

Ignaz Lindl – Founder of Sarata

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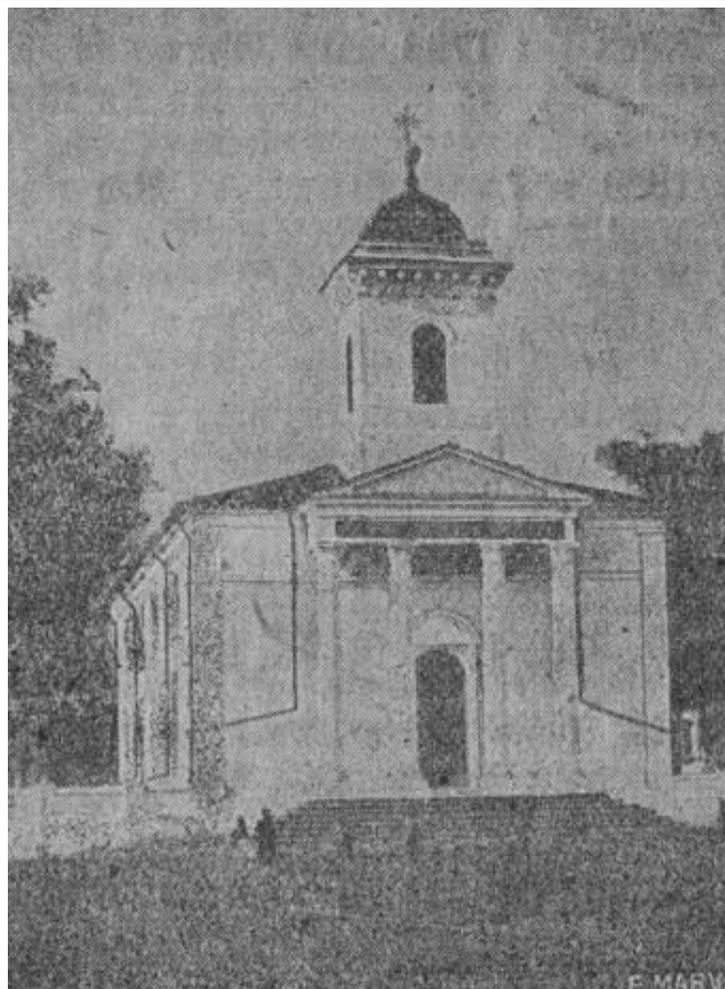
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What do we know about Pastor Ignaz Lindl, the Founder of Sarata?

From old files collected by Im. Wagner,
President of the Museum Society in Sarata.

Ignaz Lindl, originally a Catholic priest in Bavaria, was an extremely strange personality who exerted an extraordinary influence everywhere he went. As a pastor in Baidlkirch in Old Bavaria, he was moved around the year 1913 by the religious movement that emanated from the Catholic theologians Boos, Seiler and others. This doctrine was very similar to the Protestant one, which is why the Catholic Church was hostile to it. The public lectures of Lindl were filled with the spirit of the Gospel and, in a powerful, heart-captivating language, evoked a great revival in Baidlkirch and its surrounding area. Lindl found many followers not only among the Catholics, but also our [Christian Friedrich] Werner. To a large extent, Lindl was given to enchanting eloquence, his speech worked wonderfully on the listening crowd. Up to 10,000 people are said to have flocked together to hear the enthusiastic man who seemed to be speaking with angel tongues. He stepped out onto the open field and preached to the people about eternal salvation in Jesus Christ. Lindl rejected the worship of the Mother of God and the saints and spread the Bible among the people, but without publicly withdrawing from the Catholic Church. With rage, the strictly Catholic party saw how this anti-Catholic teaching was spreading. Officially, the instigators, including Lindl, were persecuted. He was expelled from his place and arrested. After a nine-month captivity in Augsburg, he was given the parish in Gunbrelingen, New Bavaria near the Württemberg border, where he caused an even greater stir with his gifted,

fiery speeches. A storm of indignation broke out against him, which forced him to leave his community after only one year in order to avoid the danger of a life imprisonment. Lindl fled to Munich. The Russian envoy there offered him a refuge in Russia. This seemed to the persecuted to be a sign from heaven to leave Germany. He urged his followers to follow him. Arrived in Petersburg towards the end of 1819, the simple country pastor was received with respect by Emperor Alexander I but especially by Prince Galizin. Here he stayed for 9 months. He preached the Gospel with great zeal in several Catholic churches. His speeches worked powerfully, but he was not to stay in the north. It was the time when people were eager to sort out the ecclesiastical conditions in the south. By higher order, Lindl went to Odessa in July of 1820 to hold the office of Provost of the Catholic Church. As in Petersburg, he had to fight against fierce resistance from the Catholic clergy. They did not want him to read Mass and smashed his windows two different times. The persecution was so great that the authority had to issue protective measures. Here, too, the effect of his sermons among the people was quite extraordinary. When he gave afternoon sermons and biblical lectures, large numbers of Protestants and Catholics flocked to his lectures.



Church at Sarata

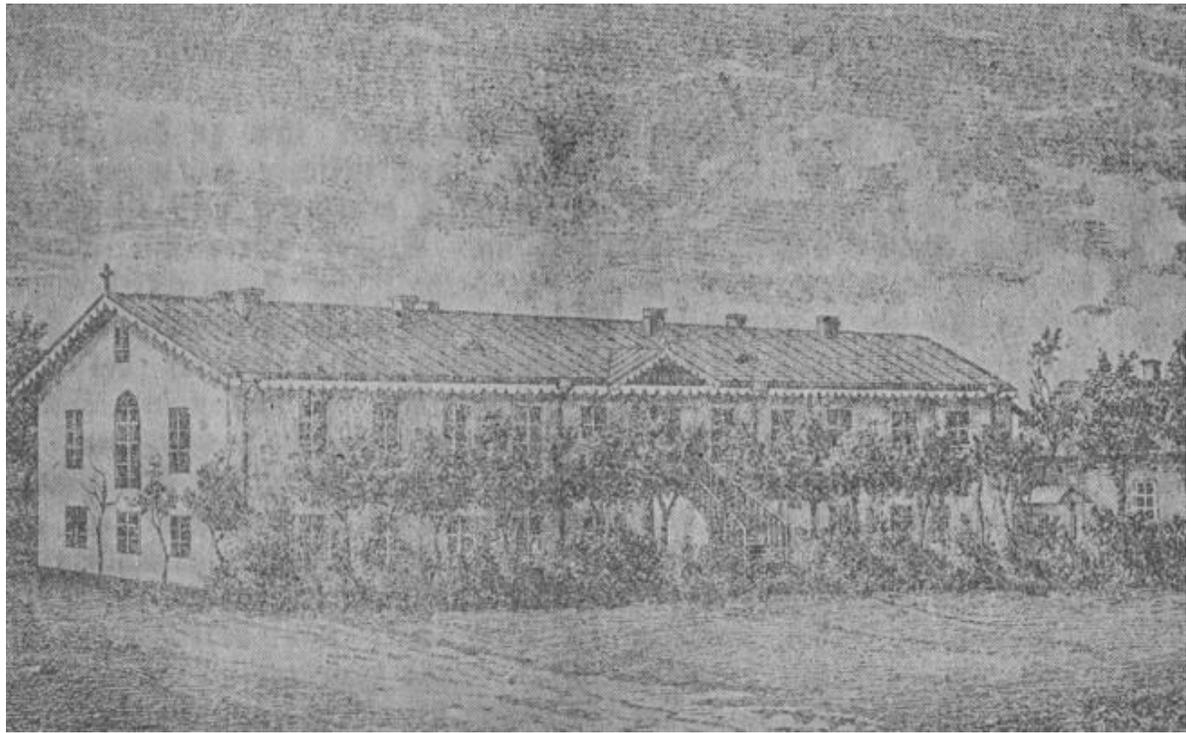
At his request, Lindl received permission from Alexander I to choose a steppe to settle his followers from Bavaria and Württemberg (Catholics and Lutherans). After a long search, he decided on the piece of land No. 66, which the 3 villages Sarata, Gnadental and Lichtental occupy. On 19 March, 1822, Lindl arrived here with a caravan of 50 wagons (in 3 colonies, 2 from Bavaria and 1 from Württemberg). A fervent prayer on the knees was his and our ancestors' first action on this ground. Together with his friend Alois Scherzinger, Lindl, in the capacity of an administrator, led the founding (building of houses) of the colony with great care. He helped everywhere with words and deeds, which is why his parishioners hung on to him with great love and called him only "Father Lindl" or simply "Daddy" (*Väterle*). From a wide radius, the people from the German villages drove to Sarata every Saturday to hear the remarkable man preach and, delighted by what they had heard and seen, they returned home.

However, he was allowed only a short time (1 year and 9 months) to the attempt to organize a Christian community with a kind of primitive Christian community of goods. (The field was cultivated jointly and the harvest was housed in "Lindl's farm house" and distributed among the families as needed). Slander and blasphemy of the Catholic clergy of Bavaria haunted him as far as the Bessarabian steppes. They accused him to the Pope; then Metteruich represented him to the Russian emperor as a rebel of the people and dangerous cult leader. For a long time, the emperor refused to give in to the pressures of his enemies, who demanded his removal from Russia. At last, however, he was persuaded to sign a decree that commanded the hard-tested man to leave Russian soil as soon as possible. An investigation was initiated. An examining magistrate and General Güldenschauz (from the Welfare Committee) came to Sarata in December of 1823, found the charges justified and quickly took away Lindl along with his wife and child after the essentials had been packed for the journey and his other affairs had been somewhat put in order. The congregation was heartbroken at the sudden removal of its revered caretaker of souls. In Berlin, where Lindl arrived at the beginning of February, 1824, he found a most popular reception. The king even allowed him, after a previous investigation of his cause, not only to stay in the Prussian state, but also, after he had publicly changed over to the Lutheran Church, the freedom to preach and to be elected as a preacher. For a time Lindl was now active as a teacher of 4 pupils of a mission institution, then for a number of years as a "helping caretaker of souls" at various congregations in the Wuppental area. Unfortunately, he had to endure much contempt from the Lutheran clergy because of his genuine Christian faith. It is highly likely due to this circumstance that Lindl was influenced in the last years of his life by Johann Jakob Wirz (silk weaver in Basel), the founder of the Nazarene sect, and joined it. (It prohibits marital union and demands a community of property. Sacraments are baptism, the Lord's Supper and the last anointing with oil). Lindl remained as a loyal follower of the Nazarenes until his end. After a two month illness, which Lindl endured with great patience—refusing medical help—he died in Barmen 31 October, 1845.

Lindl's suffering was a chain of privations. Hardships and sufferings of all kinds, yet we never hear him complain. He lived entirely for others, he did not think of himself. He comforted the community when he had to leave it and afterwards in the many letters he wrote to it, urging them to remain firm in the faith.

When we think of the big piece of land that Lindl, on his responsibility, undertook with all the obligations to the government and then look at the poor bunch of inhabitants (66 families), we

must be amazed at the willpower and trust in God of this man. It is thanks to him in the first place that we are in possession of this land and that many of our ancestors have passed from the Catholic to the Lutheran Church. —We also remember him today in grateful love, so that the name Lindl and his deeds are preserved with our children. His memory lives on in grateful hearts!



Alexander Asylum at Sarata

[Translation Ends]