

LUTHERAN MEMOIR

SAINT SEBALD CHURCH STRAWBERRY POINT, IOWA

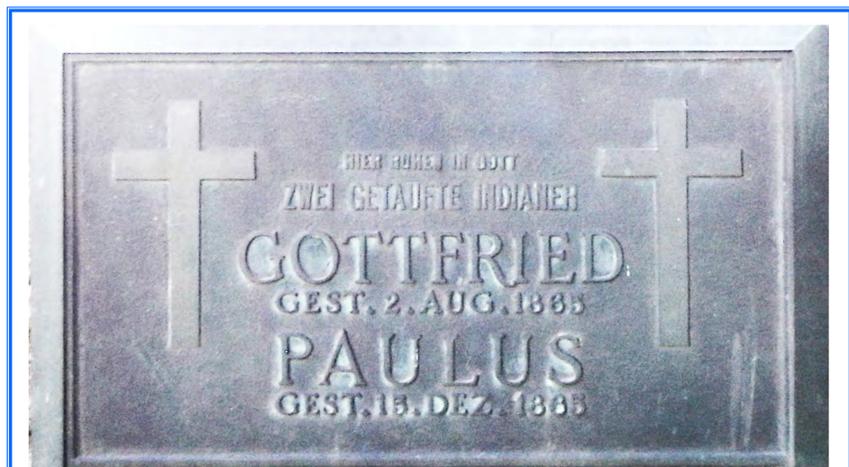
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS CHURCH

Rev. Johannes Deindoerfer and the Rev. G.M. Grossman came to Clayton county Iowa from Germany with 20 students and colonists settling at Saint Sebald in the fall of 1853. The parsonage was built and used as a church and school. The German title, "Saint Sebald am Quell" which translates to "Saint Sebald by the Spring" was selected for the facility.

It was at this location the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Iowa was organized in 1854. The first church of the Lutheran denomination in the State of Iowa.

The church's missionary efforts among the indigenous peoples of Montana and Wyoming originated in 1857 by Missionary Moritz Braeuninger. In 1864 warnings of an attack by indigenous people on their station located at Deer Creek, a tributary of the North Platte River, induced them to return to Iowa. Three Cheyenne boys, Brown Moccasin, Little Bone and Owl Head, returned with the missionaries to the Wartburg Seminary at Saint Sebald. Their hair was cut short, they were dressed in Lutheran men's clothing, baptized and given the names of Gottfried, Paulus and Friedrich. Gottfried and Paulus died of disease in 1865 and are buried in the Saint Sebald cemetery. Friedrich ran away from the community.

In "*The Formation and Influence of St. Sebald Lutheran Church*" Samantha Schwarz, University of Pretoria writes, "A single monument marks the graves of two American Indians who were part of the mission work conducted by St. Sebald Lutheran Church to the surrounding regions. The lives of these two individuals have been reduced to a single statement on the monument: Here two baptized Indians rest in God."



Monument marker written in German. Photo by Reginald Green 2024



Saint Sebald Lutheran Church . Photo by Reginald Green 2024

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How might Christians conduct missionary work in a racially just manner?
- Consider John 3:16, discuss if to be Christian was it necessary for Brown Moccasin, Little Bone and Owl Head to be baptized with a new German name, cut their hair and wear Lutheran men's cloths?
- Would the missionary work of the Saint Sebald pastors from 1857 to 1864 in Montana and Wyoming be considered a success based on current standards?
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REFERENCES

Links to PDF files on Saint Sebald Lutheran Church

Baptized @ St. Sebald = <https://lutheranmuseum.com/2022/08/26/baptized-at-st-sebald-lutheran-strawberry-point-ia/>

St. Sebald - Locating Lutheranism = <https://pages.stolaf.edu/locluth/project/st-sebald-lutheran-church-strawberry-point-iowa/>

Clayton County churches = http://iagenweb.org/clayton/church/GermanLutheran_StrawPt.htm

UWM Undergrad Rel Studies Conf = <https://dc.uwm.edu/rso/2015/panel3/3/>

The full history of families moving to Strawberry Point to establish the church can be found in Rev Albert Llewelyn Hock's book, *THE PILGRIM COLONY* (Lutheran University Press 2004).



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