cornelius Wittmann and Father Anschar Frauendorfer drove over from Richmond, and another former prior, Father Othmar Wirz, assistant to Father Clement Staub at Assumption parish in St. Paul, was present with procuratorial delegation from Father Clement. They were twelve in all that day, counting Father Eberhard Gahr who had delegated his capitular vote, as had old Father Demetrius de Marogna, the former prior and original guardian of the infant mission during the first years of missionary labors and settlement, but who was now sick in Florida.

Photo from *Worship & Work*, p. 35 <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,10954>

"Abbot of Indian Bush" by Colman Barry, OSB

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,2112> *Scriptorium*, Christmas 1944, v. 5 n. 1, p. 49-61. Chapter 4 of his later work, *Worship & Work*, also has this title.



Abbot Boniface informed the abbot of Metten, Utto Lang, of these events:

"I presided over the election. Fr. Rupert was elected unanimously by the twelve capitulars in a large house in the midst of a forest of 2,600 acres which belong to the monastery. This was on December 12. The weather was very cold, but we sang the *Te Deum* very enthusiastically in the neat chapel."

Worship & Work p. 396, footnote

Photo from *Worship & Work*, p. 35 <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,10954>

The **Te Deum** is an [early Christian hymn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Te_Deum) of praise. The title is taken from its opening [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Te_Deum) words, *Te Deum laudamus*, rendered as "Thee, O God, we praise".
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Te_Deum

NOS D. BONIFACIUS

WIMMER, O. S. B.

ABBAS

S. VINCENTII

PRESES CONGREGATIONIS

AMERICANO - CASSIENSIS ETC.



Official decree of
Rupert's election
as Abbot
December 12, 1866

*Reverendo Admodum in Christo Patri ac Domino
Dño Ruperto Seidenbusch, Priori Centrali*

From the
Abbey Archives

*Per has prae-
sentatione Abbatiati
rite celebrati
tem memorati
suo et declaramus
Abbatem digno
Domino prae-*

*In quorum omnium et singulorum fidem has litteras manu Nostra subscriptas ac sigillo No. Praesidiali
munitas fieri et expediri mandavimus.*

Datum in Praesidiali et Josephi die 12 Decembris A.D. MDCCCLXVI

*Bonifacius Wimmer Praef.
P. Konradt Kaindl O.S.B.*



D.R.N.

Seidenbusch
crest

NOS D. RUPERTUS

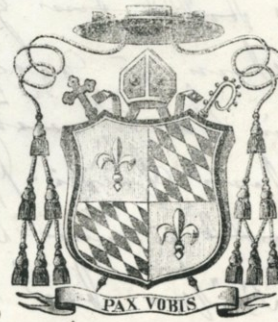
SEIDENBUSCH, O. S. B.

SANCTAE SEDIS

APOSTOLICAE GRATIA

ABBAS

S. LUDOVICI &c.



Wimmer crest

*In nomine Gulfo, zu unim Pmils di
dentis - mit demselben. Comgals:*

Compiled in December 2016
from resources in the
SJU and Abbey Archives
by Peggy Landwehr Roske, CSB/SJU Archivist.
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