

Brother Placidus Naegle

August 13th is the anniversary of the death of Brother Placidus Naegle. Ludwig Naegle was born on August 25, 1873, in Steisslingen, Germany.

As a child, Ludwig was a playmate of Fidelis von Stotzingen, son of a baronial family whose estate bordered the Naegle farm. Both became Benedictines. Ludwig became Brother Placidus of Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas. Fidelis became a monk of Einsiedeln, later its Abbot, and was elected the first abbot primate of the Benedictine order.

When he was 14 years old, Ludwig left home to become an apprentice bookbinder and then became an employee of Herder's in Freiburg. But another call was in his heart and soul; he wanted to become a Benedictine monk. He applied to the abbey of Einsiedeln, but was told that it was filled. It was suggested that he join a group of young people assembling to come to the United States for various monasteries in this country.

At the age of 20, Ludwig came to the United States and to Subiaco with the "Expedition" of 1893 from the abbey of Einsiedeln.

More than 20 candidates for religious life were aboard the ship. Four of the candidates of this voyage were destined for our abbey: one for the priesthood and three for the brotherhood, one being brother-candidate Ludwig Naegle.

Ludwig professed his vows as a monk of our monastery on October 5, 1895, receiving the name Placidus. For almost seven decades Brother Placidus served our community wherever needed. Besides being the official abbey bookbinder, he also worked in the stone quarry, and as mailman.

Later, when another bookbinder became available, he was sent to Conception Abbey, in northern Missouri, to learn the art of butchering. He also spent three years at St. Joseph Abbey, in Louisiana, teaching the art of butchering to the brothers there. Brother Placidus was our abbey butcher for 25 years, plus 10 years in the same position in south Texas at our daughter-house in Corpus Christi.

During his 25 years here as butcher, Brother Placidus also spent much of his time taking care of the abbey garden. In the latter years of his life, he worked in the laundry and as a custodian of the house.

In the spring of 1963, Brother Placidus fell and fractured his right hip which kept him bedfast thereafter. Less than two weeks before his 90th birthday, Brother Placidus died in the abbey infirmary on Tuesday, August 13, 1963.

At the time of his death, Brother Placidus was 89 years old and in the 67th year of his monastic profession. He is buried in our cemetery.

