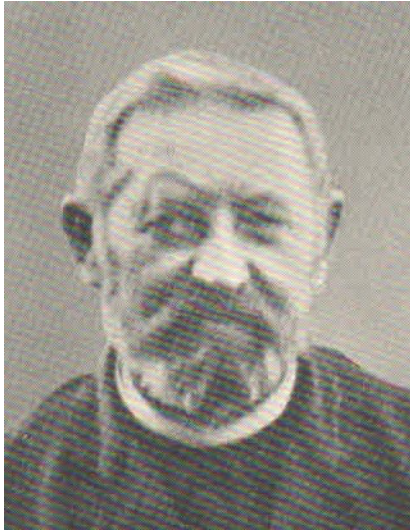


18 October

**Br WILLIAM BIERMANN** 6 June 1859 – 18 October 1926



Fr Rathgeb, the German provincial, responded generously to the request of Fr Alphonse Daignault, to send Jesuits to found the new mission at Chishawasha. William Biermann, from Menzel in Westphalia, who entered the Society in 1887, was one of a party of five that included Fr Richartz, who came out in 1892. They could only come half way by rail and set out for the rest of the journey by ox-wagon. Unfortunately, one of the wheels disintegrated when the wagon lurched to one side passing a hollow. They were in the middle of ‘nowhere’ and simply had to make a new wheel. It

took four days, but the brothers did it.

Seasoned wood was found in spare or broken dissel (drawbar) booms and sixteen spokes were shaped accordingly. Then came the fitting into the nave (hub) and breaking out and filling of the felloes (outer rim of the wheel to which spokes are fitted) with exactness so that the old tire would serve again. *Henry Shomberg Kerr.*

When they reached Chishawasha, it had just been devastated by a fire and there were no people. This and Hartmann Hill was the scene of William Bierman’s labours – with a few breaks - until his death in 1926. Chishawasha soon flourished though the attack in 1896 was a setback. He was briefly a defender. Br Biermann also laid out fields and gardens at Hartmann Hill though this too was ‘attacked’ in another way. St George’s College moved there from Bulawayo and his fields and gardens were ‘vandalised’ with buildings.

At his funeral and in his obituary, he was spoken of as ‘loyal and unselfish’ and loved by all.