

This Week in Eden History

November 23 | William T. Baur



William T. Baur's Eden senior photo, 1925. | Eden Archives.

William Theodore Baur, missionary to Central India, was born on **November 23, 1901**, in Rochester, New York. Baur graduated from Elmhurst College (1921) and Eden Seminary (1925) and was ordained on December 2, 1925, at Eden Seminary. He and his fiancé, Alby Axthelm, were commissioned as missionaries to India by the Evangelical Synod's Board of Foreign Missions on September 12, 1926 at Eden-Immanuel Church in St. Louis. They were married ten days later. At their first assignment in India, he oversaw evangelistic activities in the Bistrampur area of the Central Provinces, and she supervised the dispensary and work among the local women. They spent 41 years as a missionary couple working in the Central Provinces of India. Alby wrote about their time in mission work in her book, *Even Me? Memories of Forty-One Years in the India Mission* (copy available in Eden Archives). William died on Oct. 15, 1987 and Alby on May 16, 1997, both in Kansas City.

Baur came from a family rich in Eden connections. His father, William L. Baur, graduated from Eden in 1889, served as a pastor, and then taught church history at Eden for thirty-three years, retiring in 1937. Five of William's siblings were Eden-educated ministers/missionaries or their spouses. These Eden Seminary, Evangelical Synod, Reformed Church, and eventually UCC connections continued into the next generations of the Baur family, with nine individuals serving—or formerly serving—in full-time church work at last count. Those with prominent Eden and St. Louis connections include Orval Lee Willimann (Eden, 1959), Chair of Eden's Board of Directors, 1986-1990, who married William and Alby's daughter, Ruth, and a nephew, Robert A. Baur (Eden, 1961, 1968, 1976), who was Executive Director of the Evangelical Children's Home (now Every Child's Hope) in St. Louis for 19 years.