

Brother Maurus Strobel

May 16th is the anniversary of the death of Brother Maurus Strobel. Joseph Strobel was born on July 11, 1861, in southern Indiana, an area of the country that had become a haven for many European immigrants during the early 19th century. By 1854, Swiss monks from Einsiedeln had established a mission house in southern Indiana that would flourish into the archabbey of St. Meinrad.

His parents and grandparents had emigrated from Bavaria, Germany, to southern Indiana in the 1840s. Joseph's mother died when he was five years old and his father soon remarried and moved his family from Indiana to Logan County, Arkansas, arriving on December 15, 1880, settling in what is now Subiaco, Arkansas.

Less than three years earlier, St. Meinrad Abbey in Indiana began its foundation of St. Benedict's monastery in Logan County, Arkansas. Thus, Joseph Strobel grew up in the shadow of the monastery on his father's farm.

On September 8, 1885, Joseph Strobel professed his vows as a monk of our monastery, receiving the name Maurus. He was 24 years old and he was the first American-born member of the community.

Brother Maurus, the second monk to make vows here, was a welcome addition to the community. Not only was he a breakthrough in local vocations, but he was the first, and for a long time the only community member, who had practical experience in American farming.

For almost half a century Brother Maurus served our community in various capacities, notably farming the land and operating the sawmill.

In the spring of 1931 Brother Maurus was hospitalized with an illness that was diagnosed in late April as an advanced stage of malignant cancer of the stomach. Brother Maurus patiently bore the pain of the next few days. He died at St. Anthony's Hospital in Morrilton, Arkansas, at 9:25 a.m., on Saturday, May 16, 1931.

At the time of his death, Brother Maurus was 69 years old and in the 45th year of his monastic profession. He is buried in our cemetery.

