

College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University

DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU

Archives History Lessons

Archives

2015

Building a College for Women: The Beginnings of St. Ben's

Peggy L. Roske

College of Saint Benedict/Saint John's University, proske@csbsju.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/archives_history_lessons

Recommended Citation

Roske, Peggy L., "Building a College for Women: The Beginnings of St. Ben's" (2015). *Archives History Lessons*. 16.

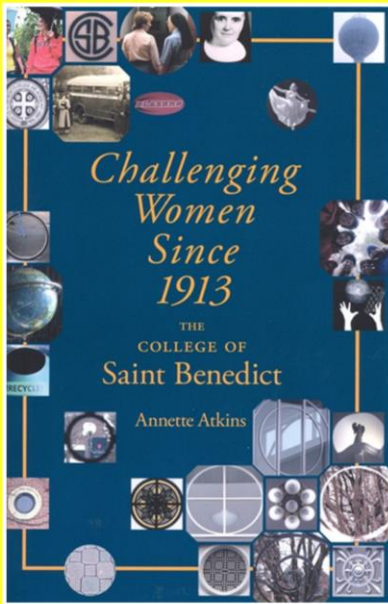
https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/archives_history_lessons/16

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Archives History Lessons by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@CSB/SJU. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@csbsju.edu.

Building a College for Women: The Beginnings



Photo from St. Ben's Monastery Archives, dated Sept. 23, 1912



As documented by Annette Atkins in her book:

- American Catholic bishops generally opposed women's higher education
- The Church prohibited sisters from attending non-Catholic colleges...
- ...but Catholic colleges enrolled only *males*
- The Sisters needed to be college-educated to found a college
- So some communities of women religious founded their own

Atkins, Annette. *Challenging Women Since 1913: College of Saint Benedict*, p. 30-35.

The Bishop of St. Paul, John Ireland, favored college for women

His sister, Seraphine, led St. Paul's Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

Like Benedict and Scholastica, they were close confidants and advisors to each other

He supported the St. Kate's sisters in attending the University of Minnesota and the University of Chicago



Atkins, Annette. *Challenging Women Since 1913: College of Saint Benedict*, p. 30-35.

John Ireland photo <http://media-2.web.britannica.com/eb-media/36/132436-004-4B462D74.jpg>

Seraphine Ireland photo

http://stmedia.startribune.com/images/ows_141790760987232.jpg

Between 1905 and 1915, 14 Catholic women's colleges were opened in the U.S., including, in Minnesota:

- St. Catherine (aka St. Kate's), St. Paul, in 1905
- St. Teresa's, Winona, in 1907
- St. Scholastica, Duluth, in 1912
- St. Ben's, St. Joseph, in 1913



Atkins, Annette. *Challenging Women Since 1913: College of Saint Benedict*, p. 30-35.

St. Kate's <http://www.carristech.com/st-catherine-university.html>

http://vignette3.wikia.nocookie.net/johnbellairs/images/8/8d/St_Marys_Hall.png/revision/latest?cb=20140918020815

St. Teresa's

http://vignette3.wikia.nocookie.net/johnbellairs/images/8/8d/St_Marys_Hall.png/revision/latest?cb=20140918020815

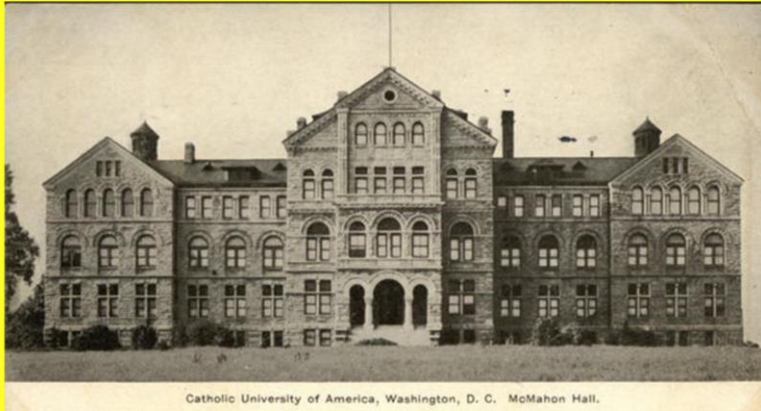
St. Scholastica [http://hcap.artstor.org/collect/cic-](http://hcap.artstor.org/collect/cic-hcap/index/assoc/p424.dir/Tower%20Hall%20(general%20view,%20n.d.),%20College%20of%20St.%20Scholastica-large.jpg)

[hcap/index/assoc/p424.dir/Tower%20Hall%20\(general%20view,%20n.d.\),%20College%20of%20St.%20Scholastica-large.jpg](http://hcap.artstor.org/collect/cic-hcap/index/assoc/p424.dir/Tower%20Hall%20(general%20view,%20n.d.),%20College%20of%20St.%20Scholastica-large.jpg)

St. Ben's <http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/22>

Women couldn't attend Catholic University during the school year, but...

- One of Archbishop Ireland's St. Paul priests joined the faculty at Catholic University and founded a summer school "Sisters College" there in 1911
- St. Ben's founding faculty could complete their master's degrees there
- Similarly, sisters at St. Ben's could complete their bachelor's degrees in summer classes at St. Ben's



Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C. McMahon Hall.

Atkins, Annette. *Challenging Women Since 1913: College of Saint Benedict*, p. 30-35.

Photo: https://www.cardcow.com/images/set534/card00507_fr.jpg



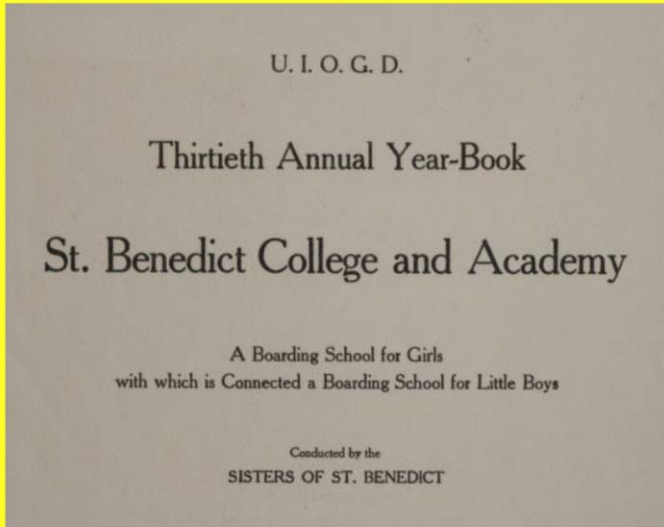
ANNUAL CATALOGUE
— OF —
St. Benedict's Academy,
ST. JOSEPH, STEARNS CO., MINN.

1885-86

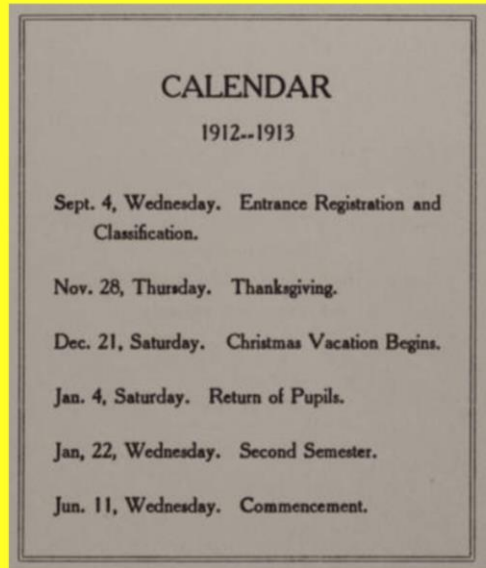
KURT C. ALLISON'S ART STUDIO, CHICAGO, U.S.A.

ST. BENEDICT'S ACADEMY, ST. JOSEPH, STEARNS COUNTY, MINN.

1885-86 Saint Benedict's Academy Catalogue
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/CSBArchives/id/2614>



front cover



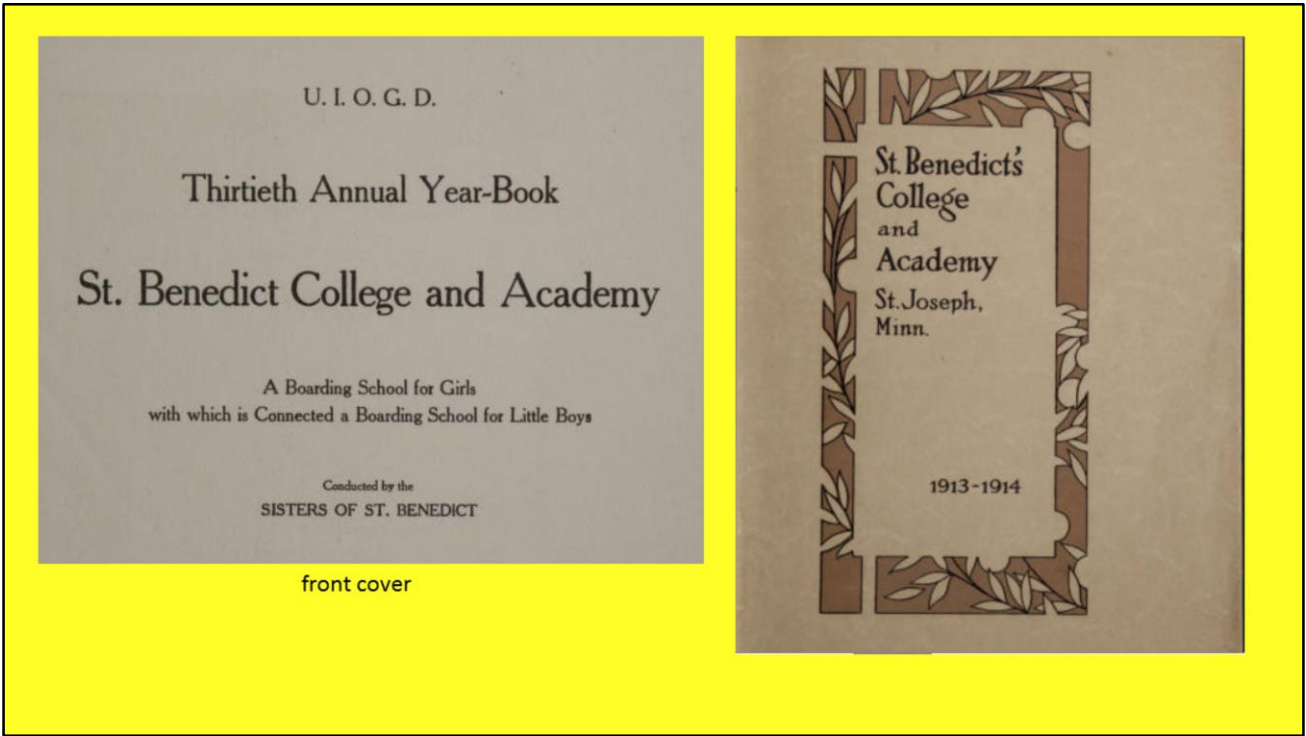
p.3

1912 – the College is mentioned even before it starts!

30th, 1912 front cover:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/1888>

30th, 1912, p.3 <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/1890>

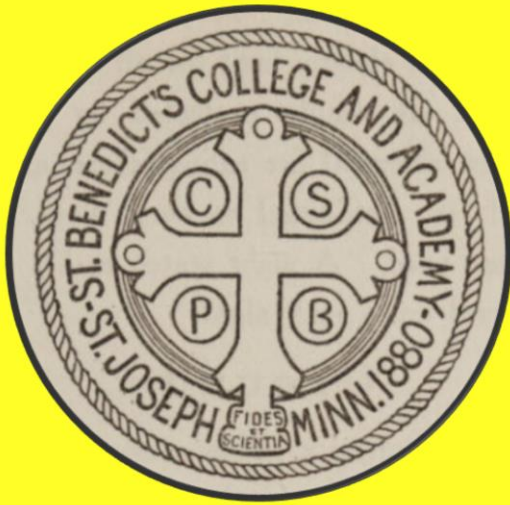


30th, 1912 front cover:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/1888>

31st, 1913-1914 <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/2108>

1913-1914



U. I. O. G. D.

Thirty-first Annual Year-Book
St. Benedict's College and Academy

A Boarding School for Girls

Conducted by the Sisters of St. Benedict

Collegiate Department

Two Years' Course for High School Graduates

Admission of Students and Entrance Requirements

The purpose of St. Benedict's College is the higher education of women. In order to attain this end, the work has been outlined for two years of college work, in conformity with the best educational standards.

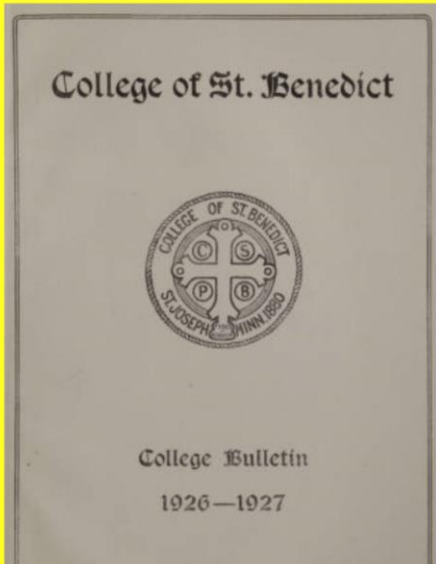
Thirty-first Annual Year-Book, 1913-1914, St. Benedict's College and Academy, St. Joseph, Minnesota

Emblem and title page:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/2118>

Collegiate dept., p. 14:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/2112>



The first separate bulletin, for the college only

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE INSTITUTION

Education as a spiritual, mental, and physical development to the end that *IN ALL THINGS GOD MAY BE GLORIFIED* has for centuries been a cherished Benedictine tradition and ideal; therefore it is the first aim of the College of St. Benedict to provide for its students those branches of religious and secular training designed to effect most directly this three-fold objective.

The Institution provides a curriculum equal to that of any college of first rank, and it is empowered to confer degrees in all ordinary academic and cultural courses. Besides these, valuable training is offered in teacher training, social service, art, music, and household science.

Every effort is made to induce the highest grade of scholarship and service. That the pupil may through the arts and sciences gain a wider appreciation of God's great gifts is the ultimate aim of the instructions in the secular branches.

College Bulletin 1926-1927 cover:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/4906>

Aims and Scope, p. 7 <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/4912>
(same text as previous years)

"Every effort..." p. 8 <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/4913>
(same text as previous years)

College of Saint Benedict

Its History

THE College of Saint Benedict was begun early in the present century.

It was the culmination of a project which had its beginning a third of a century before, when in 1880 the Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict purchased farm and wood lands in the environs of the town of St. Joseph, Minnesota, seven miles north of the city of St. Cloud, and opened the Academy of Saint Benedict for the "select and higher education of young ladies."

A beautiful site in the country, free from the increasing interruptions and distractions of the metropolitan centers to the east, yet convenient of access to these cities, was chosen deliberately and with far-sighted wisdom. This site is the key to the unique aspect which Saint Benedict's today presents—completely of the new world in spirit, method, and equipment—hauntingly of the old world in atmosphere, physical aspect, and the golden, thirteen-centuries-old traditions of Benedictine education.

Occupied in 1880, the first Academy building for pupils and convent for the Sisters rose on the site and opened its doors in 1881. In common with educational practice of that day in America, the old Academy offered the accepted version of practical higher education for women and graduated its pupils to make their substantial domestic and vocational contribution to the opening and upbuilding of the Northwest.

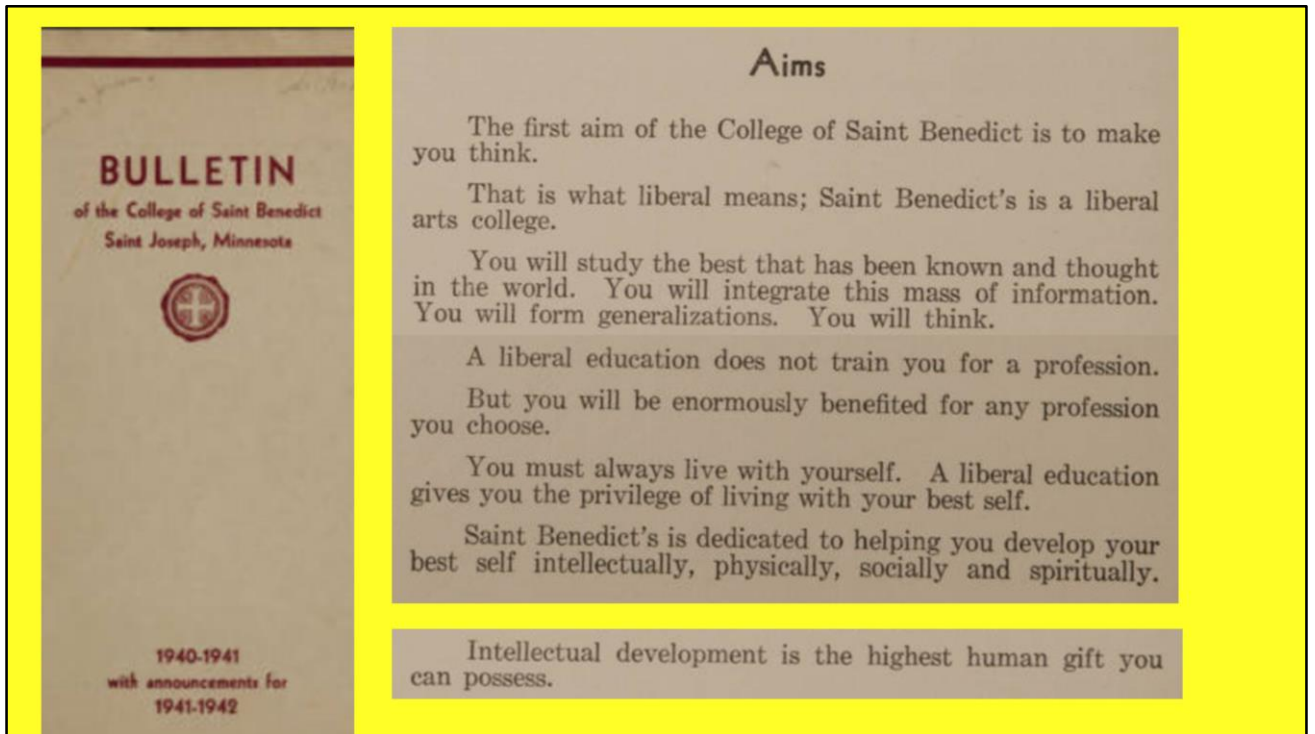
The development of new fields and more opportunities for women, which came with the present century, demanded correspondingly widened and more varied forms of mental training. The twentieth century College of Saint Benedict was the logical next step from the nineteenth century program to upbuild on the Benedictine acres at St. Joseph an edifice of higher learning, where the proven best of other ages could be studied, where the new and experimental could be tested under research, and where the spiritual life could be fostered as the guide to the mental by the principles of the Catholic philosophy of life. On this foundation, the College of Saint Benedict was begun.

The success of this educational program in the new College is already evident in the recognition which the College of Saint Benedict enjoys in the official circles of higher education.

College Bulletin 1931-1932, p. 5-6

College Bulletin 1931-1932, p. 5-6

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/5140>



Cover: <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/2418>

Aims: p. 16 <http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/stbm/id/2435>

Compiled in November 2015 by
Peggy Landwehr Roske, CSB/SJU Archivist,
from resources in the
Archives of the College of Saint Benedict and
Saint Benedict's Monastery.
All rights reserved.