

History of Zoar

Zoar, the name, suggests a sanctuary from the evil forces of the world. As Lot sought refuge at Zoar from the destruction of Sodom, so a group of German Separatists from Wurttemberg sought refuge in the United States of America from the persecution inflicted upon them by their government because of their religious beliefs. They found a haven on the east bank of the Tuscarawas River in the state of Ohio and named the chosen spot Zoar. There they began one of the most interesting experiments in communal living in the history of the United States.

Although Zoar was founded primarily as a religious community, the Separatists introduced a communal system in order to pay their debts for the land and to make a living for the people. One fact, however, must be emphasized: the communal system was adopted only as a means of guaranteeing the economic life of the Zoarites and of maintaining the community as a social and religious entity. Aside from the distinction gained by its communal way of life, Zoar is an interesting example of the persistence of a European culture in America.

Zoar was, and still is, a quaint little village in the north central part of Ohio, removed from the confusion of main highways and large cities. It is a happy accident that it has remained isolated, for as a result the village retains much of the simplicity and charm with which it was endowed by its early inhabitants.

If you wish to receive more information on the History of Zoar contact the Tuscarawas County Convention and Visitors Bureau at 124 East High Avenue, New Philadelphia, Ohio, 44663, call (330) 602-2420, or visit our website at www.ohiotimelessadventures.com. For further information contact the Tuscarawas County Public Library in New Philadelphia at (330) 364-4474 or the Tuscarawas County Historical Society at the Tuscarawas Campus of Kent State University at (330) 339-3391 Extension 47494.