SJP Headmasters 1857-1921
List of First Headmasters

SJP’s First Headmasters

1857-1858  Father Cornelius Wittmann
1858-1862  Father Benedict Haindl
1862-1865  Father Othmar Wirtz
1865-1867  Father Benedict Haindl
1867-1869  Abbot Rupert Seidenbusch
1869-1872  Father Wolfgang Northman
1872-1875  Father Alexius Edelbrock
1875-1884  Abbot Alexius Edelbrock
1884-1885  Father Chrysostom Schreiner
1885-1890  Father Oswald Baran
1890-1896  Father Herman Bergmann
1896-1921  Abbot Peter Engel
1857-1858 Father Cornelius Wittmann, OSB
LP096
Cornelius Wittmann, Head 1857-1858

- Born in Bavaria in 1828; died in 1921
- Went to St. Vincent’s in Pennsylvania in 1852
- One of the five founders: Came to Minnesota in 1856
- Was ordained in St. Paul, before the group reached St. Cloud
- Served many Minnesota pioneer parishes in the 1800s
- Had “that missionary enthusiasm which helped him to overlook hardships and primitive conditions”
- An assiduous reader and a man of “set opinions”
- Hobby was carving statues; his crucifix graced the Chapel walk

About Cornelius Wittmann
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,26122
1858-1862
Father Benedict Haindl

1858-1862 Father Benedict Haindl, OSB
LP096
Benedict Haindl, Head 1858-1862

- Born in Bavaria in 1815; died in 1887
- Prior at St. Vincent’s until coming to Minnesota in 1857, where he served settlers in Shakopee and elsewhere before coming to St. John’s in 1858
- Prior and missionary to central Minnesota settlers while SJP Headmaster, 1858-1962
- Back to Shakopee, then St. Joe, then back to St. John’s
- While in Shakopee, the St. Ben’s sisters founded a community there
1862-1865  Father Othmar Wirtz, OSB
Old Frame House completed (in Indianbush) in 1864; moved to campus in 1867
Othmar Wirtz, Head 1862-1865

- Born in Zurich in 1831; died in 1874
- Converted in Catholicism in 1853
- Prior at St. Vincent’s in Pennsylvania, 1859
- Prior at St. John’s from 1862-1865
- moved the monastery from St. Cloud to Collegeville
- settled the Benedictine Sisters at St. Joseph
- “Was of serious and retiring disposition and did not care to appear in public”
- Was “a doctor of body and soul”

About Othmar Wirtz
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,26130
1865-1867  Father Benedict Haindl, OSB; Old Stone House built in 1866
LP066
Benedict Haindl, Head 1865-1867

- Returned to St. John’s in 1865; again ministered to central Minnesota settlers
- In 1867 was again Prior
- Served in St. Cloud, New Munich, St. Augusta, St. Martin, Cold Spring, Luxembourg

About Benedict Haindl
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,26118
1867-1869 Abbot Rupert Seidenbusch, OSB
East/west central wing added to Quadrangle, LP066
Rupert Seidenbusch, Head 1867-1869

• Born in Munich in 1830; died in 1895
• Director of St. Vincent’s College & missionary to Pennsylvania settlers
• St. John’s first Abbot 1867-1875
• See previous PowerPoint!

About Rupert Seidenbusch
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,26120
1869-1872 Father Wolfgang Northman, OSB
1st Chapel built 1872
LP 092
Wolfgang Northman, Head 1869-1872

- 1st American-born monk, born in St. Louis in 1842; died 1876
- Joined novitiate at St. Vincent’s
- Came to St. John’s in 1862 to finish his studies and serve as “one man music department”
- Ordained in St. Joe in 1867
- “Vice-president of SJU” and SJP headmaster until 1872
- Professor of music and missionary to nearby English-speaking parishes
- Conducted the choir and “the famed St. John’s band”
- Poor health; died at age 33 of apoplexy

About Wolfgang Northman
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,26135
1872-1875  Father Alexius Edelbrock
1875-1884: Abbot Alexius Edelbrock

1872-1875  Father Alexius Edelbrock, OSB; 1974
Ascheman Collection, LP172 (date unknown) and LP244, 1866 (cropped)
east-west wing added to (south) Quad, LP012
Father Alexius Edelbrock, Head 1872-1875
Abbot Alexius Edelbrock, Head 1875-1884

- Born in Westphalia, Germany in 1843; died in 1908
- As a boy, welcomed the monks to St. Cloud and his father’s establishment (hotel/store?)
- Was one of the first five students, in St. Cloud
- Went to St. Vincent’s for study, returning in 1867
- St. John’s began offering a commercial course in 1872
- Elected 2nd Abbot of St. John’s in 1875
- During his term as Headmaster, he was elected 2nd Abbot of St. John’s in 1875
- Continued his role as Headmaster during most of his term as Abbot, but relinquished it as construction of the church (Great Hall) and Quad continued

About Alexius Edelbrock
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,25180
1875-1884 Abbot Alexius Edelbrock, OSB
Quad completion from 1883-1886; LP030
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SJUArchives/id/17469/show/17390
1925 Sagatagan, p. 19
1884-1885  Father Chrysostom Schreiner, OSB
1884-1885 Father Chrysostom Schreiner, OSB
Chrysostom Schreiner, Head 1884-1885

- Born in 1859 in Jordan, MN; died in 1928
- Professed and became Headmaster the same year, 1884, and served for 1 year until he was appointed vice-president of the college
- Was infirmary before and after his ordination
- A brilliant young priest, authoritarian, exact and demanding
- Students respected him as a strict disciplinarian
- Replaced the benches with chairs and introduced glasses and napkins, thus refining the table manners of the students
- Was one of the prime movers to start a student paper
- Left St. John’s to join Abbot Alexius at St. Anselm’s in NYC
- Established Benedictine presence in the Bahamas
- Determined the spot where Columbus had landed and had the island renamed San Salvador

About Chrysostom Schreiner

http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,26211
1885-1890 Father Oswald Baran, OSB
Oswald Baran, Head 1885-1890

• Born in Prussia in 1866; died in 1928
• Was ordained during his time as Headmaster
• Left in 1895 to be prior and director of the college at St. Martin’s in Olympia, Washington
• Later became its first Abbot

About Oswald Baran
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u?/SJUArchives,26188
1890-1896 Father Herman Bergmann, OSB
1894: pine trees are planted near Observatory, future site of SJP
Herman Bergmann, Head 1890-1896

- Born in Germany in 1861; died in 1936
- Lived on a farm in Freeport with his parents
- Headmaster after his ordination and into 1896, a year when he was professor, subprior/prior, and procurator
- “Worked ceaselessly, relieving Abbot Peter of many burdens”
- An efficient hard worker who demanded hard work from the other monks
- When procurator, was noted for his skill in finding a good horse
1896-1921 Abbot Peter Engel, OSB
LP171
Abbot Peter Engel, Head 1896-1921

- Born in Belgium in 1856; died in 1921
- Elected abbot in 1894
- All built during his term as Abbot:
  - Wimmer Hall, the Old Gym, Frank House, Greg House, the football field, the science building (now Simons Hall), and Luke Hall
- Started the St. John’s photo studio
- Advanced the causes of science and technology
- First distinct high school program appeared in 1899, the “Academic Department”
- 1921-22 marked some major changes for the high school: more about that another day!

About Abbot Peter Engel
http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?SJUArchives,26161
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http://cdm.csbsju.edu/u/?/SJUArchives,23866  Abbey Banner Fall 2003 p. 9 1920
campus LP186