THE NAME OF THE CHURCH AT TABLE ROCK: ST. WENCESLAUS, THEN JOHN THE BAPTIST, THEN SIMPLY ST. JOHN’S

BACKGROUND

A **1987** history identifies the church only as St. John’s, that publication being “History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Lincoln, Nebraska, 1887-1987,” written by Loretta Gosen in 1986, published by the Catholic Bishop of Lincoln in 1986. Table Rock is listed in ten places, including pages 109 and 151. It was digitized by the University of Wisconsin – Madison on September 9, 2009. It was found at <https://books.google.com/books?id=NwriAAAAMAAJ&source=gbs_navlinks_s>.

However, it appears from first-hand sources that it was originally known by a different name.

Father A. C. Raush, in his **1888** Report of the History of St. john’s refers to the church only as the Table Rock church.

A **1999** Wymore history that includes the h of St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Wymore, a history consistent with Father Rausch’s history. It says that the earliest Catholic masses were said in the homes of parishioners. The very first mass was said by Rev. Rausch of Table Rock and Tecumseh. The church at Table Rock was not named. <http://www.usgennet.org/usa/ne/county/gage/books/jubilee/03.htm>

In Mary Duder’s **circa 1950s** collection of remembrances Joseph Reuter, son of one of the founders, remembered that St. John's was originally called St. Wenceslaus. He received 1st Communion from Father Maley in August **1889** and he said that his 1st Communion certificate lists the church as St. Wenceslaus.  He thought the name St. John was not used until the church was served by a priest from Steinauer.

Joseph Reuter’s memory is confirmed at least by Catholic directories in the 1880s.

**Catholic Directories of 1883, 1886, and 1888**

Background:

There appears to have been three publishers of directories during the period 1883 to 1905:

.(1) Hoffman's Catholic Directory, Almanac, and Clergy List, Quarterly, for the Year of Our Lord 1886, Containing Complete Reports from all Dioceses in the United States, 1886 Hoffman Brothers, Printers to the Holy Apostolic See, Milwaukee and Chicago, 1886. (The 1888 directory identifies the publishers as the M.H. Wiltzlus Company.)

(2) Sadliers Catholic Directory, Almanac, and Clergy List, Quarterly

(3) “The Official Directory: Catholic Directory and Clergy List for 1905”

1883 Sadliers

In an 1883 version of Sadliers' Directory, at pages 504-505, it lists St. Mary's in Wymore, Rev. A. Rausch, pastor, with stations at Odell, Liberty, Burchard Church of the Sacred Heart; Turkey Creek, Pawnee County, St. Joseph; Table Rock, Pawnee County, St. Wenceslaus; and Humboldt (no church listed).

This directory was found at ​https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=b-DQAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=en&pg=GBS.RA1-PA505

1886 Hoffman’s directory:

At page 265, it lists this under the Diocese of Omaha, served by Rev. A. Rausch, pastor, of St. Mary's in Wymore, and with stations at Sacred Heart in Burchard, **St. Wenceslaus in Table Rock**; Humboldt; Odell, Barneston in Gage County (no church listed), and Turkey Creek in Pawnee County (“Turkey Creek” was generally a reference to the Pawnee City area; the Steinauer area was generally referred to as “upper” Turkey Creek).

Found at:

<https://books.google.com/books?id=WuDQAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA265&lpg=RA1-PA265&dq=table+rock+nebraska+wenceslaus+catholic&source=bl&ots=0QlXxuHr2t&sig=BHQWKsYscynebOSygvfrDqO57Pc&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiyx5PXxdbXAhUEwYMKHbPfBesQ6AEIUzAJ#v=onepage&q=table%20rock%20nebraska%20wenceslaus%20catholic&f=false>

1888 Hoffman’s

The Hoffman's third annual edition in 1888, at page 273, lists Table Rock's church as being in the Lincoln Diocese and the name the church as St. Wenceslaus, "attended from Wymore."

This 1888 Hoffman’s is available at:

<https://books.google.com/books?id=soNBAAAAYAAJ&dq=table%20rock%20nebraska%20wenceslaus%20catholic&pg=PA273#v=onepage&q=table%20rock%20nebraska%20wenceslaus%20catholic&f=false>

1888 Sadliers

​Sadlier’s directory, at page 251 lists the Rev. A. Rausch as pastor of St. Mary's in Wymore, and with stations at Sacred Heart in Burchard, St. Wenceslaus in **Table Rock**, a nearly finished, as of yet unnamed church in Odell; Humboldt (no church listed), and Barnston, "attended occasionally." ‘

The 1888 Sadliers is found at: https://books.google.com/books?id=CNPUAAAAMAAJ&lpg=RA1-PA251&ots=9hsM-chkdl&dq=google%20book%20Catholic%20Directory%20table%20rock&pg=RA1-PA250#v=onepage&q=google%20book%20Catholic%20Directory%20table%20rock&f=false

1905 “Official Directory”

In this directory, at page 410.  The church at Table Rock is identified as “St. John the Baptist Church,” a mission of St. Anthony of Padua in Steinauer, in the Lincoln Diocese. (Burchard continued as a mission of Wymore).

This directory was found at ​<https://books.google.com/books?id=MLdGAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA410&lpg=PA410&dq=table+rock+nebraska+wenceslaus+catholic&source=bl&ots=hgAze6AATV&sig=IQc4zf8LiZAyTq7M5ngQPNkZegg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjWsNKszNbXAhWI3YMKHVt-BgM4ChDoAQgnMAA#v=onepage&q&f=false>