

# Bell Rings Up \$16,500

When the brass bell rings somebody shouts, somebody applauds, and someone from Texas or Florida or New York says "What on earth is going on there?"

What's going on is the Phon-a-thon, and it's a huge success. As we go to press the mercury on Mr. Clark's wall chart-thermometer stands at \$16,545 from 77 contributors.

It's hard work, but it's fun, too, and maybe the record call has already been made -- the one by Pam Allison when that wonderful alumnus pledged \$1400.

The final count in dollars is no more important than the total number of contributors we report. Our volunteers, fifteen strong, will have completed more than 700 calls when the Phon-a-thon ends December 9th, and we hope now we'll get that \$50,000 promised by one man -- the man who said he'd give \$50,000 when the Abbey raises \$50,000

from the Alumni.

We've talked with old friends and new friends. We wish we could call everyone who's ever been here.

The success of the Alumni Giving portion of the Centennial Fund will give us the credibility we must have to apply to the Foundations.

At this time more than \$30,000 has been reported toward the Alumni goal of \$65,000. Reports from Bob Healy's workers in Mecklenburg and Harry Creemers' volunteers in Gaston will be along next week. The grand total reported for the Centennial Fund is \$916,210.

When we have enough time, we'll write a column designed to erase a myth. Whoever said "We needn't expect help from Abbey alumni?" We are simply elated with your response, and we'll have a wonderful story to tell next time.

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Mrs. Jane Freeman talks to alumni



## CROSSROADS

### Belmont Abbey College

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To Be Published This Month

# 'The First Hundred Years'

## INSIGHT

By REV. JOHN P. BRADLEY, President -

Over the last few months, whenever I could find the time, I have been putting together a brief historical sketch of the College covering its first hundred years. This will be published as a rather small booklet during December 1976, just managing to see the light of day before the end of our Centennial Year. It is a pity that we were not able to have an adequate history of the College to mark the celebration of its hundredth year, for the story is truly a fascinating one. The historical sketch to be published is obviously no more than a brief summary, based, particularly when dealing with the earlier years, on Father Sebastian Doris' Belmont Abbey, Its Origin, Development, and Present State.

The sketch is enough, however, I believe, to capture a recurring theme that weaves through the history of both Abbey and College. This theme, as I detect it, may be briefly described thus: No logical human reasons seem to be adequate to explain, first, why this institution was established here, one of the most unlikely places in the country for such an

institution; secondly, its survival for 100 years can be partially explained by the tremendous leadership provided by that towering figure, the first Abbot, Bishop Leo Haid, and the dedication, sacrifice, and industriousness of his monks. But, after that has been said, considering all the problems and challenges that had to be overcome, there would seem to be needed a further reason if we are to have an adequate explanation. That further reason must surely be this: God, in His Providence, wanted this institution to be here, and men of faith and dedication responded to what they took to be His will. Even today, after 100 years, the ways of Providence in this particular instance are less than scrutable, and one might think that those ways may be more clearly understood during the second century of the institution's existence.

The historical sketch I

have been working on is simply a small way of remembering the faith, dedication, and sacrifice of our predecessors with gratitude, and of expressing the hope that we in the College who have inherited their work in education will draw inspiration from their achievements.

The following excerpt from the booklet, a portion of a letter dated March 8, 1928, written by Father M. A. Irwin, a priest of the Diocese of Raleigh, who graduated in 1882, serves to give the flavor of those early days and may prompt some of us today to think not only about the physical ways in which the College has improved, but also to ponder some of the values that have been lost:

"I was at Belmont for the scholastic years, 1880-1881 and 1881-1882, two years. My course was mixed high school and college course. I received (won) six

premiums the first year and two the second year.

"In 1880-1881 the Director was Very Rev. Stephen Lyons, and was my teacher in advanced arithmetic, Religion, Rhetoric, and English Composition. He was a very efficient teacher - and also taught Elocution.

Very Rev. Herman Wolfe, O.S.B., was the prior. He taught me Algebra and Geometry. He was very cheerful - tall, grey, angular - a good pianist.

Rev. Julius Pohl, O.S.B., was my teacher in German, English, Penmanship, Vocal music and violin - and in general, our spiritual director and confessor. He was also the missionary for the surrounding country. He preached a little nearly every morning, or at least frequently, and established in us all the fear of God and the love of God. He was not quite twenty-five years of age when I first met him.

"In the early part of the scholastic year 1880-1881, not a brick had been laid of the brick buildings now at Belmont. I saw the foundations dug and the work started on the permanent buildings. The wooden buildings

were plain -- not one was plastered, all were ceiled with pine ceiling, stained dark red. Oil lamps and stoves furnished light and heat. They were of the simplest construction.

The infirmary and the brothers' building were of logs. Discipline was, however, exact, and teaching faithful and conscientious. The chapel was small and

incommodious with a very low gallery, but I received from the monks ineffaceable impressions of sanctity.

Those days are unforgettable, because they were filled with God. There I learned the first notes of the Gregorian Chant, and love for that sacred art has never left me. There the seeds of a divine vocation took root. There I learned to love all things Benedictine. The lives of the Saints were read every day at dinner, at supper, Catholic secular stories. Nothing frivolous was ever heard from the reader's desk, except an occasional flash of humor that sprang naturally out of the situation described.

"In my first year at Belmont, the dormitory was a plain wooden shed building -- white-washed on the outside, unsealed

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