

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAINT MARY'S ABBEY

Fr. Benet W Caffrey, O.S.B.

FATHER NICHOLAS BALLEIS



1 Father Nicholas Balleis, OSB

St. Mary's Abbey owes its existence to a pioneering Benedictine, not however Boniface Wimmer, the one everyone may think of first, but Father Nicholas Balleis, monk of the Austrian Abbey of St. Peter in Salzburg. Balleis was born in that city, 22 November 1808. After his ordination in 1831, Balleis responded to the appeal for missionaries to work with the growing German speaking population in the United States but it was only after some difficulty that his community of St. Peter permitted him to depart. He arrived in America in 1836 with twenty other priests and seminarians but he seems to have had no ambition to establish a monastery or a permanent Benedictine foundation. In fact, he initially discouraged Boniface Wimmer, from

such an enterprise.

Balleis was not the first Benedictine to work in North America. He was preceded by Dom Pierre Jean Didier, OSB, a monk of St. Denis in Paris who came in 1790 to minister to French colonists on the Ohio River. The colony did not perdure and after doing parish work in Missouri Didier died in 1799.

Balleis worked first in Philadelphia, then in Pittsburg, and responding to an appeal from Monsignor Joseph Raffener, Vicar General for Germans of the Diocese of New York, came east in 1838. Prompted by Bishop DuBois, Raffener and Balleis began a mission to German Catholics in northern New Jersey, then still part of the Diocese of New York in late 1838.

In the census of 1836, Newark had a population of sixteen thousand which included some three-hundred Germans in the city itself with many more living in scattered farming and mill communities outside the city. Beginning in 1838 the small widely scattered colony of German speaking Catholic immigrants met for Mass twice a month in Old St. John's Church on Mulberry Street, Newark's first Catholic church.

The congregation slowly grew and in due time Father Balleis decided to remain permanently in Newark. By 1841 he determined that the time had come to form an

independent German parish. Pastor and people decided to purchase a plot of land on Court and Howard Streets in what was then an outlying section of the city, with open fields and unpaved streets, orchards and browsing cattle. With the parishioners acting as carpenters, masons, bricklayers and solicitors of funds, and with Father Nicholas as architect and foreman, they constructed a two story frame building fifty by thirty feet, the lower level serving as a school and priest's quarters. The church was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception and the first Mass was celebrated on 31 January 1842. With an enrollment of forty-five children Father Balleis began one of the first Catholic schools in New Jersey. He himself shared the teaching duties with salaried laymen.

Continuing German immigration to Newark through the 1840s made apparent the need for a larger site on which the church might be expanded. In 1846 Balleis purchased property at High and William Streets not far from the initial site. Rather than build a new building immediately a contractor was hired to move the wooden church to its new location. Either because his business failed or because the fee was too low the contractor abandoned the job with the church on rollers in the middle of High Street where it remained for three weeks until a new contractor could be engaged to complete the job. Meanwhile, Balleis continued to hold services and the angelus bell was rung at the appointed times. The little church eventually found its home at the new location.

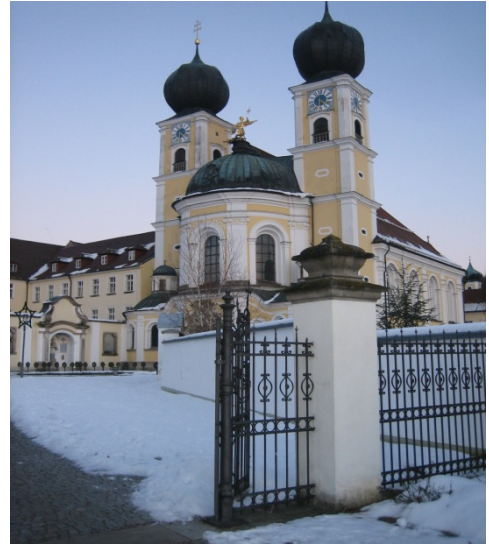
ARCHABBOT BONIFACE WIMMER



Abbey of Metten.

While Balleis was nurturing the little German Catholic community in Newark, the great enterprise of establishing the Benedictine Order in the United States was begun by a monk of the Abbey of St. Michael in Metten in Bavaria, Father Boniface Wimmer. Wimmer, born in 1809, was ordained a priest of the Diocese of Regensburg in 1831. He had been raised during a period of great turmoil for the church in Bavaria. Monasteries had been secularized; the monks dispersed and church properties seized under the influence of Napoleon's secularization policies. A new King of Bavaria, Ludwig I, however, reversed the anti-clerical policy of his father and thus in 1830, after a hiatus of a quarter century, two aged former Bavarian monks officially reintroduced Benedictine monastic life at the

Wimmer and several friends had already felt drawn to the monastic life and with the permission of their bishops entered the monastery at Metten in 1832. A year later Wimmer, a very young man two weeks shy of his twenty-fifth birthday, along with five other priest-novices, made his solemn profession,. This was to be the only year that Wimmer spent in a Benedictine monastery before undertaking the formation of numerous followers in the monastic life in the New World.



There was great concern in Bavaria at the time

about German speaking immigrants to America and their need for German priests to serve their pastoral needs. King Ludwig of Bavaria had founded the Ludwig Missionverein to support missionary work in America. It was not long until Boniface Wimmer began to feel drawn both to respond to the religious needs of his fellow countrymen in America and to the dream of extending Benedictine monasticism to what he believed would be a rich field ready for the harvest. The story of Wimmer's stubborn determination against all setbacks to achieve this twin purpose, overcoming the initial opposition of his abbot and community, and of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome, is long and fascinating.

Finally, in 1846 Wimmer and a band of eighteen pioneers boarded the packetboat *Iowa*, in Rotterdam. None but Wimmer had ever spent a day in a monastery, and he, only the one year of his novitiate. Four of his followers were clerical candidates and fourteen were candidates for the lay brotherhood. After a difficult voyage of twenty-eight days, on 15 September 1846 at 3:30 in the afternoon Wimmer and his band passed through customs and stepped into their strange new world. Wimmer was disappointed not to be met in New York by Father Peter Lemke who had offered him land in Pennsylvania. Moreover, experienced German missionaries whom he did meet, Fathers Raffeiner, Vicar General for Germans in New York, Balleis in Newark, and others, all strongly discouraged Wimmer from attempting to establish a Benedictine monastery in Pennsylvania or anywhere else. They cited the failures of several previous attempts to make permanent foundations by both Trappist and Redemptorists and advised Wimmer to seek a position in a diocese and to work independently as had Balleis. Wimmer, not to be deterred, finally met Lemke, his Pennsylvania contact, with whom he journeyed west. After a false start near Carrolltown in Cambria County, ultimately came to the place that would become St. Vincent Archabbey and the beginning of one of the lesser known sagas in the history of the Catholic Church in America.

NEWARK

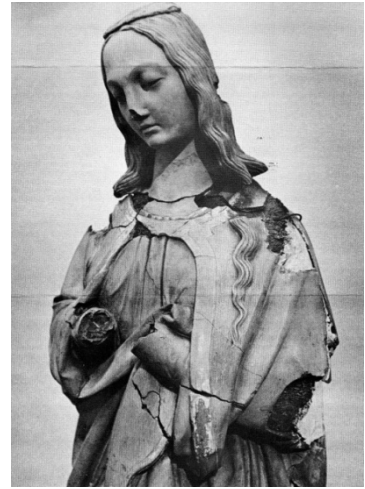
As the German immigrant population of Newark grew Father Balleis recognized the potential for a Benedictine community in the city and his own need for help. In a letter dated 31 January 1848 he petitioned Wimmer, his Benedictine confrere at St. Vincent, for assistance. While Wimmer was not blind to the advantages that a monastery in Newark would afford because of its proximity to New York and Philadelphia and its potential for facilitating communications with Europe, he nonetheless remained reluctant. Repeated requests from Balleis, however, finally brought the desired result. In 1849 Wimmer sent Father Placidus Doettl, and after his recall in November of 1849, Father Charles Geyerstanger, OSB who remained until 1855. These two were members of that original band of pioneers who had accompanied Boniface Wimmer from Bavaria. Nevertheless, despite Balleis' efforts, Wimmer declined to assume full responsibility for St. Mary's Parish or to establish a priory as he had done in several locations in Pennsylvania and in Minnesota and Kansas. By this time Father Balleis was ministering to five hundred German speaking families in Newark.

Events in Europe, the Irish potato famine and political and economic unrest in the German states, led many to immigrate to the United States. Many of these Irish and Germans settled in Newark which was beginning to show signs of growing into the manufacturing giant it would become.

But all was not peaceful at St. Mary's. It was the era of the trustee movement in the American church and a group opposing Balleis arose in the parish. The chief complaints were that the deed for the property was in Balleis' name and thus in the event of his death the property might go to his relatives in Germany or to the City of Newark, that of the income of \$1,550 from the church and St. Mary's Cemetery on Grand Street, nothing was being spent on improving either, that the pastor continually preached about money, and finally, that only German was spoken in the school. The solution proposed by the opposition was that a board of trustees be chosen from among themselves. Both Bishops Hughes of New York and later, Bishop Bayley of the new Diocese of Newark (1853), investigated but determined that no changes would be made. Bishop Bayley, however, did give the group permission to establish a new parish with the proviso that the deed be in his name. This is the origin of St. Peter's Church (German) on nearby Belmont Avenue. Both parishes continued to share the use of the cemetery, however. The ensuing peace was not to last, however.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH SACKED

Between 1830 and 1850 two million immigrants entered the United States, forty percent of them German and Irish Catholics. Prejudice against Catholics and Catholicism became epidemic and anti-Catholic and anti immigrant riots occurred in various places including Newark. On the morning of 5 September 1854, a large crowd of armed men from various Orange lodges and members of the American Protestant Association, APA, were parading through the streets of Newark. As the day wore on, many became "heated with liquor" as the newspapers reported. They paraded from Broad Street up William Street where they encountered little St. Mary's Church. One of the marchers, according to the subsequent investigation, threw a stone which ignited a riot. Another version has it that a shot was heard with the marchers concluding that it had come from the church. In any case, an innocent spectator, one Thomas McCarthy, was killed and the rioters burst into the church and destroyed its furnishings including a statue of the Virgin whose disfigured form was preserved. Strangely, its missing head was only recovered years later by Abbot Ernest who encountered it by coincidence at St. Vincent Archabbey. The statue can still be seen at Newark Abbey. Father Geyerstanger had removed the Blessed Sacrament to a neighbor's house at the risk of his life. The mob next broke into the rectory where they were met by the courageous housekeeper, Mrs. Dietrich, grandmother of James Zilliox, the future first abbot of St. Mary's. The story was told that she faced down the attackers and did excellent work with a broom stick. The cost of repair of the church amounted to \$1900 which Balleis had to bear.



4 James Roosevelt Bayley, First
Bishop of Newark

Feeling the effects of overwork, of the opposition from within the German community, and of the pain due to the sacking of his church, Father Balleis appealed for another assignment to Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, first bishop of the recently created Diocese of Newark. Father Martin Hasslinger, a Redemptorist priest, assumed the care of St. Mary's for about six months. His departure for Europe led Bishop Bayley to begin a vigorous campaign to secure a community of Benedictines for his diocese.

Bishop Bayley had assumed care in 1853 of a diocese comprising the entire State of New Jersey. In an appeal

for financial support to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Lyons, France in June of 1854, Bayley states that he is able to count on only thirty-three priests and not a single Catholic institution or religious community. The same day Bayley wrote this letter, he penned an enquiry to Bishop O'Connor of Pittsburgh enquiring about the Benedictines of St. Vincent, thus hinting at a potential solution to one of his problems.

Father Nicholas Balleis, for his part, eventually returned to New York and to the Diocese of Brooklyn where he worked until shortly before his death on 13 December 1891 at the age of eighty-three, having labored in the mission to German speaking Catholics for fifty-five years, He was invited to spend his last years at St. Mary's where he died. He is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in East Orange. In his will he left vestments, books and the contents of several bank accounts to St. Mary's Abbey. Hilary Pfraengle, second Abbot of St. Mary's, in a letter to Father Hugo Pfaff, designates these funds for the land purchased for the new foundation begun in 1889 in Manchester, New Hampshire. The books also went north to enhance the library of the fledgling College of St. Anselm. While not a man with the vision and drive of a Wimmer to establish the Benedictine Order in the United States, Balleis left an indelible mark on the history of St. Mary's Abbey and on the Benedictine Order.

BAYLEY AND WIMMER

A fascinating correspondence began in 1854 between Bishop Bayley and Boniface Wimmer at St. Vincent which reveals the tenacity and ideals of both men. The Bishop wrote persuasively of the value of a monastery so close to the port of New York. He described the attractions of the location chosen by Balleis and most importantly the desperate need of the growing number of German immigrants for pastoral care in the rapidly developing industrial city of Newark. Wimmer responded with doubts about the suitability of a monastery in the city, fearing that monastic discipline will suffer. His vision of a proper Benedictine monastery was being created at St. Vincent with its college, seminary and its cadre of lay brothers, large farm, mill and brewery (the source of contention with the temperance minded Bishop O'Connor of Pittsburgh). Moreover, his eyes were on the west with its open spaces and greater need for a Catholic presence, rather than on the east, the older, more developed parts of the growing nation. After an initial exchange the correspondence lapses for almost a year and a half during which period Wimmer traveled to Europe and St. Vincent was elevated to the status of an abbey with Wimmer appointed abbot. At the same time the American Cassinese Congregation was created by Pope Pius IX and with Wimmer as president. In 1856 Wimmer indeed sent monks west, to Minnesota, the future St. John's Abbey, and to Kansas,

the future St. Benedict's. In the spring of 1857 Bayley resumed the correspondence outlining the advantages of a Benedictine community in Newark.

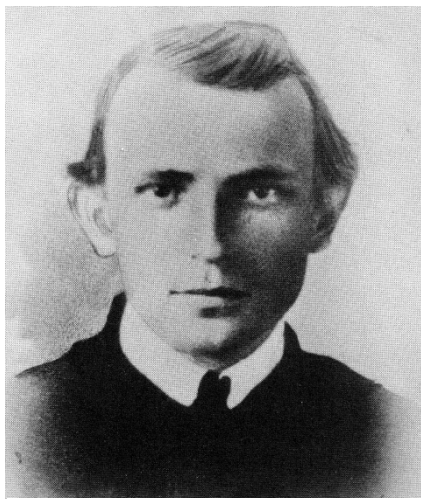
The property I obtained from Father Balleis is beautifully situated for a church and monastery. They have already laid the foundation of a large parish church. It would afford me much pleasure personally, and would be a great benefit to religion, to have a house of your ancient illustrious order established here.

Under the guidance of Father Hasslinger, construction of the new St. Mary's Church on the corner of High and William Streets had begun about the time of this letter.

Wimmer uncharacteristically hesitated although the tone of his response on 9 April 1857 would seem to have left the door open a crack. But, before Wimmer's response could reach Bayley, the bishop was faced with the imminent departure from St. Mary's German Church of Redemptorist Father Hasslinger in April of 1857, Bayley's need for a German priest was now acute and so he wrote again requesting a priest or two to take over the mission.

...I must allow that I cannot understand what East or West has to do with the matter, when the question is of the salvation of souls. There are in this city some six thousand German Catholics, and the number is increasing. A fine location is offered for the erection of a monastery, and I am certain that those who come to take charge of the mission will find plenty to do.

ST. MARY'S PRIORY



5 Father Valentine Felder, OSB

On the very day that Wimmer received this urgent appeal, he detached Father Valentine Felder, OSB from St. Mary's in Elk County, Pennsylvania and dispatched him forthwith to Newark. Bishop Bayley welcomed Father Valentine on 17 April 1857 and early in May Wimmer himself met with Bayley to arrange matters for the new foundation. The property originally purchased by Balleis in 1846, was now deeded to Wimmer and included the land on High and William Streets and, several blocks south, the house and parish cemetery on Grand Street.

Bayley expressed the hope to Wimmer that in a short time this foundation would develop into a monastery with a school. He also wanted a convent of Benedictine sisters to establish a school for the education of girls. Indeed the first Benedictine Sisters arrived in Newark on 27 July 1857. And in 1868 St. Benedict's College opened on High Street under the direction of the monks.

Thus began the service to the Catholic community of northern New Jersey by the Benedictine priests who would come from St. Vincent to Newark in the ensuing years. Parishes were begun and administered and numerous mission stations were visited which subsequently became parishes. The effect of the pastoral zeal of the Benedictines in northern New Jersey is incalculable.

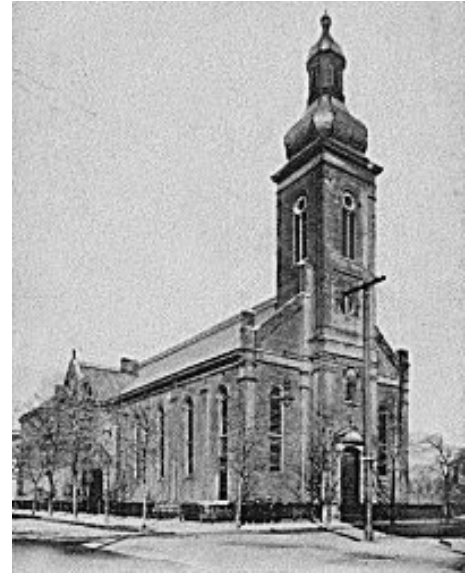
Wimmer next informed Bayley that since “the holy rule and prudence forbid to expose one priest at a far distance from his monastery for a length of time, if it can be helped,” he would be sending a companion to Father Valentine. The “minorist,” Frater Eberhard Gahr, a native of Bavaria, arrived in Newark on 17 May 1857. Bayley quickly ordained him to the subdiaconate, diaconate, and priesthood in the course of the following week. Wimmer also sent Brother Luke Zeume to be cook.

These happy beginnings of a Benedictine community in Newark were almost immediately cloaked in mourning for on 26 May 1857, while on business in New York City regarding the construction of the new church, Father Valentine Felder was struck and killed almost instantly by a horse-drawn streetcar. A stunned but decisive Wimmer hastened to St. Mary’s in Elk County, Pennsylvania and appointed the prior there, the Bavarian born Father Rupert Siedenbusch, as pastor and prior in Newark. Father Rupert served the community of St. Mary’s in Newark for five years until 1862. Under his care the new church was completed and was blessed by Bishop Bayley on 20 December 1857. Expansion followed through the mediation of Mr. Johann Radel who wrote that “the Lord Abbot could buy for \$8,000” three houses next to the church on High Street, two of brick and the other a frame building.” The brick buildings were arranged as a residence for the priests and the frame building was given over to the sisters who were teaching in St. Mary’s School. (In 1868 it would become St. Benedict’s College and the sisters shunted to the upper story of the parochial school on William Street.).

Since the city was constantly growing the authorities ordered the closing of cemeteries within the city limits, including the old St. Mary’s Cemetery on Grand Street near the original location of the church. Father Rupert thus bought a plot of ten acres three miles outside of the city in East Orange. The first burial in the new cemetery was the transfer of the body of Father Valentine Felder in the summer of 1860. In the summer of 1862 Father Rupert was transferred to Butler, Pennsylvania and subsequently had a distinguished career in the west. In 1867 he was elected first abbot of St. John’s in Minnesota and in 1875 was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Northern Minnesota. In 1862 Father Utho Huber succeeded him as superior of the Newark priory. Although his tenure in Newark was brief, only lasting until November of 1863, he built the present St. Mary’s School on William Street. On its opening day three-hundred seventy pupils greeted him; their number soon increased to more than five-hundred.

ST. BENEDICT'S CHURCH IN "THE NECK"

The story of St. Benedict's parish "in the Neck" as it was then and still is called by real Newarkers, is an interesting facet of the St. Mary's story. This parish began as a mission from St. Mary's in 1854. Everybody could see that the long distance from the Neck to High Street impeded not only children but also grownups to assist the services. There was therefore need for another church and school to be dedicated to St. Joseph. The people in Neck built a two story building which sadly was demolished by a powerful wind storm. The people of Neck did not lose courage and rebuilt, but a priest came from St. Mary's only intermittently and soon not at all. In fact the place was officially overlooked, not even being listed in the diocesan Catholic Almanac and another church with the same name of St. Joseph was built in Newark. The people of the Neck did not forget, however, and pressed for the revival of the church now to be dedicated to St. Benedict. The anonymous author from whom this account is drawn points out that "the Morris Canal would soon be opened along with a port in the vicinity and that they have built a new railroad to New York and so this will become a very important spot in a short time."



OSBNJ

On 5 March 1863 the corporation formally known as The Order of St. Benedict of New Jersey was created by an act of the State Legislature. Abbot Boniface Wimmer was designated president and Fathers, Roman Hell, Oswald Mossmuller, and Peter Lemke (By now working in New Jersey.) were the first members of the board of directors of the corporation. Regular meetings were held, often presided over by Abbot Boniface, and minutes were kept even after St. Mary's became an abbey with its own chapter.

Father Oswald Moosmueller had succeeded Father Utho as prior in 1863. He set about liquidating the heavy debt and enhancing the church. Under his aegis two side altars to accompany the high altar were designed and carved by Brother Cosmas Wolf of St. Vincent (The fine figures are still to be seen at Newark Abbey.) and plans were made for the further decoration of the church. His work was cut short, however, when in 1866 Abbot Boniface undertook to establish an American

Benedictine House of Studies in Rome to be known as St. Elizabeth's and Father Oswald was sent as superior. Clearly Wimmer had sent some of his most talented and competent monks to care for the priory in Newark. Fathers Oswald, in particular, had a remarkable career as scholar, author and administrator beyond the scope of this brief essay.

SAINT BENEDICT'S COLLEGE

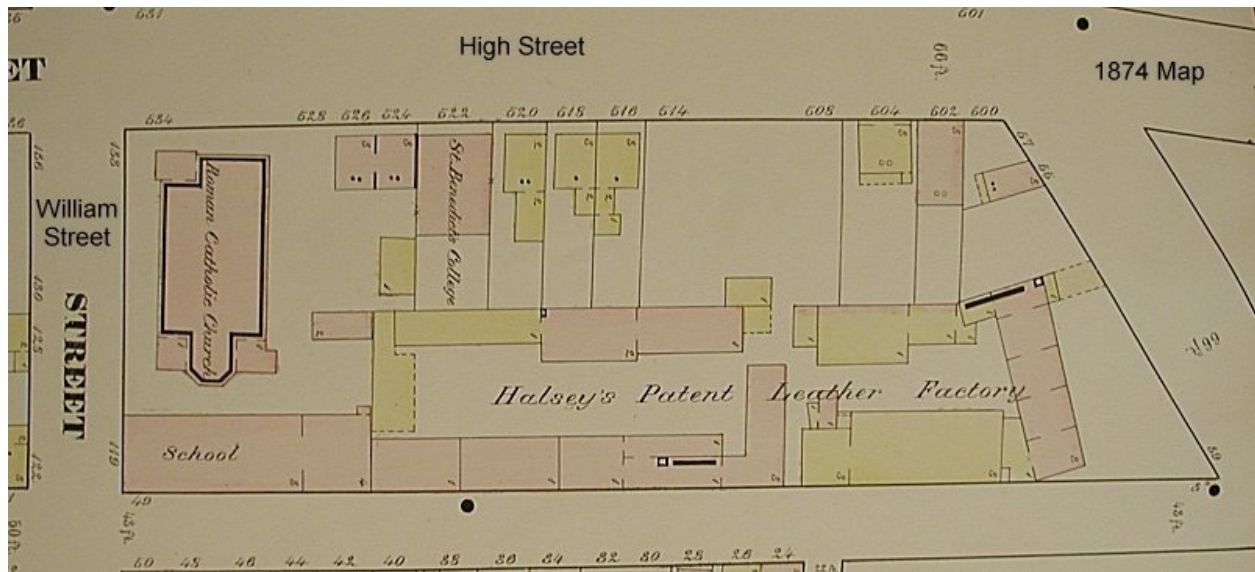


Father Roman Hell was now appointed prior and it was during his administration that the college desired by Bishop Bayley came to be. (Bishop Bayley also desired that Hell be euphemized to Hill: "For Heaven's sake change the name to Hill.") In

September of 1868 St. Benedict's College, (later to be known as St. Benedict's Preparatory School) located in the old frame building on High Street, welcomed its first students at the secondary level with the expectation that as soon as feasible the collegiate course would be added. This, of course, never happened as the demand for Catholic preparatory education grew and the bishop of Newark had begun his own Catholic College at Seton Hall. (The official school seal, however, has always retained the original name, Collegium Sancti Benedicti.)

The first director of St. Benedict's College was Father William Walter who was followed by a succession of men sent from St. Vincent's whose names resound in the history of St. Mary's Abbey such as Alphonse Heimler, Mellitus Tritz, Frederick Hoessel, (During his tenure St. Mary's became an independent abbey.) Hugo Paff, Leonard Walter (Brother of the first director, William), Cornelius Eckl, who later was "one of those selected to found the new college among the Yankees," (Manchester, New Hampshire) as one anonymous manuscript puts it.

The old frame building soon proved inadequate for the college and so at a meeting of the Board on 26 June 1871, it was unanimously agreed either to close St. Benedict's or to erect a more suitable building. With the permission of the president, Abbot Boniface, plans were drawn, the frame building sold at auction for \$300, removed, and a new college building blessed by Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley on 2 February 1872. On 1 July 1872 took place the first annual commencement of St. Benedict's College. In 1881 a supplement to the Act of Incorporation of the Order of Saint Benedict of New Jersey authorized the conferral of the "usual academic degrees by any college in the State." The college charter has never been revoked.



During this time the more than twenty members of the priory in Newark assumed responsibility for the care of more than a dozen parishes and missions. These included St. Mary's and St. Benedict's parishes in Newark, St. Henry's, later Sacred Heart and Blessed Sacrament in Elizabeth, St. Leo's in Irvington, St. Mark's in Rahway, St. Boniface in Paterson, St. Francis in Trenton and missions in Plainfield, Basking Ridge, Bound Brook, Stony Hill, Westfield, Stirling, Summit and Paterson.

SAINT MARY'S AN INDEPENDENT ABBEY

In 1866 the priory of St. John's in Minnesota became an independent abbey, and in 1876, St. Benedict's in Kansas achieved the same status. Now it was Newark's turn. Early in the tenure of Gerard Pilz as prior (1882-1884) it was felt that the time had come for the independence of the Newark priory. Father Gerard first set about the construction of a more suitable home for the community, removing the old buildings and erecting that part of the present monastery adjacent to the church. On 16 April 1883 the new monastery was blessed by Newark's Bishop Winand Wigger in the presence of Abbot Boniface Wimmer and about fifty priests, regular and secular. The new building was opened for inspection and many admired what they saw especially the painting of the Last Supper executed by the famous artist William Lamprecht which still adorns the Newark Abbey monastic refectory.

In addition to the new monastery, at a special meeting of the "Board of Directors" on 14 April 1884 it was decided to purchase for \$12,500 the two-hundred eight acre farm known as the Protectory in Denville, New Jersey which had been offered to the President, Abbot Boniface Wimmer, by Bishop of Newark, Winand Wigger. The minutes do not indicate the reason for this purchase and oddly, one of the first decisions of the Chapter of the new abbey in the following year 1885 was to approve

its sale. In fact the farm was not sold until some ten years later during the abbacy of Hilary Pfraengle. In a somewhat surprising and significant move, at a meeting on 15 October 1853 the Board of the OSBNJ decided that the office would henceforth be recited in common. With a new monastery, common prayer, the farm, and numerous missions Abbot Boniface deemed that St. Mary's was ready and portioned the Holy See for the independence of the Newark community.

By a brief of Pope Leo XIII dated 19 December 1884 St. Mary's Priory on High Street in Newark was raised to the dignity of an independent abbey. The brief arrived at St. Vincent on 15 January 1885. Now, there remained the election of an abbot. All Benedictine fathers of the province, that is, all members of abbeys and priories east of the Mississippi were called to be present at St. Vincent Abbey by 9 February 1885 to elect abbots for Newark and North Carolina. Of the one hundred and eighteen eligible, the majority attended. The nearly four hundred novices and lay brothers, however, had no vote. On 11 February 1885 James Zilliox was elected first abbot of St. Mary's Abbey in Newark on the second ballot thus making St. Mary's Abbey one of the few, if not the only abbey, whose first abbot was elected by the members of the mother house and not the community itself.

It fact there were as yet no members of the new abbey. Zilliox was an abbot without subjects. This strange lack was soon remedied, however, when a total of fourteen monks elected to transfer their stability from St. Vincent to St. Mary's Abbey: Aloysius Gorman, Theodosius Goth, Cornelius Eckl, Frederick Hoesl, Bonaventure Ostendarp, Leonard Walter, Alexander Reger, Ernest Helmstetter, Hugo Paff, Ephraim Hetzinger, Polycarp Scherer, Florian Widmann, and later, Ambrose Huebner and Sylvester Joerg, a group of fifteen in all, including Abbot James.

ABBOT JAMES ZILLIOX



8 Father James Zilliox, OSB

James Zilliox was born in Newark in the shadow of St. Mary's Church in the family home on William Street on 14 October 1847, the son of one of Father Balleis' most prominent parishioners, Jacob Zilliox, who had emigrated from Germany and was a tailor. James was the second of eleven children. He began his education at St. Mary's School but at the tender age of eleven he made up his mind to become a Benedictine priest and so began studies the following year at St. Vincent College in Pennsylvania. In September of 1865 he was invested as a novice and on 8 September 1866 professed simple vows, just a month shy of his nineteenth birthday.

Frater James lived in interesting times in the church. In order to confront the intellectual and scientific ferment of the time and to confirm the church's authority, Pope Pius IX summoned an Ecumenical Council, the First Vatican Council, in 1869. Wimmer as president of the American Cassinese congregation of Benedictines was among those called to Rome. He departed on 2 October 1869 taking with him two clerics from St. Vincent who had been selected for study in Rome. One of these was James Zilliox whose intellectual talents Wimmer had recognized. James Zilliox made his solemn profession before Archabbot Boniface on 1 January 1870 at St. Elisabeth's, the house of studies on the Aventine that Wimmer had established in Rome for American Benedictines. (Another source locates this ceremony at the tomb of St. Paul in the monastery/basilica dedicated to him.) Zilliox began studies at the University Sapienza until events in Italy interrupted both the Vatican Council and his stay in Rome.

These were turbulent times not only in the church but in Italy with the movement for national unification being played out amidst the wars among the great powers of Prussia, Austria and France. The Franco-Prussian War brought an early suspension of the Council in July of 1870 with the Piedmontese Army entering the Papal States and Rome the following September. Wimmer left the city in July taking with him all his students as the Council recessed, as it was thought, for the summer. It never resumed.

Zilliox first went to study in Ratisbon but on 30 October 1871 he entered the Jesuit university at Innsbruck in Austria where he finished his theological studies with distinction and obtained his doctorate. On 23 July 1873 he was ordained to the priesthood by Archbishop Gregory Scherr, OSB of Munich and Freising, the same Scherr who had been a companion of Boniface Wimmer in the restoration of the Abbey of Metten and would later be elected its abbot. Zilliox was regarded by all as a model of the religious and priestly life, "of amiable temperament, delicate sympathies, and noble character" wrote a contemporary.

Father James returned to St. Vincent and began a distinguished career as professor of theology, novice master in 1877 at the age of twenty-seven, prior of the monastery in 1881, and in 1865, director of the seminary. But while abroad he had tasted of the late nineteenth century European Benedictine revival led by such key figures as Prosper Guéranger, founder of the Abbey of Solesmes in France, Maurus and Placidus Wolter, founders of the Archabbey of Beuron in Germany and of Maredsous in Belgium and of Abbot Pierto Casaretto of Subiaco in Italy. This monastic revival was not based on any living tradition and was marked by a certain romanticism and nostalgia for medieval forms. Emphasis was placed on asceticism, enclosure within the monastery, and liturgical solemnity. This represented a very

different spirit from that of Metten and other Bavarian and Austrian monasteries which had been revived after a hiatus of only thirty years and from which Boniface Wimmer had taken his inspiration. Thus the seeds were planted for the tension between the activist views of Wimmer and his mission to America, and the contemplative spirit which came to be espoused by various monks of St. Vincent, among them Father James.

It is a tribute to Wimmer that he was able to sympathize with both of these disparate views in the sincere desire to attain a balanced monastic life. Wimmer, in fact, favored men like Zilliox with offices of the greatest confidence despite their criticism. There had already been several “reform” movements among St. Vincent monks who objected to Wimmer’s missionary zeal and complained about the lax discipline at St. Vincent. Father James, novice master at the time, was a key figure in a plot in 1879 to lead some of the younger members to the Trappists at Gethsemane and to Beuron. Wimmer became aware of the conspiracy, sent Father James to St. Mary’s in Newark, and replaced him as novice master. Wimmer, however, retained great respect for the pious and somewhat naïve Zilliox and soon returned him to St. Vincent.

By 1881 he had appointed Father James prior of the monastery, just in time for the eruption of another series of accusations against Wimmer. A devious monk named Maurice Kaeder played upon Father James’ piety and continued dissatisfaction about conditions at St. Vincent and convinced him to coauthor a letter to Rome containing false accusations against Wimmer, by now an old and tired man of seventy-five. Abbot Boniface was greatly pained by this calumny but was buoyed by the supporting testimony of other monks, other abbots of the congregation and the bishop of Pittsburg, and rode out the storm. He felt constrained, however, to remove Zilliox as prior and assigned him to teach moral theology in the seminary. He wrote of Zilliox as an “innocent sheep” and the source of all the trouble with his “show and praising of Beuron and deprecation of St. Vincent.” Zilliox for his part, found the active orientation of American Benedictinism difficult. “Here I have no rest and have no chance for contemplation, which would be my only delight in this world,” he had written to a friend in 1876.

A figure of some controversy and of strong views not in accord with the missionary spirit of Wimmer, Zilliox now found himself the first American born monk to be elected abbot and at age thirty-eight, the youngest abbot in the world. As Wimmer observed, Zilliox who had been dissatisfied with conditions at St. Vincent would now have the opportunity to form a community according to his own vision and perhaps to discover that being the superior was more difficult than he thought. The question was if the new community of Newark was ready for the good zeal of a Zilliox.

Newark's Bishop Winand Wigger presided at his abbatial blessing at St. Mary's Church in Newark on 22 July 1885. Our anonymous source describes the event:

The German sermon was preached by Rev. Dr. Heiter of the diocese of Buffalo, while Bishop Becker of Wilmington delivered appropriate remarks in English. Abbot James having received the insignia of his office, received the homage of the following, who henceforth, having transferred their vows, were to be known as capitulars of St. Mary's Abbey, Newark, NJ, Revs. Aloysius Gorman, Theodosius Goth, Cornelius Eckl, Frederick Hoessel, Bonaventure Ostendarp, Leonard Walter, Alexander Reger, Ernest Helmstetter, Hugo Paff, and the cleric Florian Widman. Fathers Ephrem Hetzinger and Polycarp Scherr then absent on mission duty had also cast their lot in with the new abbey.

Abbot James started at once to regulate the affairs of the monastery. Two rooms were converted into a chapel; Father Ambrose Huebner was appointed prior, Father Cornelius, pastor of St. Mary's Parish with Fathers Polycarp and Alexander as assistants; Father Frederick Hoessel continued as director of the college; Father Theodosius Goth was appointed pastor of St. Benedict's Church. Although the priests of the monastery were engaged in active ministry, one account says, Abbot James so arranged things that the work of the monk did not suffer.

At its first meeting of the Chapter on 10 August 1885, the six capitulars in attendance voted to sell the Denville farm at a price to be negotiated by Abbot James since the work of the community would be education and not farming. Consequently the decision was also made that there would be need for few lay brothers. It is said that the asking price was set too high so that the farm was not actually sold until almost ten years later for \$18,000. The farm passed into the hands of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother for the purpose of a health resort. Part of the land also became St. Clare's Hospital and the Franciscan Oaks retirement community. Thirty years later when the Newark Benedictines were looking for a "little place in the country" and found Delbarton, did they recall the farm in Denville?

Abbot James served the Newark community for only a short time. He brought with him the zeal for the contemplative life, theological study and the Beuranese liturgical life that he had yearned for at St. Vincent. The community in Newark, however, resisted his efforts to alter their accustomed pastoral and educational emphasis. His frustration with this resistance and his struggle with tuberculosis caused him to sink into depression and to attempt to resign early in 1886. Rome, however, denied his petition. Later in the same year, however, he petitioned again and with the support of Archabbot Boniface his resignation was accepted in November of 1866, less than two years after he had been elected and only sixteen months after his blessing.

During this time he had spent only six months at the abbey. Wimmer made arrangements for Zilliox to retire to St. Vincent and arranged for his personal effects to be packed and shipped there.

Following his resignation Zilliox made several moves in search of a healthier climate. At the same time he did not neglect to promote his views about the nature of true Benedictine monasticism. During the summer of 1887 his visit to St. John's in Minnesota and the extremely critical letter to Abbot Alexius Edelbrock was the catalyst, not for the first time, for an uprising of the contemplate versus the activist factions at St. John's. The affair caused a rebellion in the community, the interference of Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul, the attention of Rome, the resignation of Abbot Alexius, and sullied the reputation of Abbot James within the congregation.

On 31 December 1890 Abbot James Zilliox died in the home of his parents on William Street in Newark as the bells of the city were ringing out the old year and ringing in the new. (While James Zilliox died where he was born, in the shadow of St. Mary's Abbey Church, and is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery, the inconvenient fact is that he had transferred his vow of stability back to St. Vincent not long before died but some dogs are best left sleeping.)

ABBOT HILARY PFRAENGLE



9 Abbot Hilary Pfraengle

On 16 November 1886 with the President, Archabbot Boniface presiding, the fourteen capitulars of St. Mary's Abbey on the third ballot elected their second abbot. Father Hilary Pfraengle, director of the college and seminary at St. Vincent. Wimmer telegraphed the news and Pfraengle replied at once that he could not accept. A series of telegrams were exchanged during the day with Pfraengle remaining adamant. Finally the Archabbot wrote a forceful letter exhorting Pfraengle to accept, appealing to possible abbatial and episcopal ambitions and painting a very positive picture of conditions in Newark

A brilliant future cannot be expected for Newark, but in a small diocese an abbot is an important man. Under a good abbot the small abbey has a promising future. If I should be compelled to appoint an abbot I cannot appoint one of the resident fathers. They want no Newarker although this does not reflect on anyone. Even Abbot James was not popular for this reason. The monastery too will suffer if the abbacy is refused. It will be a

reflection on the local fathers, because it is rumored that Abbot James did not get on well with some of them

However, an abbot must not be so sensitive, and the fathers in Newark are not so bad. In fact there is a beautiful order in the monastery, much better than at St. Vincent. They attend choir regularly, there is no idea of neglecting mass, they do not miss chapter, waste time, or talk after recreation. As far as I can see, there is good understanding among them and they work diligently. In fact it is a nice little monastery and the food is good and sufficient.

Pfraengle felt compelled to succumb to the pressure and telegraphed his acceptance. Following confirmation by the Holy See, Abbot Hilary's blessing took place on 17 February 1887, not in Newark but at St. Vincent, with the bishop of Pittsburg presiding. A delegation of five fathers from Newark attended led by Prior Ambrose Huebner. On Monday, 21 February the new abbot



quietly took possession of his monastery.

Abbot Hilary was born in Butler, Pennsylvania on 9 May 1843. He entered St. Vincent College and applied to enter the monastery. He pronounced his first vows on 13 November 1862. He was ordained to the priesthood on 26 May 18 1866. In order to insure highly qualified professors in the seminary at St. Vincent Father Hilary Pfraengle was among the first group to study at Wimmer's house of studies, St. Elizabeth's, in the Eternal City. Pfraengle embarked with Father Oswald Moosemüller, former prior in Newark, whom Wimmer had appointed rector of his new Roman community. Pfraengle received his doctorate from the Sapienza University. Upon returning to St. Vincent he taught theology and in 1872 was appointed rector of the seminary which position he held when he was elected abbot of St. Mary's.

Abbot Hilary was by all accounts a remarkable man. He was a tall, burly, bearded man whose height was accentuated by his use of a stovepipe hat. He is said to have had a keen sense of humor, to have been a "character" but also a man of character and courage with whom everyone was impressed. He seems to have absorbed at its source the Wimmer motto of "Forward, always forward."

The advent of Abbot Hilary inspired the community with new life. He set about providing for a scholasticate at the abbey in Newark in which aspirants to the community could pursue the liberal arts. Recognizing that there were not sufficient priests, Abbot Hilary was forced to relinquish the missions in Rahway and Irvington and St. Hedwig's, the Polish parish in Wilmington, after the death of Father Leo Szczepanski in 1895. But he traveled to the Bahamas to explore the possibility of accepting the invitation to open a mission there. Nothing came of this, due no doubt to the lack of priests in the community. Ultimately St. John's Abbey established a monastery and school dedicated to St. Augustine in Nassau.

Father Polycarp Scherr was appointed pastor of St. Mary's parish. He was able to liquidate the debt and renovate the church so that on 17 August 1890 the church was consecrated by Bishop Winand Wigger. All the abbots and priors of the congregation were in attendance as the General Chapter was held that year at the abbey in Newark.

SAINT ANSELM, MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Already in July of 1886 the first bishop of Manchester New Hampshire, Dennis Bradley, had communicated to Abbot James Zilliox his ardent desire to have a college in his diocese under the care of the Benedictines. As an inducement he was also eager to entrust an area of the city with a German population for the establishment of a parish by the Benedictines. This was to be the base from which the further object of the college could be advanced. Due to Abbot James' illness and short tenure in office nothing was done.

Immediately upon the election of Abbot Hilary and before he had even moved from St. Vincent to Newark, Bishop Bradley wrote again on 7 February 1887 through an intermediary. Abbot Hilary responded 11 February 1887 that he was "not only willing but anxious to accept the bishop of Manchester's kind offer of a place in his diocese." He would, however, have to survey the situation in Newark and consult with the Chapter. (At this moment the Abbey still owned the farm in Denville, New Jersey.) In May 1887, Archabbot Boniface sounded a note of caution: to Abbot Hilary, "...I beg leave to remark that it might be a little premature; since you have so few priests...your day school there (in Newark) must be your main care..." The initial reaction of the most of the monks in Newark was also strongly negative.

Stretched thin though the abbey was, the Chapter ultimately accepted the invitation, perhaps encouraged by the large number of candidates entering the monastery, the members who had earned doctorates and sought a scope for their endeavors, and the possibility of the abbey establishing its own house of studies for its young religious. Records in the St. Mary's Abbey Archives, however, don't indicate any

motive other than the care of souls and a response to the Bishop's desire for a college. The Manchester foundation did indeed provide St. Mary's with a college and school of theology but as the years passed and St. Anslem grew it attracted many men whose vocations had no relationship to the distant abbey in Newark

On 16 May 1887 Abbot Hilary was able to inform the bishop that the Chapter had accepted the offer of land for a parish church and school. At the same time the abbot requested the bishop's assistance in obtaining "a square or rather two of land" for the prospective college. Pfraengle mentioned that Archabbot Boniface was not much in favor of the project due to the limited personnel and financial means available to the Newark abbey but Pfraengle offered to send two priests in the



fall or the following spring. In February 1888 Abbot Hilary sent Father Sylvester Joerg to establish the parish. The first stone was laid by Bishop Bradley on 21 August 1888 for a combination church, school and residence to be known as St. Raphael's Church and School.

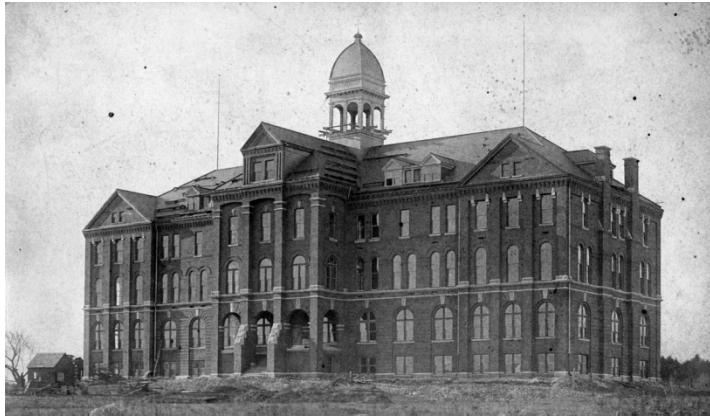


On 1 July 1890 the Chapter voted to purchase for \$5,000 a farm of about one hundred acres close to the city of Manchester to be the site of the future college of St. Anselm and in August of 1888 the Order of St. Benedict of New Hampshire was incorporated. A letter from the bishop in early 1889 urges the abbot not

to wait until he can "begin the college in a grand scale" and he anticipates "some difficulty in preventing the Canadians from making a move in the direction of a college in the event of a delay." Manchester was home to a considerable French speaking population as well as the German faction and Bradley even suggests to Pfraengle in an early 1890 letter that he attempt to secure some French speaking Benedictines while abroad in 1890. Indeed the bishop deems it essential for the prosperity of the Order in New England that there be no small number of fathers whose mother tongue is French.

The naming of the future St. Anselm College occurred well before its creation. It appears that the founders were determined to select an English saint, perhaps to avoid any appearance of being a German school. Abbot Hilary wanted it to be named for St. Bede but by this time the name had already taken by a monastery in

Illinois, so St. Anselm was a neutral choice. Although the Italian born abbot of Bec in Normandy was only English by having being named Archbishop of Canterbury, he was a genuine doctor of the church so a most worthy patron for a Catholic college, and neither German nor French.



Father Hugo Paff at the time director of St. Benedict's College in Newark, was sent in October of 1890 to superintend the construction of the college building. On 8 January 1891 the Chapter in Newark, by vote of nine to three approved the expenditure of \$60,000 for the

building of the new college near Manchester. The building was all but complete when on the night of 18 February 1892 the Saint Anselm College building was destroyed by fire. With remarkable courage Abbot Hilary and the community had to face the prospect of salvaging hope from the ruins. Soon a new structure was begun on the ruins of the old and on 6 September 1893 the St. Anselm College opened its doors to its first twenty-four students. Their numbers increased to one hundred and two by the end of the first year. The first faculty was composed of seven priests and three clerics, all sent from Newark. Father Hugo Paff was the first director and superior followed by Father Sylvester Joerg for one year 1896-1897. For the next quarter century young scholastics and monks of St. Mary's Abbey completed their education at St. Anselm's. They spoke of their annual migration to Manchester.

Difficulties continued to beset St. Anselm in the early years. A letter from Abbot Hilary to Bishop Bradley spells out the dire financial situation and expresses a fear of being compelled to close the college or sell it to the Christian Brothers. Bradley responds in a more sanguine tone, however, and makes suggestions for the financial future of the institution. It became the preoccupation of Abbot Hilary who in fact was obliged at one point to assume the directorship and to reside for a period of five years in Manchester absent from his abbey in Newark. Despite the criticism this aroused, Abbot Hilary made clear his determination that the New England venture would not fail. His return to his abbey in Newark only came at the behest of the president of the Congregation, Abbot Leo Haid of Belmont.

The Art Department was one feature that brought fame to St. Anselm College in its early days. Father Bonaventure Ostendarp left his artistic mark in many churches in New England and New Jersey until he died in 1912. He was followed by Father Raphael who died in 1942, after St. Anselm had become an independent abbey.

The tradition of art, however, lived on at St. Mary's Abbey through the work of Fathers Norbert Hink, Luke Mooseburger and others.

EXPANSION IN NEWARK

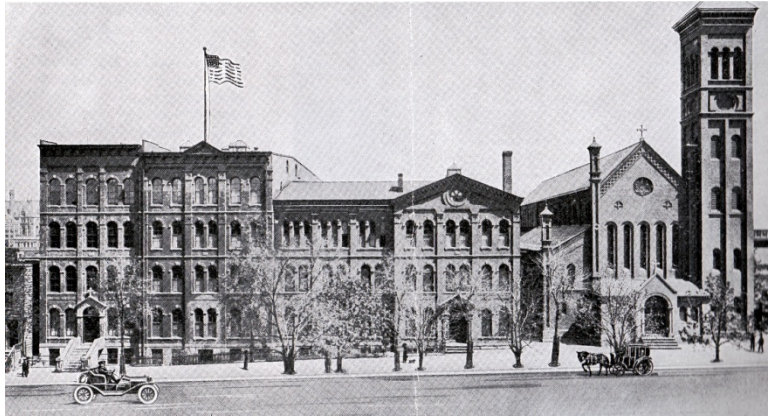
While the monks were able to acquire adequate land in New Hampshire, such was not the case in Newark. School and monastery were hemmed in by businesses and shops. Old maps of the area show a leather tannery, the Halsey Patent Leather Factory, behind the abbey on Shipman Street. It had been in operation for many years to the disgust of everyone. In the summer of 1903 the owners offered the property for sale. A portion of the property fronting on High and running through to Shipman Street was bought and was used to enlarge the yard while one of the tannery buildings was converted into a laundry.



In order to celebrate in a fitting manner the golden Jubilee of the St. Mary's Abbey Church in 1907 the complete renovation of the church was executed under the direction of the pastor, Father Polycarp Scherr. On Sunday 6 October a Pontifical Mass of Thanksgiving was offered by Bishop John J. O'Connor of Newark while Abbot Peter Engel of St. John's and president of the Congregation preached. In the afternoon pontifical vespers were celebrated with the abbot of St. Leo's in Florida, Charles Mohr, presiding. The next day Abbot Hilary Pfraengle sang a Pontifical Mass for the living and deceased benefactors of the church and school and the

pastor, Father Polycarp preached. On the following day, a requiem was celebrated by Archabbot Leander Schnerr of St. Vincent for all the deceased monks, sisters and parishioners of St. Mary's. On that occasion, the Bishop Leo Haid, OSB, Vicar Apostolic of North Carolina had the sermon of the day.

During these years the numbers of students in St. Benedict's and in the monastic community of St. Mary's had been increasing so that the need for more room was pressing. Before Abbot Hilary's death in 1909 the student body numbered 120. Before Abbot Ernest's death in 1937 the number had risen to six hundred. The Chapter decided to erect a new school building adjacent to the old on the property purchased from the tannery. An architect was engaged, contracts let, and construction was in progress when the community suffered a severe blow in the sudden death of Abbot Hilary on 21 December 1909.



Abbot Hilary had in fact been in poor health for some time and had not been able to attend choir or the common table. But he always managed to offer his daily Mass and to attend to some of his community obligations. He felt that his end was

approaching and that it would come suddenly. On the day of his death he arose at his usual time, offered Mass and spent the afternoon with some of the confreres until nearly five o'clock all the while complaining of a severe headache. About five he retired to his room and shortly after the community supper when a brother brought Abbot Hilary his meal, he was found lifeless. In order not to interfere with the celebration of Christmas and to allow abbots of the Congregation the opportunity to attend, the date of the funeral was set for Monday 27 December and Newark's Bishop O'Connor offered to celebrate the requiem. A major snowstorm, however, impeded some of the abbots from attending with the exception of Abbot Peter Engel of St. John's, President of the Congregation, who came early in the morning on the day of the funeral. The body of Abbot Hilary was laid to rest in the community plot of St. Mary's Cemetery.

ABBOT ERNEST HELMSTETTER

The election of a successor to Abbot Hilary was hurried in order that it might take place during the Christmas vacation when all might be able to participate. All but one of the forty-one capitulars were present on the evening of 3 January 1910 for the beginning of the election Chapter.

On the morning of 4 January at nine o'clock all assembled in the chapter room and formed a precession to the church for the Mass invoking the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Following the Mass the balloting began and after the second ballot it was found that Prior Ernest Helmstetter had obtained the necessary two thirds votes. The election was then made unanimous by the chapter.



The newly elected abbot was born 7 October 1859 in that part of the city of Newark commonly called the Neck. As a boy he attended St.

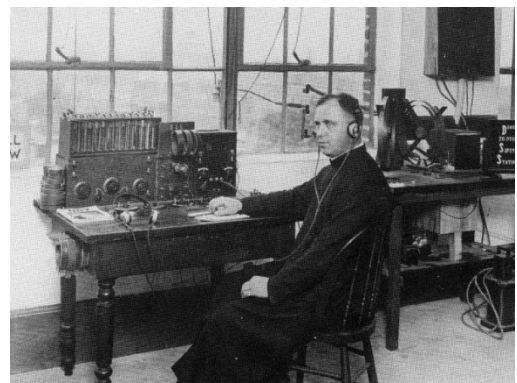
Benedict's School in the parish administered by the abbey. He then studied at St. Benedict's College for two years and in 1874 moved on to St. Vincent College in Pennsylvania. He entered the novitiate in July of 1878 and made his first profession as a monk of St. Vincent Abbey the following year. He continued his studies at St. Vincent and was ordained to the priesthood in June of 1884, the same year in which St. Mary's became an independent abbey. Father Ernest was among those who initially transferred their stability to the new abbey in his native city of Newark. Abbot James sent him first to teach in the high school in Wilmington but after that school closed recalled him to Newark and assigned him to St. Benedict's College where he remained a teacher for some twenty-five years until his election as abbot in 1910. Abbot Hilary appointed him prior in 1889, added the office of procurator in 1891 and on two different occasions asked him to serve as director of the college. At the time of his abbatial election at the age of fifty-one he was clearly a man of wide experience.

The feast of St. Benedict, 21 March 1910 fell during Holy Week that year so the celebration was postponed until 5 April and was the day chosen for the blessing of Abbot Ernest by Bishop O'Connor of Newark. Always an able and active man, Abbot Ernest took up his duties with a vim that made all feel that a new era was about to begin for the abbey. As an experienced educator he set about bringing both St. Benedict's and St. Anselm's up to an academic standard not attained in the past, facilities were added in Newark and Manchester, and during his abbacy both institutions reached capacity enrollments. Likewise, the number of monastic vocations grew. Parishes administered by the abbey were in flourishing condition and the number was increased by adding St. Elizabeth in Linden and St. Joseph in Hilton, now Maplewood, New Jersey.

During the General Chapter of the American Cassinese Congregation held at St. Vincent Archabbey in the summer of 1914 Abbot Ernest Helmstetter was elected President of the Congregation, an office which he continued to hold for twenty-eight years, the longest term in that office in the history of the Congregation. He was granted the privilege of wearing the *cappa magna* by Pope Pius IX in 1929 and of wearing the violet skull cap in 1934. Abbot Ernest died on 9 July 1937, aged 78.

INDEPENDENCE OF SAINT ANSELM

During the abbacy of Abbot Earnest the most important event affecting the future of the St. Mary's Abbey community was surely the growth of St. Anselm in New Hampshire into an independent abbey. This event must have been long anticipated as it is the genius of Benedictine



monasteries that the daughter communities separate from their mother houses and go their own way as soon as circumstances permit.. While personal communication was maintained between New Jersey and New Hampshire since all had studied and worked together in one or both houses. For example, Father Augustine Wirth created a wireless link from his physics lab on High Street. But as time went on, St. Anselm had attracted numerous men whose vocations had nothing to do with Newark and St. Mary's and thus independence was inevitable.



.At a meeting of the Chapter of St. Mary's Abbey in Newark in May 1927 it was decided unanimously to petition the Holy See for the creation of an independent abbey in Manchester. Abbot Ernest allowed those who wished to transfer stability to remain in Manchester and some thirty monks elected to do so. Before the independence of St. Anselm St. Mary's Abbey numbered one-hundred five members and was now reduced to seventy-one, but

over the next ten years professions outnumbered deaths so that at the time of Abbot Ernest's death in 1937 the membership of St. Mary's Abbey had increased to eighty-five. On October 1927 in an election presided over by Abbot Ernest as President of the Congregation the Capitulars of St. Anselm Abbey elected their first abbot, Bertrand Dolan, on the thirty-fifth ballot.

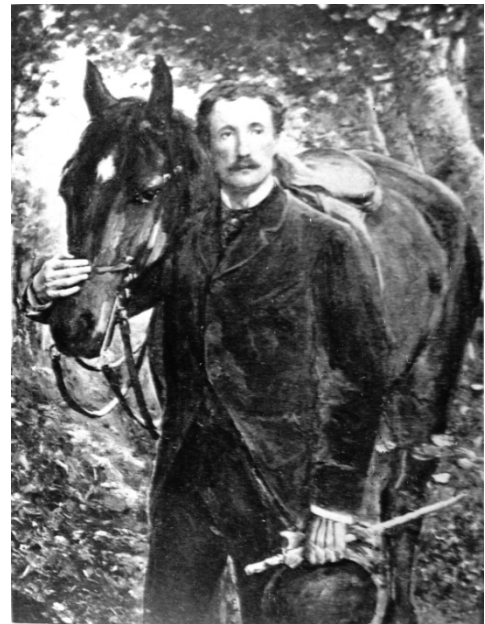
“A LITTLE PLACE IN THE COUNTRY”



For decades the mother house in Newark had depended on St. Anselm as a house of post secondary studies for its young monks. In anticipation of the coming independence of St. Anselm Abbot Ernest had led the Newark community to consider s

suitable location for a new house of studies. Two sites were considered, the Darlington estate in Mahwah, New Jersey and the Delbarton estate near Morristown. There is no record of why the choice fell upon the later, but oral tradition tells that the bishop of Newark, John J. O'Connor, wanted Darlington, and indeed it became the diocesan major seminary. But a less pedestrian legend has it that the aged Father Ambrose Huebner, who had joined St. Mary's almost at its birth and had been the first prior appointed by James Zilliox, preferred the Delbarton estate while the majority of the community wanted the Mahwah location. He therefore sought supernatural intervention. On a trip to Morristown he planted Benedictine medals on the Delbarton estate in hopes that St. Benedict would guide the choice thither.

In the late 19th century Luther Kountze, one of four enterprising brothers, sons of German immigrants, in a reversal of the usual western movement, having made his fortune in banking in Denver, came east and established Kountze Brothers, a Wall Street banking firm. In 1875 he married Annie Parsons Ward, a descendant of two old New York families, the Barclays and the Delanceys. In the 1880s Luther Kountze began to amass the four thousand acre estate which included what are now Delbarton, Morristown National Historical Park and Lewis Morris County Park. He developed the northeast corner of his holdings as a summer retreat with a large stone mansion, a working farm and several



outbuildings such as barns and a dairy, a carriage house and stable, which later served as Delbarton's first gymnasium. The mansion was completed in 1883 and the Italian Garden to the west of the main house was added after the turn of the century.

Luther Kountze had four children: Barclay Ward, William Delancey, Helen Livingston and Annie Ward. The estate was evidently named by borrowing a syllable from each of the first three children's names. After Luther

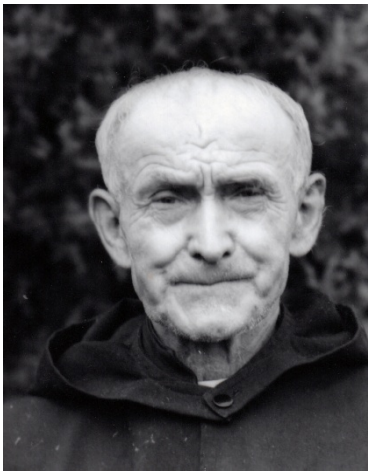
Kountze's death in 1918 the decision was made to sell the Delbarton property.

Whatever may be the truth about the choice of Delbarton, on 18 August 1925 the Chapter of St. Mary's Abbey sided with Father Ambrose and voted to purchase for \$155,000 slightly less than four hundred acres of the Delbarton estate. Ten percent was paid immediately and on 1 December 1925 the Chapter minutes record "Today we took full possession of the Kountze Estate in Morristown." The balance of the, \$150,500 had been paid.

Much work had to be done to prepare the main house and outbuildings to function as a monastery and house of studies. First of all, during the summer of 1926 central heating was installed in the main house as it had been only a summer home for the Kountze family. And during this same summer of '26, three pioneer monks were sent to establish a community at Delbarton, Father Edward Bill, superior, Fathers Ambrose Huebner, and Norbert Hink, the artist, who also served as pastor of at Notre Dame of Mont Carmel Church in Cedar Knolls. Shortly after arriving Father Ambrose fell and broke his hip requiring the care of. Brother Aloysius Hutten, a registered nurse.



The Kountzes' caretaker and later Mr. Alphonse Helmer were employed for much work needed to be done. In the main house the music room and the formal dining room became the chapel and monastic refectory. During the summer scholastics and clerics, college and theology students, resided at Delbarton and maintained the lawns and the farm. On 14 September 1927 the monastery and school of theology at



Delbarton were formally inaugurated by Abbot Ernest Helmstetter. The resident community numbered between fifteen and twenty, increasing during the summer when recently professed novices, clerics and students returned from their respective schools. During the early thirties scholastics took their first two years of college at Delbarton. All lived, prayed, studied, and ate in the one building, the former Kountze mansion, united by the common life, some hardship and a pioneering spirit. Proximity allowed the young to be inspired by the mature and tried, especially by brothers like the legendary Brother

Isadore Stumpf who planted and maintained the vegetable gardens, orchard, vineyard and directed the harvest of corn alfalfa and hay, drove his draught horses, (no tractor for him) slaughtered and butchered pigs. Monks of the decades of the thirties and forties never forgot the sweaty, dirty late summer days of the annual harvest of corn for the dairy herd in “forty acres”, the last major effort of the summer and the occasion for a final community celebration before returning to classes.

The late twenties also saw the arrival at Delbarton of three Benedictine sisters from the motherhouse in Ridgely, Maryland. They were later joined by three more and all made their home in the gardener’s cottage, now a faculty family residence. The sisters cared for the meals and laundry of the monks, and later of students at Delbarton in its early days. Like the sisters who taught in St. Mary’s School in Newark and worked in the monastery kitchen and laundry, they were silent paragons of the Benedictine culture of *Ora et Labora* that the young monks were in the process of assimilating.



24 Sisters Otilia, Christina, Anastasia, Helen, Aurelia and Delphina

As the house of studies got under way the influx of young monks resident the year round necessitated a more formal administration. Thus Abbot Ernest appointed Father Vincent Amberg to be the first prior of St. Mary’s Monastery.

FATHER VINCENT AMBERG, “PV”



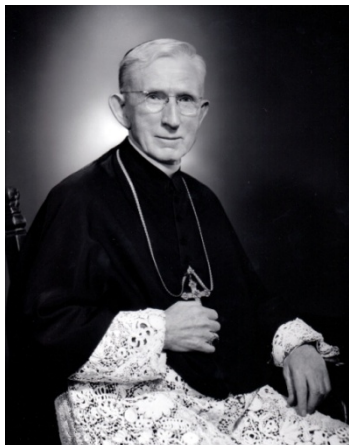
Father Vincent, PV, as he was universally known, is an iconic figure in the history of St. Mary’s Abbey. Born in Newark in 1978, several years before Boniface Wimmer was preparing to elevate St. Mary’s to abbatial status, perhaps a friend of Abbot James, a graduate of St. Benedict’s College during the time of Abbot Hilary, director, as the term was then, of St. Benedict’s Prep during Abbot Hilary’s last years and the beginning of Abbot Ernest’s, Father Vincent had lived much of the history of St. Mary’s Abbey. During his tenure he supervised the planning and construction of the new school building in Newark completed after Abbot Hilary’s

death at the end of 1909. In 1910 Abbot Ernest appointed Father Vincent prior and procurator of St. Anslem. He remained in Manchester for seventeen years during which time he served as prior, supervised an extensive building program for priory and college and taught in the college and school of theology. In 1927 he returned to St. Mary's in Newark after leading preparations for the independence of St. Anslem and the election of its abbot. Tradition has it that he had been a strong contender for the abbacy of St. Anslem. By the time of Father Vincent's death in 1965 at age 87 he had known Abbot James and had served in highly responsible positions under Abbots Hilary, Ernest, and Patrick in the most formative years of St. Mary's Abbey.

Father Vincent was among the earliest professors of the new St. Mary's School of Theology teaching canon law and moral theology though the late fifties. Father Bede Babo joined the faculty for dogmatic theology and was socius, the immediate superior of the clerics. Classes were held in the all purpose main house and the texts were the standard Latin manuals of the time, Sabetti-Barrett and Tanqueray. Scripture and homiletics were taught by a number of members of the community such as Fathers Benedict Bradley, Hugh Duffy, William Koelhoffer and, visiting monks, Fathers Michael Ducey, Ambrose Gallagher, and Ninian McDonald.

ABBOT PATRICK O'BRIEN AND DELBARTON SCHOOL

An interesting example of ecclesiastical politics occurred in 1932 when on 7 May the Chapter of St. Mary's Abbey, meeting with the authorization but in the absence of Abbot Ernest, approved the establishment of a "country day school with some residents" at Delbarton, to commence the following September, pending, of course, the approval of Abbot Ernest and the Bishop of Newark in whose diocese Morris County still lay. The decision in favor of the projected school was leaked to the press. Feeling that his authority had been transgressed, Bishop Walsh promptly aborted the plan thus delaying the founding of Delbarton School for seven years. Prior Anslem Kienle was forced to write an abject letter of apology to Bishop Walsh but the idea was clearly percolating in the Benedictine community and providentially in the mind of Walsh's secretary, Monsignor Thomas McLaughlin who in late 1937 became the first bishop of the new diocese of Paterson.



ABBOT PATRICK MARY O'BRIEN

Abbot Ernest died earlier in the same year on 9 July 1937. His successor Abbot Patrick M. O'Brien was elected fourth abbot of St. Mary's by the second ballot on 11 August 1937. At the time he was pastor of St. Joseph's in Maplewood. At his doctor's recommendation he had been excused from the election chapter and was convalescing in

Glens Falls, New York when notified of the nomination. His good friend, now Archbishop Thomas Walsh of Newark was with him when the call came and urged him to accept the election as God's will.

A native of Manchester, Edward Raphael O'Brien was born on 29 October 1885, the eldest of eight children, seven boys and one girl. His parents had emigrated from Tralee in County Kerry, Ireland. He attended St. Raphael's School under the direction of the Benedictine Sisters. He continued at St. Joseph's Cathedral High School and completed his last two years of high school at St. Anselm Prep graduating in June 1905. His school years were marked by poor health which he continued to experience at Holy Cross College. After an interruption of his studies for several years caring for his health he entered St. Anselm College but ill health again forced him to drop out. After a stint of teaching at St. Joseph School in Manchester he entered the novitiate for St. Mary's Abbey at St. Vincent Archabbey in June 1914 at the age of twenty-eight taking the name Patrick Mary. After simple vows he returned to St. Anselm to complete college and study theology. He was ordained to the priesthood on 29 May 1820.

From 1920 until 1923 Father Patrick taught Algebra and French at St. Benedict's Prep School in Newark and received his Master of Arts degree from Holy Cross College in 1924. In addition to his teaching duties Father Patrick served as chaplain to the Newark Alms House and the Newark Convalescent Hospital for six years where his kindness and charity made his name a byword among the poor of the city. Despite his continued bad health he was appointed pastor of St. Joseph's in Maplewood in 1933.



27 Firsts Students of Delbarton School with Fathers Augustine Wirth and Claude Micik

Shortly after his election Abbot Patrick, responding to the opinion of some in favor of selling Delbarton, in a lengthy manifesto, argued the need for Delbarton and informed the chapter of his determination to develop the Morristown property. Although the formal decision to open a school was not made until later, the intention must have been implicit in a building project that now took place. On 6 June 1938 Father Vincent Amberg proposed to the Chapter the construction, for the total cost of \$35,000, of a monastery building that would house the clerics and theological faculty until then residing in the mansion. The building became known as St. Mary's Monastery and is now aptly named Vincent House. PV's proposal was approved, thus implying the intention of the community to establish a school in Morristown in the now available Kountze mansion. PV managed to build the structure for very little more than the sum

originally proposed by using the bricks from the former Kountze chicken house, an imposing structure which once stood near the present South Gate entrance. The clerics were set to work cleaning the bricks from the demolished building for reuse in the new monastery on the hill. It should have come as no surprise then that on 8 May 1939, responding to a strong request by Bishop McLaughlin, the Chapter, by a vote of twenty-three to nine, approved the foundation of a “residential high school” at Delbarton to commence the following September.



With four months to create the infrastructure of a boarding school, to recruit students and a faculty Abbot Patrick appointed Father Augustine Wirth first headmaster of Delbarton School and he and his principle associate, Father Claude Micik set about preparing the building and canvassing for students through the summer months. Despite the lingering effects of the depression and the uncertainty caused by the renewal of

war in Europe, their efforts bore fruit in a September 1939 enrollment of twelve boarding students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. At the end of that first school year in June of 1940 Father Augustine proudly announced in the *New York Times* Delbarton’s first commencement of eight boys from the eighth grade.

The United States’ entry into World War II in 1941 brought changes to both monasteries and schools. Abbot Patrick permitted Fathers George Sherry, Maurus McBarron, Eugene Polhemus, Dunstan Smith, Martin Burne and Philip Hoover to serve in the armed forces as chaplains. At the same time St Anselm College found itself short of students and so lent monks such as Kevin Mahoney, Timothy Pelletier, Philip Mullen, Carl Tuck, Andrew Lavalley, and Felix Pepin, who taught at St. Benedict’s and Delbarton. Several European monks were given hospitality during the war years. Fathers Sigmund Toenig, Willibald Berger, Ansgar Rabenalt from Austria taught at St. Benedict’s and Ninian McDonald from Scotland and Augustine Verhaegen from Belgium at Delbarton. Abbot Patrick was instrumental in the establishment of a priory in Keyport, New Jersey composed of refugee Beuranese monks, Albert



Hamerstede, Prior of Maria Laach, Damasus Winzen and Leo Rudloff, later founders of Mount Savior in New York State and Weston Priory in Vermont.

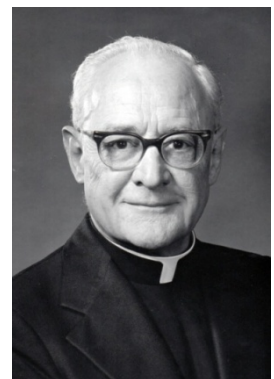
The presence of visiting monks from abroad as well as of diocesan priests was common in the age of ocean crossings to Europe by ship. The Abbey's proximity to New York harbor assured a continuous flow of guests resulting in St. Mary's gaining a certain fame for its hospitality around the monastic world. The locals sometimes grumbled but at the same time were quietly proud. In addition the abbey welcomed a number of priests and religious who lived and worked as members of the community, some for long periods. They filled many a need in the schools and parishes for the always shorthanded monks of St. Mary's. Father Cletus Donaghy, a diocesan priest, who taught for decades at Delbarton before joining the community shortly before his death, the Fathers Foley, Cecil and Anthony, blood brothers, who taught English and French and ran the popular intramural basketball program at Benedict's in the 1940s, come to mind, as does Father Genadius Díaz, a Spanish-born Benedictine from Manila who came in 1950 and remained in Newark until his death in 1985.

In 1948 the monumental labors of Father Matthew Hoehn, prior and librarian of St. Benedict's bore fruit in the publication of *Catholic Authors, Biographical Sketches of Living Catholic Authors*. A second volume followed in 1958. Father Matthew is an example of the extraordinary productivity of monks at that time, serving as prior from 1946 until 1858 to a largely absent abbot, worked as full time and unassisted librarian and in his spare time was researcher and author. No wonder that the records indicate that many died relatively young.

Another publishing effort was the result of Abbot Patrick's encouragement of Father Benedict Bradley to bring to publication *St. Mary's My Everyday Missal and Heritage*. Intended to be the first truly American missal it featured brief historical vignette of the Catholic Church in every State. Father Bede Babo, editor of liturgical texts for Benziger Brothers Publishers, was a key figure in seeing the missal into print.

FATHER STEPHEN FINDLAY

By 1941 the Delbarton School enrollment had increased to more than twenty students and seemed well and truly launched. During this time, however, headmaster Father Augustine's health began to fail and Abbot Patrick became concerned that the school was not becoming a full secondary school rapidly enough. Consequently, in late August 1942 he appointed Father Stephen



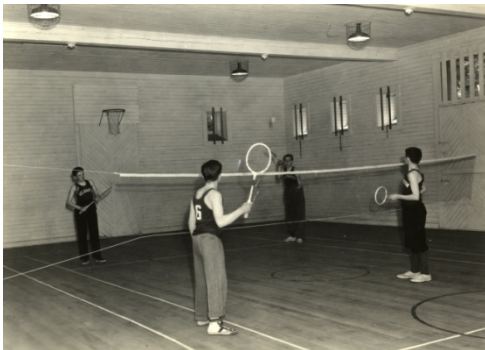
Findlay Delbarton's second headmaster. Father Stephen had been ordained only five years at the time with little school experience. Indeed, for part of the interval since ordination he had been at the Catholic University in Washington earning a doctorate in Canon Law. Nevertheless, under his energetic leadership Delbarton School grew rapidly and soon would earn a place among the most distinguished Catholic independent schools in the country. In June of 1948 the first twelve preparatory school graduates would receive diplomas from a proud Abbot Patrick.

NEWARK VERSUS MORRISTOWN

But, all was not a yellow brick road. A growing rivalry between the communities of Newark and Morristown, always under the surface, began to find expression. Newark monks suspected that unauthorized funds were being expended in Morristown, and that the growth of the school was being pushed too aggressively



to the detriment of St. Benedict's and the abbey in Newark. In truth, Father Vincent and Father Stephan were masters at making due with small sums below the radar screen of full community scrutiny, or of estimating costs that later seemed to escalate. At least that was the word on High Street.



The response to the effort to expand the Kountze carriage house building for school use is an example of the contentious spirit that began to surface within the monastic community. The first floor had been adapted to serve as gymnasium and auditorium. In the summer of 1943 Fathers

Vincent and Stephan conceived the idea of renovating the upper floor of the building as a dormitory to accommodate the increasing resident student applicants. With the intention of making an inexpensive adaptation with cash on hand the work was begun in early summer and confident of the expanded capacity additional students were admitted for the fall.



33 General Chapter of 1946

By August it became apparent, however, that additional funds would be required and Prior Vincent now appealed to the Chapter for an additional \$5,000. Despite the fact that Delbarton School had shown a net gain that year, the Chapter rejected the request. By adjusting the plans the amount required was lowered to \$3,000, a sum that Abbot Patrick himself could expend with the consent of the Abbot's Council. The abbot approached some members of the Council privately, and armed with their assent authorized the continuation of the work. But several members of the Council, absent at the time, had not been consulted and no formal meeting had been held. Abbot Patrick later apologized to the Chapter for these actions.



Opposition to these moves continued, however, and culminated in a long and stormy meeting of the Chapter in November of 1943. A petition was presented agreed to by almost every member of the community which called for a committee to be formed to devise a long term plan for the abbey and St. Benedict's Prep. This was not the last time that Abbot Patrick was presented with such an initiative from the floor. While agreeing with its content on this occasion he did not agree with the right to present a petition. Indeed such an action is highly irregular since only the abbot may propose initiatives to the Chapter. Nothing seems to have come of the proposed committee but the matter of the additional funds for the carriage

house at Delbarton was defeated by one vote and Father Vincent was forced to terminate the renovations as gracefully as possible.

The carriage house did somehow become the dormitory of a number of boarding student but subsequent events made everyone glad that the money had not been spent. On the morning of 23 April 1947 catastrophe struck. As boys and faculty were at breakfast in the dining room of the main house, a horrified Brother Christopher Kraus rushed in with the report that the building used as a gymnasium and a dormitory for some twenty resident students was ablaze. Lack



of water hampered efforts to extinguish the fire and the building and personal effects of students was a total loss with nothing but blackened stone and bed posts to mark the spot.

In 1947 Delbarton was a school of one hundred ten boys in grades six through eleven, ninety of whom were resident students. Just the year before the building had been dubbed “Chapter Hall” because a General Chapter (meeting) of all Benedictine Abbots of the Congregation had been held there in 1946. Emergency housing had to be hurriedly assembled from generous families of day-hops who took in the “refugees” who had lost their home away from home.

A NEW GYMNASIUM AND THE BROTHERS’ HOUSE

Nothing daunted, Father Stephen led the drive to construct the St. Joseph gymnasium on the footprint of the old gym. Stone from the first story of the carriage house forms part of the north façade of the gymnasium. It was about this time that the school designed its seal and chose its motto, *Succisa Virescit; Cut Down It Grows Again*, borrowed from St. Benedict’s often destroyed Abbey of Monte Cassino in Italy, most recently in 1944 during World War II. No evidence exists that the motto was chosen because of the fire and the quick rebuilding but it seems a tempting coincidence.



In a significant act of unity, the Chapter voted for the construction of a new gym to cost \$110,000. Boys formerly housed in the old carriage house continued to be hosted by local day-hop families until the frame building that had been the home of Kountze’s farm superintendent, and known as the “Brothers’ House” could be prepared for students.

The Brothers’ House did noble service as a dormitory for generations of students until its demolition in 1991 along with the bungalow that served as the school infirmary and adjacent garages and physics lab to make way for a large parking area. Delbarton School continued to grow and Father Stephan was a master of utilizing any and all spaces. In 1956, for example, he very creatively had built three classrooms tucked into the east side of the St. Joseph Gymnasium. Currently the weight room, they look like they’ve always been there. The small but elegant building near the present South Gate, the former creamery of

the Kountze farm, was utilized as a chemistry lab with thrilling to and fro bus service from behind Old Main.

Continued pressure of applicants and the need for adequate classroom and lab space led Father Stephen to plan a large classroom building to be known as Trinity Hall. Following its completion in 1959 the enrollment increased to over three-hundred, the majority now day students, a harbinger of things to come. Father Stephen retired as Headmaster in 1967 after 25 years in that position but continued as Director of Development. In 1971 the Schmeil-O'Brien Hall dormitory would be dedicated.

FATHER HUGH DUFFY

The 1940s and 1950s was an era blessed by abundant vocations. The number of monks residing in St. Mary's Monastery at Delbarton grew to some thirty during the school year and to over fifty during the summer. Abbot Patrick was moved to make some administrative changes, appointing Father Hugh Duffy as Prior in 1945 to replace the venerable



PV who remained as a very active procurator until his death in 1965.

The New England born Father Hugh was a highly cultured and urbane man who had studied theology in Rome and had traveled widely especially among the German Beuranese abbeys where he had made friends with monks who would eventually seek refuge during the war at St. Mary's Abbey. Several had a significant impact on the community and on American Benedictinism like Leo Rudloff, Damasus Winzen and Albert Hamerstedde.

Father Hugh enhanced the esthetic environment of the monastery in Morristown and imparted a liturgical style and taste that endeared him especially to the young monks, if not always to the more tradition bound. He accomplished changes in the horarium moving Lauds from evening of the previous day to its rightful place as morning praise. Private Masses followed and a so called "Communion Mass" for the non-ordained, and then Prime, breakfast, Terce and Sext and the sung Conventual Mass. None was recited before lunch and Vespers after. Matins continued to be anticipated at 5:00 PM with Compline sung at 7:30. This schedule remained in force until the major post Vatican II changes in the liturgy.

Father Hugh strove to foster the vocation to the brotherhood and to enhance the brothers' prayer life. He enlivened the life of the monastery by introducing seemingly small customs that he had observed in Europe such as use of the pax-board and the recipe for a Christmas Eve beverage called "Caritas." Choir stalls were turned to face each other across the small chapel; Father Augustine Verhaegen became choir master and introduced a method of chant traditional in his monastery of Afflighem in Belgium. One small detail is worth mention: monks wore cowls over surplices, not at all the custom in Newark and frowned upon in our parishes. The biretta was still mandatory for solemn liturgies. Incidentally, while there is no proof, Father Hugh is traditionally credited as the author of the Delbarton School Alma Mater, "In among the hills of Morris."

In 1952 Hugh Duffy resigned as prior and joined a Roman classmate, Rembert Sorg, in attempting to create an experimental monastic community in Fifield, Wisconsin. While there he suffered a heart attack, and had to return to New Jersey where after recuperation he served as pastor of St. Benedict's Church, Down Neck Newark, dying in 1968.

NOVITIATE AND COLLEGE STUDIES



36Father Claude Micik and Novices - 1938

St. Mary's Abbey had traditionally sent its young candidates to St. Vincent Archabbey for the year of novitiate, except for one fatal year. Using the new opportunity afforded by the green fields of Delbarton in 1938 Father Claude Micik, with Frater Martin Burne as socius, was appointed the first novice master in the history of St. Mary's Abbey. Four novices happily began their novitiate year but none survived to make vows. After that experience it was back to St. Vincent until in 1941 novices began traveling to St. Benedict's Abbey in Atchison, Kansas and continued there until the new monastic buildings were completed in Morristown. In 1965 Father Martin Burne was appointed novice master and has been followed by Fathers James O'Donnell, Brian Clarke, Giles Hayes, Paul Diveny, and Hilary O'Leary.

College studies both before and after the year of novitiate were pursued at St. Vincent, St. Benedict's or St. John's Colleges, with theological studies continued at St. Mary's School of Theology in Morristown where St. Mary's Abbey clerics were joined by "day hops" from St. Paul's Abbey in Newton, New Jersey.

True to the tradition of their American Benedictine roots, as the number of ordained in Morristown increased, so did the pastoral outreach in the Paterson Diocese and neighboring Trenton and more recently Metuchen Dioceses. Monks have likewise served as chaplains to a number of mother houses of religious women in the area. The Sisters of Charity in Convent Station, the Sisters of Christian Charity in Mendham and the Religious Teachers Filippini at neighboring Villa Walsh as well as for many years at the Carmelite Monastery in Morris Township have all benefitted from the ministry of monks of St. Mary's.

The decade of the fifties was very productive for infrastructure at both schools. St. Benedict's had long had an enrollment of over seven hundred but was always pressed for space and lacking facilities such as a proper auditorium and cafeteria. This was remedied by the construction of the Conlin Auditorium in 1958. Meanwhile, Trinity Hall was built at Delbarton Thus Abbot Patrick and the Chapter sought to attend to the needs of both the venerable St. Benedict's and the fledgling Delbarton.

TRANSFER OF ABBATIAL TITLE - 1956

For decades monastic visitators expressed concern about the disunity fostered by the two growing communities and schools in Newark and Morristown that comprised St. Mary's Abbey. Up until 1953 as visitations came and went there had been much discussion, many proposals, but no action. The visitators that year set a deadline and the usual thing was done, Abbot Patrick appointed a committee. Its task was to survey the community and to solicit suggestions for achieving unity. A number of alternatives were discussed such as separation of Morristown from Newark, the closure of one or the other location, closing both and moving to an entirely new location or, the transfer of the abbatial seat to Morristown. In June of 1956 an historic meeting of the Chapter took place in Newark in which Abbot Patrick presented a proposal to transfer the title of Abbey to Morristown with Newark remaining as a dependent priory. The Chapter voted forty-two in favor, thirty-two opposed.



This radical change was the signal for a construction boom in both Newark and Morristown as long standing needs were addresses. In Morristown pressure of applicants and the need for adequate classroom and lab space encouraged Father Stephen to plan Trinity Hall in 1959. The enrollment of Delbarton School increased to over three hundred, the majority now day students, a harbinger of things to come. Father Stephen retired as Headmaster in 1967



40 Constuction of Trinity Hall begins, 1958

after twenty-five years in that position but continued as Director of Development. In 1971 a dormitory building, the Schmeil-O'Brien Hall, was dedicated.

St. Benedict's had long had an enrollment of over seven hundred but was always pressed for classroom space and facilities such as a proper auditorium, and cafeteria. This was remedied by the construction of the Conlin Auditorium in 1958. Thus Abbot Patrick and the Chapter sought to attend to the needs of both the venerable St. Benedict's and the fledgling Delbarton. Abbot Patrick was resolute in his determination to hold the two houses together but, tensions continued, each house feeling, correctly or not, that its aspirations were being thwarted by the needs of the other.

NEW MONASTERY IN MORRISTOWN - SEPARATION

The success of the building programs notwithstanding, there were many who believed that the only real solution to the question of unity within the community would paradoxically be separation. Meanwhile in 1961 the Chapter had approved the hiring of an architect, Victor Christ-Janer, to design a grand new monastery and church in Morristown. In January of 1963 the Chapter authorized the borrowing and expenditure of up to \$2 million for the project.

It was when Abbot Patrick came to the Chapter the following November for a further borrowing of funds that, over the objection of the abbot, a petition was presented for the independence of Newark signed by seventeen monks resident at the priory in Newark. To the abbot's insistence that this was not relevant to the matter before the Chapter, the Newark group responded that the future location and number of monks was totally relevant to determining the size of the new monastery buildings in Morristown. When Abbot Patrick rejected the petition and insisted on presenting the funding resolution the Chapter proceeded to reject it. Shocked

silence filled the room and the meeting was quickly adjourned. Thus, a month later on 10 December 1963, Abbot Patrick was forced to present the resolution he most abhorred, a petition to Rome for separation. It received the overwhelming approval of the Chapter. Meetings began immediately and committees formed to plan for the independence of the Newark priory, but, without the endorsement of Abbot Patrick or of Archbishop Walsh of Newark the petition was already doomed. Indeed the Holy See rejected the independence of Newark as “inopportune.”

MISSION TO BRAZIL



In the late fifties there had come a mandate from Pope John XXIII for American religious communities to send personnel to Latin America to counter the inroads of evangelical groups among nominal Catholics. Abbot Patrick informed the community of this request and asked for volunteers. The abbey at the time was hard pressed with two schools and eight parishes under its care. Negotiations with various Latin American bishops ensued, however, and finally on 6 September 1963 Fathers Edmund Nugent and Kevin Bray left for the diocese of Anapolis in the State of Goias, Brazil. In 1964 Father Kevin returned and in May of 1966 Father

Columba Rafferty set sail for Rio de Janeiro to reinforce the mission and in July of 1967 Father Sebastian Joseph joined Fathers Edmund and Columba. In January 1971, however, Father Sebastian suffered a heart attack and died. His body was returned and lies in the Abbey Cemetery in Morristown.

Father Columba retired and returned to the abbey due to ill health in 1985 after almost twenty years in Brazil and on 2 August 1995 Father Edmund Nugent, the last of the four monks of St. Mary's Abbey who had volunteered to serve as missionaries in Brazil, died in Urutai and, in accord with his request, was buried in the parish that he had served for so long. Thus ended the Brazilian effort that had begun in 1963 more than thirty years before.

The Brazilian effort had not resulted in a permanent foundation and the extension of the Benedictine Order, as a Boniface Wimmer would have desired. Perhaps the community, hard pressed for personnel, had not invested its most able men with a clear mandate to make a permanent foundation. The attention of the community for next few years were dominated by nagging internal issues of unity or separation, the death of Abbot Patrick after a thirty year rule, and the election of a new abbot.

The Brazil mission was not the first overseas effort on the part of monks of St. Mary's. The Catholic University of Peking was originally established by Benedictines of the American Cassinese Congregation in 1925 at the request of the Holy See. American monks were recruited, among them Fathers Gregory Schramm, who had recently obtained his doctorate in psychology, and Damian Smith, with advanced degrees in biology. In 1933, the administration of the university was transferred to the Society of the Divine Word because the American Benedictines, in the midst of the Great Depression were no longer able to sustain the mission financially. Gregory and Damian returned to teach at St. Benedict's.

NEW ABBEY CHURCH AND NEW ABBOT



1966 was a memorable year with the realization of Abbot Patrick's dream of a great new monastery and church in Morristown, his resignation later in the same year and the preparations for the election of his successor. The altar of the new abbey church was consecrated by Abbot Primate Benno Gut and the church by Archbishop Boland of Newark on 15

and 16 July 1966. Then the following October Abbot Patrick announced to the community that he had requested a coadjutor. He had been abbot of St. Mary's Abbey for almost thirty years. Under his aegis Delbarton School was born and grew to robust youth; new buildings were erected in both Newark and Morristown, and the community grew from eighty-four members listed in the *Ordo* of 1937 to one



42 SMA Monastery Complex

hundred thirty in 1967, the year of his death. The long tenure of Abbot Patrick, despite all its turmoil, could justly be regarded as a golden age of St. Mary's Abbey. Often absent from the abbey due to perennial ill health, now in his eighty-first year his always limited strength had ebbed markedly. On 28 November the community gathered in Morristown to elect a coadjutor abbot and the choice quickly fell on Father Martin Burne.

ABBOT MARTIN BURNE AND INDEPENDENCE FOR NEWARK

1967 began as a year of high hope and new energy. On 2 February an energetic and zealous Martin Burne was blessed as coadjutor abbot of St. Mary's Abbey by Bishop Lawrence Casey of Paterson. Less than two months later, on 30 March, Abbot Patrick died in Florida leaving Martin Burne as fifth abbot of St. Mary's Abbey. Abbot Patrick was laid to rest in the old St. Mary's Cemetery in East Orange.



The newly elected Abbot Martin assumed the responsibility for a community numbering one hundred thirty men and including the priory in Newark, the abbey in Morristown, two secondary schools and the administration of eight parishes. In the eyes of many he was the man for whom the community had been waiting, always the decisive voice in meetings of the Chapter, the very model of leadership. A 1932 graduate of St. Benedict's, after several indecisive years he entered the Benedictine

novitiate at St. Vincent and was professed in 1935. He was ordained in 1940, and served as a chaplain in the navy and saw action with the Marines in the South Pacific campaigns of World War II. After the war he resumed his role as leader of the music department, director of the glee club, band, and teacher of German at St. Benedict's. The musical program came to life again under his leadership. During summers and at night he earned his doctorate from New York University, all the while serving as weekend assistant at St. Rose of Lima Church in Short Hills. Abbot Patrick appointed Father Martin prior of Newark in 1958 but he resigned in little over one year and asked to serve as parochial assistant at Sacred Heart Church in Elizabeth. In 1965 Abbot Patrick appointed him novice master in the newly established novitiate in Morristown in which office he served one year until his election as abbot.

Abbot Martin made a number of significant changes during his first year in office. He appointed Father Lawrence Grassman to succeed Father Mark Confroy as

Headmaster of St. Benedict's and Father Francis O'Connell to succeed Father Stephan who had been headmaster of Delbarton school for twenty-five years.

Parallel to the internal changes in St. Mary's Abbey, tectonic shifts had been taking place in the demographics of Newark and northern New Jersey. Large numbers of African-Americans had been migrating to the north for many decades and this great migration was accelerated by the war and its aftermath. The population of Newark and of its suburbs had changed radically. During the summer of 1967 Newark suffered its passion in riots which caused massive physical and moral destruction around St. Benedict's and the flight of what remained of the white middle-class to the suburbs. During the post-war decades this migration had already affected Morris County turning it from a rural to a suburban environment which caused a drastic relocation of the population from which St. Benedict's had traditionally drawn its student population.

Abbot Martin made every effort to respond to the high hopes and enthusiasm with which he had begun his new office. He frequently visited the priory in Newark and even convened meetings of the Chapter there but came to the conclusion that he could not be abbot in two places. He brought the issue of separation to the boil again and on 14 October 1968 offered what amounted to an ultimatum that the Chapter vote to petition the Holy See for the independence of Newark. The resolution was approved by a vote of seventy-five to thirty-five with one abstention. This time, with the support of the abbot and a new archbishop, the petition was successful and on 21 November 1968 Newark Abbey was canonically erected as an independent abbey and on 14 December gathered in Chapter to elect its first abbot, Ambrose Clark.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION IN OLD NEWARK

Life in the city was not easy for the newly independent community. Enrollment in the school continued to decline due to the fear many had of sending sons from the suburbs into the riot scared city and to the competition from newly created diocesan Catholic high schools. Some members of the new abbey believed that the monastery and school should relocate somewhere else, the Jersey Shore for example. Negative trends in the school and the monastery continued despite verbal commitments on the part of Abbot Ambrose to remain and build in Newark.

Matters came to a head in early 1972 when, following a special visitation by abbots of the Congregation the Chapter voted to close St. Benedict's at the end of the year. The Headmaster, Father Cornelius Sweeney had the unenviable task of announcing to the students at a morning assembly on Ash Wednesday that their school would die after over a century of life. The remainder of the school year was painful in the extreme and that June was held what would be its last commencement.

While the community had voted to close the school, in what might seem a contradiction, not to relocate the monastery outside of the city. Large empty buildings remained representing the abbey's major apostolate and source of income, and the community appeared stranded in an alien city many preferred to depart. Some, especially the older and ill, thought it best, both for themselves and for the remaining Newark community to return to St. Mary's in Morristown from which Newark Abbey had separated just four years before. Abbot Leonard Cassell and the community in Morristown resolved their own dilemma: in favor of generously accepting all of the monks of Newark who wished to transfer. They had, after all, shared novitiate, studied, taken vows and been ordained together and been confreres but a few years before. Shortly after graduation day in 1972 a dozen monks left Newark Abbey for Morristown. Quite likely the monks of Morristown did not realize what a wrenching experience this was for the monks who remained at Newark Abbey.

The twenty-four monks who chose to persevere in Newark were mostly younger, lean, healthy and determined men with a united commitment to the survival of their community and the revival of St. Benedict's. The following year was devoted to discussions especially of how the community would support itself. By the fall of the year it was obvious that the group's heart was in education and they began to plan how they might fulfill Newark's need, now more than ever before, for a good boys' school.

The more the monks experimented with a new names and curricula the more they discovered that what their neighbors wanted and needed was the same as the sons of the immigrant Germans and Irish of a century past, namely an opportunity to pursue a disciplined, value driven education and to pursue higher education and careers, to "get ahead." Thus the *Collegium Sancti Benedicti* of the school seal was reborn. The dream of the courageous "remnant" who gave the monastery and school in Newark new life has been abundantly realized in ways beyond the imagination of alumni of the "old" Benedict's. Boniface Wimmer would be proud and pleased, especially by the largely minority student body. Pastoral and educational care for African-Americans was a mission dear to his heart, before and after the Civil War. The continuing story of Newark Abbey on Nigh Street, now Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, however, will have to be left to another time and place.

MEANWHILE BACK IN MORRISTOWN

While the middle decades of the twentieth century were eventful ones at St. Mary's Abbey, young men, typically after graduating from St. Benedict's Prep, made their intention known to join the monastic community and were sent to a Benedictine

college, generally St. Vincent's College. Having spent the high school years together they formed a like minded and similarly experienced group well known to the monks. Occasional "outsiders," non Benedict's boys, were welcomed but they may have felt a slight sense of not quite belonging. Delbarton and St. Mary's Monastery in Morristown at first seemed a foreign place. St. Benedict's Abbey in Kansas with its agricultural environment where many completed their year of novitiate was an exotic experience to the eastern "city slickers" plopped down among the "rustics."

After completing undergraduate studies they finally got a real taste of life in Morristown. Summers, before the camp, and while the small dairy herd still flourished, meant hard work in the garden, caring for lawns, and chopping corn in "forty-acres," now the location of the Sugarloaf athletic fields,.



About 1950 the cows passed from the scene and Camp Delbarton began to make use of the fields and the lakes and to occupy the young clerics as counselors. The camp schedule was so arranged that the clerics, sweaty as they might be, could don habits and take part in the liturgical hours and the common table. Summer came to an end with a day trip to the shore and a festive dinner. A week or two "home with your

family," (The word "vacation" was not part of the vocabulary.) was permitted with PV bestowing the handsome sum of \$15.00 on the youngest clerics. Those were the days, of course, when one could dine well for five or six dollars.

Often after solemn vows, junior monks began graduate degree programs during the summer at Notre Dame, Catholic University, Seton Hall or elsewhere. It was expected that a master's degree would be attained, or even a doctorate as many would be teachers and school administrators.

Theology classes resumed in September with Father Bede Babo teaching dogma, Father Vincent, moral theology, Father Leonard Cassell, scripture, Fathers Stephen, canon law, Fathers Hugh and Michael, homiletics, and the same Father Michael, clerical accounting. Most of the lectures came from the Latin theological manuals then in vogue and tended to be on the boring side, if truth be told, especially in the pre Vatican II world of the 1950s. Later additions to the faculty lent some energy such as Hungarian refugee Father Egon Yavor in dogmatic theology, Father Christopher Lind with moral theology and Father Denys Hennessy in canon law, a

man ahead of the Xerox era always distributing great wads of mimeographed legal size sheets on esoteric aspects of the law.

The part of the day most anticipated was the class the clerics were allowed to teach in Delbarton School. At last they got to participate in the work of the community. Almost everyone had a second job such as sacristan, orchard boss, bee keeper, librarian, or caregiver to the wheelchair bound Father Alfred Meister. Indoor and outdoor housekeeping and maintenance details were mandatory and “frater primus,” the senior cleric, would post a weekly work list. There were no janitors and Alphonse Helmer and Steve Gndt comprised the entire maintenance staff.

Entertainment was limited to *haustus* and established periods of recreation with clerics, brothers, and fathers in their separate locations. Recreational opportunities consisted of walks in the countryside, sledding, cards, and occasional softball or touch football games. The Friday night movie screened in the monastery prior to its viewing by the students on Saturday night was eagerly anticipated. During the summers and school vacations three D slide shows presented by avid camera buff Father Bede or Father Alfred’s home movies provided entertainment. Trips to Morristown were rare and shopping largely unnecessary since PV maintained a supply of “Bachelors Friend” socks, tee-shirts, and washable pants in several sheds by the water tower. Brother Aloysius Hutton was the monastery’s man about town as he daily picked up mail, newspapers, and did all the necessary errands. Young monks looked forward to ordination, of course, and a freer life in the wider world of school, parish or other pastoral work but in many ways their cleric days were idyllic.

While life on the hill top was lived largely within the seasonal and daily rhythm of the liturgical year and of the liturgy of the hours, monks who worked full time at Delbarton School marched to the very different beat of prefecting school boys and dormitories,, leading classes, study halls, and activities. Little sense of this parallel twenty-four hour seven-day-a-week world of the “school fathers” drifted up the hill from the building, not yet dubbed “Old Main,” and the Brother’s House. Men such as Fathers Stephan Findlay, Frederick Muench, Kenneth and Arthur Mayer, Cletus Donaghy, Adrian McLaughlin, Lucian Donnelly, David Conway, Peter Meaney, and their successors by necessity lived among students in the dormitories, taught full time and were drawn away from the life of the monastery.

The typical day of monastic faculty member seems almost superhuman in its wide ranging obligations combining fulltime teaching, dormitory duty, with added charges such as bookstore manager, moderator of yearbook, newspaper or club or sports coach. At the same time ordained monks served on weekends and sometimes daily at a local parish or convent and often also pursued their master’s degree part time. The obligations of the monastic prayer life also had somehow to be fulfilled even

though in private. (There is a curious photo of Fathers Stephan and Frederick sitting at the top row of the bleachers at a football game, heads bowed over their breviaries. One had to snatch the moment.) Up on the hill the time and labor that went into the operation of a school by the still largely monastic faculty perhaps was not fully appreciated, but, as critical as some were at times, the juniors could hardly wait to become full partners in the work of the community.

TRINITY HALL, HARBINGER OF THE MODERN DELBARTON

The modern Delbarton School began to take recognizable shape with the opening of Trinity Hall in 1959. Old Main remained a student dormitory, dining room, tuck shop, and chapel. The more ample classroom space allowed for increased numbers of day-hops and freed space for added resident students. The suburbanization of the area, however, presaged the coming flood of day student applicants, but efforts to increase the number of resident students continued. The 1960s were difficult days for even the most prestigious of traditionally single sex boarding schools.

The enhancement of the environment for prayer life of the monastic community was the central interest of Abbot Martin. Following the dedication of the new monastery on 11 July 1967 the bells for the Abbey Church were installed and rung for the first time for the ceremony of profession, and on 1 November 1967 the community began use of a Divine Office in English based on the opportunities afforded by the Second Vatican Council. A record was not kept but this day may have seen the first use of the vernacular for the recitation of the Opus Dei at St. Mary's Abbey. And on 8 December 1967 the newly installed organ in the Abbey Church was dedicated in a concert by Dennis Michno, organist of Trinity Church in New York City.



46 New Monastery Bell Tower

A new building designed as a dormitory by architect Victor Christ-Janer the architect of the abbey complex, was the next major physical development at Delbarton. Ground was broken for Schmeil-O'Brien Hall, to be located behind Old Main where the former kitchen garden had been located. The building opened for student use in the school year 1970-1971. The more senior borders, however, given their preference, elected to reside in Old Main rather than in the new dorm. Tradition trumped modernity.

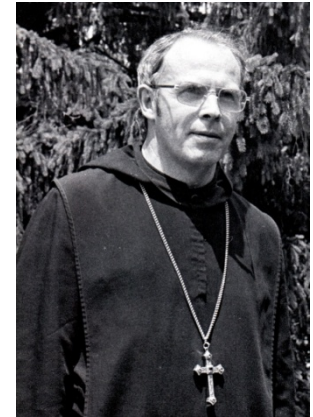
ABBOT LEONARD GILBERT CASSELL



In the summer of 1971 three events followed one upon the other that shook the community in Morristown. Abbot Martin Burne announced his resignation of 1 July. He did not explain his reasons and it was a blow to the community. On 2 August Leonard Cassell was elected sixth abbot of a community now numbering seventy-five and was blessed at a simple ceremony at the regular Conventual Mass by Bishop Casey of Paterson on 12 August. He served until May of 1975 when ill health forced his resignation.

ABBOT BRIAN HUGH CLARKE

On 13 June 1975, Brian Clarke was elected seventh abbot of St. Mary's Abbey, a community now numbering eighty, a slight increase due partly to the exodus from Newark Abbey during Abbot Leonard's tenure. The first major challenge faced by Abbot Brian was the near total destruction by fire of the old monastery, now dubbed "Vincent House," on the night of 12 December 1975. The cause was one of the monks smoking in bed. The monastery library also suffered serious damage from smoke and water but there were no major



48 Abbot Brian Clarke



injuries to the residents. After considerable evaluation of the alternatives the Chapter approved the reconstruction of Vincent House and it was reoccupied in 1977.

In Delbarton School, following the lengthy and formative headmastership of Father Stephan Findlay, Father Francis O'Connell had been appointed by Abbot Martin for a term of five years in 1967. He served until illness forced him to cede the day-to-day operations to his assistant, Father Giles Hayes for the balance of his term. Father Francis died in 1972 and Abbot Leonard appointed Father James O'Donnell the new headmaster.

Father James served until 1975 when Abbot Leonard appointed Father Gerard Lair headmaster of Delbarton School, again for five years. Brief though it was this would be a paradigm shifting administration. Father Gerard significantly enhanced the academic standing and reputation of the school and brought it into the first rank of independent schools in New Jersey and the nation. He set a new tone in the order and discipline of the school which would hence forth be based on conversation and reason Father Gerard's vision has continued and set Delbarton apart. Gone were lurking disciplinarians, gone demerits and "jug," "Ds and days," in student argot, gone the dress code of jackets and ties. Reacting to the difficulty in recruiting qualified boarding students and the superabundance of qualified day students, Father Gerard proposed the phased termination of the boarding program. This historic change after forty years was approved by the Chapter in 1978. The last boarding students graduated from Delbarton in June of 1982.

The end of the residential program left the question of the future use of Schmeil-O'Brien Hall, after only a decade of use as a dormitory. Several proposals were advanced but the building has found renewed purpose as a guest house and retreat center.

Father Gerard was also convinced of the value and inevitability of co-education, as major formerly all male universities and independent schools one by one began to admit women. He quietly initiated discussion within the monastic community of the desirability of co-education at Delbarton, but this was one reform to far that tradition and alumni pressure denied him.

Abbot Brian appointed Father Giles Hayes headmaster of Delbarton School in 1980 to succeed Father Gerard. By now the five year term had taken on the power of a tradition that would not be broken until the turn of the century. Father Giles' accession to the office was notable in that he himself was an alumnus of Delbarton.

In June of 1982, under the guidance of Father Karl Roesch, the Chapter approved the construction of the Abbot Brian Clarke Gymnasium and the refurbishing of the St. Joseph Gymnasium to form the Lynch Athletic Center. There had been an alternate plan for an entire new field house to be located to the east of Old Main, the "horseshoe well" area, but deemed too expensive and remote from the existing gym.

The two decades of Abbot Brian's service are marked by the physical growth of both monastery and school, a tribute to the remarkable generosity of many alumni and benefactors and to the labors of the development office. In 1982 the Chapter,



in response to the growing need to care for aged and incapacitated monks, approved the construction of the Abbey Health Care Center attached to the Mass Chapel corridor. The following year saw the development of the Shoemaker (South Gate) Fields in an area that had once been pasture and barns of the Kountze farm.

In mid March of 1990 there arrived the long anticipated letter from the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York enclosing a check for \$1 million for the purchase of the marble sculptured terms called Flora and Priapus by Pietro and Gian Lorenzo Bernini. These sculptures, originally acquired by Luther Kountze from the Borghese Gardens in Rome had been placed in his Italian Garden at Delbarton on either side of the east gate but had been on loan to the Museum since 1977.

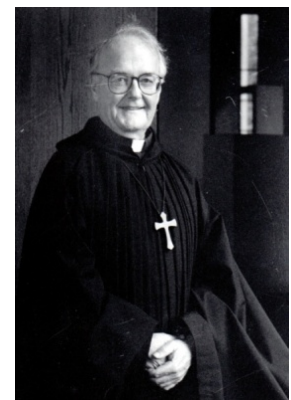


Meanwhile, while headmasters come and went at five year intervals. Father Bruno Ugliano following Father Gerard in 1985 and Father Beatus Lucey in 1990, professional and amateur planners had been contemplating the future shape of abbey and school. As a result of the most recent master plan, the Chapter in September of 1991 approved a major project that transformed the campus. It included the demolition of the

Brothers' House, once the Kountze estate caretaker's house and later a student dormitory, and the removal of the adjacent garages and of the frame buildings formerly used as physics lab and infirmary, for the construction of what is now known as parking lot C. This was followed by the construction of the campus loop road linking the east and west sides of the campus, the West Gate entrance and parking lots A and B. And the construction beat went on with the approval by the Chapter in February 1993 of the Findlay Science Pavilion to be joined to the south end of Trinity Hall.

ABBOT GERARD PARKER LAIR

The year 1995 saw the end of the twenty year long tenure of Abbot Brian Clarke who by the regulations of the Congregation then in force had to resign upon reaching the age of sixty-five. The community, now numbering sixty-one, chose as its eighth abbot, Gerard Lair on 27 June 1995. Abbot Gerard, the same year appointed Father Giles Hayes to serve once again for a second term as headmaster of Delbarton School.



52 Abbot Gerard Lair



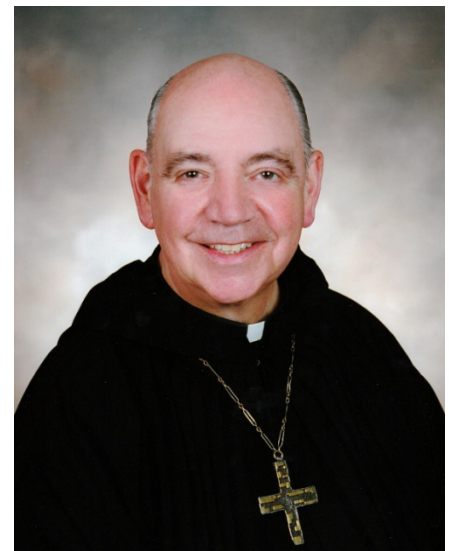
ABBOT THOMAS JOSEPH CONFROY

Abbot Gerard resigned in June of 1998 after three years, whereupon the Chapter elected the ninth abbot, Father Thomas Confroy on 25 June. Abbot Thomas after his ordination in 1958 had taught and served as assistant headmaster at Delbarton School under Father Stephan. The War in Vietnam and the need to serve the pastoral needs of the

man and women in service called, however, and he entered the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps in the early 1960s. He served in Vietnam under fire and continued a thirty year career during which he rose to the rank of Colonel. He had not been long retired from the army before assuming the abbacy in 1998. Abbot Thomas in 1999 appointed Father Luke Travers to succeed Father Giles as headmaster of Delbarton School. He would serve until 2007 thus breaking the five year barrier.

ABBOT GILES PETER HAYES

In the early 2000s long contemplated plans began to mature to meet two major needs, first, for an auditorium and fine and performing arts facilities and secondly, to solve the financial issue that had grown more pressing. The creation of the auditorium proved to be a great success. The second initiative did not get past the planning stage but had unforeseen results which wrought a major change in the landscape of the Abbey and Delbarton and as a by-product occasioned the solution of a long standing



Delbarton mystery. Both arts and economic projects began under the aegis of Abbot Thomas but when the Congregational age limit, now seventy-five, brought about his resignation, Father Giles Peter Hayes was elected tenth abbot of a community now numbering forty-seven. Both projects would be brought to their conclusion under his leadership.

THE FINE ARTS CENTER

The Fine Arts Center was the long desired facility for the proper presentation of musical and theatrical events and for art and music studios and practice spaces. Up until its completion in 2006 Old Main had served as the site for drama and musical

productions as well as for art and music studios. It was remarkable what students and faculty mentors were able to accomplish with such limited means. On the beautiful fall morning of Thursday 19 October 2006 the new FAC was opened for use. The day began with a gathering in the new auditorium; several student musical groups performed; a school photo was taken in front of the building; students then pitched in to move hundreds of boxes of materials from art, music and drama rooms in Old Main to their appropriate locations in the new building. An alfresco lunch was served in the garden and a non-academic afternoon program followed. No sports practices were missed, of course.

THE CCRC

The second project which terminated in monumental frustration ultimately proved unexpectedly positive. Since the time of Abbot Martin, there had been concern about the financial needs of the abbey as distinct from the school. For decades, support of the monastery had depended on a steady flow of the salaries of new young monks staffing schools and parishes. Abbot Martin, however, recognized the need to supplement income to the abbey and he and the community looked to the land. In the late sixties committees had been formed to make proposals for the use of the large tract of mostly unused land to the southeast of the abbey and school buildings, centered around what had traditionally been called “forty acres.” Nothing came of these discussions then, but, as time went on the need to realize income from this asset became more pressing as the numbers of vocations diminished and as monks retired from active teaching and parish duties.

The creation of a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC) that became known as “Abbey Woods” was proposed and detailed plans were laboriously developed. Thus began a decade long struggle with strongly opposed neighbors, the Township of Morris Planning Board, and finally, with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. In the end, after its successful resolution with local boards, it was the State DEP that rendered the project impossible by arbitrarily rejecting permission for the link from the CCRC to the Township waste treatment line. The community made the decision not to litigate and so the abbey was back where it started except a good deal poorer from the loss of substantial sums invested during the many years of planning the CCRC.

But that failure after so much effort was not the end of the story. The Trust for Public Land, a non-governmental organization that brokers open space conservation programs,



put together an offer for the land from a consortium of state and local government agencies. On 28 July of 2008 the Chapter approved the conveyance of one hundred eighty-eight acres to the Morris County Park Commission for perpetual preservation without development for \$13.75 million out of which the abbey had to repay investors some three million dollars. Good news it would seem but as a result of this conveyance the land once pertaining to St. Mary's Abbey/Delbarton is now considerably reduced from the original almost four hundred acres and the long term income stream from the CCRC lost.

NEW ATHLETIC FACILITIES AND "THE ROCKS"

An athletic complex in the "forty acres" area had been envisioned independently of the outcome of the CCRC project and so on 9 July 2008 construction began and the fields began to be used in the spring of 2009. With the relocation of the baseball diamond to "forty acres," construction began in April of 2009 on the North Fields Project: a new football/lacrosse field, and, at long last, a track.



An odd development occurred as a byproduct of the land conveyance. For over a century there had lain in a wooded area to the north of Trinity Hall a large number of architectural elements once pertaining to a great but unknown building. Now this land was no longer owned by the abbey but with the permission of the Morris County Park Commission, the entire collection

consisting of some three-hundred items was removed to the parking area nearby and the groundwork was laid for the solution to a Delbarton mystery. Marta McDowell, local landscape garden researcher and historian googled the right combination of words and unlocked the mystery that has baffled monks and students since the property was acquired. The capitals and columns had once formed part of the façade of *La Grange Terrace*, a magnificent New York City Greek Revival building of great historical and architectural interest. It was partially razed in 1901 and portions removed to the Kountze estate. One mystery solved, but we shall have to wait until the last trumpet calls to ascertain what Luther Kountze planned for these remains.

Professor Thomas Smith of the School of Architecture of Notre Dame University it turned out was the author of an article, "The New Athenians," featuring this very building, and has visited Delbarton several times to study the materials. In addition he has encouraged the interest of officials of the American Art Wing of the

Metropolitan Museum who it is hoped will present an offer for some of the pieces.
The ways of Providence once again prove strange.

ABBOTS OF ST. MARY'S ABBEY

- I James Zilliox - 1885 - 1886
- II Hilary Pfraengle - 1886 - 1909
- III Ernest Helmstetter - 1910 - 1937
- IV Patrick O'Brien - 1937 - 1967
- V Martin Burne - 1966 (coadjutor) - 1971
- VI Leonard Cassell - 1971 - 1975
- VII Brian Clarke - 1975 - 1995
- VIII Gerard Lair - 1995 - 1998
- IX Thomas Confroy - 1998 - 2006
- X Giles Hayes - 2006 -

PRIORS OF ST. MARY'S ABBEY **Newark Priory Dependent on St. Vincent**

Valentine Felder - 1857
Rupert Seidenbusch - 1857 - 1862
Utho Huber - 1862 - 1863
Oswald Moosmueller - 1863 - 1866
Roman Hell [Heil] - 1866 - 1871
Bernardine Dolweck - 1871 - 1871
Leonard Mayer - 1871 - 1875
Bernard Manser - 1875 - 1880
William Walter - 1880 - 1882
Gerard Pilz - 1882 - 1884

After Elevation of Priory to Independent Abbey

Cornelius Eckel - 1885 - 1886
Ambrose Huebner - 1886 - 1888
Augustine Wirth - 1888 - 1889
Ernest Helmstetter - 1889 - 1910
Polycarp Scherer - 1910 - 1924
Anselm Kienle - 1924 - 1937 (Procurator)
Boniface Reger - 1940 - 1944
Charles Carroll - 1944 - 1946 (Headmaster of St. Benedict's - 1944 - 1946)
Matthew Hoehn - 1946 - 1956 (N) - (Continued as Prior of St. Mary's Priory,
Newark 1956 - 1958)

After Title of St. Mary's Abbey Transferred to Morristown

Michael Collins - 1956 - 1967 (First Prior in Morristown, after separation)
James O'Donnell - 1968 - 1972
Brian Clarke - 1972 - 1975
Beatus Lucey - 1975 - 1980
Cornelius Sweeney - 1980- 1993
Richard Cronin - 1993 - 1995
Elias Lorenzo - 1995 - 2002
Patrick Hurley - 2002 - 2004
Paul Diveny - 2004 - 2006
Richard Cronin - 2006 - 2009
Bruno Ugliano - 2009 -

PRIORS (SUPERIORS) AT DELBARTON BEFORE 1956 (TRANSFER OF ABBATIAL TITLE TO MORRISTOWN)

Edward Bill - 1926
Vincent Amberg
Hugh Duffy - 1952
Bede Babo - 1956
Michael Collins - 1956 - 1967

PRIORS IN NEWARK 1956 - 1968 (Between transfer of title and independence)

Matthew Hoehn - 1956 - 1958
Martin Burne - 1958 - 1960
George Sherry - 1960

SUBPRIORS OF ST. MARY'S ABBEY

Ephrem Hetzinger (N) - 1910
Boniface Reger (N) - 1924 - 1937 (Headmaster of St. Benedict's: 1926-1945)
Benedict Bradley (N) - 1941 - 1945
Gregory Schram (N) - 1946 - 1949
Michael Collins (N) - 1949 - 1956
Stephen Findlay (Mo) - 1952 - 1970 (Headmaster of Delbarton School: 1942-1967)
Simon Gallagher (Mo) - 1970 - 1972
Germain Fritz (Mo) - 1972 - 1973
Alfred Meister (Mo) - 1973 - 1974
Beatus Lucey (Mo) - 1974 - 1975

Cornelius Sweeney (Mo) - 1975 - 1980
Andrew Smith (Mo) - 1980 - 1981
Mark Confroy (Mo) - 1981 - 1989
Hilary O'Leary (Mo) - 1989 - 1992
Paul Diveny (Mo) 1995 - 1998
James O'Donnell (Mo) - 1998 - 2000
Patrick Hurley (Mo) - 2000 - 2002
Rembert Reilly (Mo) - 2002 - 2009
Eamon Drew (Mo) - 2009
Luke Travers (Mo) - 2009

MASTERS OF NOVICES

Claude Micik - 1938 - 1939 (First Novice Master in history of SMA)
Martin Burne - 1965 - 1966
Brian Clarke - 1966 - 1972
Hilary O'Leary - 1972 - 1982
James O'Donnell - 1982 - 1992
Giles Hayes - 1992 - 1995
Paul Diveny - 1995 - 2007
Hilary O'Leary - 2007 -

PROCURATORS OF ST. MARY'S ABBEY

Anselm Kienle - 1910
Michael Collins - 1967 - 1979 (Assistant Procurator - 1979 - 1994)
James O'Donnell

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