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Saint Benedict's Woods, Lodge and Lake Sarah

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Saint Ben's Woods, Lodge and Lake Sarah
Some History to Explore!

Saint Ben's Woods, Lodge and Lake Sarah: Some History to Explore!

Compiled in 2024 from resources in the archives of the College of Saint Benedict, Saint Benedict's Monastery, and elsewhere as noted by Peggy Landwehr Roske, CSB/SJU Archivist. All rights reserved.

FB_IMG_1698008733129

Retrieved from Facebook 4/6/2024.



There are lots of things that have changed since this 1980 aerial photo was taken of CSB, but what I want to talk about today <ENTER> hasn't changed much: the Sisters' Woods and lake, on the far reaches of the campus.

CSB Archives, filename CSB 1980 AIR B-30000002-18



These woods don't get nearly as much attention as those in the Saint John's Arboretum, but I'd like to encourage you all to experience them.

Image from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.
15-PS Campus West-Prairie by Woods



Saint John's has Lake Sagatagan; Saint Ben's has Lake Sarah. OK, it's a little smaller... OK, it's a LOT smaller...

Image from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.
12-PS Campus West-Lake Sarah



...but the paths in the Saint Ben's woods are beautiful, peaceful, and can be adventurous!

Image from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.
02-PS Campus West-Trail in woods



TOM DUDLEY
Staff Columnist

The woods of St. John's University and the College of St. Benedict are the source of much inspiration and resource. Whether sitting at the edge of Lake Sagatagan, eating wild blackberries from a stumbled-across berry patch, or walking along the wood-chipped paths of Lake Sarah's Trail, the woods embody different things for different people.

Arts & Entertainment



people. The problem, however, is that although nature is readily at our disposal, it has been widely neglected by many. Too often we allow ourselves to be absorbed by our daily rituals to observe the simple elements of nature. Too

Whether we recognize it as "Carpe Diem" or "seize the day", we are continually reminded to take time to observe the world and be always in awe of its wonder and beauty.

I'll use these words from a 1992 *Record* columnist: "Although nature is readily at our disposal, it has been widely neglected...Too often we allow ourselves to be absorbed by our daily rituals." And we fail to observe nature. We should "observe the world and be always in awe of its wonder and beauty."

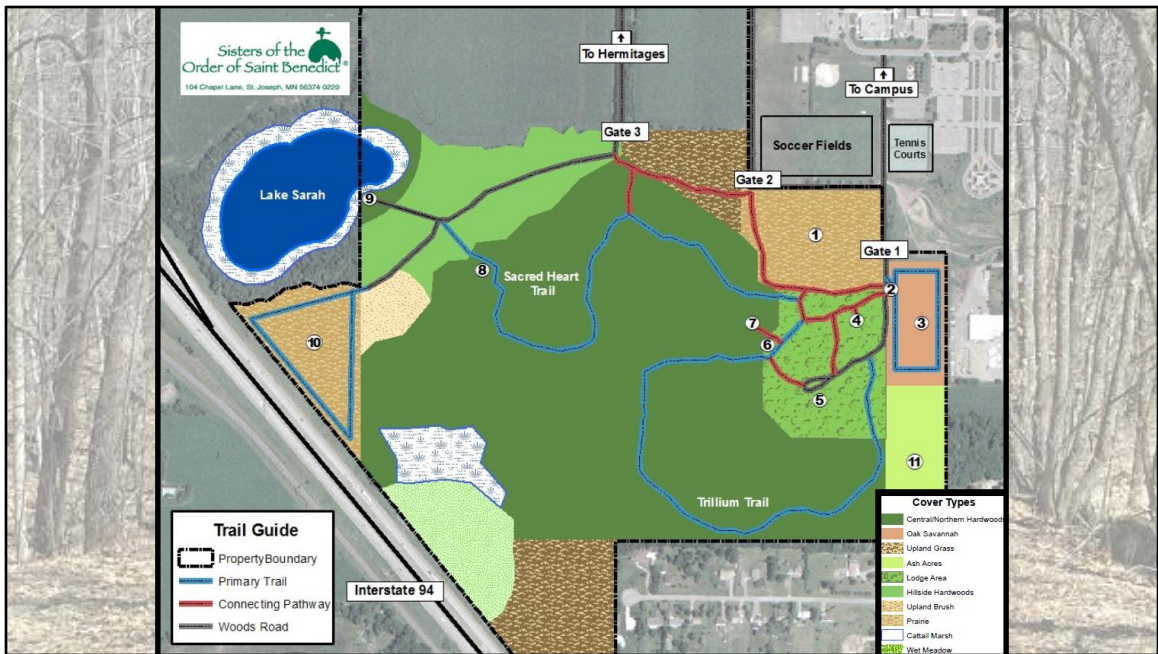
1992-10-01, *The Record* p.8

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/38017/rec/2>



Maps of the Saint Ben's woods seem to be hard to come by, but I have this hand-drawn one in the Archives, showing the trails, and the freeway, and noting some of the distances. It is oriented toward the south, however, the opposite of most "global north" maps...

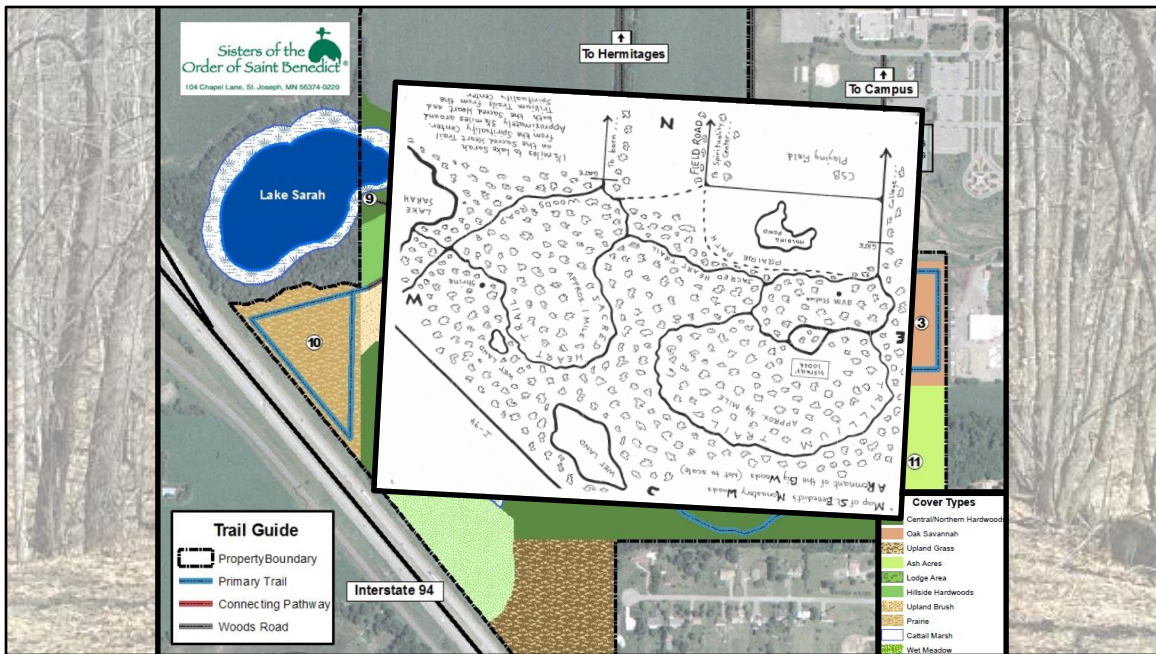
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...which is the orientation of this map, which is newer...

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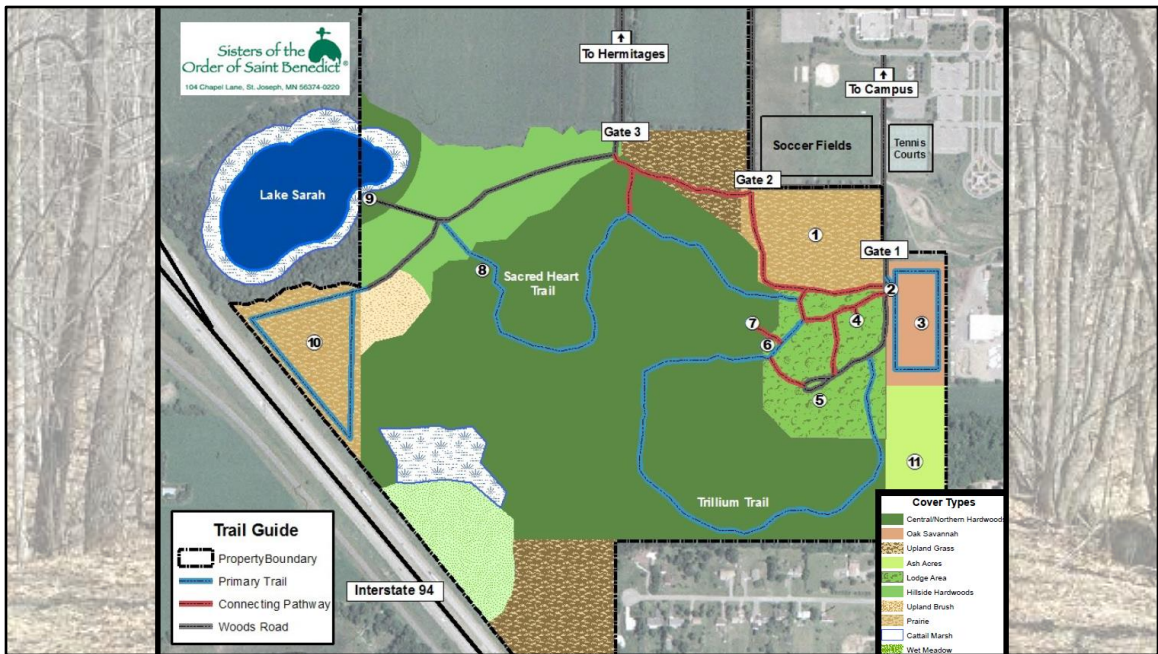
<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchives/id/8851/rec/6>



...a bit more accurate, and...

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<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchives/id/8851/rec/6>



...available on the CSB Archives' website.

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<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchives/id/8851/rec/6>



Somewhere along the way, in the last ten years or so, students – both Bennies and Johnnies – became more aware that St. Ben's had a woods, and trails for hiking...AND a lake.

Image from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.

Left: 09-PS Campus West-Trail

Right: 11-PS Campus West-Trail in the Woods

OPINION

OPINION
Bridget Barry • bnbarry@csb

Senior Perspective: Painful to leave CSB/SJU



By Annie Luke
anluke@csbsju.edu

it turned out you didn't actually need up the stairs to your new home for the next nine months?

Do you remember them saying your time at this amazing school would be over in the blink of an eye?

I do.

And it turns out, that smiley OL whose name I can't even remember was absolutely right.

I am a senior at CSB. In fact, I'm a senior who is nearing her last few weeks as a student here and let me tell you firsthand, it's

mean I am ready to graduate.

So which numbers am I missing in this equation?

The truth is that I don't think any CSB/SJU student who has fallen in love with this extraordinary school will ever be able to leave without wishing for just one more day—wishing for one more trivia question from JD the bus driver, one more dance to Piano Man or one more night staying out to watch the breathtaking sunrise appear over a glassy Lag Sag.

What is it about this institution

and faculty we meet. It's the people we become while we are a part of these campuses. And it's the fact that any mention of CSB/SJU brings an immediate smile to our faces, undoubtedly triggering a million memories from our four years at a place where we felt supported, encouraged and loved.

So, the real question to any CSB/SJU senior is not "What's your plan for next year?" but rather, "How in the world are you ever going to leave this magnificent place?"

we are right now. The p has grown, learned an through the unique es that make a life at CSB. And let's not forget

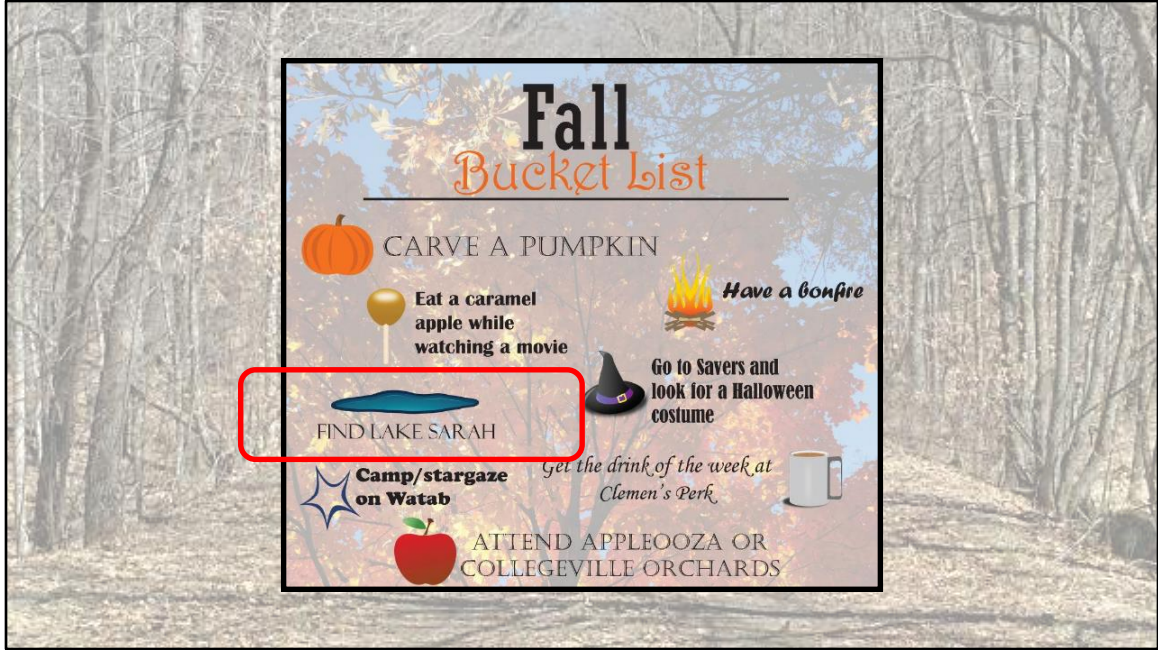
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Sure, I've completed all eight of my FAEs, I've walked up to Quad 4 more times than I can count. I've eaten my weight in Gary's Pizza and I've even found the notoriously hidden Lake Sarah. If I do my math correctly, that should mean I am ready to graduate.

This pensive senior in April 2015 noted that "I have eaten my weight in Gary's Pizza and I've even found the notoriously hidden Lake Sarah" - so she should therefore be ready to graduate...

2015-04-17 *The Record* p.9

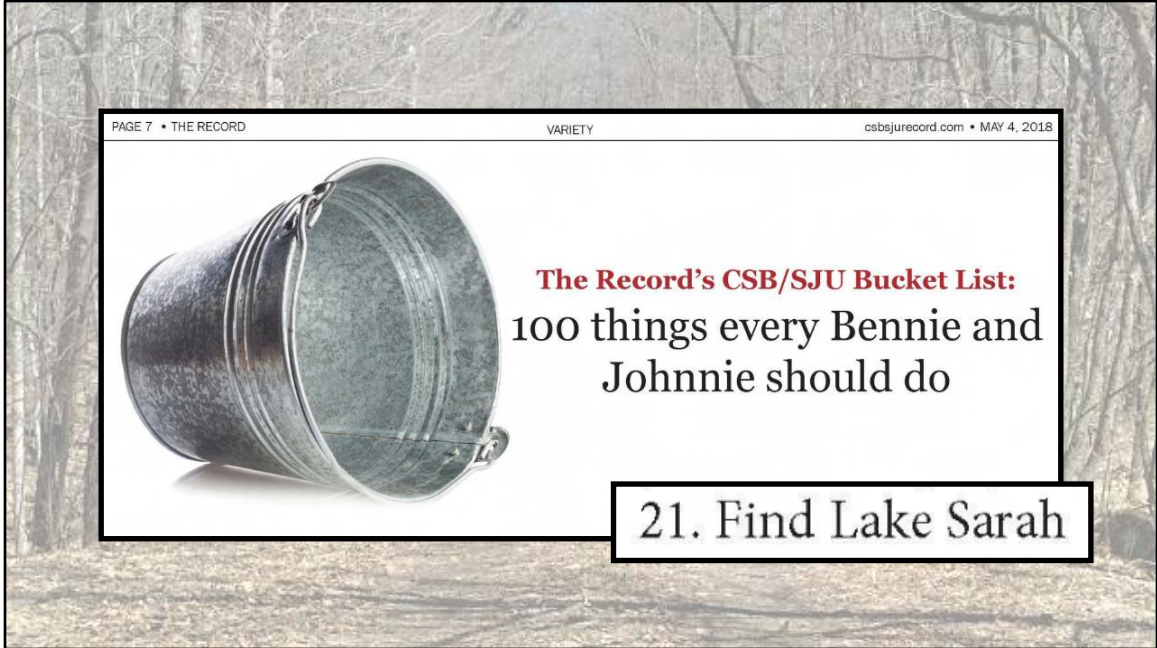
<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/42772/rec/10>



...evidence that finding Lake Sarah had become something to accomplish. Here, it is on *The Record's* fall 2015 "Bucket list."

2015-10-23, *The Record* p.4

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/42872/rec/11>



...and on its spring 2018 list of "100 things every Bennie and Johnnie should do," where it is ranked at Number 21.

2018-05-04, *The Record*, p. 7

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/43629/rec/12>

“ASDC” by KSDZ

Annual Spring Dating Challenge by KSDZ's Theology 349A Class

Instead of going out for 40 days, go on a date in 40 ways. Date to pursue a healthy personal relationship in which both of you listen, show care and concern for each other, respect each other, help each other, live out dreams and have fun making memories along the way. It's not marriage, it's just a simple date in which you take time out to remember the little things that make you smile.






PHOTO COURTESY OF CHSBSU MEDIA CENTER
Kari-Shane Davis-Zimmerman, KSDZ's Theology 349A Class

How: Just follow these four simple steps:
1. Ask in person. No text or e-mail-you are enough.
2. Don't ask, because you are equal-being found.
3. Keep it simple. Start with an hour and build on that.
4. Think outside the safe and sane.

KSDZ's Theology class discusses the importance of healthy relationships and brainstormed their date ideas for students.

JOLEY OMELETTE - @regionandchapters

FIRST DATE IDEAS:

1. ATTEND THE MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL (THINK FAST ON THIS ONE.)
2. COFFEE AT THE LOCAL BLEND
3. CHURCH TOGETHER ON SUNDAY
4. GO TO AN ATTENTION STARVED CHILDREN SHOW
5. GO PRINT A CANVAS/POTTERY AT "ART AS YOU LIVE IT"
6. GO TO A SPORTING EVENT TOGETHER
7. PARK, DINNER AND MOVIE AT MARCUS THEATER
8. LIVE MUSIC OR OPEN MIC NIGHT AT LOCAL BLEND
9. CLIMB THE ROCK WALL AT SJU
10. ACTIVITIES ON THE LAKE OR IN THE ARB
11. GO TO MILK AND HONEY
12. GO BOWLING
13. STUDY DATE IN THE GREENHOUSE AT SJU
14. GO TO KAY'S KITCHEN AND GET AN OMELET
15. RENT A BUREAU ROLLER SKATES AND GO TO SJU
16. GO TO AN ON CAMPUS EVENT AND DINNER
17. OUTDOOR RECREATION ON CAMPUS
18. WALK THE TRAILS ON CAMPUS
19. GET SANDWICHES AT BO DIDDLEY'S
20. GET TEND AND FIRE.

GOOD DATE IDEAS:

1. SUNSET CANOE
2. ICE FISHING/REGULAR FISHING
3. GO TO THE MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL
4. HAVE A MARIO KART TOURNAMENT
5. MAKE DINNER TOGETHER
6. LEARN HOW TO PLAY CARDS
7. MOVIE ON STUDENT NIGHT (THURSDAY)
8. PLAY GAMES AND HAVE A DRINK IF YOU ARE 21+ AT BAD HABIT
9. GO TO LAKE SARAH AND PADDLE BOARD
10. GO HAMMOCKING IN THE ARB
11. GO OUT TO EAT
12. JEC EVENT
13. HAVE BREAKFAST AT KAY'S
14. GO TO MASS TOGETHER
15. RENT STUFF FROM THE OLC
16. PLAY BOARD GAMES
17. GO TO A SPORTING EVENT
18. GO TO MUNSINGER GARDENS IN ST. CLOUD
19. GET A DONUT AT COLD SPRING BAKERY
20. DO AN ESCAPE ROOM

GOOD DATE IDEAS:

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When Kari-Shane Davis-Zimmerman and her class made lists of dating ideas that was published in *The Record* in 2019, "Go to Lake Sarah" shows up as number 9 on the list – though I'm not sure *paddle boarding* on the lake was ever really a "thing." 2019-03-22, *The Record* p. 5
<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/43823/rec/13>

NEWS

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Meet the new CSB Senate Executive Board



Crystal Diaz is a junior political science major and the 2021-22 CSB Senate President.

The Senate President leads the St. Ben's Senate and advocates for the needs of the community.

Why did you run for Senate?

I ran for Senate because while I love the College of St. Benedict, I recognize work needs to be done



Abby Goff is a junior psychology major and the 2021-22 CSB Senate Vice President.

The vice president serves as liaison between students and Institutional Advancement, carries out leadership tasks and assists the president.

Why did you run for Senate?

I ran for Senate because I

to make sure every Bennie feels recognized. I want to amplify the identities and the marginalized voices that belong here.

What are your goals and how will you achieve them?

I'll continue to make diversity, equity, inclusion and justice issues prioritized in conversations for improving

am determined to improve our institutions and advocate for the needs of students.

What are your goals and how will you achieve them?

It is incredibly important that we offer opportunities for students to become educated on issues of race. Moreover, CSB's U is constructed on the assumption

community living for all Bennies. I will make sure our Bennies have the support to confidently thrive and I will support projects that allow underclassmen who have trouble making friends have a great campus experience.

What is your favorite spot at CSB?

Gazebo Bench by Lake Sarah

of heteronormativity, which is something we need to disentangle from our institutions. Lastly, it is time we repair relationships between students, administration and the St. Joe community, as they have been damaged this past year.

What is your favorite spot at CSB?

The trails by Lake Sarah.

In 2021, two of the CSB Senate board members identified Lake Sarah as their "favorite spot at CSB."

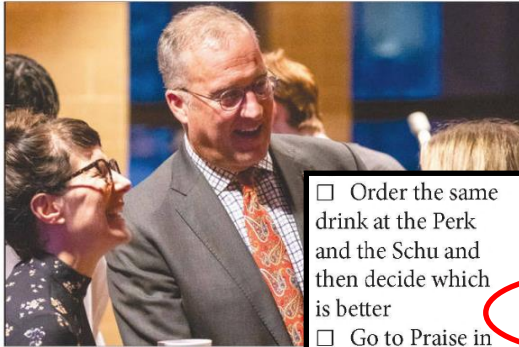
2021-04-16, *The Record*, p.2

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/44288/rec/16>

VARIETY VARIETY EDITORS
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Fifty things to do before the end of spring semester

By Marissa Pax
mpax001@csbsju.edu



- Try lava cake from Gorecki
- Walk across frozen Lake Sag to the chapel
- Have a conversation with Boz Bostrom
- Bike, rollerblade or walk the Wobegon Trail
- Attend mass at the Abbey or Sacred Heart Chapel
- Go sledding behind St. John's
- Order the same drink at the Perk and the Schu and then decide which is better
- Go to Praise in the Pub
- Attend an art gallery opening
- Have a conversation with a stranger on the Link
- Find Lake Sarah
- Help OutdoorU tap maple trees
- Drink a cider abroad
- Find a new study space
- Present on Scholarship and Creativity Day
- Stop @ Buzzed on Case Day
- Write an article for The Record

And finding Lake Sarah was on last year's list of "Fifty things to do before the end of spring semester."

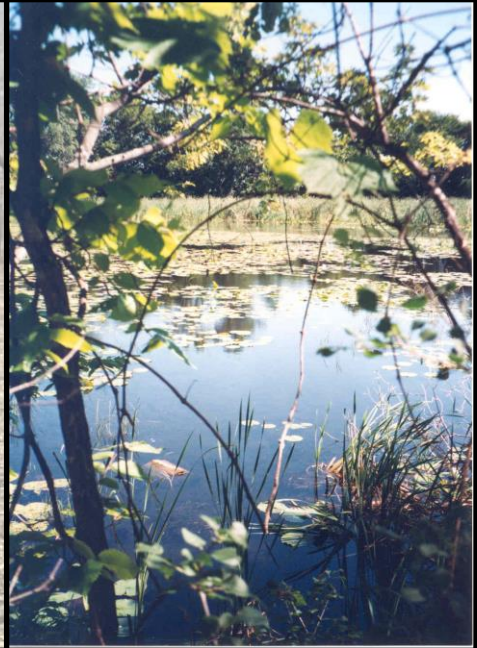
2023-01-26, *The Record*, p. 4

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/44860/rec/18>

Sister Simona Nehl, 1883-1981

In 1958 [*age 75*] she came to the motherhouse and helped wherever and however she could...

... she took great interest in all that went on around her and **was considered a sort of walking encyclopedia. She delighted in repeating her story of how she was one of a group of aspirants who in 1907 named the lake in the woods Lake Sarah.**

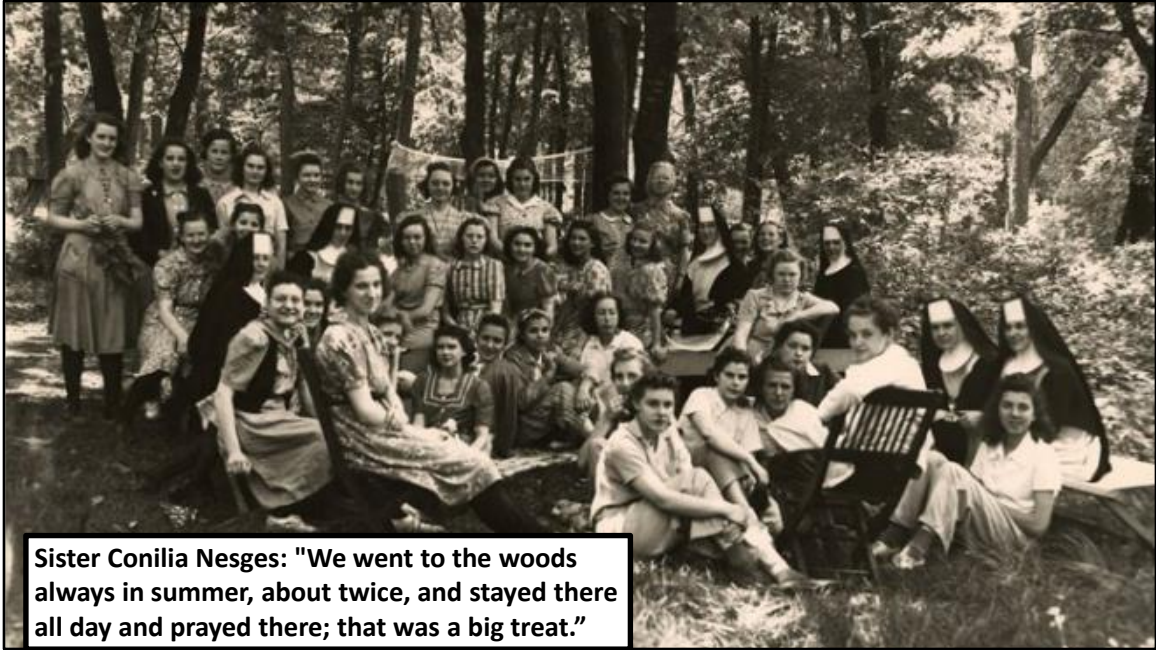


So going there is definitely a "thing." I'm here to share some of its history! The lake's name dates back to Sister Simona Nehl, who "was considered a sort of walking encyclopedia. She delighted in repeating her story of how she was one of a group of aspirants who, in 1907, named the lake in the woods Lake Sarah."

Image from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.

13-PS Campus West-Prairie by woods

Text from personal histories in the SBMA.

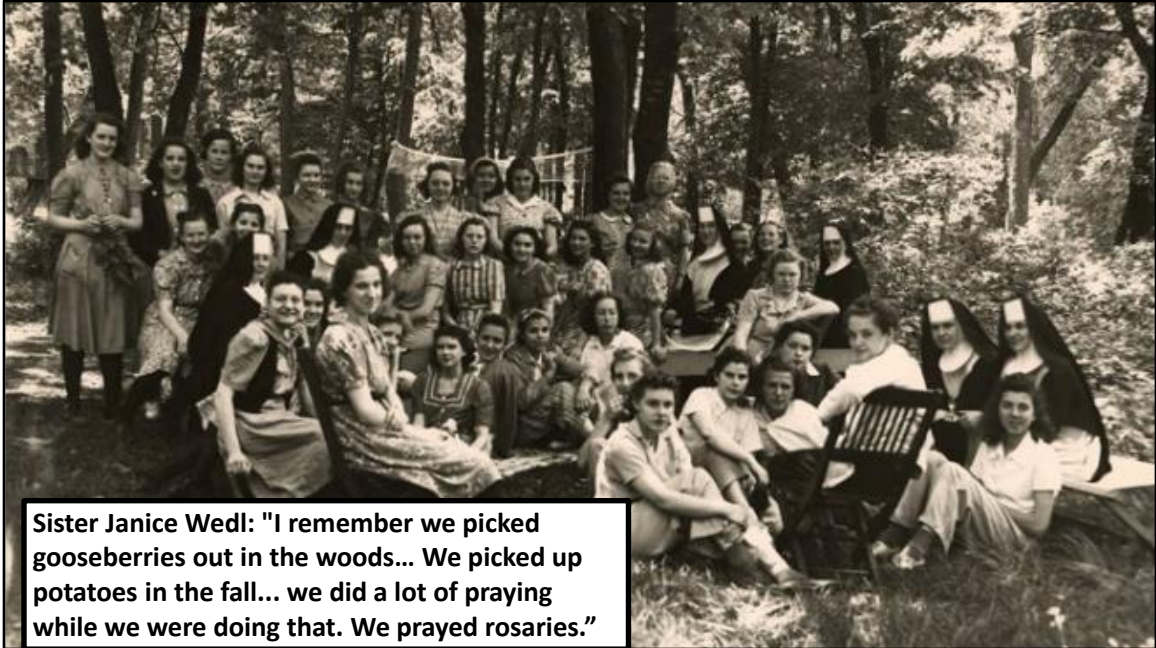


Many of the sisters and alums recall spending time in the woods in their earlier years, sometimes playing – volleyball was popular – and sometimes praying.

Image from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.

07-PS Campus West-Picnic in the Woods [unidentified participants]

Text from personal histories in the SBMA.



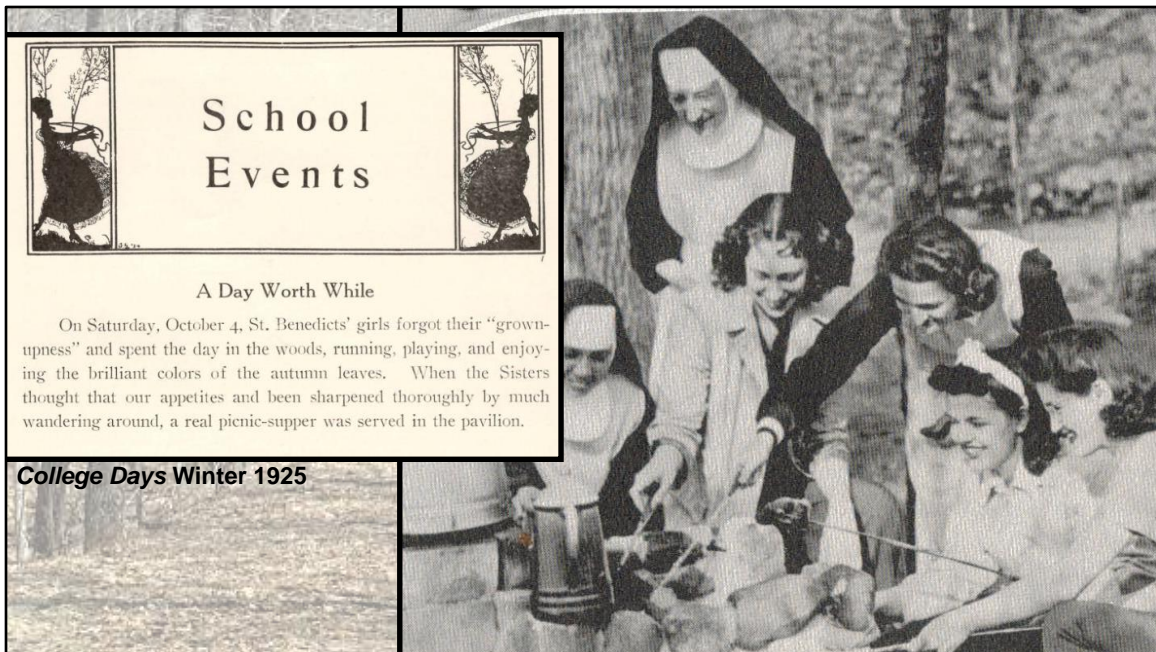
Sister Janice Wedl: "I remember we picked gooseberries out in the woods... We picked up potatoes in the fall... we did a lot of praying while we were doing that. We prayed rosaries."

...sometimes picking berries and doing "a lot of praying..."

Image from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.

07-PS Campus West-Picnic in the Woods [unidentified participants]

Text from personal histories in the SBMA.



School Events

A Day Worth While

On Saturday, October 4, St. Benedict's girls forgot their "grown-upness" and spent the day in the woods, running, playing, and enjoying the brilliant colors of the autumn leaves. When the Sisters thought that our appetites and been sharpened thoroughly by much wandering around, a real picnic-supper was served in the pavilion.

College Days Winter 1925

...and also picnicing. This entry in the CSB publication *College Days* from 1925 describes students spending the day in the woods running, playing, and enjoying the colors of autumn, and having a picnic supper in the pavilion.

Right image from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.

08-PS Campus West-Picnic in the Woods [unidentified participants]

1925 v.5 n.2 *College Days* Winter

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchives/id/11561/rec/1>



The pavilion was a structure built out in the woods – initially looking like this – and it was new in 1925. Roman Zwack worked for Saint Benedict’s Convent from 1936-1979, and he did ...

Left image from Saint Benedict’s Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.

06-PS Campus West-First Lodge

Right image: <https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/225/rec/1>

SBMA on Vivarium: SBM.11e10 Installing the hanging lamps; Roman Zwack.

“Roman Zwack, on the right, was a faithful employee who served the sisters in many capacities (college bus driver, convent driver, maintenance) for 43 years (1936-1979).”



...an oral history that is in the Monastery Archives. Roman was asked about the Pavilion. "Ja, that was already there when I came... not as nice as it is now. There were no screens, it was just open, and the grounds were not kept up. "The sisters would go there and have their picnics and stuff." There was no place to cook, so they brought food out from the kitchen. The Men's picnic would also be out there, and Sister Alfreda had horses out there.

St. Benedict's Monastery Archives Oral Histories: OHT 243 – Roman Zwack interview March 18, 1991; March 22, 1991; April 3, 1991. From page 40-41 of the transcript. Interviewer: Sister Etienne Flaherty

Image: <https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/225/rec/1>

SBMA on Vivarium: SBM.11e10 Installing the hanging lamps; Roman Zwack.

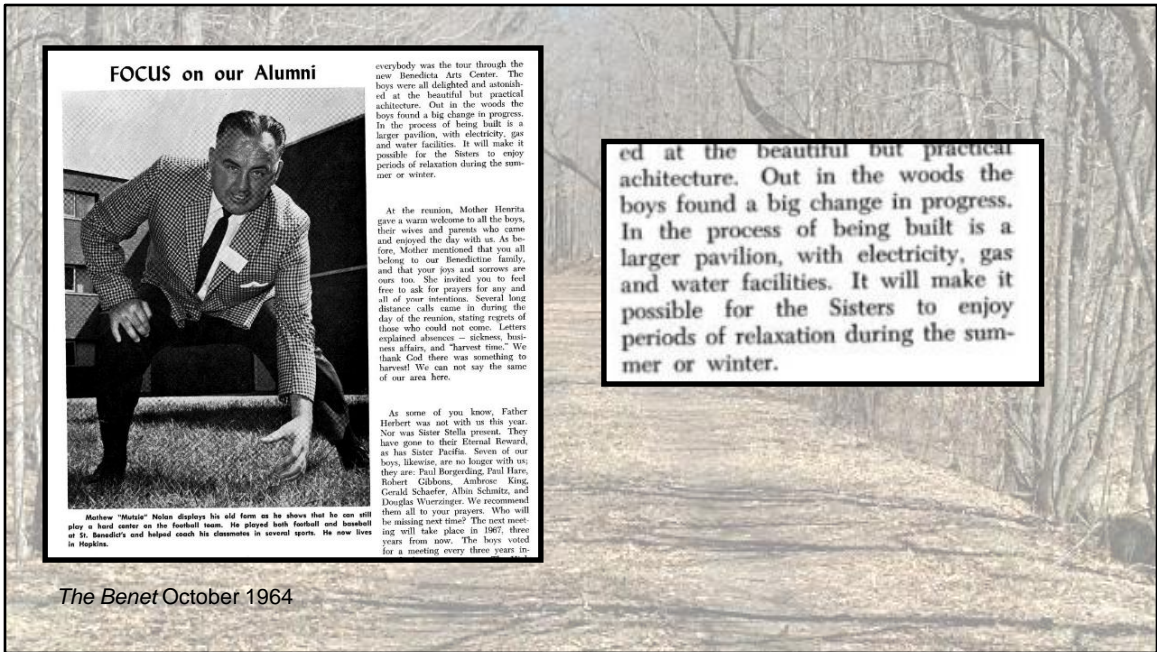
“Roman Zwack, on the right, was a faithful employee who served the sisters in many capacities (college bus driver, convent driver, maintenance) for 43 years (1936-1979).“



In May 1962, the Sisters' Chapter approved the renovation of the pavilion to make it more serviceable for recreational needs, winterizing it and including sleeping accommodations for 6-8 people.

Image from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.
04-PS Campus West-Lodge

Caption facts from S. Mariterese Woida, Archivist, SBMA, August 25, 2022. Folder "925-26 St. Joseph Pavilion (Lodge - Woods).



I'm willing to bet not many people know that there were once male "Bennies," back when the Sisters ran a school for boys here. After it closed, the Sisters kept in touch with them as alumni, as noted in this 1964 *Benet* magazine feature in which one of those boys came back for a homecoming and demonstrated his football stance. Sister Marie Hilger writes that "Out in the woods, the boys found a big change in progress.... a larger pavilion, with electricity, gas and water facilities."

1964-10 *The Benet* Volume 30 Number 01 page 14

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchives/id/460/rec/3>

"...the boys from St. Benedict's Bethlehem School for Boys had to be kept from feeding the young turkeys corn, which the Sisters discovered was a harmful diet for them." – SBMA text on the turkey industry at St. Benedict's.



Here's a photo I took myself in 2010. By this time, the Pavilion, also referred to as the Lodge, had undergone renovations in 1980, 2005 and 2006, to install electricity, a bathroom, insulation, kitchen cabinets, carpeting, and to create more rooms.
CSB Archives photo: Lodge 20101005 plr 02.jpg, October 5, 2010 by Peggy Roske.
Details from S. Mariterese Woida, Archivist, St. Benedict's Monastery Archives, August 25, 2022. Folder "925-26 St. Joseph Pavilion (Lodge - Woods).



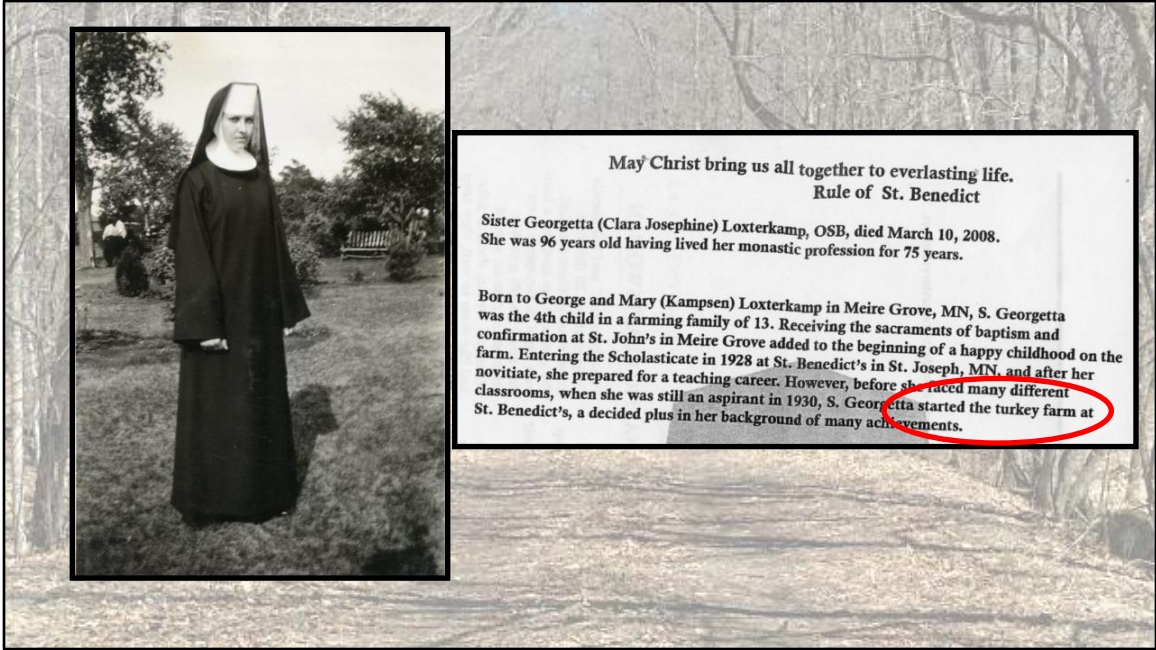
For several decades, in the 1930s to the 1960s, the woods served another purpose for the Sisters and the students, when there was turkey farming on the campus. There is a long video about it in Vivarium. The operation was started by Sister Ruth Kann, both as a way to provide food for St. Ben's, but also as one way to repay the debt for the Saint Cloud Hospital's construction the year before. <ENTER> Sister Ruth asked student Clara Loxtercamp, who grew up on a farm, if she would like to start raising turkeys in the spring. Later Clara's mother donated nine turkey eggs, and with 18 more from two other mothers, the flock was nurtured.

"As was the custom of Benedictine houses in the Old World, the sisters, from their beginnings in America, tried to be self-supporting."

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/32/rec/1>

Quote and images from the Saint Benedict's Monastery video, "The Turkey Story," by Evin Rademacher, O.S.B. and John Parker (a video describing the work done by the Sisters to raise turkeys for profit from 1930 to

1962). <https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1110/rec/9>.



Clara later became Sister Georgetta, whose obituary notes that she "started the turkey farm, a decided plus in her background of many achievements."

Georgetta (Clara) Loxtercamp. Photo from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.

Text image from RG-16-2-Sisters-Records-Transfers, Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives.



Sister Frances Kaproth, in her oral history, talked about leading the turkeys out to the woods and back with Sister Georgetta. And how they would tell Sister Ruth whenever a turkey sneezed, because they enjoyed watching her applying Vicks to the turkey's bill!

Kaproth Image from RG-16-1-Sisters-Records-Deceased, Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives

Image from the Saint Benedict's Monastery video, "The Turkey Story," by Evin Rademacher, O.S.B. and John Parker (a video describing the work done by the Sisters to raise turkeys for profit from 1930 to 1962). <https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1110/rec/9>.

S. Frances Alphonse Kaproth (1910-2000): "On no-school days Sister Georgetta went ahead and led the turkeys to the woods. I was at the other end making sure that all was going along well. We led them home the same way. When a turkey sneezed, we told Sister Ruth. She would come to the turkey barn and rub the turkey's bill with Vicks. We enjoyed watching her. [Laughter] That's why we told her whenever a turkey sneezed."



When Sister Ruth left to minister to orphans in St. Paul, Sister Carolinda Medernach bore responsibility for the turkeys for many years. Sister Carolinda oversaw the industry evolve from a shed to turkey brooder houses and roosting barns on campus and in the woods.

SBM.24c02 St. Benedict's Monastery Farm: Turkey caretaker, Sister Carolinda Medernach

“While Sister Ruth Kann started the turkey industry at St. Benedict's Monastery, it was Sister Carolinda Medernach who bore the responsibility for the turkeys throughout the years. Beginning under Sister Ruth Kann's direction in 1932, Sister Carolinda assumed the leadership in this industry after Sister Ruth left to minister to the orphans in St. Joseph Orphanage, St. Paul, MN. Sister Carolinda watched the industry grow from a shed, known as the ‘rag shed’ to turkey brooder houses and roosting barns on campus and in the woods while the flock grow from 52 to over 4,000 turkeys.”

SBMA on Vivarium: <https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1097/rec/1>
Larger image of Sister Carolinda from the Saint Benedict's Monastery video, “The Turkey Story,” by Evin Rademacher, O.S.B. and John Parker (a video describing the work done by the Sisters to raise turkeys for profit from 1930 to 1962). <https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1110/rec/9>.

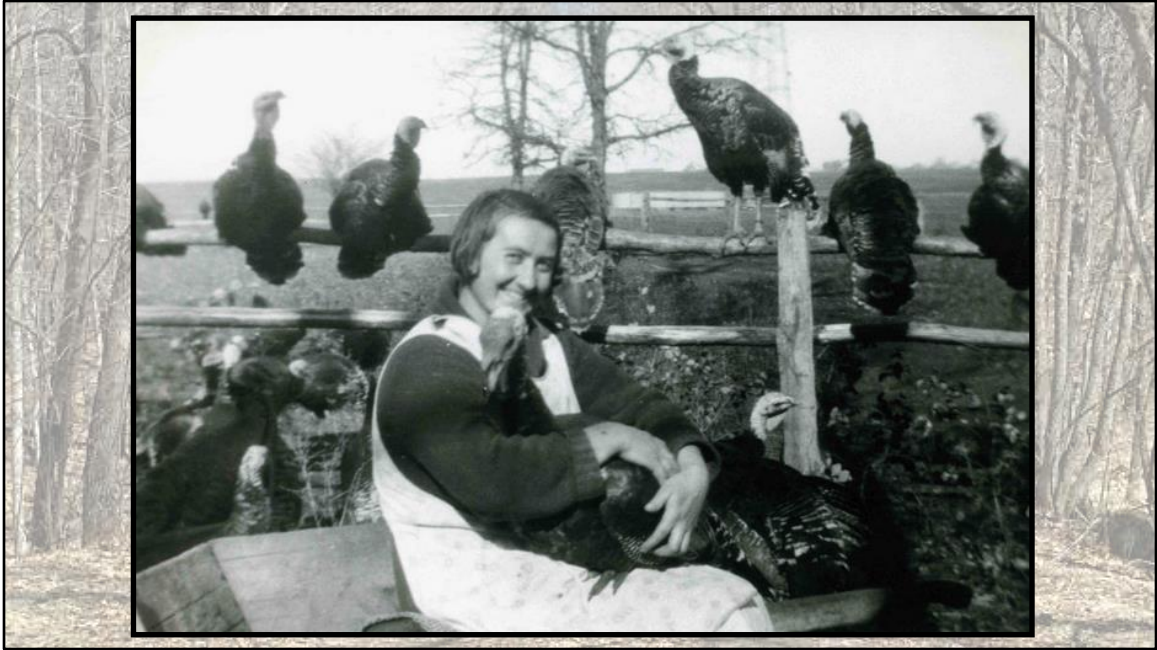


The flock grew from 30 to 52 to over 4,000 turkeys. (In this photo of their winter home, you can see the Sacred Heart Chapel, the old water tower and the roof of the Main Building in the distance.)

SBM.24c04 St. Benedict's Monastery Farm: Turkey winter home

“As the flock of turkeys grew, brooder house and sheds were added to the farm to house the turkeys during the winter months. The winter offered many challenges: at first the turkeys preferred to roost on the roofs after their freedom in roaming the woods during the summer; the incubators, hoverers and other heaters (causing frequent electrical failures) demanded a private electrical line from the power house to the turkeys; the boys from St. Benedict's Bethlehem School for Boys had to be kept from feeding the young turkeys corn, which the Sisters discovered was a harmful diet for them.”

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1099/rec/5>



The caption for this photo says “the candidates who took care of the turkeys (the ‘turkey girls’) each had their pet turkeys, and the turkeys knew [them]. In the photo, Veronica Klein (later Sister Ruthelda) hugs her special turkey.”

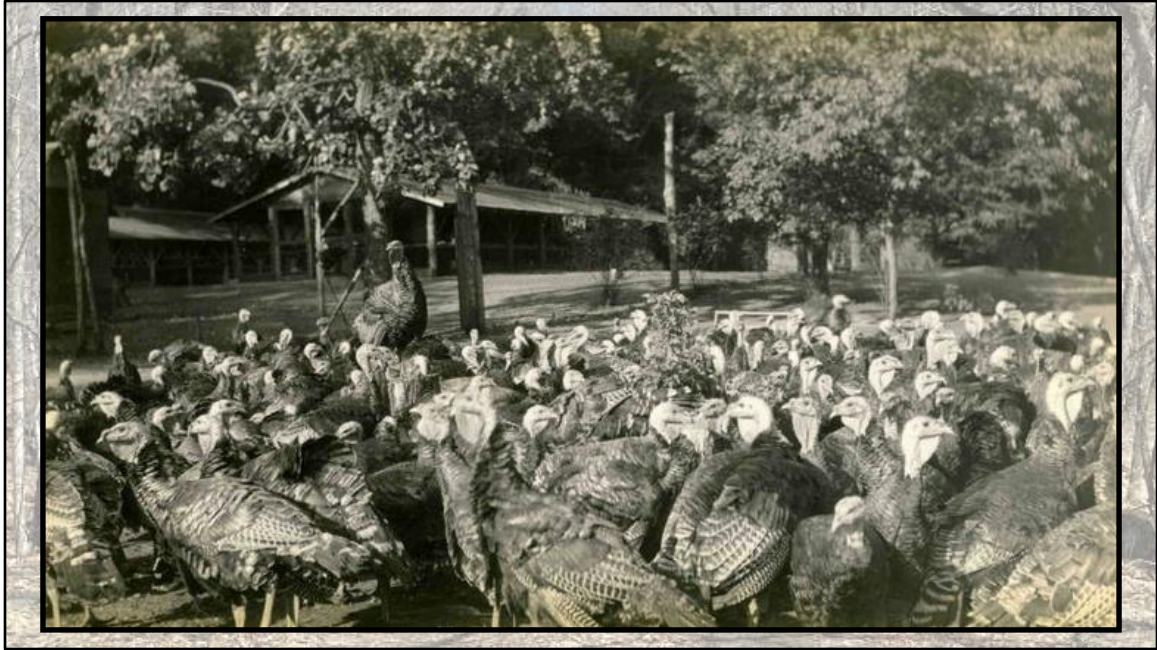
SBM.24c03 St. Benedict's Monastery Farm: Turkey pets

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1098/rec/4>



This 20 x 80 foot wire-sided turkey pole barn was built in the woods in 1932, which “added to the rustic beauty of the woods and the comfort of the turkeys.”

Details from SBM.24c01. Image from the Saint Benedict’s Monastery video, “The Turkey Story,” by Evin Rademacher, O.S.B. and John Parker (a video describing the work done by the Sisters to raise turkeys for profit from 1930 to 1962). <https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1110/rec/9>.



“In spring, the Sisters and candidates rounded up the turkeys and led them to the woods. They then took turns staying with them to deter "run-aways," fed and watered them, and set up nests to encourage the turkeys to stay in the barn area rather than hide their eggs all over the woods.”

SBM.24c05 St. Benedict's Monastery Farm: Turkey summer home in the woods

“To give the turkeys more space and freedom during the summer, a turkey pole barn was built in the woods. In spring, the Sisters and candidates rounded up the turkeys and led to the woods. They then took turns in staying with them to deter "run-aways," fed and watered them and set up nests to encourage the turkeys to stay in the barn area rather than hide their eggs all over the woods.”

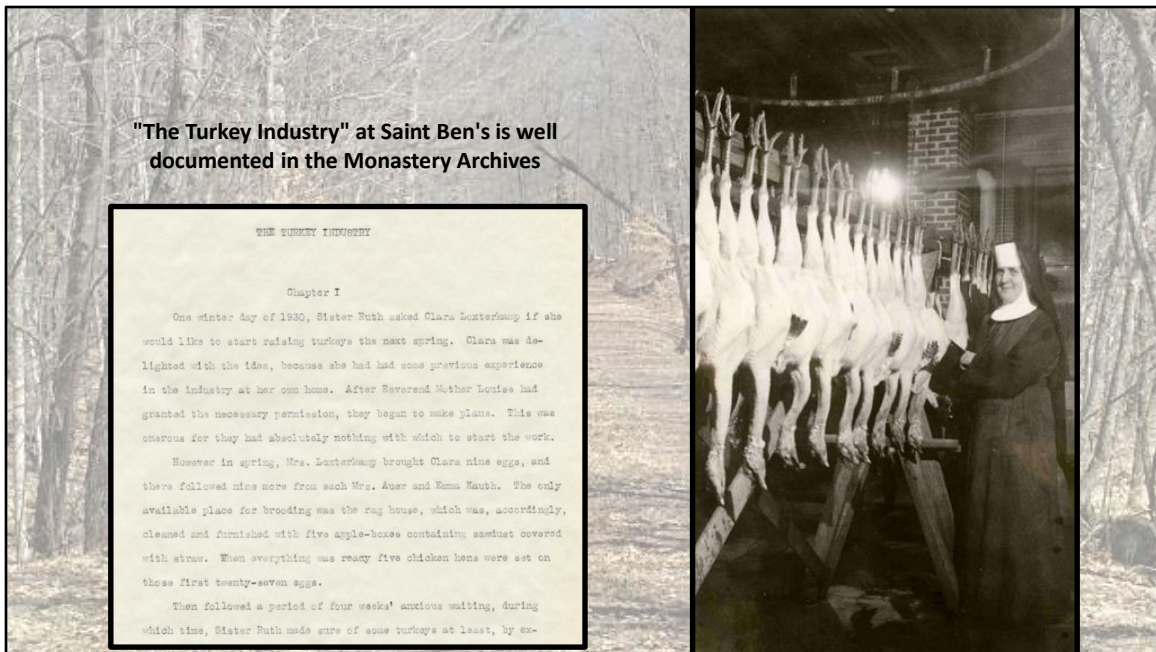
<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1100/rec/6>



“The round-up of turkeys for their return to their winter home after summer in the woods was always a challenge.” Sometimes they had to be led back by Sisters holding bait to coax them.

SBM.24c06 St. Benedict's Monastery Farm: Turkey round-up for winter
<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1100/rec/6>

Images from the Saint Benedict's Monastery video, “The Turkey Story,” by Evin Rademacher, O.S.B. and John Parker (a video describing the work done by the Sisters to raise turkeys for profit from 1930 to 1962). <https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1110/rec/9>.

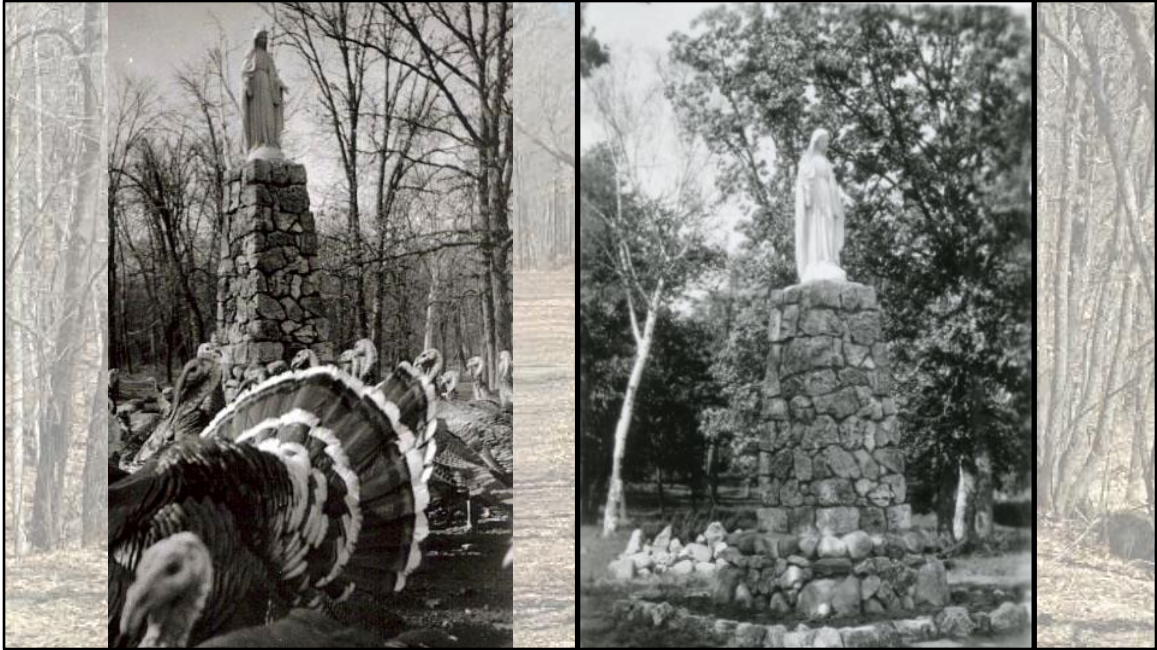


After the novices plucked the turkeys for Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Easter sales, a retailer would come for the turkeys. Here's a photo of Sister Ruth with turkeys ready for market, along with a document from the Saint Ben's Monastery Archives about the turkey industry effort. The turkey operation ended in 1962. At its peak it produced 4,000 turkeys a year.

SBMA on Vivarium: SBM.24c07 St. Benedict's Monastery Farm: Turkeys ready for marketing

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1102/rec/2> 1930s. "Generally after the Sisters (chiefly the novices or new members of the community) had plucked the turkeys, the St. Cloud Poultry Company or Witt's Butcher Shop in St. Paul would send an agent to judge the turkeys for marketing. However, occasionally the task fell to Sister Ruth Kann."

"The Turkey Industry" image is from the video, "The Turkey Story," by Evin Rademacher, O.S.B. and John Parker (a video describing the work done by the Sisters to raise turkeys for profit from 1930 to 1962). <https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1110/rec/9>.



And one last photo of the turkeys, in all their glory – because it leads us into another feature of the Sisters' woods...the statue of Our Lady of Grace that is near the lodge.

Left image: Turkey image PS Enterp-Agri10-16.jpg.

Right image from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.



Its plaque says that it was "presented by the college students of 1932-33"; it was "paid for by donations received by the novices." Nowadays it is showing its age and could use some repair.

Our Lady of Grace Statue in the woods
Color photo by Thomasette Scheeler OSB

Left and right images from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.

Plaque photo 2013 0422 by Peggy Roske

*Rumors afterward
said that S. Colman
and some of her other
friends, all of them
faculty who hated
those statues, had
come with a truck in
the dead of night,
had loaded Saint
Joan and Saint
Anthony and the
other heavenly bodies
into it and driven in
the moonless dark to
the woods and the
edge of Lake Sarah,
where they drowned
the whole saintly
company of statuary.*

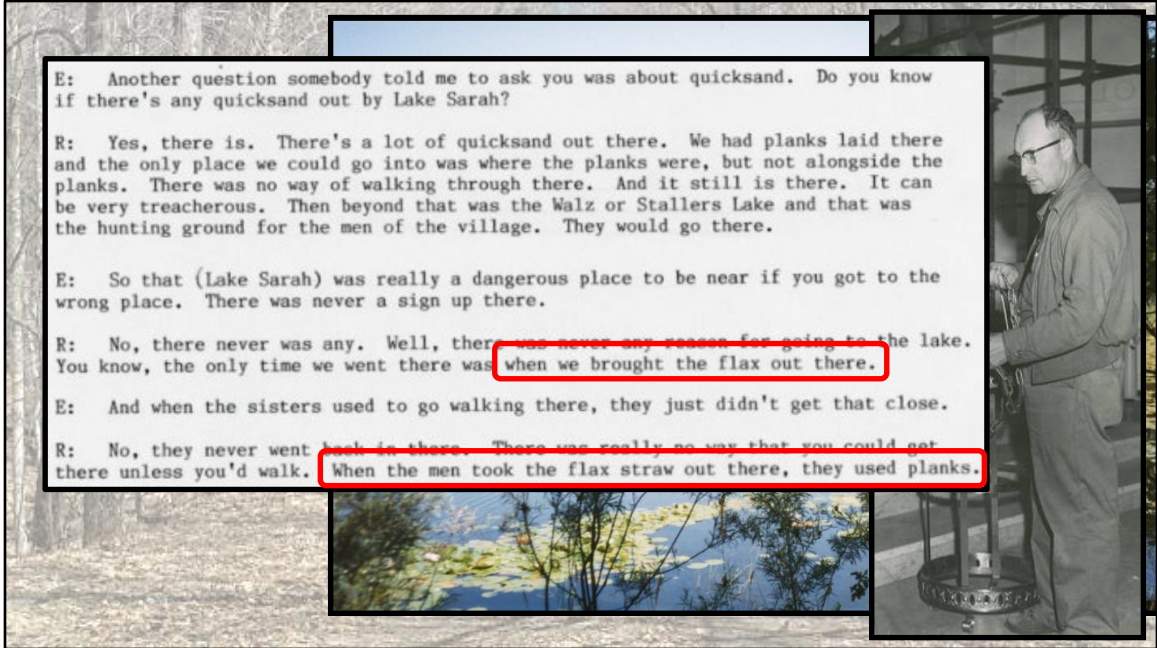


And speaking of statues, one of my favorite stories about Sister Colman O'Connell is the rumor that she and "other faculty who hated the statues" in the Main Building loaded them up in the dead of night and "drowned the saintly company" in Lake Sarah! There may be a grain of truth here somewhere...

Saint Benedict's Today Fall 1988 p. 3

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchives/id/4370/rec/4>

Photo 3-Lake Sarah-July 1998-front, by Sister Vernice Ramler, SBMA



...because, returning to Roman Zwach's oral history, there was a problem with quicksand by Lake Sarah. The workers had to walk on planks by the lake. It was "a really dangerous place to be near if you got to the wrong place." But there were no warning signs because, when the Sisters went walking there, they didn't get that close to the lake, and "Well, there was never any reason for going to the lake....the only time we went there was when we brought the flax out there." "When the men took the flax straw out there, they used planks."

St. Benedict's Monastery Archives Oral Histories: OHT 243 – Roman Zwack interview March 18, 1991; March 22, 1991; April 3, 1991. From page 45 of the transcript. Interviewer: Sister Etienne Flaherty

Image: <https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/225/rec/1>

SBMA on Vivarium: SBM.11e10 Installing the hanging lamps; Roman Zwack.



Flax was another industry the Sisters tried, making linens from home-grown flax, such as the altar cloth here, used on the occasion of the dedication of the new Sacred Heart altar in 1983. The sisters had found a plot of land in the woods near St. Benedict's Monastery that was compatible to the planting of flax.

DEDICATION OF THE NEW ALTAR OF SACRED HEART CHAPEL October 24, 1983
[SBM.12c09 Clothing the altar - St. Benedict's Monastery - St. Joseph Minn - Vivarium \(oclc.org\)](#) – a photo – the caption of which says: “The homespun linen altar cloth used on this occasion was made in 1920 by Sisters Albina Hoeft, spinner, and Patricia Hoeft, weaver. They had learned their craft as girls in Bavaria. The sisters found a plot of land in the woods near St. Benedict's Monastery that was compatible to the planting of flax. They followed the whole process of harvesting it, thrashing it, retting* it in Lake Sarah, and drying it in the sun. Then after breaking it, they spun and wove it into the linen.”



Here's a formidable photo! Flax spinning was introduced at St. Benedict's Monastery in the 1890s by two blood sisters, Sisters Albina and Petrina Hoeft, who had learned that craft as girls in Bavaria. "They followed the whole process of harvesting it, thrashing it, retting* it in Lake Sarah, and drying it in the sun. Then after breaking it, they spun and wove it into the linen."

*("Retting is a process employing the action of micro-organisms and moisture on plants to dissolve or rot away much of the cellular tissues and pectins surrounding bast-fibre bundles, facilitating the separation of the fibre from the stem." [Wikipedia](#))
Image and details from SBM.24d01 St. Benedict's Monastery Farm: Preparing home-grown flax for spinning ("Scutching")

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1106/rec/7>



And lastly, the Saint Ben's woods has long been used as a science lab. Here is CSB's first Biology professor, Sister Remberta Westkaemper, amidst the trillium, the flower that gave the woods' "Trillium Trail" its name (although I've been told that, sadly, the deer have decimated the flowers so the name no longer applies). Sister Remberta took many a class on field trips to the woods, and collected and classified over 600 plants from Stearns County, a collection that is now kept at the University of Minnesota.

Remberta (1890-1988) opened the biology department in the College of St. Benedict in 1917.

Left: Sister Remberta Westkaemper amid the trilliums in the St. Ben's woods.

Image from Saint Benedict's Monastery Archives, PastPerfect, retrieved April 2024.

01-PS Campus West-S Rembertha Westkaemper – trillium

Right: <https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/495/rec/5>; SBM.18a01b.

See also: S. Rembertha Westkaemper, OSB (Videos-5; audio)

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SBM/id/1126/rec/11>

Bennies Explore . . .

Nature Reveals Secrets

With the coming of spring, many changes are seen—new clothes, Easter bonnets, and spring cleaning to cite a few. But Mr. Nick Zaczkowski, head of the biology department, has his eyes on other signs of spring—the new kinds of plant and animal life.

Mr. Zaczkowski instructs a field biology class consisting of two sections with six girls in each section. Every Wednesday morning and afternoon Mr. Zaczkowski and his class are seen leaving campus decked out in field pants, old jackets, boots, and mittens and carrying fish nets, traps, field buckets, jars, tows, and hip boots.

So far they have visited Lake Watab and the winter grounds of the white-tailed deer at St. John's, where they caught several species of fish. They also visited the Sauk River in Cold Spring where they made a stream habitat study.

Mr. Zaczkowski plans several habitat studies for the rest of the semester. The girls will travel to an area north of St. Joseph for a bog habitat study. They will make a limnological study of Lake Sarah, study the sand dune habitat at Sand Dune State Park, the blue heron colony at the Sauk River and the hardwood forest on the CSB campus. Also on the

erous forest at Little Boy Lake which is located north of Brainerd. Mr. Zaczkowski points out, "My hope is that the content of this course will develop an ecological conscience—a recognition of *homo sapiens* as members of a complex biotic community rather than conquerors of it."



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TRIPPING through melting river-beds on a science field trip project are biologists Doris Anderson and Jane Crabtree.

Later, Biology professor Nick Zaczkowski took students on field trips as well. This 1965 piece in the CSB paper *The Torch* mentions that "the girls" (!) in his class "will make a limnological study of Lake Sarah." That was before the Biology department consolidated on the SJU campus in the late 1960s. (By the time I took Nick's Field Biology class in the 1970s, none of the field trips included Lake Sarah.)

1965-05-07, *The Torch* p. 3

<https://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/376/rec/1>

CSB Archives

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Aerial Photos & Campus Maps

See also [A History of CSB Buildings](#) for a set of maps showing the changes over time.

[Current map on campus website](#)

2018 CSB Buildings Named for Sisters

2015 St. Ben's Woods Trails

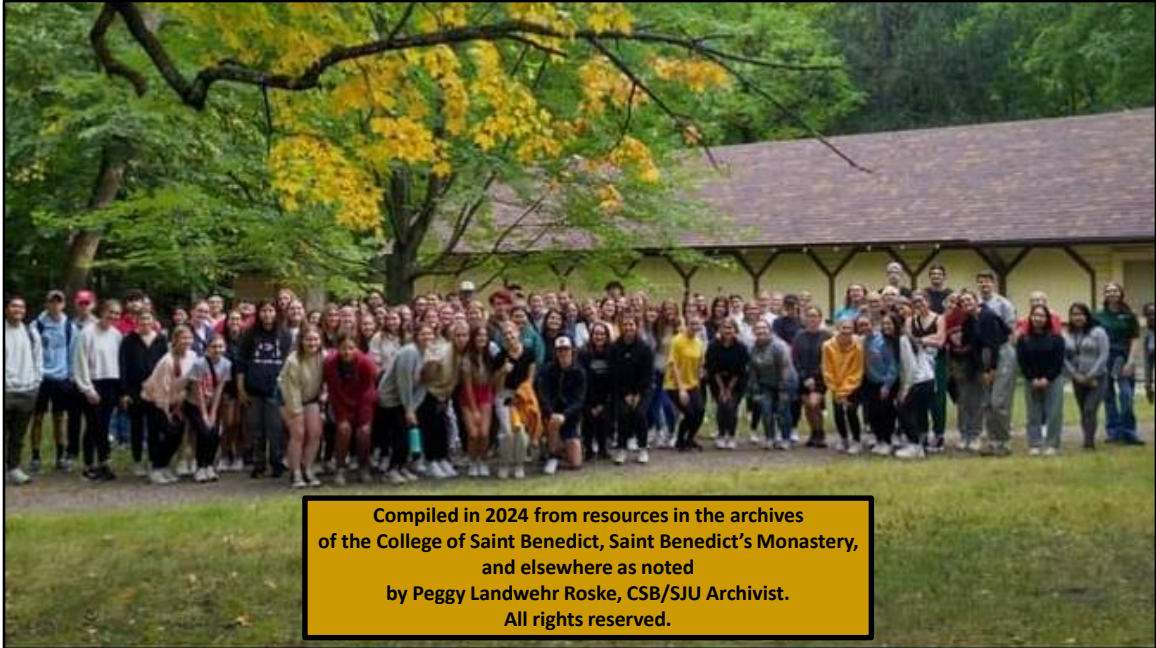
2014 Campus Map

- College of Saint Benedict Archives
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- Timeline
- Special Collections

If you care to take a walk in the Sisters' woods, you might find it helpful to have a look at that map on the CSB Archives' website. Enjoy!

[https://www.csbsju.edu/csb-](https://www.csbsju.edu/csb-archives/photosandmaps/csbaerialphotosandcampusmaps)

[archives/photosandmaps/csbaerialphotosandcampusmaps](https://www.csbsju.edu/csb-archives/photosandmaps/csbaerialphotosandcampusmaps)



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