

# OUR HISTORY

Founded in 1876, Belmont Abbey College is located ten miles west of Charlotte, NC. The college is located on land donated by Reverend Jeremiah O'Connell, a missionary priest, who had purchased the land through foreclosure. He wanted to give the tract to a religious community that would use it to create an educational institution for youth.

The Benedictine monks of Saint Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, agreed to accept the land and to found a community and school. On April 21, 1876, the Reverend Herman Wolfe, O.S.B., arrived with two young students from Richmond, Virginia to take possession of the property and begin classes that very same day.

Today, the college continues to be sponsored by the monastery. Each fall, the monks of Belmont Abbey welcome a new class of students into their home as new members of the "Abbey Family."

Since its founding, several events have marked important milestones in the college's history.

**1876** Benedictine monks from Saint Vincent Abbey (Pennsylvania) take possession of the former Caldwell farm, and open Saint Mary's College.

**1878** The College holds its first commencement exercises.

**1891** The Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes is constructed and blessed as a Pilgrimage Shrine.

**1904** Saint Katharine Drexel, S.B.S., visits Belmont Abbey. Drexel had been a generous donor to the construction of the Abbey Basilica.

**1913** The name of the college is changed from "Saint Mary's" to "Belmont Abbey College." The first alumni reunion is held in Belmont.

**1952** The College returns to senior-college status.

**1962** Belmont's Abbot Walter Coggin begins his service as a Father at the Second Vatican Council.

**1972** The College became coeducational for resident students.

**1976** The first lay members are admitted to the College's Board of Trustees.

The annual observance of Founders' Day on April 21 is instituted in the Monastery.

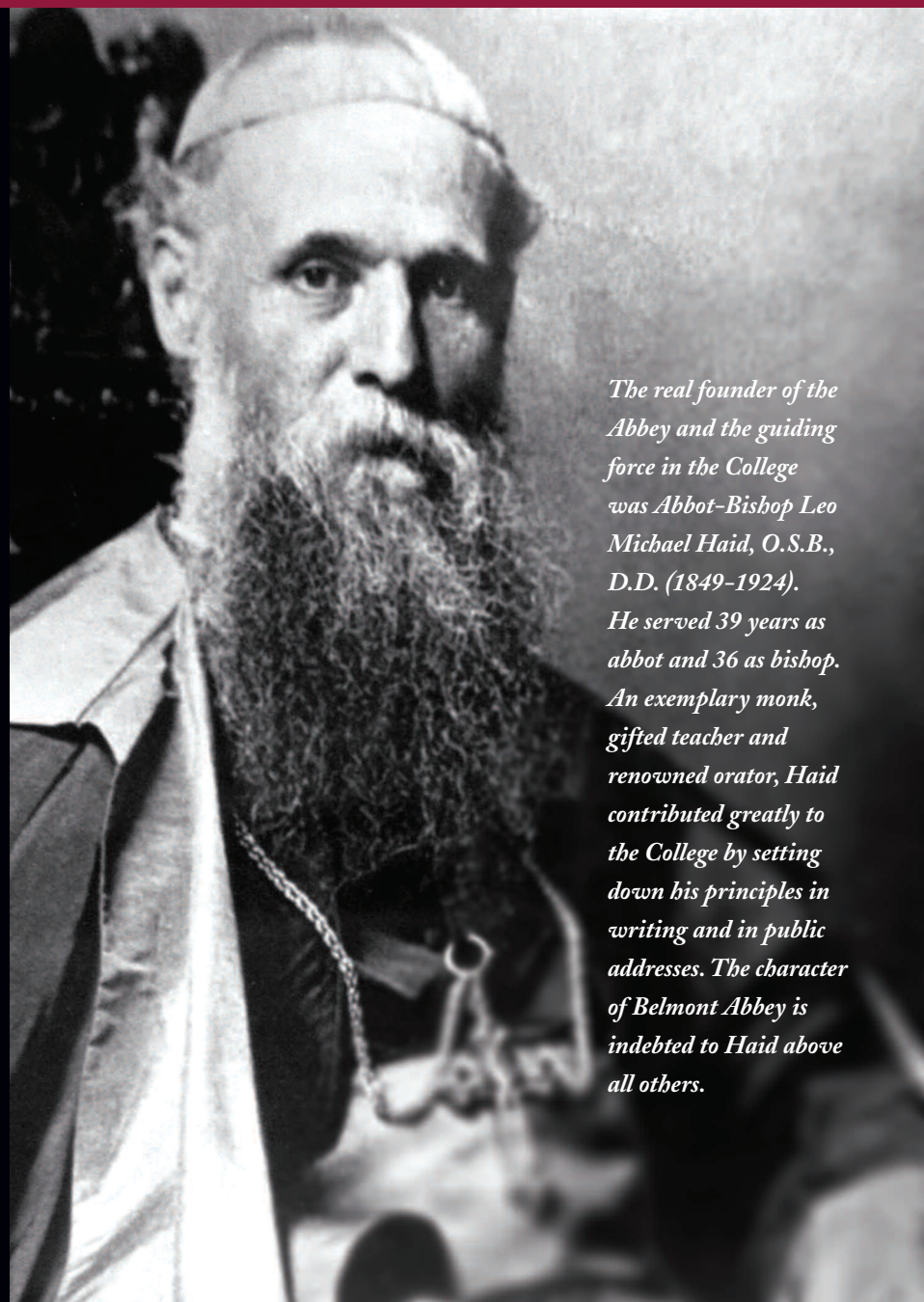
**1993** The Belmont Abbey Historic District is created and entered upon the National Register of Historic Places.

**1998** Abbey church raised to the rank of a Minor Basilica by Pope John Paul II.

**1999** Belmont Abbey was the site of a public proclamation of the elevation of the Abbey Church to the rank of Minor Basilica. His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, granted this recognition in honor of the historical, architectural, spiritual, and pastoral significance of that building.

**2008** The St. Joseph Adoration Chapel was completed and consecrated.

Belmont Abbey College is a Benedictine Catholic college that finds its center in Jesus Christ. Today, as in the years past and in the future, our college is inspired by St. Benedict's desire "that in all things God may be glorified."



*The real founder of the Abbey and the guiding force in the College was Abbot-Bishop Leo Michael Haid, O.S.B., D.D. (1849-1924). He served 39 years as abbot and 36 as bishop. An exemplary monk, gifted teacher and renowned orator, Haid contributed greatly to the College by setting down his principles in writing and in public addresses. The character of Belmont Abbey is indebted to Haid above all others.*

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