

27 November

Br GEORG GÖBB

22 February 1863 - 27 November 1953



Hohe Rhoen is the village in Thuringen, Germany, - ‘a cold hilly country’ – where Georg Göbb came from. Later he was grateful he came from a hard-working Catholic family. He devoted himself to helping his father on the farm from the age of 14 when he left school: ploughing, harvesting, caring for the horses, cattle and poultry. At the age of thirty he found his way to the Jesuit novitiate in Holland (1894) and stayed until 1902 because he was ‘so useful’.

He then came to Chishawasha to join the other German brothers there and he was involved in the farm for six years. One of his tasks was to ferry grain and lime and often he would be away from the mission for days living rough and sleeping under the wagon at night. He believed in a good gun and his guardian angel to protect him from lions.

In 1908 he moved to Driefontein and there he developed a whole new farm, and branched out into tobacco. But his unique contribution was the planting of trees. He had to experiment at first but when he got it right, he planted thousands of Cypresses and Eucalyptus. He was a pioneer in forestry in the country and sold many poles for telegraph wires. It was much work as young trees need much care.

In 1929 he was in Triashill where the soil was not good for farming - it was 5,800 feet (1,900 meters) above sea level - but marvellous for fruit trees. He produced apples, pears, peaches and plums. He was twenty years at Triashill and St Benedict’s and lumbago set in and he had a wound in his leg that would not heal. In 1949 he was a Chishawasha but not ready to retire: he laid out seed beds for young trees. Br Lovell and the Dominican sisters nursed him. His friend, Fr Emil Schmitz, died at 82 and Georg came back from the funeral muttering, ‘He did not eat enough. If he had eaten more, he would not have died so young.’ He himself died at 90.



