THE UNIVERSITY OF WICHITA

HISTORY OF ST. BENEDICT'S COLLEGE

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PREFACE.

The many great educational institutions which spread in beauteous panorama over the undulating plains of sunny Kansas have contributed no trivial share to civilization and to the growth of the state. Much has been written on political, industrial and commercial enterprises; but the educational institutions, which are a paramount factor in the acceleration of civilization and the growth of industry and commerce, have not been given the proper place in history. In this work an attempt was made to place one of the educational institutions of Kansas into its annals.

I desire to express my obligation to Rev. Edmund Pusch, who kindly permitted me the use of his valuable manuscript which became the basis of my work. I also owe acknowledgment to the many friends who by correspondence and interviews have given me material for this work. Above all, however, I wish to express my appreciation of Dr. John Rydjord, who assisted me very kindly with valuable suggestions and corrections. To him I am indebted for any value this work may contribute to history, for without his interest and cooperation this work would have wanted completion.
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CHAPTER I

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BENEDICTINES IN KANSAS

After the passing of the Kansas Nebraska Bill, 1854, by which Kansas became the chaos of political rivalry, the region of border warfare, the cynosure of the world, and the headwaters of the great civic cataclysm which was threatening, immigration increased rapidly. Pro-slavery as well as anti-slavery leaders vehemently advocated and aided organized immigration. Through lectures, pamphlets, and many other possible advertising agency, Kansas was minutely and forcibly photographed upon the public retina. Its name was frequently pronounced in political speeches and inserted in many political platforms. Though most of the immigrants entered the territory in organized bodies, there were some who came as independent settlers. One of these was Rev. Henry Lemke, the first Benedictine monk to touch upon Kansas soil.¹

the man who became influential in the establishment of a Benedictine institution of higher learning, which opened another chapter in the education history of Kansas.¹

Rev. Henry Lemke who came as missionary to this country in 1834 and who was instrumental in bringing the first Benedictines to the United States² in 1846,³ entered the order in 1852. His superior, Rev. Boniface Wimmer, the founder of the Benedictine monastery in Pennsylvania permitted the aged priest to remain in his parish⁴ in Carrolltown, the town which he had laid out and named in 1838.⁵ When in 1855 Rev. Boniface Wimmer went to Rome to raise his priory to the dignity of an abbey, a misunderstanding took place between Rev. Henry Lemke and the younger superior of the order.⁶ This and a series of unfortunate occurrences, over which Rev. H. Lemke had no control, wrought him up to such a climax that he abruptly left the monastery and sought refuge in the West.⁷

5. Ott, op. cit.
7. Flick, op. cit.
The disasters which, Father Lemke alleges, led him to this action, but which were probably only the culminating irritation that stimulated his act, were the sudden and accidental deaths of two young priests who had been associated with him on the mountains, one by being thrown from a colt, which was Father Lemke's property, and the other was run over and killed while in New York City....During the year 1854 he was evidently not able to meet all his financial obligations, for he was sued for debt and levy was made upon some of his real estate. During the latter part of this year and early part of 1855 he was likewise sued for damages for having united a couple in marriage, the young man joining in the marriage contract having been a minor. The case was decided in favor of Father Lemke on the fourteenth of March, 1855.1

Father Wimmer was absent in Europe when these things happened, and Father Lemke did not wait for his return to consult him, or obtain permission for his departure, but at once, as though he could not bear his troubles one moment longer, fled to Kansas. He was, no doubt, induced to go to Kansas rather than to some other part of the world because his friend, Dr. Aristide Rodriguez, whom he had known intimately for many years on the mountains, had preceded him there and, being cognizant of the dearth of Catholic priests, had for a long time urged him persistently to devote his remaining years to missionary work in this territory.2

His first stopping place in the wild West was in Westport, Missouri, where he met his old friend Doctor William

2. Ibid., p. 177.
Rodriguez, who ushered him into the interior of the territory during the Christmas week. Shortly after their arrival he introduced him to Bishop Miege of Messena, titular bishop of the Kansas vicariate, who, being in great need of priests, welcomed him heartily.

In the early part of 1856 he was at Lecompton where his friend had the contract to build the state capitol for one of the rival factions in authority. The weather was so clear and moderate that they passed the night at their campfire under the blue sky without experiencing discomfort. Father Lemke, it seems, was lost in amazement at the marvelous beauty of this region which, he compares to an artistically landscaped English garden. Speaking of the fertility of the virgin soil he observes that its fecundity borders on the fabulous.

When Abbot Wimmer had come back from Europe, he had peremptorily summoned Father Lemke to return to St. Vincent's Abbey and submit to authority. But this order, given on the

4. Flick, op. cit.
5. Letter from Rev. Lemke to Abbot Wimmer, Kansas Territory, (February 8, 1856), copy of the ms. in the Archives of St. Vincent's Abbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania.
third of January, 1856, did not reach its destination until the eighth of February. This delay, according to the explanations of the recipient of the letter, was due to climatic conditions.

Shortly after their arrival, the tranquil calm weather suddenly changed into a terrific snowstorm which blew frantically from the Rocky Mountains as if the end of the world were approaching. As the snowstorm continued uninterruptedly for some weeks, all communications between Lecompton and the rest of the world were severed.

The pioneer priest declined to acquiesce but utilized almost every possible device to induce the Abbot to undertake a Benedictine establishment in Kansas Territory. In his letter to the Abbot he gives a glowing description of the country; the opportunities to accelerate the spreading of Christianity in this vast missionary field. He frankly expressed his desire to be authorized by Abbot Wimmer to found a Benedictine community in the then wild west. In his eagerness ultimately to have his anticipations realized he remarked in his letter: "I have already selected a suitable place on the Miami River."1

1. Letter from Rev. Lemke to Abbot Wimmer, Kansas Territory, (February 8, 1856.) In a letter from Rev. Pusch (April 5, 1931) I learned that the Miami River was nothing more than a mental picture.
In spite of his ardent appeals, Abbot Wimmer at first refused his assent to permit the pioneer to labor in the new territory. When Father Lemke became a member of the Benedictine Order, Abbot Wimmer expected him in compliance with the canon law to divest himself of his real estate by transferring it to the community and also expected him to cancel the old indebtedness of the community to Father Lemke on the Carrolltown property. Rev. Lemke, however, took the reverse view of the affair and continued to hold much of his real estate in his name which gave rise to a controversy that placed him into an embarrassing position as a priest since no bishop could permit him to perform the sacred duties of his ministry without the Abbot's consent. Consequently before Bishop Miege authorized him to exercise any priestly functions in his vast missionary vicariate, dotted here and there with lonely Catholic settlers, he attempted a reconciliation between the two. In this complicated project he was successfully assisted by Robert Johnson, Esquire, Father Lemke's life long friend. He urged Rev. Henry Lemke to deed his property to the monastery as he had theoretically done by his vow of poverty.

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That at that time Rev. Lemke was at Lecompton and at the most could have heard only of the Miami Indians and their country.
same time he supported Rev. Lemke's appeal to establish a Benedictine monastery in Kansas. As a result the pioneer deeded over all his property in the summer of 1856 except a tract of about eight hundred acres in Clearfield Township, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, which was in litigation and was therefore permitted to stand in his name.

That Rev. Boniface Wimmer assumed a conciliatory attitude and contemplated the establishing of a monastery in Kansas is obvious from Rev. H. Lemke's next letter. He wrote:

Leavenworth, July 5, 1856.

The bishop is very delighted and requested me to inform you that he will at once make out a deed as a gift, in a region toward Nebraska. Several Catholic families have settled there and a man who seems to be influential, has requested the Bishop for a priest and five hundred dollars for the erection of a church. N. B. He does not want the deed for the church, on the contrary, we should have it. Next Monday I will go there to inspect everything...

Fearing that the reports of the political agitation in the territory, which were spread across the length and width of the country by the papers, would heighten the Abbot's apprehension and impede the founding of a Benedictine Institu-

tion, he shrewdly remarked in his letter, ... "the unrest in the territory is not as bad as the newspapers picture it, and I think that the present ordinances will put an end to existing conditions." ¹

In a postscript to his letter of the fifth of July, he asks for greatly needed articles and adds that he will depart for the "Wilderness" on the morrow.² In the "Wilderness" he found Doniphan, the town he preferred to Lecompton when the Bishop gave him the choice between the two.³

Though his anticipations in this choice were later turned into disappointments, his various reasons for selecting this town as the cradle of an educational establishment were well grounded.

Doniphan was at that time one of the promising towns, west of St. Louis.⁴ It was a busy boat-landing place, predicted by many to become the St. Louis of the Missouri River.⁵

Rev. H. Lemke, in extolling the prospects of this town, writes to the Abbot: "A town has been laid out here which,

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if the developments continue as heretofore, must become an
important place, perhaps another Cincinnati or St. Louis."
A similar opinion was expressed by Bishop Miege in a letter
to Rt. Rev. Wimmer, April 1857, in which he writes; "I am
confident it will finally be a good and numerous Catholic
settlement." Father Augustine Wirth considered it "the best
place in Kansas for a college" and his companion Rev. Casimir
Seitz, more enthusiastic than any, wrote to the Abbot: "All
indications are that it will be a large parish. The church
may be too small in a few weeks." Aside of Leavenworth it
was the only good landing point to which heavily laden steam-
ships could come the year round. Steamships arrived and de-
parted daily and by the summer of 1856, the traffic of this
fourteen-month old place, according to the paper, had reached
a half million since the preceding fall. On account of
these wonderful advantages the prospects for a future great-
ness were so promising that at first sale of lots on the fif-
teenth of April, 1855, a price as high as two hundred dollars
was paid for a single lot.

Another important motive for preferring Doniphan was

1. Rev. Fellner, "Erzbat Bonifaz Wimmer, O.S.B., und die
Anfaenge der St. Benedict's Abtei, Atchison, Kansas," in
2. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 32.
3. Letter from Rev. Lemke to Abbot Wimmer, Doniphan, Kansas,
(August 28, 1856).
Rev. Lemke's just fear that the war would be fought in the neighborhood of Lecompton. In the early part of July Father Lemke went to Doniphan. From an Irish settler he rented a small shanty fourteen feet by sixteen feet which was neither plastered nor floored and used a lawyer's office for a chapel. With this temporary arrangement he shifted along until, with the assistance of the bishop, he was able to build a small church in town on the three lots, which had been purchased by the bishop. The latter also gave Rev. Henry Lemke a written introduction to one of the city-directors, in which he strongly recommended him as a man who would attract many settlers and would contribute to the development of the city. As a consequence they presented him with three more lots. To these Rev. Lemke added six more which, as a privilege, he bought at the original price of fifty dollars though by this time they were sold, at least on the front street, for two hundred to three hundred dollars. This gave him a whole square of twelve lots in the nicest part of town about one hundred feet above the river, three hundred eight feet long and two hundred sixty-

2. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 32.
four feet wide.

The building he was constructing was seventy feet long. Of this thirty feet were to be divided into two rooms with the masoned ground for culinary departments and the semi-story above for dormitories. These he considered spacious enough for two priests and three brothers. The remaining forty feet was not to be partitioned, but was to serve as a church until financial means would permit the construction of a more stately one. The forty feet department was to be rearranged for living quarters.

To his great distress the work was interrupted by the political agitation and border warfare. Some of his laborers were frightened away, others went to war.¹

Being anxious to bring the church under roof before winter he devoted himself with full energy to his project and with his own hands assisted in making mortar and laying the foundation. Though this was a humble structure he met with difficulty in raising the necessary funds that he was compelled to seek financial aid in some larger town in Missouri.

But his attention was not concentrated upon his building plans alone. He also was solicitous about the scattered

¹ Letter from Rev. Lemke to Abbot Wimmer, Doniphan, Kansas, (August 28, 1856).
Catholic families. On one of his sick-calls, far out on the lonely prairies, he was informed of some unclaimed land where some Catholics had settled. In hopes of ultimately establishing a monastery in Kansas, he and a young man inclined to a religious life, took up claims. To secure a clear title to the land, he drew upon his friend, Mr. Johnston, the administrator of his property in Cambria County, Pennsylvania.

To have a Benedictine monastery established was his sole ambition and to attain this goal he gave an enthusiastic description of the fecundity of the soil, the climate, the great prospects of soon having an organized parish, and the generous offer of Bishop Miege, who promised not to demand a deed from any of the churches they would build. In extolling the importance of Doniphon he states: "Steamships arrive and leave every day."

To this letter filled with glowing accounts he had a postscript on August 30:

My building plan is shattered, all my laborers are gone, some ran away, some went to war. Things look very doubtful here just now. Today I heard the distant roar of a cannon. There are plenty of reports but I know nothing definite. By the time you receive this letter, you will know

2. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 34.
more from the news reports than I know myself now. All are moving, trying to save themselves, taking to flight. But I will remain at my post....

Father Lemke, endowed with marvelous energy and heroic courage tenaciously held out at his post until the seed for the new flourishing St. Benedict's was dropped into the fertile soil of Kansas, as we shall presently learn from the next chapter.

1. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 34.
CHAPTER II

REV. AUGUSTINE WIRTH IN DONIPHAN

The Rt. Rev. Abbot of St. Vincent gave the new foundation in Kansas the best attention and it seems he wished to establish a mother-house in the West, similar to the one he was presiding over. For this purpose Father Lemke was hopelessly unfit. 1 "Father Lemke had his mind set on being the Prior of the new foundation." But though he was endowed with a heroic missionary spirit, he "had a temper that did not fit him for a position as a superior." As a secular priest he had lived in dissension with the bishop of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia 2 and this want of submissiveness he also showed to his superiors in the Order. 3 Besides he lacked a clear understanding of the rule. 4 The Abbot there-

3. Flick, Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia, (June, 1898), IX, 177.
fore sent Father Augustine Wirth in the following spring.\(^1\) Accompanied by Casimir Seitz, a deacon, he left St. Vincent's on the first of April and arrived at Leavenworth on the ninth of April, 1857,\(^2\) at ten in the evening. To their surprise the Bishop came to the parsonage the very night they arrived to welcome them. The following Saturday (they arrived Thursday) the Bishop summoned Father Lemke to Leavenworth. He came the evening of the same day and revealed his plans to the Bishop,\(^3\) namely to have the Benedictines permanently established in Kansas under his leadership.\(^4\) To select him as the superior was not within the Bishop's power; such appointments were made by the Abbot. In compliance with the Abbot's desire the Bishop sent Rev. Augustine Wirth and Rev. Casimir Seitz to Doniphan but Father Lemke to Lecompton.

The appointments of the Bishop and the Abbot spelled disappointments for the self-sacrificing missionary, Father Lemke. Courageously he had continued the work on his house at Doniphan in spite of the odds against him. He had gone to Missouri to collect money for this purpose. He had not hesitated to use the income of his own property for the Pennsyl-

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vania community—not his own. Yet Abbot Boniface Wimmer, considering him unfit to become the founder of a Benedictine Monastery, passed him over and selected Rev. Augustine Wirth for this heroic undertaking. It was quite natural that Father Lemke felt slighted and eventually his zeal for missionary work in Kansas relaxed; his enthusiasm cooled; and having found conditions at Lecompton intolerable, he returned to St. Vincent's Abbey, Pennsylvania. According to an account given by Rev. Pusch in his manuscript the two remaining priests were settled in Doniphan by the first part of May and were being initiated to the hardships of pioneer life.

Perched on the high bluff with a wonderful view of the river and the surrounding country, they saw very little opportunity to satisfy their wants. Their cash assets, after the expenses of April were deducted, amounted to $112.35. To keep this small budget from diminishing too rapidly Rev. Augustine Wirth searched for Catholic settlements, which he thought, would support him and from whom he intended to solicit Mass stipends.

During May he began his missionary tours and the first collection amounted to one dollar and seventy-five cents.

This was probably the first mass collection of Father Casimir who was ordained April 27, and said his First Mass at Doniphan on May the third, the date of the above recorded entry. Father Casimir was the first priest ordained in Kansas, and this collection at his First Mass was certainly none too large to give him a start in the great missionary field before him. The collections taken up for the five Sundays in May amounted to eleven dollars and sixty cents; the intentions and the stola, nine dollars and fifty cents. To this the settlers at Atchison added one dollar and seventy cents on May the twenty-fifth, when, for the first time, the Sacrifice of the New Testament was offered in their midst. But not all the offerings were to be that meager. On this first visit in Atchison Father Augustine found his way to the present St. Patrick's parish south of town, where he was surprised with a donation of thirteen dollars and fifty cents, a sum that must have seemed a fortune to the Fathers. At the close of the month the total expense, fifty-four dollars and forty-one cents, was more than twice that of the total receipts, twenty-one dollars and ten cents.

Until June the twentieth, all the long, tedious missionary trips were made by the Fathers either on foot or on hired ponies; most of their traveling was done on horseback.

With the requirements for celebrating Mass strapped on their shoulders, they wandered across the trackless prairies to their respective stations. "Father Augustine often walked from Doniphan to Atchison with his knapsack upon his back." On June the twentieth, ninety dollars, a huge sum for the pioneers, was invested in the purchasing of a horse, part of which was to be paid by a collection solicited for that purpose. To their great disappointment the contributions reached only the meager sum of ten dollars, and as a consequence, July the first found them one dollar and eleven cents in debt in spite of Father Augustine's attempt to keep the credit side of the cash book to exceed the debit side. Through a check of twenty-eight dollars from Bishop Miege for Mass intentions, nineteen dollars and five cents received from the Missions, the scale of the cash balance was swung to the reverse side, so that, in spite of having invested twenty-four dollars in a somewhat pretentious cooking stove, the Fathers were fourteen dollars and sixty-one cents to the good, by the first of August.

During the month of August, Father Augustine toured to St. Joseph's, Missouri, and to Omaha, establishing stations along the way. His laborious journey was richly repaid

in Omaha by the quite amazing donation of seventy-one dollars and the Mass collection of seventeen dollars. So delighted were the two missionaries over this apparent fortune that they ventured to subscribe for the Constitutionalist, a two dollar rank, pro-slavery paper.

On his missionary trips, which extended as far as one-hundred miles north of Omaha, Rev. Augustine Wirth visited many Catholic settlers in Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, and Iowa. During this time Rev. Casimir Seitz was obliged to make the trips to his missionary stations on foot. By this time these stations included St. Joseph, Leavenworth, Sonora, and Iowa Point, comprising a distance too long to be attended by one, and additional help was in need. Besides, Rev. Augustine Wirth contemplated the establishment of a boys' boarding school at Doniphan which would necessitate constant attention at home. Consequently, Father Augustine, as well as Rev. Casimir Seitz, earnestly entreated the Abbot to send men. On May 13, 1857, the former wrote "You said, I will help you with men, but I cannot send money....I have asked no money in any of my letters, and I ask not a solitary cent now, but I want help of men, and that you have promised...." The tone of Rev. Casimir Seitz's letter of June 4, 1857, is similar: "We need a cook, and a cook who deserves this name.

We should accept no money even if you would send us some; we are willing to assume the adventure with courage and constancy in accordance with our agreement, but in the person of a cook you must assist us."¹

These appeals for aid were augmented by the ardent requests of Bishop Miege, who asked to have at least two more Benedictine priests sent to his vicariate by fall. Realizing that the success of a monastic establishment would be a potent factor in spreading Christianity in his vicariate he assured the Abbot "that Kansas will be an immense field for missionary labor," and generously tendered his assistance by all means in his power.²

In compliance with the request for a cook the Abbot sent the very man for whom Rev. Augustine Wirth had asked. Brother Paul Pfeifer, who was cook in St. Mary's, Elk County, Pennsylvania, arrived in Doniphan in September of the same year and took charge of the kitchen.³ But before sending any ecclesiastics authorized to perform priestly functions, he paid the pioneers a short visit in the fall of 1857.

In a report of this visit he remarks that the house at

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2. Letter from Rev. Wirth to Abbot Wimmer, Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, (June 11, 1857).
Doniphan cost two thousand, five hundred dollars of which three hundred dollars was not paid and that Father Augustine bought three hundred and twenty acres ten miles from town costing four hundred dollars. He seemed to be horrified that Rev. Casimir killed a rattle snake in his house and states that the country is filled with reptiles. His sympathy for the suffering pioneers may be learned from his own words:

I had hardly any money left when I came home. At every place I was obliged to leave something; shirts, socks, underwear. The poverty of the missionary is often very great.¹

Having observed the prospects of a promising future that the vast wild plains of Kansas Territory held out to a monastic establishment, Rev. Boniface Wimmer sent Rev. Francis Cannon, Rev. Edmund Longenfeller, and Brother Henry to Doniphan the early part of the summer, 1858.² They were given charge of the many stations and missions that had been under Father Augustine's care. This gave him time to turn his interest to the opening of a boys' boarding school in which he was assisted by Rev. J. A. Koenig, a secular priest. It opened in October with an enrollment of four boys. The total enrollment for the year grew to a round half dozen. They found their dining room, kitchen, dormitory, classrooms, and

1. Letter from Abbot Wimmer to King Louis I of Bavaria, Carrolltown, Pennsylvania, (December 7, 1957) copy of ms. in the Archives of St. Vincent's Abbey.
2. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 44.
all, just as described in Father Lemke's letter to the Abbot. 

Thus ere the flag with the added star of Kansas was raised by President-elect Lincoln over Independence Hall, the foundation for an educational establishment was laid. "But it was at Atchison, which was rapidly becoming the more promising town, and not Doniphan, that the embryo institution was to take root and flourish." ¹ The retrospection of a short span of years will elucidate the change in fortune—Doniphan's ephemeral glory and Atchison's rising prominence.

After the middle of the fifties, while Kansas was still in the throes of border warfare caused by the agitation of the pro-slavery and anti-slavery parties, brave and daring frontier men began to establish their homes on the vast bank of the Missouri, at that point of the stream, known as the "Great Bend," where a gap in the bluffs afforded an easy passage to the vast prairies east of the Rocky Mountains. At this favorable point, freight destined for the distant miners in California was shipped across the river in ferry boats. From this landing place it was then transported by caravans of oxen over the lonely prairies, across the Rockies to the Pacific Coast. Thus the place offered promising occupations for teamsters, wagon and harness makers, grocers, clothiers, and other merchants, while the fertile soil of the

¹ Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 44.
vicinity invited farmers to stake their claims and thus break
the monotony of the undulating prairies and low hills by
their huts, shanties, and dug-outs, which served as dwelling-
places for these pioneers. As a consequence this recently
forlorn place became so well settled that it deserved to be
raised to the dignity of a city, named Atchison, after the
staunch pro-slavery senator of Missouri.¹

Senator Atchison and his friends of Platte County, Missis-
pouri, selected this site for the first town in the county be-
cause of the advantageous position on the river. They at-
tached great importance to the fact that the river bent bold-
ly inland at this point and expected it to be of great com-
mercial advantage to the town. That their anticipations were
realized is obvious from the following:

The population of the town was about five hun-
dred, and yet there were eight hardware stores,
dozen dry goods stores, eight wholesale grocery
stores, nineteen retail grocery stores, and twenty-
six law firms....The Atchison branch of the Kansas
Valley Bank was the first in the State to be formed
under the legislative act, authorized February 19,
1847, with a capital stock of $300,000.00²

While Atchison was making forward strides at a rapid
pace and the future held out every promise of prosperity,
prospects at Doniphan were taking a reverse turn. Civic af-

¹. Rev. Heinz, Historical Sketch of St. Benedict's Parish,
². Ingalls, History of Atchison County Kansas, p. 71.
fairs proved unstable. Though the town had enjoyed a population of fully 1000 when Atchison was looked upon as a mere village, it took a startling alteration in fate. Within the space of a few years the thriving promising city looked very much like Goldsmith's "Deserted Village."²

That Doniphan had no future, became more and more evident. The conviction grew on Father Augustine that the only logical step for him to take was to build the college at some other town. During the summer of 1858 he came to Atchison twice a month to conduct services in the home of Charles Burnes, located on the south-west corner of what is now called Second and L Street. This gave him ample opportunity to observe the progress of the village. With the decline of Doniphan he began to focus his sole attention upon this town and, following the shift of fortune, selected Atchison as the future home of St. Benedict's College.³

CHAPTER III.

FIRST YEARS IN ATCHISON.

When the conviction that Atchison would surpass Doniphan was firmly established in Father Augustine's mind, he decided to transfer the college to Atchison. In the spring of 1858 Messrs. P. T. Abel and B. F. Stringfellow presented to the Benedictines about three acres northeast of town, at the present junction of Division and Second Streets. This liberal gift accelerated the contemplated transfer and Rev. Wirth commenced the plan for a church. This being completed by August, he gave orders for the work to proceed, while he made a trip to St. Vincent's College, Pennsylvania, to attend the general chapter. Work was in full swing on his return in October and ere long a frame-church thirty feet by sixty feet was completed in which Mass was celebrated for

2. Connelley, Kansas and Kansans, II, 1051.
3. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 44.
the first time on Christmas, 1858.¹

During the fall of the same year he erected what can scarcely be styled a building, but what was generally known as the "barn." In this barn, located about one hundred and fifty feet south of the present Sister's residence, the kitchen and chapel were on the first floor, the dormitories on the second. As the construction of these buildings demanded more attention than could be given from Doniphan, Father Augustine and Brother Paul moved into the building toward the end of the year 1858 while the other members continued educational work in their primitive home. Before they could be transferred to the new home, another building which was to serve as a monastery and college was an exigence.² In those days, when no bridge spanned the River at Atchison, material for a more than ordinary structure was difficult to obtain, but Father Augustine's pertinacious determination to erect a brick building, thirty-nine feet by eighty-nine feet, was not vanquished by those apparently insurmountable impediments.³ A building of those dimensions would have been considered beyond the power and financial scope of a community under such stress by any leader with a less tenacious intellect than

¹. Rev. Heinz, "The Pioneers of the West," in The Catholic Register, XV, 1, (September 25, 1913), Kansas City, Mo.
². Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 44.
³. Connelley, Kansas and Kansans, II, 1051.
Rev. Augustine Wirth. On the first of March 1859, work on the two and a half story edifice was begun. The corner stone was laid the twenty-ninth of May, and being completed by fall, the Fathers bade farewell to Doniphan, and with all their scanty possessions and a small student-body arrived in Atchison where they opened school in the new building the twelfth of October, 1859.¹

The institution being raised to the dignity of an independent priory, now offered opportunities not only for high school and college students but also for seminarians. Rev. Alphonse Heimler, O.S.B., taught Moral and Dogmatic Theology besides some graduate work; Rev. Philip Vogg, O.S.B., taught philosophy; Rev. Guy and Rev. Grehnther, both secular priests, were instructors of the undergraduates. Besides the above mentioned branches the curriculum included Latin, English, Arithmetic, Geography, Algebra, and Astronomy.

Three registered and though the dial slowly moved upward during the year, it reached only the number sixteen. This scanty enrollment was, however, not due to lack of knowledge of the opening of the college. As soon as Father Augustine arrived in Atchison, he canvassed for students² by his "Hand Bills" of which the following is a copy:

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¹ Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 44.
² Ibid, pp. 60-61.
ST. BENEDICT'S COLLEGE
CONDUCTED BY
THE FATHERS OF THE ORDER OF ST. BENEDICT
ATCHISON CITY, KANSAS.

This flourishing Institution is beautifully situated in one of the healthiest localities in the West, and access to it is rendered very easy by the Missouri and Platte County Railroad. Extensive additions are being made to the college edifice, which will be completed by the first of September, and which will afford ample accommodations for at least one hundred students.

The object of the institution is, to impart to young men a thorough education which will render them capable of filling any situation in life. The discipline is mild and paternal, but the strictest obedience is required of all. The Collegiate Department begins with the first Monday in September.

All letters not known to be from parents are liable to be read before delivery.

Terms:
Tuition, Board, Bedding, Washing------------- $130.00
Physicians Fees-------------------------------- 6.00
Use of Reading Library---------------------- 3.00
Music, Vocal or Instrumental---------------- 20.00
Board during vacation if spent at college-- 25.00
Greek, Latin, French, German form no extra charge.

In all cases payments must be made semi-annually in advance. No deduction made for accidental absence except in case of sickness. Pupils are admitted at any time of the year. Stationery and books may be obtained at the college at cost price.

No advance will be made by the college to purchase clothes etc., for students, therefore every student will be required to deposit ten dollars for unforeseen expenses. Pocket money must be deposited in the hands of the prefect, who will give it over to the student in such a manner as he may judge the occasion to require.

All communications shall be addressed to
Rev. Augustine Wirth, O.S.B., President of St. Benedict’s College, Atchison City, Kansas.

These charges can hardly be considered to have been exorbitant yet some remained unpaid. As a consequence the meager income of the Fathers was far from being adequate to meet the expenses, and Rev. Augustine Wirth, to whom Rev. Casimir Seitz applied the cognomen "beggar genius," began a series of begging-letters. One of these, directed to King Louis I of Bavaria, was favorably answered with a donation of $1218.27. From the Ludwigs-Mission-Verein in Munich he received eight hundred florins ($320). That not all his solicitations received such a generous response is evident from the following: "The total amount of donations received from the time the Fathers came to Doniphan until the first of January, 1860, amounted only to $1895.97. Rt. Rev. Bishop Miege gave one hundred seventy-two dollars—of this total amount." How much of the gross receipts was borrowed cannot be determined, but it is certain that in that space of time Mr. Peter Bless loaned Father Augustine eight hundred dollars and

1. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 46.
4. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 42. The Central-Blatt and Social Justice, (June, 1928) states that the King sent 3000 florins ($1200) as early as 1858. According to that paper there is much dispute over exact figures. Rev. Pusch states that a close figure of all the money sent by the King is $5000.
Mr. John Hanson five hundred sixty seven dollars.

Exigence compelled the pioneer to expect the members of his little community to live most economically; to be content with an almost frugal household. It was contrived to economize to such a degree that after the sheer necessities of life had been provided for always some cash would be on hand to continue the building project. His plans and expectations were met with the whole-hearted co-operation of his subjects. Men, that were willing after a hard day’s ride to be content to sleep on a buffalo robe, with the starry heavens as their vaulted roof, and with mother earth, their mattress; men, who did not shirk from a hazardous ride across a limitless plain, were his co-laborers. With men of such heroic stamp at his service, he was induced dauntlessly to scan the future; he was warranted in having confidence in the years to come. His bright prospects were solidified by the arrival of additional help from St. Vincent’s Abbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, Father Edward Hipelius, who arrived the latter part of 1859 and Father Emmanuel, who came in the early part of 1860 were sent out. Fathers Philip Vogg and Severin Rotter came as clerics and were ordained in 1860 and 1861 respectively. Now the missions could receive better attention and the school could have a stronger staff.¹

¹ Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict’s College, pp. 45-46.
These promising expectations were soon to be dashed by an unforeseen calamity. The drought of 1859-60 caused nearly one-third of the one hundred thousand Kansas settlers to leave the territory.¹

Instead of receiving support by means of the expected income from the missions and the school, the Fathers found it necessary to obtain aid not only for those immediately dependent upon the institution, but also for the settlers in the vicinity who came a distance of fifty miles expecting aid from the priory. Father Casimir was sent on a begging tour through the East where he secured a quantity of provisions.² Father Augustine again solicited for money by means of his pen. His begging-letters were directed to the East and to Europe. The person to whom he appealed frequently and persistently was the generous King Louis I of Bavaria who annually set aside a certain sum for German Missions. The distribution of this sum he entrusted to his chaplain, Rev. Mueller, which is clear from the letter the latter wrote to Abbot Wimmer, the twenty-fifth of October, 1859:

On the eighth of October, I was summoned by King Louis who handed me a packet of petitions. Among these there was no request from you but there was a letter from Father Augustine in Kansas. His majes-

¹ A. E. Arnold, History of Kansas, p. 106.
² Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, pp. 45-47.
ty remarked: "I designate 6000 florins for the Ger-
man missions. Select those you deem most worthy
and let me know your opinion. P. Archangelus Gar-
lier in Cincinnati must receive 1000 florins." I re-
ported on the tenth of this month and assigned 1000
florins for Archangelus, 1000 fl. for P. Nichola in
Philadelphia, 1000 florins for the Ursulines in
Louisville and 3000 florins not for Abbot Boniface,
but for the new Benedictine Station in Texas. Is
the Abbot not satisfied with this? As I proposed so
his majesty agreed to make the distributions."

Father Augustine, however, was persistent in his begging
campaign. A few weeks after the above letter was written,
Rev. Mueller was again called by the King who handed him an-
other letter from the Kansas Prior and remarked "I have just
sent him three thousand florins." He ordered his chaplain
to learn from Abbot Wimmer the reasons for these frequent
letters. The King also wished to know whether the Kansas
priory was separated from the Benedictine Abbey in Pennsyl-
vania and whether the financial aid was so pressing that it
could not be postponed until fall.

As soon as the King's chaplain received informations
from Abbot Wimmer who greatly eulogized Father Augustine, the
King decided to send two thousand florins to the Benedictines
in Kansas.²

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1. Rev. Fellner, "Erzabt Bonifaz Wimmer, O.S.B., und die
   Anfaenge der St. Benedict's Abtei, Atchison, Kansas," in
   Central-Blatt and Social Justice, XXI, 90, (June, 1928).
2. Ibid.
That the pioneer priest in Kansas did not harbor the idea that this pecuniary aid of the King was solely due to the eulogistic information of Abbot Wimmer, may be taken from a letter of the former. ¹ On the second of January, 1861, he wrote to the headquarters of the Ludwigs-Mission-Verein that the abbot had not forwarded the King's first contribution, eight hundred florins ² for Doniphan nor given him the fifty dollars sent to the abbey by Bishop Miege for his journey. ³ Theoretically this accusation is correct; Abbot Wimmer, instead of sending the money to Kansas, used it to aid the new Benedictine establishment in Minnesota. But that cash as well as supplies had been sent to Kansas is clear from the account book in the Archabbey which shows a debt of five hundred ninety-four dollars under the account of the Atchison Priory for April, 1857. As there were no entries on the credit side the Procurator inserted the following remark on the twenty-third of November, 1857: "P. Henry's account cannot be demanded from the present Atchison Priory and I suppose F. ⁴

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² In Central-Blatt and Social Justice, (February and March, 1928), the letter gives the sum 800 florins. The same paper of May, 1928, mentions only 600 florins.
Casimir's account has been (nicht angekommen)\(^1\) settled; it is profit and loss by this time anyway.\(^2\)

No doubt, when Father Augustine wrote this letter, he was in ill-disposed humor, since at this time his mind was distressed not only with disastrous results of the drought and the building expenses, but with the exodus of his priests,\(^3\) of which more will be given later.

Though the effects of the drought of 1859-60 were felt earlier, he refrained from a descriptive narration of it in his previous correspondence with the Ludwigs-Mission-Verein. In his account of the deplorable conditions in Kansas and dire need of assistance he remarked; "Certainly no one is in greater need of assistance this year than Kansas."\(^4\)

In response to this pleading petition the Ludwigs-Mission-Verein sent 500 florins. In later years, even as late as the nineties, the Benedictines at Atchison were privileged with donations from this benevolent society.

Father Augustine's begging-campaign was not terminated by these numerous alms. He again appealed for assistance to King Louis and though the patience of the King's chaplain was

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1. Did not arrive.
3. Ibid, (June, 1928).
so exhausted through Father Augustine's continuous begging that he gave him a sharp reprimand, the King sent him 1000 florins.¹

In place of applying this financial aid to purchase food as one would expect, he decided to let it reach the poor by indirect channels. His main ambition was expansion, and he wisely decided to use the money by giving employment to those in need.

In the spring of 1861 he added a wing to the building erected in 1859. When it was completed it contained a large dormitory, a spacious study-hall, and a classroom for the parish boys.² At present this wing serves as infirmary and chemistry department.

At the same time that Father Augustine's mind was harassed by distressing results of the drought and troubled with the construction of the new building, he was confronted by a situation with which he was not prepared to compete.

During the time of the drought Kansas took a long step backwards. Not only had the population of the territory decreased by one-third, but immigration was discouraged by the

² Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 48.
accounts of the emigrants who revived the old stories about the "American Desert." ¹ This told of the enrollment of the college, and heroic efforts to increase the number proved futile. These trying circumstances were beyond Rev. Augustine's comprehension. His iron will, his stern character, would insist upon straining every sinew rather than fail. As a result the teachers, afflicted with sickness and overwork, became discouraged. An exodus started their return to St. Vincent.

This new calamity, together with the Civil War, the debt created in the erecting of the additional wing, and the effects of the drought placed the entire project into jeopardy. He realized that a drastic action was required to save the situation. During the first year in Atchison he had established a novitiate and now began to canvass for novices to supply the deficient enrollment. Before this new ambition was attained, Fathers Wendelin Mayer and Louis Fink, by orders of Abbot Wimmer came to Kansas for an inspection of the novitiate. They found it was not canonical. This was a terrible blow to the Prior, but the future had an even more distressing misfortune in store for him. The exodus continued until by the summer of 1873 only Father Augustine and two lay brothers were left at the college. Rev. Thomas Barth and

¹. Arnold, History of Kansas, p. 106.
Rev. Emmanuel Harting were laboring in Kansas. But they were supervising the missions and Father Augustine was convinced that they could not be employed to teach, since they had by this time, twenty-two regular stations to attend, of which five were one hundred miles from Atchison. The following order given by Father Emmanuel to Father Thomas, the first of August, to initiate the latter may convey an idea of their missionary trips, and the impossibility of placing them on the teaching staff.

....Go from here to Rock Bluff about 18 miles from Nebraska City and ask after Mr. Hatkins, the owner of the flour mill. If you find him, he will invite you to say mass on Saturday; from Rock Bluff go to Plattsmouth and ask after Mr. Godfried Fickler, a German butcher; he will tell you what you have to do. You can say mass and preach there on Sunday. Monday you can ride to Omaha and see the Bishop. Ask him about the German settlement at Helena, whether you should go there or not, and how far it is. On Thursday you may start for West Point. Ride as far as Elkhorn City and take your dinner there; it is about twenty miles from Omaha. There you have to take another road to Fontonelle; it is about twenty miles from Elkhorn City. In Fontonelle inquire after the road about the Elkhorn River. On the road you will come to a saw-mill; there you have to cross the large creek, and when you see once on the other side of the Elkhorn River some houses and a road to the river you will find the German Settlement. You may inquire where Mr. Groviam is living or Mr. Hopkins. West Point is about 35 miles from Fontonelle. In West Point you may stay as long as you please; from there you can probably ride to Helena and back to Omaha. Be here on 23 of August. You must go to Missouri for the 4th Sunday. Ask Father Kelly about Forest City.

1. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 56.
2. Ibid.
The task of conducting a school without professors stared "four square" at Father Augustine in the summer of 1863. Yet he did not harbor the thought of giving up; the word "Fail" was not in his lexicon. Toward the end of June, he made a trip to St. Vincent's Abbey from where he returned the following month with two clerics, Rev. Bernard Lesker and Rev. Timothy Luber. Besides these two, Mr. E. Erchson was employed as a lay teacher and thus, with himself acting as missionary, builder, professor, and director, the staff of professors was completed for the school year of 1863-64.

Though the enrollment reached only the number thirty-two it was an increase of eight over the preceding year. Among these students were three, John Kassans, Frederic Vereheyen, and Ulrich Rudroff, who contributed an important share to the progress of the college and the church in this part of the state. The next year, however, forty-four boarders and twenty-five day scholars registered. This was to remain the largest in the history of the institution for a number of years.¹

Soon another jeopardy threatened the existence of the community. During the Civil War several strenuous attempts were made to draft the small forces at St. Benedict's which would have blotted the institution from the globe. Father Augustine was cognizant of this and firmly opposed the en-

¹ Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, pp. 18-20.
deavors of civil authorities on that point. Only one of the members was called to enlist. As far as can be ascertained, he was not called to do actual work nor was the community disturbed by other war activities. "Aside from a few bullets that found their way into the community garden, nothing serious happened."2

A fair conception of the standing of the college may be formed from the protocol drawn up after the first visitation of the independent priory at Atchison. This canonical visitation was attended by the Fathers Augustine Wirth, Emmanuel Harting, Thomas Bartl, Timothy Luber, Bernard Lesker, and Brothers Lucas Zounar, Anthony With, and Joseph Van Brake. The president of the visitation was Rt. Rev. Abbot Wimmer whose report was "satisfactory." The clear account also states that the college possessed six hundred forty acres about fifteen miles from the Priory; two other tracts of sixteen and fourteen acres; three and one half acres where the college now stands, and a cemetery two miles from the college. They owned seven cows, five horses, and machinery. During the preceding year the missions had brought in about eight hundred dollars.3

The enrollment of the school year of 1865-66 was again

1. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 56.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 58.
affected by local conditions. The reconstruction period be­
gan. Prices went up; the high post-war wages offered ample
opportunity to earn money without an education which induced
boys to work rather than to go to school. Consequently, the
drop in the registration was almost as great as the increase
had been the preceding year. There was only an enrollment of
twenty-nine, boarders and day-scholars combined. Now the
unusual happened. The pioneer man who had courageously faced
numerous obstacles and accomplished the seemingly impossible
lost heart in the project on which his sole ambition had been
focused since his arrival in the "Wilderness." The thought
that his school was doomed to failure took such a firm grasp
on his mind that he turned his attention to the building of
a strong Catholic community, and since his interests were
side-tracked, he devoted his entire energy to this new pro­
ject, permitting the school to retrograde still further. The
new school-term commenced with an increase of but twelve over
the first year when the school opened in the wild days of
1858-59 at Doniphan. But a worse fate was yet to come. Dur­
ing 1867-1868 the college did not open its doors at all.
When Father Augustine struck upon the idea of establishing
a Catholic community, he fancied that the best means to at­
tract Catholic settlers would be a beautiful church.¹ As the

¹ Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 60.
new edifice was to occupy the site of the old one, the latter was torn down and services were conducted in the college, necessitating the close of the school, which was not reopened during the administration of Father Augustine, who resigned the eighteenth of June, 1868.¹

CHAPTER IV

THE COLLEGE IN ITS EXPERIMENTAL STAGE

In July 1868, Rev. Louis Mary Fink, a man of discipline, erudition, and character, arrived to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of the first prior. ¹ Divine services were still conducted in the student's dormitory and the college consequently remained closed. Being anxious to commence anew and build up the college, the prior at once began plans for bringing the church under roof. But in place of finding any cash assets he found a heavy debt. ² An attempt to abandon the plan was immediately checked by Abbot Wimmer, who laboriously collected several thousand dollars in the East for this purpose. Some of this did not reach its destination while Rev. Fink was prior of Atchison. In the meantime he succeeded in turning the work of "bringing the church under

roof" over to Brown and Bier, Contractors,¹ who assumed the task of advancing the required money and the supervising of the work.² In the early part of 1869 the roof was completed. To make divine services possible, planks were laid in the center aisle, a few home-made pews were placed in the naíve, the side doors and windows were closed with rough boards; and in winter, two stoves were kept flaming, not to heat the church, but merely to thaw out the numb limbs of those who came near them.³

In the spring of the same year the college re-opened with an enrollment of ten. The new prior judged the meager enrollment a result of the scanty Catholic population, which he successfully remedied by advertising for home-seekers.⁴ During the early seventies he was in constant correspondence with the government at Washington to obtain immigration literature which he sent to the eastern states, England and Germany. Not content with this, he frequently wrote articles to newspapers of the United States and Europe, and even had recourse to personal letters. This brought hundreds of Catholic families to Atchison and to the vicinity which has supplied the college with a copious enrollment ever since.⁵

¹ Rev. Fusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 92.
³ Rev. Heinz, St. Benedict's Parish, p. 15.
⁴ Rev. Fusch, op. cit.
⁵ Ibid., p. 88.
Father Fink was contemplating a school of higher learning when he reestablished the college, and that this idea was not lost when he arranged different departments of study is obvious from the following outline for Latin.¹

5th. Class.---Rudiments, Etymology with exercises, Eptome Historiae Sacrae.
4th. Class.---Etymology rehearsed and Syntax with Exercises, Viri Romae, Cornelius Nepos, Phaedius.
3rd. Class---Syntax in full, Prosody, Exercises, Caesar, Sallust, Ovid.
2nd. Class---Grammar reviewed, Exercises in Composition, Livy, Virgil, Cicero's Letters and Horace.
1st. Class---Composition and Exercises in Grammar, Cicero's Orations, Horace and Tacitus.²

The courses outlined for the English Department and Mathematical Department were placed on the same plan as the Latin. But to carry out these elaborate plans called for additional expenses which were difficult to meet at a time when post-war conditions caused high prices to prevail. This applied to foodstuffs as well as clothing, the latter being enormously high. Cotton goods went out of sight and calico sold as high as seventy cents per yard, which a few years later sold at seven cents per yard.

The college, however, continued with its reasonable rates.³ That there was trouble in collecting these small amounts is indicated by the following regulations found in the

first catalogue issued by the college;

Payments to be made per session (of five months) in advance. Those not complying with this rule, and deferring payment for two months from the commencement of the session, will be charged ten per cent more. No deductions will be made for a quarter commenced, except in case of protracted sickness or absolute dismissal.

No advances are made by the institution for clothing, books or other wants of the students; to meet such incidental expenses a sufficient sum is to be deposited with the treasurer or prefect.

Next to a well-prepared curriculum he considered the expansion of the college grounds to provide for the future of vital importance. In 1869 he purchased all the land east of First Street to the River from Stringfellow and Abell, for six thousand five hundred and eleven dollars. Besides this he bought two lots on the southeast corner of Second and Division Streets. This was the last land purchased in the nineteenth century.¹

Under the leadership of this successful organizer and competent disciplinarian, the silver lining began to emerge from behind the dark cloud that had cast such a gloom on the career of the college, and the professors and students were warranted in anticipating a bright future.² No wonder that the inmates of the college felt as is struck by lightning out of a blue sky when the following notice was received from

¹ Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, pp. 95, 96. ² Ibid., p. 94.
Bishop Miege:

During my absence the Very Rev. L. M. Fink, O.S.B. will administer the affairs of the Vicariate Apostolic of Kansas, and is hereby appointed to that effect with all the powers and jurisdiction necessary for the fulfillment of the duties of the office.

"The note of optimism sounded by Rev. Fink was echoed in the ever-persevering Abbot of St. Vincent," who filled the vacancy by sending Rev. Giles' Christoph the fifteenth of August, 1871. Upon Giles arrival he found the college, which temporarily was managed by Father Timothy Luber, in good working order, which he preserved during the short period of his administration. Like his predecessors he was a strenuous worker who did not shirk from exerting his mental abilities for the intellectual advancement of the college, nor did he shun the overalls of the day laborer.

A parent one day came to matriculate her boy into college, and inquired from this humble laborer where she might find the president. Father Giles directed her to the parlor, quickly changed his attire for the habit, and attended to his duties as president.

But he was not qualified for the position. Though he de-

1. Letter from Bishop Miege to Father Thomas Bartle. Leavenworth, Kansas, (September 10, 1889), copy of the ms. in the Archives of St. Benedict's Abbey.
voted to the college the best that was in him there was little or no growth in the school. The parishes did not increase their revenues and the liabilities grew from year to year. It was beyond his ability to solve the financial problems and to check the increase of the debt.\(^1\) Realizing his inability to cope with the position, he resigned on the tenth of January, 1875, and was immediately succeeded by Rev. Oswald Moosmueller, O.S.B.\(^2\)

Contrary to the procedure of his predecessors, Father Oswald refrained from assuming the pastoral responsibility but appointed Rev. Suitbert Demartean for pastor, reserving for himself the office of general supervisor.\(^3\)

Father Oswald was a profound scholar. Previous to his advent to Kansas, he had written a German work on "The Europeans in America before Columbus", a history of St. Vincent's in Pennsylvania; and later, when he had charge of an industrial school for colored boys on the Skidaway Islands, he published monthly pamphlets on historical researches.\(^4\)

Probably his great passion for writing incited him to place the pastoral charge upon others so that most of his

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time might be devoted to the furtherance of the educational project.

During this year (1874-75) the school had six professors and seventy-nine pupils. As Father Oswald deemed the staff sufficient, he did not teach, but the opening of the first session of the next school-year found him carrying a full load besides attending to his duties as president of the College. His prime law was order and how pertinaciously he insisted upon having it carried out may be elucidated by the following incident. The Brass Band of St. Benedict's College, under the management of Professor Atcherson, had advertised a grand ball for New Year's Eve. This band consisted of young men from the parish under the leadership of Father Theodosius. Father Oswald was not apprised of the affair until the advertisement was shown him. As such a step required his permission, he not only broke up the arrangement but also dissolved the band.  

While his interests were thus bent on the intellectual progress of the school, he discovered that it was his lot to deal with diversified problems. One of the paramount tasks that confronted him was the same that had been a worry to every one of his predecessors—the college debt. Gifted with

a clear vision, "he at once saw the straits into which position the institution was drifting." A glance at the register of the past showed him the retrogression of financial affairs.¹ The following is a summary of the college receipts and payments covering the total of all liabilities, repairs, living, and every outlay incurred:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Receipts</th>
<th>Expense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>$ 768.00</td>
<td>$ 3140.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>3533.28</td>
<td>7109.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>2655.30</td>
<td>2835.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>6194.54</td>
<td>9460.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>5339.42</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>5137.43</td>
<td>6383.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>1389.75</td>
<td>2899.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$25017.72</td>
<td>$39061.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to these figures the financial downward course amounted to $14,043.75, covering the period of seven years.

Father Oswald's courage was not disheartened by these odds against him. He at once devised a plan of interest reduction.²

When Rev. Augustine left, the debt was $14,000. The purchase of land and the expense of completing the church added to the deficit and brought the debt by the twenty-fourth of May, 1875, to the sum of $53,106.45 on which the interest paid for that fiscal year equalled $4905.64. At this time the college was paying twelve or twelve and a half per cent which he reduced to six per cent.

2. Rev. Pusch states in his manuscript that the rate was reduced to eight per cent.
In regard to paying off on the principal he remarked in his letter to the Abbot on the twentieth of December, 1875:

It is almost a year since I came out here and I have not been successful in diminishing the heavy debts. On the contrary they have increased, owing principally to the assuming of the debts which Rev. P. Emmanuel had left at Nebraska City.¹

Not content with his success in decreasing the interest, he organized a unique scheme for reducing insurance payments, not only for his priory but also for other Benedictine Houses that were in similar financial embarrassments.² He suggested to the Abbot that, in place of paying three thousand dollars³ to the insurance companies, they pay this sum to the Abbot who was to invest it in one of their houses at eight per cent. In ten years these annual premiums with the interest would equal $46,936.46. The Abbot did not consider this proposition feasible for he saw the possibility of fire and storm that could tear air-castles to pieces.⁴

That the Abbot did not accept his proposition seemingly did not bother the prior, nor did it prevent him from frankly expressing his conviction thereafter. There was the Doniphan farm problem to be solved and the Abbey establishment to be

1. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 102, 103.
2. Letter from Rev. Oswald Moosmueller to Abbot Wimmer, Atchison, Kansas, (December 20, 1875).
3. Rev. Pusch states in his manuscript that this was the amount of the annual interest paid by most of the Benedictine Houses.
considered. When on account of the grasshoppers in 1874-75 the farm in Doniphan did not yield the revenue upon which the college largely counted to meet its expenses, he wrote to the Abbot: "I have not a single dollar in our treasury." Besides some creditors were demanding their payments and he therefore continues; "The best would be, if we would sell the whole concern just for the debts...." Ten years were to elapse, however, before this suggestion was carried out.

The movement to raise the priory to the dignity of an Abbey he opposed, because in his opinion it necessitated a change in the recently established order of the community. He had reorganized every branch and office in the house, the church, choir, college, parish and financial affairs. Changing the priory to an abbey, he thought would paralyze the existing discipline and management. It seems his opposition was not taken into consideration very earnestly; for a petition was sent to Rome to raise the Conventional Priory to an Abbey. On the eight of April, 1876, Pope Pius IX approved the movement, and on the twenty-seventh of September, 1876, Rev. Innocent Wolf was elected first Abbot by the chapter of the Order.

2. Ibid., p. 122.
3. Letter from Rev. Oswald Moosmueller to Abbot Wimmer, Atchison, Kansas, (December 20, 1875).
This man was to play such an important roll in the history of St. Benedict's College that it has been considered a folly to attempt a description of his life and the dynamic force of his noble character. He was born in Schmidheim, Rhenish Prussia of a family of moderate means. In 1865 he entered St. Benedict's Abbey and in 1866 he was sent to Rome from where he returned in 1870 with the Doctor's degree. It was while attending this Papal University known as Sapienza that he earned the cognomen "Medalist."

The newly elected did not assume his office until the eighteenth of January, 1877. On that day Father Oswald resigned his official position at the college. During the brief period of his administration the school was a success; it moved on quietly in its course, though it can hardly be said to have made much progress. He arranged the library, made provisions for its growth and had the good fortune of securing a gift of eight hundred volumes from the Abbey at Haignern in Moravia.

Though at this time the people were in the thralls of famine as a result of the grasshopper pest and in mental agitation caused by the "human pest," Father Oswald kept the

1. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, pp. 127, 128, 139, 125.
3. Horse thieves were so numerous that they were treated as a pest.
college from retrogression. When he left, a strong personality departed, but only to be succeeded by a man with greater character and greater abilities.¹

¹ Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 124.

THE PRIORY RAISED TO AN ABBEY

Raising the Priory to the dignity of an Abbey was in every sense a real turning point in the history of the institution. With the installation of the abbot the college moved steadily onward, its period of retrogression was passed. It seems to be evident now that the cause of the community's slow progress during the previous years rested on several fundamental principles. When Prior Fink was appointed bishop hopes seemed to come. In what you would, progress seemed to recede. Soon the Fathers cast about for, conditions where better conditions might prevail. Opportunities for migrating to a new home offered themselves already in 1874 while Rev. Giles was prior. There was a priory established at Creston, Iowa, intended to become a strictly Irish Monastery, towards which the Fathers at Atchison looked for their future. Prior Father Ferdinand contemplated the founding of a monastery in Winnebago. Even at an earlier date, during Rev. Wirth's
CHAPTER V

THE PRIORY RAISED TO AN ABBEY

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prio|orship an invitation had come from Denver (1864) to open a college there. Shortly after the election of the Abbot an enticing offer came from Bishop O'Connor who wrote to Abbot Wimmer:

If you wish to take Nebraska City and the missions now attended from there, you are welcome to them. If you prefer any other place, let me know where it is and I think we can easily come to an understanding in regard to it.

These alluring invitations aroused a strong fever for establishing Benedictine foundations. Father Oswald, following these promptings, attempted a monastic establishment in Clark County. He selected this section to facilitate attention to the wants of the Catholic soldiers at Fort Dodge and Camp Supply, Oklahoma. To draw settlers the project was widely advertised in connection with the general scheme of immigration. Many letters of inquiry came from the East but no real attempt was made for an organized Catholic settlement.

Nevertheless Father Oswald carried out his contemplated plan. This hazardous project gave rise to the story of "Monte Cassino in Clark County" which was dubbed Eueffel Au by Rt. Rev. Bishop Fink, and of which Father Edmund gives an account in his manuscript. His narration is based on the reminiscences of Brother Andrew, letters and chronicles pre-

3. Ibid., p. 111.
served by Rt. Rev. Abbot Innocent and a sketch of Father Bon-
iface’s experience in the southwest, published in the Atchi-
son Daily Globe, April 16, 1908. ¹

On May, 1876 Brothers Fridolin and Raymond started from
the college farm in a "prairie schooner" drawn by "Mustang
and Cody." Father Oswald was to follow them with supplies on
the Atchison Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad as soon as a tele-
gram would inform him of their arrival in Dodge City. On ac-
count of the ill-repute into which this town had fallen the
Brothers were warned not to park in town. The inhabitants
were believed to be lawless cowboys, who would surely seize
the wagon and its contents.

The message reached Atchison two weeks after their de-
parture; Father Oswald, having a bad case of erysipelas, sent
Brother Andrew in his place. At three o’clock in the morning
he arrived in the ill-famed town, where he sought for shelter
in a tavern near the station. Here he met a half dozen
cattle dealers who proposed to drown all sorrow with a few
tumblers of whisky. When Brother Andrew asked for a glass of
wine, the bartender served it cheerfully, but courteously re-
fused to accept pay.

At dawn he met his two companions and soon the three
were driving along the Texas Road to Fort Coffee, a distance
of forty miles. The Fort was built in the form of a quad-

¹ Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict’s College, p. 111.
ränge, scarcely spacious enough for a wagon to turn around in it. The walls, with an altitude of twelve feet, were constructed from coffee-bags, filled with clay, hence the name Fort Coffee.

Here the mover's wagon was unloaded, and Brothers Andrew and Fridolin returned to Dodge for the shipment by way of Sante Fe. The freight agent's dray ticket shows that the following was sent on the sixth of May, 1876:

Two trunks, five barrels of provisions and meat, two bundles of bedding, two bundles of rails, three old doors; six chairs; two bundles altar stuff; five boxes; one stove; one coffee boiler; one set harrow frame; one double tree and two single trees; one bundle towels; six bundles of lumber; and thirty-six pine planks.

Brother Raymond was made custodian of the supplies. During the night a few cowboys, camping at Bear Creek in the vicinity of the Fort, were startled by the barking of a dog within the walls. They instantly arose, armed themselves to the teeth and cautiously advanced to the Fort. The entrance was guarded by some, while the others stealthily scaled the coffee-bag walls. They were in search of horse-thieves and felt confident they had detected their rendezvous, but were momentarily struck with confusion when, to their great amazement, they saw only an old man near a fire, drinking a cup of coffee. Advancing boldly they annoyed him with a list of inquiries. Brother Raymond, not knowing the English language, could only say "wagon dutch" whereby he wished to convey that the wagon had gone to Dodge. With shouts and laughter the
cowboys later related the occurrence to Andrew and Fridolin.

Three miles from the Fort was a beautiful knoll covering about three acres. This spot was selected as the site of the future monastery, principally on account of the clear stream and good quarry of building rocks near the stream.¹ Of this site Father Ferdinand wrote some years later to his brother, Abbot Innocent:

₂. Letter from Father Ferdinand to Abbot Innocent, Great Bend, Kansas, January 20, 1879, copy of ms. in the Archives of St. Benedict’s Abbey.
their horses were stampeded. After a weary search, they were found near Newton, Kansas, a hundred and fifty miles away. The pioneers were soon convinced that Atchison compared with their new home could no longer be considered as belonging to the wild west. Here rattlesnakes abounded, the buffalo and antelope were close neighbors, while the coyote furnished the dismal mask for the evening concert.

On the fifth of July they were graced with a visit by Prior Oswald who was anxious to assist them in getting the right start. Before leaving he celebrated mass in the dugout using a table for the altar.

The brothers did not idle away their time. Before the winter set in they put up in the old fashioned way thirty tons of hay. This finished they commenced quarrying rock for the future buildings. They had the rock work of a structure twenty by forty completed. It needed only a roof and the home for the winter would have been finished but the Abbey was established in Atchison, and the Brothers were at once recalled by Abbot Innocent. Mustang and Cody were again hitched to the same prairie schooner and soon they were on their journey homeward bound; the foundation in Clark County was abandoned.¹

Though the brothers were summoned to Atchison within a year after their arrival, they had in that short time built themselves a sod-house, mowed about thirty tons of hay, cut down cotton-wood trees for the roof of their new building and partly completed the erection of their new home. The project was abandoned but the labor and the hardships they endured were not a failure. They paved the way for the two great missionaries of St. Benedict's, Fathers Boniface Verheyen and Ferdinand Wolf.

Rt. Rev. Innocent Wolf succeeded in diverting the attention from the divers localities from which invitations had been received and in focusing all efforts on the work in Atchison. To guarantee success, concentration was the potent factor needed, not division. This was his sole motive for recalling the Brothers and for rejecting any and all offers to start anew anywhere. The "Roman Doctor" and "Gold Medalist" did not hesitate to take part in janitor work, whenever time permitted it. He taught his regular classes in the college and the seminary besides the office as director and procurator of the college. The effects of his example upon his subjects was observed in their changed attitude. Soon a constant growth in the college was noticed. The enrollment increased and expansion of the college was necessary, but the funds were lacking. In considering this affair Rt. Rev. Innocent Wolf expresses the hope that God may send benefac-
tors so that the monks would "at least be able to live." Poverty necessitated an economic life; there were very few, if any, luxuries. Beverages, cigars, and delicious dishes were ruled out.

The fact that St. Benedict's establishment was now an abbey, independent of the St. Vincent's Abbey, did not diminish Abbot Wimmer's interest in its welfare. Confident of his ascendence in Europe he did not hesitate to appeal to the Leopoldinen-Verein and the Ludwigs-Mission-Verein for pecuniary aid. Both societies sent money. The former sent one thousand five hundred dollars in June, 1877. Though these donations only helped in clearing current debts and interests of long standing, it was decided to erect an addition which was to be a three-story building forty-four by fifty-six feet with a garret and a basement. This section was begun on the sixth of June, 1878 and was ready for occupation the fourth of November of the same year. The basement was used exclusively for culinary purposes. The first floor contained two dining halls and a telegraph office, the second floor four recitation rooms. The third floor was used for a study-hall and the attic for a dormitory. This edifice gave the col-

lege a new aspect and those members of the community that still dreamt of seeking a new home began to contemplate making Atchison their permanent home. It also seems to have been a powerful factor in attracting students. In 1878-79 the total enrollment reached the number seventy-seven. The next year the number swelled up to one hundred four, a copious increase, indeed.¹ Some of the credit for the large registration must be attributed to the improved attention given to the students.² Then too the strain of the seventies was relaxing and students as well as professors were feeling some relief from the hardships experienced by St. Benedict's. Referring to these, Abbot Wimmer remarks that the numerous difficulties which impeded the progress of St. Benedict's monastery were second to none.³

During the summer of 1880, the fourteen-hundredth anniversary of the Benedictine Order was celebrated at Monte Cassino. It was the Pope's desire that all the abbots congregate in Rome. On the eleventh of April, Abbot Innocent sailed for Europe to participate in the family reunion and to utilize this favorable opportunity for a campaign to secure funds; for he already contemplated another addition to the college. Archabbot Wimmer gave him a lengthy introduction to

which Nicholas d' Ougemon, Archabbot of Monte Cassino, affixed his signature. He toured through Austria, Hungary, Moravia, Bohemia, Belgium, Switzerland, Prussia, England, and Scotland. His campaign was a success. With the money he collected sufficient debts were paid off to permit the erection of another building which was needed in the proximate future.

On his return from Europe the second of December, 1880, he found the living quarters overcrowded with one hundred eleven students. Admission had been refused to a number of applicants owing to lack of accommodation. Consequently plans for a new edifice were not delayed very long. On the nineteenth of April, 1883, construction was begun on a building which was to be ninety-two by fifty-four and three stories above the basement. To keep the expense as low as possible most of the carpentry work was performed by three Brothers of the community and the common labor was furnished by clerics and students. Yet the building was one of which the college was proud. It was provided with steam heating, artificial ventilation, and fire escapes which were readily accessible from all doors. The improved accommodations brought an increased enrollment and placed St. Benedict's with more

credit among the greater schools of learning. "The college was now on a solid footing and began to expand."\(^1\)

The college was now well provided, but the monastic quarters were entirely inadequate for the members of the community. The abbot realized that the spirit of St. Benedict would not be maintained unless the monks were given the opportunity to foster that spirit. This was nigh impossible as long as they had to be content to live in the same building where classes were conducted, where all the business of the institution was transacted and where all the noise was centralized. There was little chance for private prayers, meditation, and devotional exercises, nor could they devote themselves to concentrated study. That such conditions would spontaneously prove detrimental to the religious spirit and thorough scholarship was admitted by all.

After some deliberations the task of drawing up the plan was delegated to Father Boniface and Alfred Meier. The building is two hundred seven feet long with an average width of fifty-seven feet. It is three stories high with a spacious basement and costs one hundred thousand dollars. On October the nineteenth, 1891, work on the structure was begun under the direction of Mr. Meier, the architect and his assistant, Rev. Boniface. By the tenth of July, 1893, the building was ready for occupation.

Before the members of the community took up their abode in the new habitation an invitation was extended to the public to pass through the monastery. Hundreds availed themselves of the opportunity.

Quite a number, however, after inspecting every nook and corner from the basement to the very top of the tower, were not yet satisfied. Somewhat timidly they asked to see the "cells" where the monks were immured and chained down and fed on molten lead. Others, despite the closest scrutiny, failed to find the guns and rifles ever held in readiness for an attack on the "heretics." 1

The life of Monachism was now insured on the Prairies of the West. The Abbot had long desired to give the Fathers a home separated from the building in which the classes of the institution were conducted, in which all the business of the institution was transacted and where all the noise was centralized. Thus during the sixteen years of the administration of the first Abbot two additions to the College were made and the first real Abbey home was erected. 2 This was, however, not to be the end of building. Soon the buildings and ground were inadequate and the Fathers realized the necessity of expansion but on account of several impediments the much needed expansion was delayed.

2. Ibid., p. 177.
CHAPTER VI

EXPANSION

In its wild flight the first decade of the existence of the new monastery had rushed into the irrevocable past, and yet all was quiet. There was no move to expand; no stir to extend the growth of the school. For nearly a half a century this place had been in perpetual motion—either progressing or retrograding. Now it was static and that not without sound motives. More grounds and more buildings were in exigence, but the college could anticipate expansion only toward the north. The property owners of the period manifested no tendency to accelerate the growth of the school. The price they asked for their real estate was "the property is not for sale." That was but one of several causes that produced such an equilibrium in the college and became the paramount impediment to the progress of the college.

The city refused the college a sewer; the State Board of Health condemned the "open slough" system. In demanding improvements of these unsanitary conditions, the officials were justified. The college maintained that it was unjust to expect it to build a sewer for all the residents clear to the
River; besides on the one it had constructed to warrant sanitation of its own property. After considerable heated argumentation the city agreed to build the sewer. While these questions were gathering momentum as they were moving rapidly onward and kept the college in constant abeyance, another phantom appeared no less vicious in consequence than either of the precedence had it won the day. The notion that the college should be within city-limits was circulated, and soon that fancy assumed the aspect of another obstacle which challenged the institution to a battle. To make this unsavory proposition more odious, movements were initiated to cut the streets through the college premises.\footnote{Rev. Pusch, \textit{St. Benedict's College}, pp. 209, 210.} But the Fathers highly prized the freedom from the trammels of city environments and the rumble of the commercial bustle, especially since this remoteness was not so great as to deprive them of the advantages of the city's utilities.\footnote{Rev. Heinz, "St. Benedict's College," in \textit{The Catholic Register}, XV, I, (September 25, 1913).}

These obnoxious difficulties aroused the desire in the members of the community to move into a better atmosphere. With great circumspection the Fathers deliberated the transfer, and when Kansas City and Topeka offered excellent inducements, they focused their attention on these enticing places.
As soon as the rumors leaked out that the city might lose the college, those who appreciated the value of the educational establishment were filled with apprehension. The "Globe" and the "Champion" carried long articles in order to impress upon the mind of the people the importance of retaining the school. The results were gratifying. Rather than lose the college the city acquiesced to its demands of leaving it outside of city limits.¹ On the twenty-eighth of December 1908, the Committee of Forty deeded to the College all of block one hundred and fourteen, Old Atchison, for one hundred dollars² and in 1909 it donated ten acres of land north of the college and a block south of the college.³ This laudable example aroused the latent generosity of a number of others who tendered the sale of lots at reasonable prices. Before that current year came to a close the College had made the following purchases.

On April the seventh, two lots from Frances L. Garside for three hundred and twenty-five dollars. On April the ninth, two lots from Abraham Kerfore for eighteen hundred dollars. On April the twenty-fourth, six and two-thirds lots from H. M. Jackson for seven hundred and fifty dollars. On May the

1. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, pp. 210-211.
2. Land Deeds, copies from Office of Register of Deeds, Atchison, Kansas.
fourth, four and one-half lots from Eastern Kansas Land and Loan Co., for three hundred and fifty dollars and four and one-half from M.E. Baker for three hundred and fifty dollars.¹

Mr. J. P. Brown sold two lots for one dollar. On these were located a large spring with excellent spring water.²

Now that these hindrances were removed and the college warranted of the staunch support of the city, the Abbot no longer harbored the thought of transplanting the school a second time. "Jumping from place to place" was not characteristic of Rt. Rev. Innocent. He had saved the college for Atchison once and was determined to do so again if there was a tangible possibility of success. In grateful acknowledgement of the city's amicable attitude, an elaborate program was commenced in 1908.³ A group of buildings, all modeled according to one style of architecture, the simple, monumental Tudor Gothic were to crown the brow of the hill east of the old college.⁴ The view from this point, the highest Missouri bluff, is miles and miles of picturesque romantic scenery, stretching along the valley to the north and south with the "stately old Missouri River as a fitting centerpiece."⁵

1. Land Deeds, copies from Office of Register of Deeds.
3. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 211.
4. Ingalls, History of Atchison County, p. 264.
The plan for the group of edifices provided for a chapel, a gymnasium, a class-room building, a science hall, culinary department and an administration building.

In the spring of 1909 the orchard and vineyard, which had been such welcome spots for the boys, were forced to yield to the scraper and the plow that were preparing the ground. Much laborious grading was done to make the execution of the elaborate program possible. But the device was not carried out; only the administration building was erected. The architects were Haines and Barnett from St. Louis; the contractor was S. J. Hayde, Kansas City, Missouri. Construction was commenced in 1909 and by Christmas week of 1910 it was ready for occupation. The solemn dedication of it by Bishop Lillis took place on the eighteenth of January, 1911.

It is fire-proof, built of reinforced concrete and vitrified brick; is spacious and well ventilated. The central section is devoted to administration, the remaining part of living quarters for the students. It is a four-story building that accommodates two hundred and fifty students. Now the sleeping quarters in the attic of the present class-room

2. Ingalls, History of Atchison County, Kans., p. 290.
department were deserted; the long trip from the cold attic to the lavatory beneath the present Chemistry room was exchanged for modern conveniences. The old-fashioned tin cans that had served as wash basins for so many years now landed on the rubbish pile.

During these years (1909-11) the College also improved its water system. After the Brown Spring had been added to its real estate, a third lot adjacent to the ones donated by Mr. Brown was purchased. A fifty thousand-gallon reservoir was raised on the hill for water pressure; a pump-house was placed on the lowest portion of the campus, tangent to the spring; and by means of a high class gasoline engine the water is pumped to a height of one hundred and eighty feet into the supply tank from whence it is distributed to the various buildings and hydrants.

These activities were succeeded by another lull in the external progress of the monastery. Again everything seemed to be in a status of equilibrium. There were no indications of accelerating the completion of the edifice designed to adorn the hill. Even the nearest and dearest friends of the college censured it for its lack of progress. But with conditions as they were, it was sound logic to progress slowly.

1. Cf. supra, p. 70.
3. Connelley, Kansas and Kansans, 11, 1054.
The Fathers were justified in scanning the future with apprehension; their whole building project was placed into an embarrassing position by the appearance of a "seven headed Hydra, as often as one head was struck off seven more appeared."

About the year 1905 A. J. Spalding opened a small rock quarry northeast of the college grounds, which apparently was a harmless concern, except that it demolished the landscape. The increase of the labor on the quarry necessitated the use of explosives which by their terrible blasts endangered the buildings of the neighborhood. The monastery, being in its proximity, suffered the most. Its buildings frequently acted as though they were at the mercy of a miniature earthquake. The walls of the buildings cracked, the plastering fell down, and it was obvious that if the blasting was not checked the edifices would soon resemble dilapidated structures.

When the attempt of a mutual agreement failed, litigation was begun between the college and the quarry owner. From 1911-14 trial followed trial which only served to heighten the aggravation. As soon as the court had regulated the amount of explosives, and the most conspicuous "head of the Hydra" seemed to have been amputated, "shots seven times as severe followed;" the consequence was more litigation, more trials, more suits. It appears evident that the Benedictines did not harbor the idea of continuing their building program as long as a settlement, guaranteeing the safety of the build-
ings, was not reached. Financial matters of the quarry went from bad to worse until during the War the owners lost the property. Now, however, the World War stamped a quietus on the building enthusiasm, and it was not until 1922 that that spirit was given an opportunity to revive. Thus during the course of a score of years, apparently insurmountable impediments were compelled to succumb to the obstinate fight of the College. But before entering upon the details of the renovation of the building spirit it will be well to detour in order to survey the real estate expansion.

In 1919 the quarry came into the possession of the monastery through the purchase of the Monaly Tract about forty-five acres bordering on the real estate donated by the Committee of Forty. Previous to this purchase, two lots were bought in 1906, and two in 1919. These were trivial additions, nevertheless, they were valuable on account of their advantageous location. A few more purchases of real estate were made in 1927 and 1939, until little by little the small tract of one hundred and forty feet by two hundred and fifty feet acquired by Father Augustine was increased until it comprised over one hundred and ten acres. Now the college has

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1. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, pp. 120, 211, 212.
3. Land Deeds, copies from Office of Register of Deeds.
ample space to expand for many years to come.

The farm was not enlarged, on the contrary, its dimensions have been decreased. A few acres have been utilized for the building of a road. When it was purchased the buildings and orchard were along the Mt. Pleasant road. This was altered; the buildings were torn down, a new site selected, about a quarter of a mile to the east. Here they erected a spacious rock dwelling and a farm barn. The house contains a neat little chapel and plenty room for the help required on the farm. Since then other buildings have been added and at present the place is fairly well equipped. Up to 1923 the Brothers managed the farm. But vocations for the Brotherhood had been on the wane in all the monasteries of this country. This necessitated the employing of hired help to operate the farm which at this time, (1931), consists of three hundred and twenty acres.¹

In December 1919 another valuable asset was brought into the domain of the Benedictines by the purchase of Midland College,² which had been conducted by the Lutherans since 1886, and which was probably sold because the War had been exceptionally hard on Midland. It owned seven substantial

¹ Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, pp. 210-18.
² Letter from Rev. Pusch to Sister Monica, Atchison, Kans. (April 5, 1931).
³ "St. Benedict's College," in Atchison Daily Globe, (December 8, 1927) in Clippings in the State Historical Collection, Topeka, Kansas.
buildings and twenty acres of beautiful campus. Two of the dwellings, the president's residence and "Ingalls Home" which had been converted into a seminary by the Lutherans, were sold to St. Benedict's Parish for school purposes.\(^1\) A remodeling and improvement plan for one hundred thousand dollars was designed for the remaining property of the purchase and work was commenced on it without delay.\(^2\) The enrollment was exceptionally large in the fall in 1919, so that an opportunity to relieve the congestion was welcomed. Through the amicable aid of some friends in the city the preparations were completed by the opening of the second semester. On the fifteenth of January 1920, the newly acquired school was blessed by Right Rev. John Ward\(^3\) and christened "St. Benedict's Maur Hill."\(^4\) The purchase of the Midland College was made for forty-one thousand dollars and during the next two years seventy-two thousand dollars were spent for improvements.

Here it may be opportune to return to the college campus for a retrospection. As soon as post-war conditions removed the check that the War had placed on the building spirit, the former enthusiasm was revitalized. In 1921 a bakery was

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built which was a needed and serviceable accessory for the culinary departments. In 1922 plans for a new gymnasium were designed. At first it was decided that the cost should not exceed one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. A building was sketched for this cost but its dimensions proved inadequate for the demands of the institution. The Fathers now realized that a dollar no longer reached as far as it had done formerly. A new plan was drawn up which called for the amount of two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. Operations were begun in the spring of 1923, and at the beginning of the new year 1924 the edifice was completed. On the thirteenth of January, 1924, the gymnasium was formally opened with a reception to the public and it is estimated that between five and six thousand people were shown through. Many of those that passed through it did not hesitate to pronounce it "the best of its kind in the west." Since then numerous visitors have passed through it and not infrequently the query was raised, "Why such a large play house?" The Faculty of St. Benedict's considered the "play house" a valuable educational investment that would be a potent factor in accelerating the development of a better college spirit. "If our forefathers would have been blessed with such houses to

play in, we may be sure they would have been used."

Ere the gymnasium was completely equipped, sketches were designed for another structure which was destined to be less expensive and less spacious.¹ This was the St. Joseph's Hall which was completed in 1924.² It is a three-story structure of which the basement serves as a garage, the first story as a printing department, and the second and third stories as rooming facilities for fifty-six students. To economize as much as possible the building was erected by the members of the community.

During the year 1925 a general interior and exterior renovation of the institution took place. New sidewalks were built; the old barn was torn down; the wall in front of the church was remodeled; the campus was improved; new barns were erected. The purpose of this work was to expedite the way for the construction of the gigantic plan that had been under deliberation since 1923. After much careful sketching the architects finally produced a satisfactory draft³ for a group of buildings which when completed will cost one million, five hundred thousand dollars.⁴

¹ Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, pp. 217, 222, 224.
² "St. Benedict's College," in Atchison Daily Globe, (December 8, 1927), in Clippings in the State Historical Collection, Topeka, Kansas.
The plan, resembling the letter E, provides for a new monastery, a chapel, and a library. All of these are to be built from the native stone, a species of granite known as "Waverly Ledge" which is quarried south of Atchison. White Carthage stone is used for adorning the buildings. The main corridor will be three hundred and twenty-five feet and the extreme length of the building, extending north and south along the bluffs will be four hundred and five feet. On the west a Gothic-style church will project two hundred and forty-eight feet.

It was decided to execute the plan by sections and after nearly three years of discreet planning, the excavation for the first section was begun on the fourth of May, 1927.

When the work was commenced a special branch railroad was built to the bluff and a cable hoist and track ran one hundred feet up the face of the cliffs to hoist material from the railroad. To accelerate the progress an elaborate stone cutting plant was installed on the building site where all the material was cut.

This section comprises the back and northern arm of the

4. Ibid.
E.\(^1\) Of the church only the crypt was constructed at this time and is being used though it is in no sense completed.\(^2\) It contains twelve altars all built of stone penetrating deep into the earth.\(^3\) The cost of this part amounted to six hundred fifty thousand dollars.\(^4\)

In 1929 the members of the abbey vacated their thirty-five-year old home and took up their abode in the new monastery on the west bluff of the treacherous Missouri.\(^5\)

It has been prognosticated by the Fathers that years will elapse into the irrevocable past before the cliffs of the winding Missouri will be crowned with the completion of this Gothic design—a suggestion of the Middle Ages. Even in the selection of the site, the builders were guided by the tradition of past ages. For purposes of defense the monasteries of Mediaevalism were planted on high inaccessible cliffs. The idea of inaccessibility is marvelously represented in the localization of the group of monastic edifices. The edge of the bluff, a declivity precipitous in character,

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is seventy-five feet from the foundation walls.¹ When completed it will closely resemble the famous old English Abbeys.²

CHAPTER VII

ATHLETICS

From the beginning of the School, sports were encouraged among the boys.¹ A chronicle of the years when Father Augustine was still in Atchison states that Neel McKeever could bat a ball higher than any other boy in school. In those days the College grounds and athletic equipments were too limited for other athletics. Long walks, skating, fishing, swimming and baseball were some of the principal college sports.²

For swimming the back waters of the Missouri were used,³ but as the waters of the old "Muddy" are dangerous, the boys frequently walked to Deer Creek to indulge in this sport. On the sixth of June, 1885 an accident put an end to swimming in the Missouri.

Two boys, Francis Wickham and John Rhomberg, both good swimmers, got the cramps at about the same moment while

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1. Letter from Rev. Isidor Smith to Sister Monica, Atchison, Kansas, (March 31, 1931).
floating about on logs and were drowned. The Rt. Rev. President forever prohibited swimming in the treacherous waters of this river, not only for the students, but the faculty members as well.

Though the ball grounds were only in the early stage of development in the eighties, and the athletics unorganized, football and baseball were the principal games. A gymnasium the college could only desire, but not build and hence the pupils were confined to the skating rink which also served as an auditorium. On cold winter days it was utilized for divers amusements, such as lectures, concerts, and plays. Many an evening was passed here in enjoyment during the early years when the College lacked funds to provide modern equipments for more entertainments and sport. Generally a long walk from five to eight miles or out to the farm, which is seven miles from the college, was taken once a week. Short hikes were taken oftener. Whether it was a long hike or a short walk the student went in a body accompanied by one or two prefects. If on such a long walk they chanced to come face to face with the girls of Mt. St. Scholastica who were also out for a walk, or any crowd of girls, the Prefect

2. Rt. Rev. Tihen, in Questionnaire, April 17, 1931.
4. Interview with Nick Martin, April 6, 1931.
prevented the meeting by short orders to turn about. At such commands all boys in an almost military style, turned on their heels and marched in an opposite direction. 1

One of the great winter sports was, and still is, hunting rabbits. But previous to 1920 only a few enjoyed the right of indulging in this sport with the proper weapon—the gun. Ever solicitous about the students, the authorities cautiously guarded themselves against too great leniency in granting this privilege. Only the older boys who were known for prudence and could be trusted were licensed to carry a gun on a hunt. 2 The rest used the method invented by the students of St. Mary's College in 1890, after one of their pupils accidentally shot and instantly killed his twin brother. 3 In place of shouldering a gun, they carried a wooden club. The method of encircling the rabbits by the whole student body was a favorite one. At other times they searched the underbrush along the River where there was plenty of game. Occasionally they caught as many as fifty rabbits, with their clubs. 4 If the boys wished to get a taste of the game, they were obliged to dress it for the cooks, which they were quite

1. Interview with Henry Peltzer, April 6, 1931.
2. Interview with Nick Martin, April 6, 1931.
4. Interview with A. Ven Johann, April 6, 1931, Andale, Kansas.
willing to do. During the transition period the system was changed. Now all the students at the College enjoy the right of hunting with guns. The club system is now out of vogue.

By the opening of the twentieth century handball, tennis, and basketball had been added to the outdoor athletic activities, while the indoor games were principally chess and checkers. Playing cards was still prohibited though that too came into practice a little more than a decade later. Gambling was never tolerated. It was penalized with expulsion.

In 1901 a modest building seventy by fifty feet in size was erected which served as a gymnasium. Plans for a new one were terminated by the war regulations prohibiting the erection of any building not absolutely necessary. It seems that this placed a check on the advancement of athletics, and delayed the College in entering inter-collegiate competition. All sports were restricted to intra-mural games, under the direct supervision of two professors. The student body was divided into Senior and Junior sections. Each section elected its own officers. There was no hired coach whose livelihood depended on the maintenance among the

1. Interview with Albert Debbrecht, (April 24, 1931).
2. Interview with J. Hesse, (April 23, 1931).
students and faculty of a factitious interest. Yet as many as from twelve to fifteen teams were yearly vying with one another for diamond honors.¹

The purchase of Maur Hill in 1919 added the long desired gymnasium to the College. Inter-collegiate athletics began the following year.² From that time, until the completion of the new college gymnasium in 1924, basketball practice was held at Maur Hill every evening. The old College bus daily took the squad over after supper. All games were played there too. The evening of a basketball game was quite an event. The whole student body was expected to attend, and the grand procession usually began shortly after supper for the walk of nearly two miles. The students were grouped according to the hall in which they studied³ and were accompanied by the Prefect of that hall. If the inclemency of the weather made walking too disagreeable, street cars were chartered to appear at the college entrance. As many as seventy or eighty sometimes boarded one car, frequently causing the car to slip from the track in rounding a curve.

The beginnings of inter-collegiate competition which began with the football season, were rather difficult. The students at the college numbered slightly over one hundred fifty, and of that number, scarcely more than a dozen had

². Interview with Nick Martin, April 6, 1931.
³. Cf. infra, p. 130.
sufficient ability to make any pretense at competition with the heavier teams of other schools. In spite of seemingly overwhelming odds, the small football squad reported daily for practice, usually from four to six o’clock, under the direction of Rev. Malachy Sullivan, who acted in the capacity of coach until the spring of 1921, when he was succeeded by Coach Quigley.

It was the task of the latter to train the Benedictine athletes to his style of play in which he succeeded very well. The traditional recreation of an hour after dinner was abolished soon after he was engaged, and was added to the period from four to five. That was the ideal situation for athletic tendencies.

Now the baseball squad, numbering about twenty-five members, reported on the diamond at three-thirty and practiced until five-thirty while no small number of those not participating, gathered in groups on the side lines to watch the maneuvers of practice and to discuss the relative merits of the respective players. Not infrequently many optimistic conjectures as to the outcome of the next game were the cause of the exchange of a few Sunday pies.

1. Letter from John Weschensky to Sister Monica, Kenrick Seminary, St. Louis, (April 9, 1931).

John Weschensky states in his letter: "Sunday pies were
With football Coach Quigley was more successful than with basketball. From the handful of men that composed the squad, he developed a stable and winning system. 1 There were scarcely more than the number required for a team of sufficient ability to play, quite a handicap when one was injured. 2 From this small, weak football infant, Coach Quigley developed a team that emblazoned in bright letters on the 1925 schedule: "Undefeated Season, 1925." It was therefore no great surprise to the students to hear during that successful year that St. Benedict's was admitted to full membership in the Kansas Conference. 3

Handball and tennis were also games to much popularity. Previous to the completion of the gymnasium there was but one cemented handball court and one gravel tennis court. At the opening of each free period there was a race to the courts and the first there was first served. More than one "Sunday pie" was lost on these places.

During the seven years Quigley held the position as the coach he had brought the student body as a whole into a move

the common and usual stakes for all bets. No sooner would two individuals enter upon a discussion, than the challenge, 'I'll bet you a Sunday pie', could be heard. Pie was served only on Sunday."

2. Letter from John Wochensky, April 9, 1931.
compact and social union. He fostered and spurred on the desire to win in the inter-collegiate competition thus providing a common objective which interested all regardless of class standing or study hall division. He put St. Benedict's on the athletic map.

Though a great per cent of this success must be attributed to his skillful management, there were other factors that contributed to the success. A paramount one was the great attention the Faculty at St. Benedict's gave to the varsity to represent the school in inter-collegiate competition, the athletic department features schedule in almost all branches of sport for intra-mural competition. During the first part of the twenties one or more priests usually supervised these games and prevented any outburst of enmity among members of different halls. They organized various divisions in the different sports in which they took into consideration the size and ability of the participant so that all had an equal chance. Each hall placed one or more teams in

1. Letter from John Wechensky to Sister Monica, April 19, 1931.
3. Letter from Lawrence Quigley to Sister Monica, Atchison, Kansas, (April 9, 1931).
5. Letter from Lawrence Quigley, April 13, 1931.
each division and the winning teams received the possession of a trophy for their hall for the year. If the hall kept the trophy for three successive years, it became the trophy of that hall. This stimulus kept the intra-mural athletics in full swing.\(^1\)

Another important factor contributing to the progress made in athletics was the fact that St. Benedict's College is composed largely of students who make their homes on the campus during the scholastic year. In this regard the school has a distinct advantage over other colleges because the students are always on hand. Moreover, the school is not co-educational, the entire enrollment being of the same sex, the games can be more readily adapted to suit the majority of the participants.

The new gymnasium\(^2\) also was no small contribution for the execution of an extensive program. Of this building Coach Quigley says that it "is second to none on this side of the Mississippi, and this includes State schools and universities."\(^3\)

In the fall of 1928 Quigley was succeeded by Robert Schmidt of St. Thomas College, St. Paul, Minnesota. The same

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1. Letter from Mr. Lawrence Quigley to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
2. Cf. supra, p. 77.
3. Letter from Lawrence Quigley, April 13, 1931.
year the athletic department witnessed a change in the manner of government. Since then the board consists of the Dean of Residence as ex-officio chairman, the Athletic Moderator, the Coach and Athletic Director, and two representatives from the board of prefects.¹

Everything pertaining to athletics comes before this board and its decisions are final. It regulates the buying of equipment for varsity and intra-murals, the scheduling of games, and the checking up on class work of athletes.

The Athletic Director has complete charge of Athletics, whether intra-mural or inter-collegiate. With the approval of the Board he schedules the games for varsity competition in football, baseball, kittenball, handball, volleyball, swimming, boxing, and horseshoe. He recommends to the Board the purchase he thinks should be made.

The Faculty Advisor, being a representative of the Faculty, must sign all athletic contracts and orders for athletic equipments. On trips for inter-collegiate games he has charge of the discipline and financial affairs. He gives a complete report to the Board whenever called upon, on the athletic finances.

The intra-mural teams are coached by varsity men in their particular sport. The Athletic Director appoints a

Student Manager who is responsible to him, and as many assistants as he needs. For each sport--football, baseball, etc.--a different Student Manager and his assistants are appointed. These men tend to the playing of the intra-mural games according to the schedule. Though this appears complicated, it works out nicely.

The Prefects of the various halls assume the responsibility of making every student under their charge take part in some form of athletics and report any infringement on rules of training to the Coach. They see to it that the students report for practice regularly and punctually.¹

One of the great achievements of the Athletic Board was the installation of illumination in 1929, for night football. Previous to that event baseball was played on the football field but the lighting system ruined the field for baseball and consequently inter-collegiate baseball was dropped temporarily.

In 1930 boxing was taken up and developed rapidly.² Now St. Benedict’s is well equipped to carry out its extensive athletic program. It has two large athletic fields for football and baseball, the gymnasium with one maximum size basketball court and three regulation courts which are used.

¹ Letter from R. W. Schmidt to Sister Monica, Atchison, Kansas, April 10, 1931.
² Letter from Bernard Dickmann, Atchison, Kansas, April 12, 1931.
for intra-mural games; a large modern swimming pool of standard size. It also has indoor handball courts, a gymnastic-room, shower-rooms, club-rooms, and athletic offices. Besides the College is provided with four clay tennis courts and two gravel courts.

The Athletic program of St. Benedict's compares favorably with the best that has been found in any college in the state. The students have the opportunity of learning all the sports from the ground up. The instructors and coaches have always taught the boys the true value of "Sportmanship." ¹

¹ Letter from Lawrence Quigley to Sister Monica, April 13, 1931.
CHAPTER VIII

DISCIPLINE

Concentrated attention to studies, faithful observance of religious duties, propriety of deportment, principles of morality and the health and welfare of the students are objects of almost perpetual attention and solicitude of St. Benedict's. Though discipline was evolutionized during the "transition period" it has always been held at a high standard and has been considered an indispensable factor to success. The members of this institution were opposed to the contention of modern educators who would put the boy on his honor. They believed that the forming character of the adolescent needed the bracing of authority and disciplinary restraint to insure its healthy development. A rule was maintained that was firm in repressing the wayward tendencies of youth.  

1. Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, Kenrick Seminary, St. Louis, (April 9, 1931).
Prefects was the order of the day and had a strong beneficent influence upon the students.¹

Rt. Rev. Bishop Tihen, who was a student of St. Benedict's from September 1879 to July 1882, speaking of the discipline states: "It was strict according to present customs and views, but always considerate and kind."² A similar remark was made by Michael Hogan who attended the College at a much later date—September, 1920 to June, 1928.³ Several young men who were high school boys at that school between 1905 and 1927 maintain that the discipline was strict compared with the present day discipline, but not severe.

Close and continuous personal supervision was not only the order of the day, but that of the night as well. Whether in the classroom, the study hall, the dormitory, or the playground the student was under the watchful care of some Prefect.⁴

The following may serve as one illustration of strict disciplinary system still in practice during the first decade of the present century.

Annually on the feast of St. Benedict, the twenty-first

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3. Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
4. Interview with Nick Martin, (April 5, 1931), Andale, Kansas.
of March, the girls of Mt. St. Scholastica attended the solemn high mass in the College chapel. To check any misdemeanor between the boys and girls who were placed on the opposite sides of the aisle, and prevent the passing of notes across, two prefects marched to and fro in the aisle during the services. Sharp as this observation of the lynx-eyed prefects was, some boys passed and received notes.¹

A comparison of rules and reports on discipline show that by the opening of the twenties a slight deviation from the early rigorous discipline could be noticed. The great changes which evolutionized the system came during the last half of the twenties.²

A deep and solid foundation for the punctilious discipline was laid by the founder who did not economize in making rules and regulations that were destined to keep the truant in school and mischief out of school. Though the enrollment was never large in his days he provided for twenty-six college rules to guide the student, day scholar included, through the scholastic year. In glancing over the prolix list one may harbor the thought that the matter was overdone. But the boys, who came to St. Benedict's in those days, were of an entirely different type than those of the present century. All were pioneers; many had experienced hard times;

¹ Interview with Henry Peltzer, (April 6, 1931), Andale, Kansas.
² Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
some had not learned to enjoy the ordinary comforts of life, and the majority had had very little training. A definite set of rules and plenty of them became a necessity.¹ That a number of these regulations were by no means ephemeral is obvious from the fact that they still were on the "General Rules" list in 1924.²

But though these rules were strictly enforced, they did not instill the habits of the white man into the Indians that attended the school. Andy Jack Fitzpatrick, an Indian, attended the College from 1859 to 1863, and Father Guenther remarks in his chronicle that some years after his departure he was seen in full Indian Regalia, living the primitive life of the Indians.³ Stephen Pensineau and Joseph Proveaux, also Indians, found it difficult to adopt the habit of sleeping in beds. "As soon as the lights in the dormitory were low and all was silent, they rolled into their blankets and slept on the floor or under the bed. Stephen obstinately refused to part with his long fore lock which he loved to pull down over his eyes. When Father Peter, who was less influenced by this characteristic Indian vanity than the common sanitary good, succeeded by a shrewd trick to cut the fore lock, Stephen ran

¹ Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 63.
³ Rev. Pusch, op. cit., p. 50.
out of the house indignant at such liberty taken with a young warrior. 1

The general order of the day remained unaltered to the twenties. 2 At five-thirty a hand bell aroused the boys from their sleep, 3 the prefect then proceeded from bed to bed to alarm the drowsy who hazarded to procrastinate their rising. He would either throw ice-cold water in their face or roll them on the floor by turning the mattress over with a quick jerk. Either of the two procedures would obtain the desired end. If ever the prefect failed to observe a procrastinator, the latter was, on that account, not warranted a longer sleep. Most of the boys possessed as much skill in turning over mattresses as the prefect and were delighted to serve as his substitute, in such a case. 4

At six o'clock the boys marched to chapel for morning prayers and Mass at which all Jews and Protestants, as well as Catholics were obliged to attend. Non-Catholics remained in the rear of the chapel. All that was expected of them during the services was silence. To exempt them from this general exercise would have necessitated the appointment of an ex-

2. Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
3. Interview with Dr. Biermann, (March 23, 1951), Wichita, Kansas.
4. Interview with Joseph Debbrecht, (March 24, 1931), Andale, Kansas.
tra prefect to superintend these boys which the Fathers represented—they all were loaded with sufficient work.

This was followed immediately by one of the exercises that occurred three times a day and in which every healthy boy participated most willingly. Beginning with breakfast, the strict silence of the morning hours was terminated at least until classes opened. The boys all ate in one large refectory, superintended by a prefect who took his meals at the same time but at a private table. When the number of students reached the hundred-fifty, two hundred, and three hundred mark, strict observance of the students' trivial misbehavior was nigh impossible, and the prefect's supervision was confined to the task of keeping a damper on the noise. A tap of the bell was all that was needed to hush the boisterous voices.

Butter was served for breakfast but generally not for dinner nor supper. It required, however, no genius among the boys to invent a means for having it at these meals also. Forgetting the text of the Bible: "Be not solicitous what shall we eat etc.," the boys filled their drinking glass with butter of which there was always a surplus at breakfast. When the chair was shoved under the table after the meal, the

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1. Interview with Dr. William Biarmann, March 23, 1931.
3. Interview with Joseph Debrecht, April 6, 1931.
glass of butter was placed securely on it where it remained untouched until the next meal, except on the days when the janitor came around to sweep, he swept not only the floors but the chairs as well and there was no more butter that day. To the great consolation of the boys, the dining room was not swept daily. This was not the only manner in which the boys provided for the "hard times." Slipping bread into pockets and swiping some jelly from the table was no unique occurrence.

After the morning repast was over the boys were free until eight o'clock when the day's work began with classes until twelve o'clock. From one to one-thirty all were assembled for a supervised study period. After that classes were resumed and continued until four-thirty. Then came the long period of recreation which was devoted to athletics. After the six o'clock meal they enjoyed another free interval which was succeeded by a study period, lasting from seven to eight-thirty. Writing letters or reading stories during a part of this period was not prohibited, provided the student's class record was laudable. But neither at this nor any other time was reading tolerated that was considered the

1. Interview with William Debbrecht, March 24, 1931. Wichita, Kansas.
2. Interview with Henry Peltzer, April 6, 1931.
3. Interview with Dr. William Biermann, March 23, 1931.
4. Interview with Nick Martin, April 6, 1931.
least harmful or indecent. Story books, newspapers, and periodicals required the approbation of the Prefect before the boys were permitted to read them. During this time, silence was obligatory not only in the nineteenth century when the tenor of discipline was strict, but in the twentieth century as well.

At nine-thirty, night prayer was said in common in the study hall after which the students lined up and marched in silence to the dormitory. After the boys had retired the prefect continued to march to and fro in an adjacent hall until a profound stillness, occasionally interrupted by a feigned snoring, indicated that the boys were, if not already in dreamland, at least on their way there. Frequently, however, it was all sham. No sooner had the sound of the prefect's footsteps died out, than the room of soundly sleeping lads changed to one of live-wires.

One of the rules laid down by the Founder in the sixties, and maintained on the list of rules down to 1924, sounds as follows: "The strictest silence is always to be observed in the dormitory." But though, breach of rules, and mischief occurred in almost any department of the college

1. Interview with William Debbrecht, March 24, 1931.
4. Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
premises, it seems the dormitory was the place for a "good
time."¹ Here the pieces of bread and the jelly that had been
swiped at one of the meals was passed around to be relished
by every one that was fortunate enough to get a bite. Pillow
fights occurred frequently but to change the monotony some
began a shoe fight. Since sixty to seventy occupied one dormi-
itory the noise of the shoe fight generally brought the
priest in charge of the dormitory to the battle field. If
his shoes were very squeaky, it was no easy task for him to
overawe the boys. The moment the sound reached the dormi-
tory, all boys were tucked under the covers and silence
reigned. But this deception did not always attain its end.
If the prefect was convinced that some mischief had been car-
rried on, he ordered them to rise and marched them to the
study hall for a nightly study period.² The length of the
period depended not only on the graveness of the mischief but
also upon the person who dealt out the punishment.³ In a few
cases the culprits were detained to two o'clock in the morn-
ing.⁴ In place of giving a study period, he sometimes order-
ed them to write the rules a certain number of times, one
rule fifty to a hundred times, the Greek or Latin grammar,

¹. Interview with Albert Debbrecht, (March 24, 1931),
Wichita, Kansas.
². Interview with Henry Peltzer, April 6, 1931.
³. Interview with Joseph Debbrecht, March 24, 1931.
⁴. Interview with Henry Peltzer, April 6, 1931.
four or five times. To this penalty the boys applied the
cognomen "soaking". Though the penance was detested by the
students, they purposely misbehaved in the dormitory on days
when they had some eatables stored in the study hall which
they wished to relish there. The "soaking" or the nightly
study-hour was a welcome penalty then.¹

In some rare cases the students went to the extremes.
The pillow fights occasionally became so serious that whole
pillows were torn asunder and the feathers went flying
through the room. When the rougher boys went too far in their
behavior, those of a nobler mind and of a more timid charac-
ter refrained from participating in the sport.² At one occa-
sion however, the boys erroneously suspected that the chief
prefect, Father Isadore, who had left Atchison, would not
return that day. All of them numbering about sixty-five or
seventy engaged in the fight so roughly that in a few min-
utes the floor resembled a field after a snow-fall.

Father James, a sub-prefect came to witness the scene
and ere he recovered from his amazement at such a sight,
Father Isadore, whom the boys feared more, stepped into the
room and almost spontaneously questioned: "What's all this?"
One scanning look at the situation told the prefect enough..

¹ Interview with Henry Peltzer, April 6, 1931.
² Interview with Nick Martin, April 6, 1931.
Having requested his co-laborer to furnish two straps he remarked: "You take this side, I'll take that." Only two of the boys escaped the strapping that night, by claiming that they were not guilty. The next day the boys administered justice to them by a beating worse than what the prefects had given them and then marched the two culprits to the disciplinarian's office to plead guilty.¹

"Setting the bed" of some student during the day was another dormitory disturbance. It was no novelty to hear the crashing noise of falling slats and squeaking springs and momentarily see the owner of that bed roll on the floor. On some evenings when the mirth of the boys was at its height, they ventured to tie a student to his mattress and carry him to the "prefect's tent,"² or to the roof of the house where he was left for about a half an hour. A trick still more daring than these just mentioned was performed from year to year at the expense of some "easy-make-believe" newcomer. The boys' beds were not enclosed with curtains like that of the two prefects who retired at a later hour than the students. It was one of the boys annual amusements to make a freshman believe that the enclosed bed was his and after a night or two he could remove the curtains. It is needless to

¹ Interview with Albert Debbrecht, March 24, 1931.
² This cognomen was applied to the cell of the prefect which was enclosed by curtains.
say that the rest of the boys lay awake on such occasions un-
til the prefect retires to his cell. These and similar
harmless pranks in which the supervisors saw no malice were
occasionally passed over good-naturedly without any penalty.
In most cases however, the boys were given a "soaking" and Al-
bert Debbrecht seems to be justified in saying: "We had lots
of fun and lots of grief in the bedroom."  

Besides the dormitory rules there were the restrictions
on the use of tobacco and the leaving of the college premises
which contributed their share in making the pupils march the
chalk line. Before the latter part of the twenties pupils
were not permitted to leave the premises without permission
which was not easily obtained especially if it was a question
of going to town. The process for gaining that license was
almost as tedious as filling the application for admission to
the Graduate School and even after the permission was granted
the student was by no means at liberty to go when he pleased.
The college had its set time when it gave the scholars a half
a day off for going to town, which during most of the years
was Wednesday and Saturday afternoon.

Anyone desiring to go to town was required to make out a
written request in which he stated his reason for wishing to
go. This slip of paper was deposited on Tuesday or Friday

1. Interview with Albert Debbrecht, March 24, 1931.
with the prefect who handed it to the Director for consideration. The latter then posted the names of those he licensed in the study-hall on the following day. In the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century, the Directors were not lenient in granting the permission. By 1907 a student was permitted to go to town once in three weeks provided his conduct was good and his reasons important. If either of these was lacking his business, which generally was the purchase of a trivial article, was entrusted to another student. Boys who frequently applied were not surprised not to see their name on the list. By the opening of the twenties they could without much difficulty get permission to go almost every week.

Shortly after the noon recreation those whose names were posted assembled on an appointed place and then marched in double file to town, a prefect in the lead and another in the rear. In the business part of the town the crowd dispersed and the prefects watched to detect any misdemeanor or any attempt to attend a movie. By 1926 the boys occasionally were permitted to see a movie in town. After four o'clock, the chances for attending movies being past, the two supervising priests returned home and the boys were obliged to be at the

1. Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
2. Interview with Henry Peltzer, April 6, 1931.
4. Interview with Henry Peltzer, April 6, 1931.
college by five.

Leaving the premises in the evening was strictly prohibited until about 1922. The breach of that rule was not punished by "soaking" but by expulsion. The following incident, which occurred between 1905 and 1907, will illustrate how rigorously this rule was enforced. During the study period, between seven and eight, one of the lads feeling hungry remarked that he would risk anything to get some pastry from the adjacent bakery if he just had some cash. According to the college's regulations the boys at that time were not permitted to keep any spending money, that had to be deposited with the prefect. Henry Peltzer, however, happened to have two nickels, which he had neglected to return to the prefect after his return from town that afternoon. These he tendered quite willingly and to the surprise of the rest, the lad hazarded the undertaking. After a short interval the boy stood in the door and, holding out a small parcel remarked: "Here's your cake boys; but I was caught." In narrating the event Henry observed: "That was the last we saw of the boy. He was isolated that night and expelled the next morning." As this boy had quiet, quick, and sly ways, his companions had expected him to return safely. But that night the prefects were watching for two boys that had not yet returned

1. Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
from town. One of these was expelled; the other one, being a brother of a member of the community, was given another chance.

If a boy received an invitation from relatives or close friends in Atchison or the vicinity, it was so difficult to obtain permission that he sometimes preferred to remain at the college, rather than answer the numerous questions to explain the relationship between himself and those inviting him.\textsuperscript{1}

Besides the town there was another important forbidden place to which the boys were not permitted to wend their way; the hill or bluff that is now adorned by the new monastery and the Administration Building. At that time it was adorned by grape-vines and an orchard. When these disappeared,\textsuperscript{2} the regulations also disappeared.\textsuperscript{3}

The sixth rule of the College's "The use of Tobacco is prohibited" was strictly enforced in the past century. One of the students addicted to the habit of chewing, utilized the waste basket as a spittoon for which he was expelled. He was an exceptionally good backstop in basketball and well liked by his comrades who induced the Director to permit him another chance.\textsuperscript{4}

\begin{itemize}
\item[1.] Interview with Henry Peltzer, April 6, 1931.
\item[2.] Cf. supra p. 71.
\item[3.] Interview with Henry Debbrecht, April 6, 1931.
\item[4.] Interview with Henry Peltzer, April 6, 1931.
\end{itemize}
A person who from 1886 to 1890 was a pupil of St. Benedict's was asked in later years whether a student that had not reached the age of twenty-one but had the parental permission to smoke were allowed to do so at the college. To which he replied: "They were not even allowed to sniff the aroma escaping from the prefect's room." to the inquiry, "Was the age of twenty-one required to obtain license to smoke?" he responded, "Mathusalem or death would not have been old enough for that." As a consequence smoking was a rare practice. The college did not provide a room to which smoking was confined, but "smokers were confined after the smoking." 

On account of smoking there was much "soaking" at St. Benedict's. It caused an almost uninterrupted game of "hide and-seek" between the prefects and those attempting to steal a smoke. The sixth rule of the College's regulations was written oftener than any. This rule like all others was less strictly enforced as time rolled on, and its restrictions were eliminated to some extent. By the opening of the

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1. Doctor Tihen, in Questionnaire, April 23, 1931.
2. Bishop Tihen, in Questionnaire, April 23, 1931.
3. Doctor Tihen, in Questionnaire, April 23, 1931.
4. Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 20, 1931.
6. Interview with Albert Debbrecht, March 24, 1931.
present century the privilege of smoking was extended to all that had a written parental permission, provided they were not too young. Cigarettes were prohibited until about 1926. But all smoking was strictly confined to the smoking department which was generally a basement room of one of the old buildings. During the first decade of the twentieth century a small house constructed of lattice work was made a smoking department. The former was known as the indoor smoker, the latter as the outdoor smoker as late as 1928. Any one caught smoking on the grounds paid a severe penalty by a "soaking" that would take up all his free time for at least a day. Yet not only those who had the privilege to smoke but also those with no license, attempted to do so in the forbidden places. As soon as a faculty member or prefect was spied the cigarette was quickly dropped into an adjacent gutter or any hiding place but the supervisors had not only a strong sight but also an accurate sense of smell. For the odor of the smoke there was no hiding-place and as a former student of St. Benedict's puts it; "They generally caught us by smelling the smoke." Some students utilized almost any scheme that a mind could contrive to escape detection. Even the fog, of which

1. Rt. Rev. Tihen, in Questionnaire, April 17, 1931.
2. Interview with Albert Debbrecht, March 24, 1931.
there is plenty at Atchison in spring and autumn, has been used as a shield against the detector, as the following incident may illustrate. In the fall of 1920 two or three, wishing to steal a smoke after breakfast, went to the large elm trees on the south end of the athletic field. Here they thought the watery vapor would conceal them. A prefect, who had for some time suspected that these boys occasionally indulged in smoking without the proper license, saw them wend their way into that direction. Immediately ready for the "hide-and-seek," he took his customary morning walk on the opposite end of the field. As the boys were leisurely strolling to and fro, they happened to emerge a trifle too far out from the foggy veil and, they were caught by the prefect. Writing some pages of the Greek Grammar and taking it to the Director was their penalty. When students were sent to the Director for such a purpose, they could expect an advice that was anything but pleasing to the ear. ¹

The "soaking" method was used extensively ² and was employed for nearly any kind of offense. Professors made use of it in the classroom to penalize the procrastinator; prefects administered it to the unruly in the study hall. Referring to the writing of rules a former pupil of the School

1. Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
2. Interview with Dr. Biermann, March 23, 1931.
remarks: "That's what ruined my penmanship." By 1928 the method was no longer in use in the College Department and had become an exception in penalizing high school students. The term was almost completely obsolete. The black list took its place and aside of expulsion, was about the only method employed to castigate college students, especially those having a private room. The evolution of discipline was commencing to show its effects of which a paramount one was to make a distinction between college students and high school students. Up to about 1924 a very sharp distinction was marked between students, based on an entirely different principle than the present distinction which began to appear about 1922. It was the belief of the educators of St. Benedict's that boys younger in years and smaller in size were not to associate with the older ones. Hence the dividing line between the two classes—juniors and seniors—was based on age, weight, and size.

Each class had its own proper playground; its own portion in the refectory, its own prefect, and its own study hall. Occasionally severe punishments were given for not observing the distinction. Generally both classes kept the division well marked. It was no novelty to notice a group of

1. Doctor Tihen, in Questionnaire, April 23, 1931.
2. Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
juniors chase away a senior who dared to trespass over their grounds or interfere in their games.

Toward the end of the twenties this distinction had passed out of vogue to make place for the class distinction that was coming to the front the first years of this decade. The dividing line was now drawn between high school pupils and college students. The latter were privileged with a standing permission to go to town on Wednesday and Saturday and the liberty to go out occasionally at night, provided their name was not on the black list. About five years later college students were offered two nights per week for going out. The individual had his choice of one of those nights. Obtaining permission to go to town is practically abolished for college men. If the Dean of Residents for students happens not to be in office, the student simply hands in his name and time of leaving so that the authorities know his whereabouts if a call comes for him. The restrictions limiting the time for going to town have also been greatly eliminated.

Even as late as 1920 it was a difficult task to obtain permission to visit the store two blocks from the college, except during the long free period in the afternoon. To go there without permission would have been considered a serious breach of the rule. Now they go almost any time they can do so without cutting class. There are two stores which depend
on the college students for their trade. The right to go out in the evening has also been extended. College seniors are permitted six nights out; juniors, four; sophomores, two; and freshmen, one.¹

There still are regular study hours at the College during which silence must be observed in the building, but it is not strictly required that the students study at these particular periods. As long as a scholar shows that he is doing efficient work in class, he will not be called to account for not preparing his assignments during the time set for study.²

The system of administration in discipline was also evolutionized. In the summer of 1928 a new method was organized. Previous to that time power of the prefects was limited to giving good advice and penalizing the student. He could not expel a student; that power, besides many other rights, was vested in the Director. In 1928 this office was changed to Dean of Residence who has less authority than the Director. Many of the latter's powers were delegated to the prefects. Any affairs of discipline, modifications, granting of new privileges are taken up by the Board of Prefects, of which the Dean of Residence is a member, for discussion and a

¹ Interview with Joseph Hesse, (April 23, 1931), Wichita, Kansas.
² Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
vote. If the change is a major one, the sanction of the Rt. Rev. President is required to make the legislation of the board valid. In a case of expulsion of a student he does not override any decision so that the right to expel a student practically rests with the Board of Prefects.¹

A retrospection of the last few years brings to notice a dazzling change in the system of discipline at St. Benedict's. Though it still is held at a high standard, it can hardly be considered strict. This great change was not brought about without cause of which the paramount causes may be said to have been the changed principles of the faculty and the changed personnel of the student body.

Before the transition period, the number of high-school pupils greatly outnumbered the college students.² In 1920 there were about two hundred fifty or three hundred high-school pupils and twenty-five or thirty college students. This same year the College was accredited by the Kansas University as a four year college, and the following year it was accredited by the State Board of Education,³ and from that time on the pendulum swung into the opposite direction. In a few years St. Benedict's changed from what was virtually a

¹ Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
² Interview with Rev. Leon McNeill, April 20, 1931.
³ Secretary of Public Instruction, in Questionnaire, April 13, 1931, Topeka, Kansas.
high school into what is now primarily a college. ¹

As long as the School was principally a high school the student body was composed mainly of boys in their adolescent age, at which period the character is in the formative stage. Cognizant of the importance of proper training of the boy in his adolescence the faculty members and prefects adopted and maintained the strict supervision. When the personnel of their scholars changed, the system of discipline was changed. The character of the college man, being past the formative period, is expected to be well established. With some vigilance form the authorities of the College he is expected to stand on his own feet.

The changed conditions, especially the greater liberty that youth demands and receives to-day, no doubt also influenced the authorities at the College to greater leniency. To continue the strict discipline of the early times would have meant empty college-halls.

A third cause may be found in the fact that the professors of the early days were influenced by the German system of order, because the majority of them were natives of Bavaria and had received at least some of their training in that country. It would, however, be a mistake to ascribe it to the "German military spirit," especially the "Prussian Military

¹ Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, April 9, 1931.
Spirit" for which the Bavarians never showed much tendency. Nor would it be correct to place much weight on the German influence upon the early discipline at Atchison. The Fathers of Irish extraction were generally more exacting and less considerate than those of German birth.

Since the discipline at Maur Hall where the personnel is similar to that of the College of the early years is still strict, neither the German spirit nor the changed conditions of our time can be considered very important factors in the change of discipline. It remains, therefore, that the difference between the past and present personnel of the student body is the paramount cause for the leniency.¹

¹ Letter from Rev. Claude Enslain to Sister Monica, Seneca, Kansas, May 3, 1931.
CHAPTER IX

INTELLECTUAL GROWTH.

The Order of St. Benedict has been a professional teaching order since the past five centuries\(^1\) and when the members of this community settled on the wild prairies of Kansas their paramount aim was the founding of an educational institution. They brought with themselves "a system of education begotten of fourteen hundred years of experience;"\(^2\) a will determined to succeed and a soul satiated with the religious spirit of their founder, St. Benedict. These were their intellectual assets and with them they hoped to impart and perpetuate the education, characteristic to their order.

Rev. Augustine Wirth, a well educated, energetic, young man, who had received his professional training in the Universities of Wuerzburg and Munich,\(^3\) opened a Latin School

with only a few pupils, but with a firm confidence for success. When the school was moved to Atchison it offered courses, not only to grade pupils, high school and college students, but also seminarians, which clearly indicates that the Fathers intended to found a school similar in standard and high ideals to the schools in which they had made their studies. But a number of years were to elapse before these high ideals were to be attained.

During the first nine years only a High School was maintained and the principal branches of the curriculum were Latin, English, Arithmetic, Geography, Algebra, and Astronomy. Besides these music was taught as a part of the curriculum from the very opening of the College. The first year of school when it was still in its primitive home at Doniphan an organ was purchased, and a violin and a piano were purchased in the succeeding year. In 1860, one by one, the clarinet, the flute, the horn, and finally, the drum were introduced. This was sufficient to organize a small but fairly complete band. Thus "the husky lads of the sixties then had all the opportunities of the world to noise their existence abroad and quicken the step of the visitor up the muddy road,

2. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 47.
through the Hazel brush, to the College.¹

On the twenty-eighth of June, 1868, however, the College was incorporated under the Kansas Laws and empowered to confer degrees and academic honors.² Now courses of instruction were definitely established and the first catalogue was published in 1870.

The plan of instruction embraced two regular and distinct courses, the Classical and the Commercial. The former included Latin, Greek, English, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Modern Languages, History, Penmanship, Fine Arts, Declamation.

The Commercial Course comprised the same with the exception of Greek, Latin, and the branches taught for the sixth year. It was completed in three years³ while the classical was divided into five years, the fifth class being the lowest. This division was retained until well into the present century⁴ except that the order of the classes was reversed by the year 1878.⁵ To accommodate those who were aspiring to academic degrees a sixth year was added in which Mental Philosophy, Natural Theology and higher mathematics

1. Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, p. 60.

were offered.

Besides there was a Preparatory Department in which orthography, writing, and the elements of arithmetic, history, and geography were taught.

Public speaking and journalism was encouraged in various ways. To develop oratory the Philomathic Society, which met once a week, was organized. It provided opportunities for the students in practical exercises of elocution and dialectics. Twice a month a debate was given by the seniors and one hour and a half were set apart every week for declamation and the reading or delivery of original composition. Another aid to oratory was given by the "Reading Room Association" of the seniors which provided the library with the leading weekly papers and periodicals of the country. During the school year of 1872-73 The Bachelor's Spontaneous Combustion Club was called into life. It included all the senior students and had for its chief purpose the promotion of extemporary speaking. In addition to this the members of the club assumed the task of editing a semimonthly, written journal, called "The St. Benedict's Semimonthly Banner." This literary pioneer gave an impetus to college journalism that was to become of importance even before the close of the century and

of which it was merely a prelude.

Prior to 1889 several journalistic ventures had been launched which, after an ephemeral period, succumbed to the course of events. In the fall of 1886 Tom Fisher, a Democrat, got out a paper in one of the Commercial halls. Edwin McAnomy thought the College was entitled to a Republican paper and issued the "Commercial Standard." The first number appeared on the twenty-first of November, 1886; the last, containing twelve pages of double columns, appeared on the seventeenth of December, 1887. The "College Reflector" made its first appearance on the third of March 1889, its last appearance in May, 1889.1

The need of a magazine, however, was felt keenly. The practice of writing was nursed in the very cradle of the Benedictine Order, famous for its Scriptorium, and has seemingly become adjunct to the Benedictine Monasticism. This spirit of writing and publishing was not fostered by St. Benedict's in anticipation of making it as prolific as the Benedictines abroad have done in the past.

Since the Fathers had few spare moments to devote to journalism they successfully induced the students to launch out into that literary field. In December 1891 the first e-

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dition of the Abbey Student with its motto "Ora et Labora" appeared and was followed by the second issue in January, 1892. The school year of 1891--1892 enjoyed such an efficient staff that the paper promised a successful future.\(^1\) From that time until 1930 when it was discontinued on account of financial embarrassment,\(^2\) it was published quarterly.\(^3\)

The success of the Abbey Student created a potent impetus for journalism and the desire for a college press. This wish was realized by the purchase of a second hand press in the early part of the year 1904. Number three of Volume III was the first edition of the Abbey Student published within the walls of St. Benedict's. Father Luke was the Director of the office and Peter Boesen, a student, was the foreman.\(^4\) But the work of the press was by no means confined to the printing of the Abbey Student, it also printed programs and plays. The department grew little by little. In 1906 a small annex, which remained the home of the printing department until the fall of 1924, was built to the wing erected in 1861. During that year it was transferred to a spacious floor in the St. Joseph's Hall. Many of the old equipments were replaced by new ones and new machinery was

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2. Letter from Bernard Dickmann to Sister Monica, Atchison, Kansas, April 12, 1931.
The increase of equipment brought a parallel increase of work. Now the press prints the "Rambler," a college paper; "The Dove," a college magazine published by the students of Mt. St. Scholastica. The Elements of Expression" and "Cae-remoniale Monasticum" were the first books published. These were followed by "Diocesan Statutes," Bishop Fink's catechism, pamphlets and booklets. Thus the substitute for the renowned "Scriptorium" of the past is well represented, and when the Fathers of St. Benedict's, as the monks of old, will find time to devote to writing, this modern scriptorium will be able to bring the results of their efforts and noble work before the public.  

While journalism was making such progress the curriculum also passed through some changes, the first noteworthy alteration was made in the year 1885. The Fathers of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore had concentrated their attention on the College education, the selection of the branches, and the time to be devoted to them. In accordance with their expressed wish, the curriculum was extended to come up to the tenor of the degrees promulgated by that assembly. The revised course definitely stated the text books to be used, the portion to be covered each year and the number of lessons to

1 Rev. Pusch, St. Benedict's College, pp. 183, 184.
be assigned per week.¹

The next year the Classical Course was extended over eight years. The following branches were offered in the seventh year: Christian Doctrine; Philosophy-Logic, Ontology, Cosmology, and Natural Theology; Hebrew; and Mathematics—physics, and chemistry. In the eighth year; Philosophy-Psychology, Ethics, History of Philosophy; Hebrew; Physics continued and Astronomy were offered. The courses for the six years remained unaltered.² More than a decade was to elapse into the irrevocable past before a conspicuous change occurred but journalism was given more attention.

By the year 1916 the college offered courses leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Letters, Master of Accounts and Bachelor of Accounts. The School of Music offered a five-year course in violin and piano. One of the requirements for a Bachelor's degree was the writing of a thesis with a minimum of three thousand words. For the Bachelor of Arts degree the thesis was written in Latin. In 1919 the School of Theology was added. Its aim was to train young men for the proper fulfillment of the exalted duties of a Catholic priest; to qualify them to become competent expounders and defenders of revealed Truth.

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2. Catalogue of St. Benedict's College, pp. 15, 17, (1886-87)
The department offered Dogmatic and Manual Theology besides special courses in Sacred Scripture, Church History, Canon Law, Liturgy, Sacred Eloquence, and Ecclesiastical Chant. The library contained a copious supply for these courses. Of the nearly 35,000 bound volumes more than two-thirds of the collection were books for this department.¹

With such a number of volumes, the Graduate School of Theology was well prepared to assume the custody and training of students preparing for Home Mission work. These students were studying under the auspices of the Catholic Church Extension Society of America, who entrusted the education of the young men to St. Benedict's in 1923.² It has been abandoned. Since these students were not affiliated with any bishop the Pope did not sanction the undertaking.³ Two years later the Junior High School was transferred to Maur Hill to relieve the congestion at the College.

During the year 1919 the vital importance of having the school accredited was impressed upon the mind of the Faculty members and as a consequence such a sweeping change was made that the eight years following are known as a "transition period."⁴ One of the high school graduates of St. Benedict's

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³ Interview with Rev. McNeill, (April 1, 1931).
⁴ Letter from Michael Hogan to Sister Monica, (April 9, 1931).
wishing to continue his studies in Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska, found it difficult to obtain admission. Not because he lacked the requisite preparation, for of that he possessed even a surplus, but merely because St. Benedict's was not accredited with the state.\(^1\) The College had maintained a high standard and had given the pupils a broad knowledge\(^2\) but had not yet taken into consideration the importance of having the institute accredited. This step meant a severance from the German system which had served the College since its establishment.\(^3\) But the Benedictines, whose motto is "Pax," tranquilly acquiesced to the requirements of the state.\(^4\) Through the stenuous indefatigable work of Father Sylvester the course of studies was revised to comply with the State requirements\(^5\) and by 1920 the College was accredited by the Kansas University as a four-year college; by 1921 it was accredited by the State Board of Education and by 1927 it was accredited by the North Central Association.\(^6\)

Up to this time the number of students pursuing a college course was rather small and most of those that completed

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1. Interview with Dr. W. Bierman, March 23, 1931.
2. Interview with Rev. McNeill, April 1, 1931.
3. Interview with Henry Peltzer, April 6, 1931.
4. Interview with Rev. McNeill, April 1, 1931.
5. Interview with Dr. W. Bierman, March 23, 1931.
6. Secretary of Public Instruction, in Questionnaire, April 13, 1931, Topeka, Kansas.
a collegiate course were members of the community. But after the middle of the twenties the enrollment in the college department increased rapidly. In 1919 the enrollment in the collegiate department was about thirty-two; a decade later it was two hundred forty-one. With such an increase in attendance an expansion in the curriculum was evidently an exigence. This demand the Abbey was well prepared to meet, one of its paramount aims for some years had been the education of its members. During the school year of 1919-20 the College offered one hundred and eighteen courses; during 1929-30 it offered two hundred and thirty-eight courses, exclusive of the fourteen available in the School of Aviation. The importance of aviation will justify a deviation from the subject to give it more than a passing notice.

Realizing the importance of aviation, St. Benedict's entered into a contract with one of the largest pilot-training firms in the United States, the Patterfield Flying School, Inc. of Kansas City, Kansas. The company established an airport near Atchison within two minutes flying distance of the College, where students who have chosen courses in aviation receive their first flying lessons. All instructors engaged

1. Interview with Rev. Leon McNeill, April 1, 1931.
are government licensed and selected on the basis of their ability to teach as well as to fly. After such progress the recognition which St. Benedict's desired was not withheld. By the year 1929 the College was fully accredited by the Kansas State Board of Education, the University of Kansas, the Catholic Educational Association, the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and the Department of Education of the State of Washington. By the University of Illinois it is recognized as a Class "A" College.

A brief retrospection of the yesterday of St. Benedict's brings to notice her rapid rise from the obscurity as a little college to a prominent stationary member of the great educational institutions scattered in beauteous panorama over the sweeping plains of Kansas.

The rapid growth of the college can hardly be all attributed to the fact that it was accredited by the state. There were other factors that played a share in this game. Closely connected with the intellectual growth of the College thus far narrated, is the system of study-halls and the Student Council.

The educators of St. Benedict's College have always con-

considered it proper that those with similar interests should be grouped. When a young man enrolls he is placed in the study hall which has a spirit in keeping with his aim. Those who intend to join the Order of St. Benedict are placed in St. Gregory's Hall, those aiming to prepare for the secular priesthood, in St. Bede's Hall. Those pursuing the general college course are in the St. Joseph's Hall, and the senior high school pupils are found in the St. Edward's Hall. Besides these St. Benedict's Hall is set aside for the day scholars known as "Day Dodgers." The latter assemble in their hall from eight o'clock in the morning until twelve and again in the afternoon as long as classes are in session. In 1923 a hall was provided for the students who studied under the direction of the Extension Society. When the Society stopped sending students, this Hall went out of existence.

Each hall harbors some students whose personality makes them leaders in some activity. There is much inter-hall competition, especially in athletics. With the establishing of a Hall Committee in 1927, a strong organization was created. This body has played an influential part in all activities of the College. Each hall is represented in the Committee by three men chosen by the members of the different halls. The

members of the Committee elect the chairman who is also a member of the Student Council.¹

This Council was founded in 1925 to create a better understanding between the faculty and the students and foster a more intimate union among the various parts of the school. It constitutes the student-governing body and acts in collaboration with the faculty for the welfare of all. Through the Diet composed of the officers of the council, suggestions and petitions are presented to the faculty for consideration. The election of officers, in which all college men are permitted to vote, takes place every spring.²

During the year general meetings are held at which all are given ample opportunity to express their views and suggest changes or improvements. All school activities are managed by the Hall Committee under the supervision of the Student Council Diet. The Committee creates and promotes interest in all events of the scholastic year. It manages pep rallies, amateur night, athletic day, and the intra-mural sports.³ While working in union with the Diet, the Hall Committee endeavors to be in closer contact with the students and to represent the views of the students as such. The Council has been successful in its achievements. Through its

influence the students have taken a more active part in the
development of their college. It was this organization that
saved Abbey Student by inaugurating a campaign to swell the
subscription list and founded The Raven in 1926.

A paramount factor was the preparation and training the
Order gave its members, and how much stress was placed on it
may be taken from a letter of Abbot Wimmer, published in the
Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, XXVIII, (1869):

We have a complete College and a Seminary, which
are not inferior to another in the country. Lately
our faculty was increased by the addition of a pro-
fessor of Chemistry, Botany, Mineralogy and Astron-
y in the person of M....1 I have also sent Father
Alphonse, a very talented man, to the Jesuits of
Georgetown, near Washington, to take a course in
Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and Astronomy, so that
we may have a complete faculty for the Commune Stud-
ium of St. Vincent's Minnesota and Kansas. We aim
to have thorough professors in all departments. The
Bishops of Fort Wayne, Brooklyn, Newark, Covington,
Galveston, Leavenworth, Erie and Pittsburg have stu-
dents in our Seminary. I had also resolved to send
two young Fathers to Rome to take a thorough course
in Philosophy and Theology, and the necessary ar-
rangements had already been made with the Rt. Rev.
Abbot of St. Paul in Rome for their reception, but
the war trouble broke out and prevented the execu-
tion of this plan.2

This spirit did not vanish when the Benedictines became
Kansas pioneers. As early as 1867 Rev. Kassan, one of the

1. It was Dr. Rudolph Meuller of Prussia, whose name Abbot
Wimmer did not give, because the Doctor had only recently
been converted to Catholicism and did not wish his where-
abouts to be known by his former friends.
The monks of St. Benedict's were sent to St. Louis to attend College. Financial embarrassment prevented other Fathers of St. Benedict's from attending institutions of higher learning until 1884. In the eighties Rev. Bradley, Rev. Stoeckly, and Rev. Green studied at Chicago. By the opening of the twentieth century Rev. Joseph Sittenauer and Rev. Innocent Wolf returned from Rome, the former with the Doctor of Divinity, the latter with the Licentiate of Sacred Theology.

Others, who went to Rome before the World War checked this movement, were Rev. Wise and Rev. Schwinn. On account of the war the latter did not finish his studies in Rome.

In the fall of 1908 a radical change was made in favor of the clerics who up to this time had been students and professors. Besides assuming the duties of prefects and teaching several classes, they were expected to attend to their classes as students. Realizing the hindrance which that was to thorough scholarship, the community decided to send the clerics to different monasteries for their studies. Beginning with the fall of 1908 until the fall of 1914 all clerics were sent either to St. Vincent's, Pennsylvania, or to St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota. This gave the clerics ample opportunity to do graduate work and acquire degrees that had become a necessity in the revolution of educational standards.

Though the professors had spent summer after summer in
good schools, most of them had but the Bachelor's degree, as a consequence, professors were also given more opportunities of securing higher degrees. As soon as Europe was at peace again three Fathers crossed the Atlantic to pursue higher studies in Rome. In 1928 fifteen were studying in various universities: three in Europe, one at Harvard, three at Iowa City, two at Notre Dame, one at Chicago, and one at Northwestern University. This educational movement naturally affected the system of instruction and brought about an educational revolution during the transition period. The standardized catalogue of St. Benedict's as it exists today owes its form primarily to Rev. Kamian Lavery, Rev. Sylvester Schmitz, and Rev. Louis Baska. Through their efforts the catalogue "changed from a picture book with an outline of studies to a book with a scientific arrangement of topics."

The History of St. Benedict's College may be narrated in different ways. But all point to the one work, "Progress," true progress, with its three-fold characteristic which is a part of the Spirit of St. Benedict's: prayer, work, and study, "That in all things God may be glorified."
ge ihn nicht bei jetzigen unsicheren Zeiten durch unsere woe-
chentliche reitende mail zu befoerdern. Ich schrieb ihm wied-
der, ich sehe keine grosse Gefahr und wenn er keine andere 
sichere Gelengenheit faende, so moege er ihn nur wiederum re-
gistriert abgeben lassen. Da er aber immer nicht kam und ich 
neugierig und in grosser Gel .dverlegenheit war, ausserdem auch 
zu Beicht gehen wollte, so machte ich mich laetzten Montag 
selft auf den Weg. Wie ich nach Leavenworth kam, hatte der 
Bischof den Brief gerade abgeschloen und ich fand ihn heute 
bei meiner Heimkunft vor. Ich danke herzlich fuer alles, was 
er enthaelt.

In meinen letzten Briefe von Leavenworth schrieb ich, 
dass ich bereit waere, an meinen neuen Wirkungskreis zu gehen. 
Dass ist auch geschehen. Ich kam hier Anfangs July an. Man 
hat hier eine Stadt angelegt, welche, wenn die Entwicklung 
des Landes wie bisher fortschreitet, ein bedeutender Platz 
werden muss, vielleicht ein anderes Cincinnati oder St. Lou-
is; denn die hat ausser Leavenworth den einzigen guten Land-
ungsplatz an dem reissenden Missouri im Territroium und ist 
die hoeschte Stelle, zu welcher schwer beladene Dampfschiffe 
zu jeder Jahreszeit heraufkommen koennen; dazu ist die Umge-
bung sehr schoen und fruchtbar, Wasser und Holz im Ueber-
flusz, das Klima sehr gesund, wie man es wohl nicht leicht 
irgendwo in der Welt findet. Es kommen und gehen taegli-
dampfschiffe und der Verkehr diesses vierzehn Monate alten 
Platzes betrug, wie die hiesige Zeitung nachweist, seit vo-
rigem Herbstbete eine halbe Million.

Die Amerikaner kennen die Wichtigkeit diesses Platzes 
recht gut und reisen sich um die Stadttotten, welche vom 
Flusse aus an sanft aufsteigendem Grunde bereits eine halbe 
Meile weit in die Prairie hinein ausgelegt sind. Unser lie-
ber Bischof sucht mit lobenswerther Vorsicht ueberall, wo 
neue Ortshaftrten ausgelegt werdern, sogleich festen Fuss zu 
fassen. So hatte er auch hier schon drei Lotten gekauft. 
Wie ich hierher ging, gab er mir ein Schreiben an einen der
hiess es, was ist denn das fuer eine Platform? Es ist, sagte ich, der Grundsatz, welchen die Katholische Kirche von Anfang gelehrt und bis heute festgehalten, der Grundsatz, den der Herr und Meister ausgesprochen, wenn Er sagt, "Ich bin nicht gekommen aufzulosen, sondern zu erfüllen." Darum sucht die Kirche die einmal bestehenden Verhältnisse der Welt und des menschlichen Lebens keineswegs zu zerstören, sondern zu veredeln, zu heiligen. Wenn daher Z.B. einer von euren Sklaven mir zuliefe, so würde ich ihn, wie St. Paulus den Onesimus, seinem Herrn zurückschicken; den Herrn aber würde ich ermahnen, ihn nicht wie ein Stück Vieh, sondern wie einen Mitmenschen zu behandeln u.s.w. Wie ich meine Speech Vollendet hatte, wurde mir von allen Seiten Beifall gegeben und welche die ganz vernünftigen und gebildeten Männer zu sein schienen, setzten sich zu mir und zogen mich in ein langes Gespräch über kirchliche Gegenstände, besonders "on the temporal power of the Pope."

laesst, zum aufbauen einer Klosterlichen Anstalt consentiert und beihilft, er nicht einmal einen Deed fuer die Kirche und andere Kirchen, die wir noch in unserem Distrikte bauen moechten, beansprucht und uns die Seelsorge wenigstens fuer dieses County uebergibt. Ich habe deswegen auch schon die Bonds fuer die Lotten auf mich zu machen angeordnet, N. B. "to have and to hold them in trust for the Benedictine Society."

Sie sehen also, mein verehrtester Pater Abbot, dass wir, d.h. der Herr Bischof und ich, uns noch nicht haben abschrecken lassen, hier eine kleine Anstalt unter der Fahne des hl. Benedikt zu beginnen....

Mit aller Liebe und Hochachtung

Ihr gehorsamerster

P. Heinrich

P.S. Aug. 30.

Doniphan, Aug. 28, 1856

A certain fatality seems to rule over your letters to me. You are aware that two letters of our present correspondence are lost. The last letter of July 27th (my birthday 1796) I received to-day. Three weeks ago the bishop wrote, that there was a letter there for me, which in all probability contained money since it had come by registered mail; but that he did not venture to send it by the weekly pony mail on account of the present dangerous conditions. I wrote to him again that I did not see any great danger and if he could not find any other safe opportunity, he should register it and forward it. As the letter still did not come and since I was curious and in great need of money, aside of the fact that I desired to go to confession, I left last Monday. When I arrived in Leavenworth, the Bishop had just delivered the letter which I found on my return to-day, I thank you most heartily for all it contains.

In my last letter from Leavenworth, I stated that I was prepared to go to my new field of labor. That happened; I arrived here in the beginning of July. A town has been established here which, if the developments continue as heretofore, must become an important place, perhaps another Cincinnati or St. Louis. Aside of Leavenworth it has the only good landing point to which heavy laden steamships can arrive the year around. Besides this, the surrounding country is most beautiful and fertile. There is water and wood in abundance. The climate is very healthy, such as is not easily found anywhere in the world. Steamships arrive and leave every day. The traffic of this fourteen-month old place, according to the paper, reached a half-million since last fall.

The Americans know the importance of this place very well and hasten to buy the city lots which are laid out from the gentle slope at the river, about a half mile into the prairie. Our dear Bishop has praiseworthy forethought (fore-sight, prognastic) to obtain a foothold wherever a town is laid out. So he had also bought three lots here. When I came here he gave me a written introduction of one of the city-directors, in which he strongly recommended me as a man who could draw many settlers and would be of assistance to the development of the city. In consequence, three more lots were presented me, I bought six more at the original price of $50 as a privilege, for they are now bought already at least on the front street, for $300 to $300. Thus I have a whole square of 12 lots in the nicest part of town about 100 feet above the river, 308 feet long and 254 feet wide. I commenced at once to build on them so that I will be under roof before winter sets in. Until then, of course, it will go hard with me. An Irishman built a little kitchen 14 by 16 on his lot.
He has a claim with a shanty two miles from town, where he lives with the family during the summer. This man has rented me his city residence which has not been plastered nor floored; nearby lives a family that does my laundry, bakes my bread and from whom I also obtain milk and water. Mornings and evenings I prepare a little soup, tea or coffee, and at noon I go to the hotel in order to get at least one good meal a day. I sleep on a straw tick that rests on a few slats nailed together. In regard to my parochial duties, my parish extends on the civilized side half way to Leavenworth, on the other side to the Nebraska line and on the third side out into the infinite towards the Rocky Mountains. My parish church is a wooden shanty arranged to do carpenter work and my parishioners are in petto. Of course there are scattered Catholic Families everywhere. These have, however, to a great extent fallen into lax habits and it will require a great effort to bring them back on the right road. Some are half Indians where the Irish Catholic Americans married Indian parties. Fortunately there are no Protestant churches or resident preachers in this entire district.

Last week just as that uproar, of which you have read enough in the papers by this time, was renewed, I went up the river to visit a dying person. The boat was filled with Kentuckians and Missourians who had lynched a Methodist preacher that morning and cast him on a sand bank. I noticed that they watched me with sharp eyes and would have discerned my mind. There is really a tense spirit here such as there was in the year 1793 at the Reign of Terror in France. Finally one of them approached me directly and when I saw that I could not get out of his way I said; "Gentlemen I am a Catholic priest and as such I am above all that has brought you into such a terrible commotion in high relief quite on another platform." "Well?" was the question, "What sort of a platform is this?" "It is the principle," I said, "which the Catholic Church has taught from the beginning and has held fast to the present day, the principle which the Lord and Master announced that He came not to destroy but to fulfill. Therefore the Church seeks to sanctify, to elevate the existing conditions of the world and humanity, and in no manner aims to destroy. If therefore, for example, one of your slaves would come to me I would send him back to his master as St. Paul did, Onesimus. I would admonish the Master, however, not to treat him as an animal but as a fellow-man etc. When I had finished my speech I was applauded.

I expect to have an organized parish soon. I know five good families from Missouri who will settle here this fall and today as I came home, there were two men from Indiana seeking a location. At the present time only three Catholic
families live in town, therefore it is easy to understand the parish income. Since I am here I received 50 cents as a mass stipend and one dollar (stola) for a Baptism. But you will say: "If it is thus with the income, how can you live?"--buy lots and develop them? The people in this locality (also non-Catholics) have already subscribed $700 for the erection of a church and a house and the Bishop has promised $500 over above this. He had already given me $150; if I should find my self in financial embarrassment I can have recourse to him. For the lots I am only required to pay the first half, October 1st, and the second half, April 1st. My opinion concerning the building is this; I will now erect a building 70 feet long and of this I will use 30 feet for two rooms with the masoned ground for cellar and kitchen and the half story above for sleeping quarters which is large and comfortable enough for at least two priests and four brothers. The entire remaining room 40 feet long will remain without partitions--for it will be our church until we shall be able to erect a stately church. Then a wing 60 feet long will be erected from the east end of the building, the present church will be changed into living quarters by means of partitions and the little monastery is finished, as one could only wish it--The Bishop has already promised and has repeated it to me, that if the Rt. Rev. Abbot permits me to rule and govern here as a Benedictine, that he will assent to, and assist in the establishing of a monastery, that he will not demand a dead for this church and other churches that we may build in our district; he offers us at least the care of the souls of this county. I have therefore ordered the deeds for these lots, to be made in my name. N. B. "to have and to hold in trust--for the Benedictine Society."

You see therefore, dear Father Abbot that we, the Lord Bishop and I, have not been frightened away from the idea of establishing a small institution under the banner of St. Benedict.

Your most obedient,

P. Henry.

P. S. August 30. "My building plan is shattered, all my laborers are gone, some ran away, some went to war. Things look very doubtful here just now. Today I heard the distant roar of a cannon. There are plenty of reports but I know nothing definite. By the time you receive this letter, you will know more from the news than I know myself just now. They are all leaving, trying to save themselves, taking to flight. But I will remain at my post. Besides, I do not believe
But I will remain at my post. Besides, I do not believe that we have much to fear at this place. The war will be fought out in the neighborhood of Lecompton. I foresaw this, therefore I did not go there when the Bishop gave me the choice between that place and this one.


2. No one is allowed to leave the college premises at any time without permission.

3. No one will be permitted to go to town except in company with the Prefect or their parents. Only once in a month will the Prefect go to town with those that must necessarily go there.

4. Whenever the weather is favorable, everyone must be found on the playground during the time of recreation. Otherwise all must be in the recreation room during that time, and not leave it without the permission of the Prefect.

5. No one is allowed to absent himself from the regular walks, and all must remain with the Prefect during walks or when going to town.

6. All pocket-money must be deposited with the Prefect, who will give it over to the student in such a manner as he may judge the occasion to require.

7. Students are not allowed to borrow money from each other, nor to trade or sell articles.

8. The strictest silence is always to be observed in the dormitory, and in the study-hall during study-hours. Also at table unless permission is given to speak.

9. No one should be seen with his hat on in any part of the house.

10. All clamorous noise, whistling, running and jumping inside the house is strictly forbidden.

11. Great care should be taken not to deface the walls, windows, furniture, etc. of the institution. Any damage culpably done, has to be paid for.

12. The floors of the rooms must be kept clean. Waste paper should be thrown in the waste basket.

13. No one is allowed to leave his seat or the room, during study time, except when he goes to classes.
1. Every student is obliged to meet the Superiors and Professors of the College with due respect and obey their commands.

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7. Students are not allowed to borrow money from each other, not to trade or sell articles.

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11. Great care should be taken not to deface the walls, windows, furniture, etc. of the institution. Any damage culpably done, has to be paid for.

12. The floors of the rooms must be kept clean. Waste paper should be thrown in the waste basket.

13. No one is allowed to leave his seat or the room, during study time, except when he goes to classes.
14. No one should absent himself from any of his classes without informing the teacher of his reason.

15. In going to or coming from class, the strictest silence is to be kept, and no one should be allowed to go outside of the house.

16. No one should open the desk of another under any pretense whatever.

17. Day-scholars are admitted into the College at eight o'clock in the morning, and are required to leave the College as soon as the classes are dismissed.

18. No one is allowed to go into the other part of the house without the approbation of the Prefect.

19. No story-books, newspapers, periodicals, etc., are allowed to be read by the students without the approbation of the Prefect.

20. Everyone should call to mind the rules of politeness when at table and behave accordingly. All noise with knives, forks, plates etc., should be carefully avoided, and every one should find time to wait on his neighbor.

21. Punctual attendance at the class is required; and day-scholars after absenting themselves, or coming too late, will not be received without a note from their parents or guardians.

22. Day-scholars are forbidden to take out letters or perform errands for boarders. Any one violating this rule may be dismissed.

23. Day-scholars not going home for their meals, are not permitted to leave the College premises during free-time.

24. Whoever transgresses any one of the above rules, must submit to the correction given him by the respective Superior; and no one is allowed to apply to a higher authority before having submitted to the proper correction.

25. Any By-law added hereafter, is as binding as the above rules."

1. Rev. Wirth, Rules, in the Archives of St. Benedict's Abbey
This data is based principally on Rev. Pusch's manuscript, periodicals, letters, interviews and standard histories of Kansas. Of these the manuscript was of paramount importance. The author, who has been an active member of the Catholic American Historical Association and Professor in History at St. Benedict's College for a number of years based his work on interviews with contemporaries and on letters, chronicles, and on documents some of which are kept in the archives of St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kansas and others in the archives of St. Vincent's Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

Several of the letters were of great value. Rev. Henry Lemke's letters gave historical facts for the early history of this work. A letter from Michael Hogan, now attending the Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis, has been of great value on account of the long and detailed account he gave. It covers not only the eight years of his stay at the college from 1920 to 1928, but also narrates the changes that have taken place since he left. These he learned from some of the professors he met the summer of 1930 and from correspondence with students of St. Benedict's. A comparison of his account with the St. Benedict's College papers, The Rambler and The Raven, and other sources proves that his dates and statements are correct in every case in which he makes an assertion. In cases in which he was doubtful
in even the least respect, mention was made of this fact.

The same credit must be given to the letter on athletics from John Wechensky also a former student of the College. Every date that he mentions agrees with the college papers and informations from various interviews. Two other letters of no less value than those mentioned are the one from Lawrence Quigley, who was the Coach at St. Benedict's from 1922 to 1928; and Robert Schmidt, who is the Coach since 1928. The former gave a general account of athletics; the latter a detailed account of the changes and the present athletic system.

The interviews were all valuable. The writer being personally acquainted with the men, and knowing their character, knew how to judge their accounts and upon which topics to make inquiry. From Dr. Biermann, and Arnold Ven Johann she could expect a description of the smooth and bright side of college life only, while from Albert and Joseph Debbrecht she could expect to get a picture of the reverse side also. Nick Martin and Henry Peltzer gave a very accurate and well balanced account. Rev. McNeill's informations were exceptionally good because of his experience and interest in educational work and his reliable memory.

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