

## Butte St. Paul, “Ot Accowabiwinins”

Butte St. Paul, northwest of Dunseith, was named by pioneer Missionary George Anthony Belcourt, the second pastor in North Dakota’s history. It was once considered the highest spot in North Dakota and offers scenic views of the Turtle Mountain area in northeast North Dakota.

In January of 1850, Belcourt, his guides and sled dogs set out to visit the Native Americans in this area in order to teach the gospel. The group was caught in a blizzard and sought refuge on the highest peak (580 feet) by burying themselves in the snow until the storm broke. On Jan. 25, which coincides with the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, Belcourt offered a Mass of thanksgiving for their delivery from the blizzard. Next day, Belcourt blessed a large wooden cross and planted it on the summit of the hill naming it Butte St. Paul. In 1933, a cairn topped by a cross was dedicated on the summit of Butte St. Paul.



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Belcourt in a letter to the bishop of Dubuque, Iowa, dated February 16, 1850, says:

This place (Butte St. Paul) is called Ot Accowabiwinins (by the Indians) meaning the place where one watches what is happening at a distance; fifteen or twenty families were encamped there. I occupied there as elsewhere a part of one night and the

following day. In the morning of January 25, 1850, I announced at mass that we would make a cross during the day and toward the night we should set it up on Mount Ot Accowabiwinins, which dominated the entire mountains and is about 48 feet (sic) above the level of the prairie...



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