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Saint John's Founder: Boniface Wimmer, in Brief

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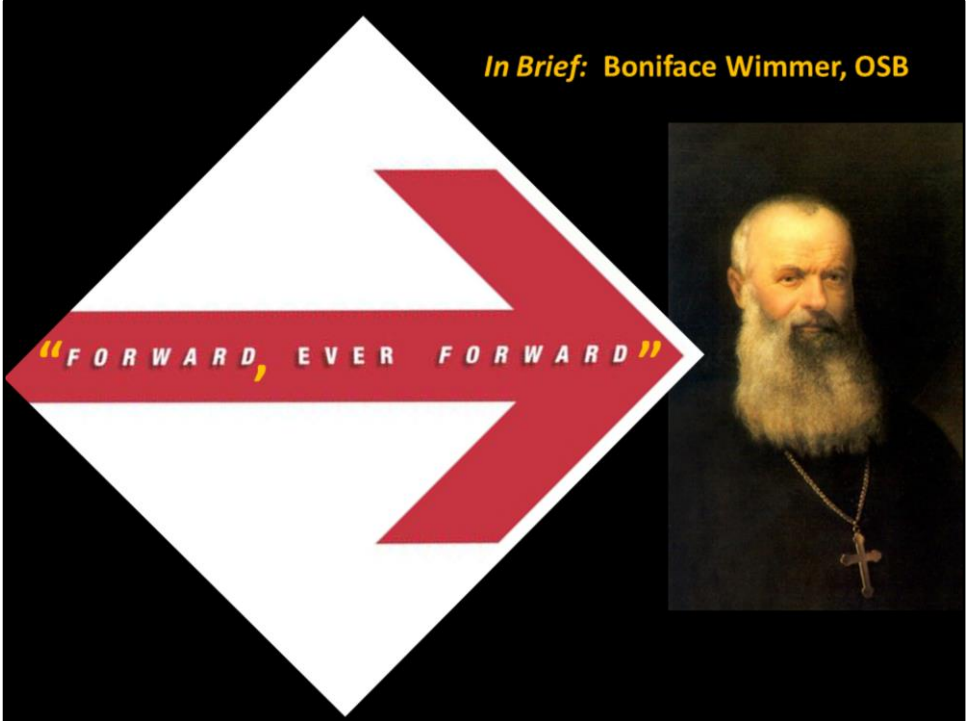
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The Campaign for

Saint John's

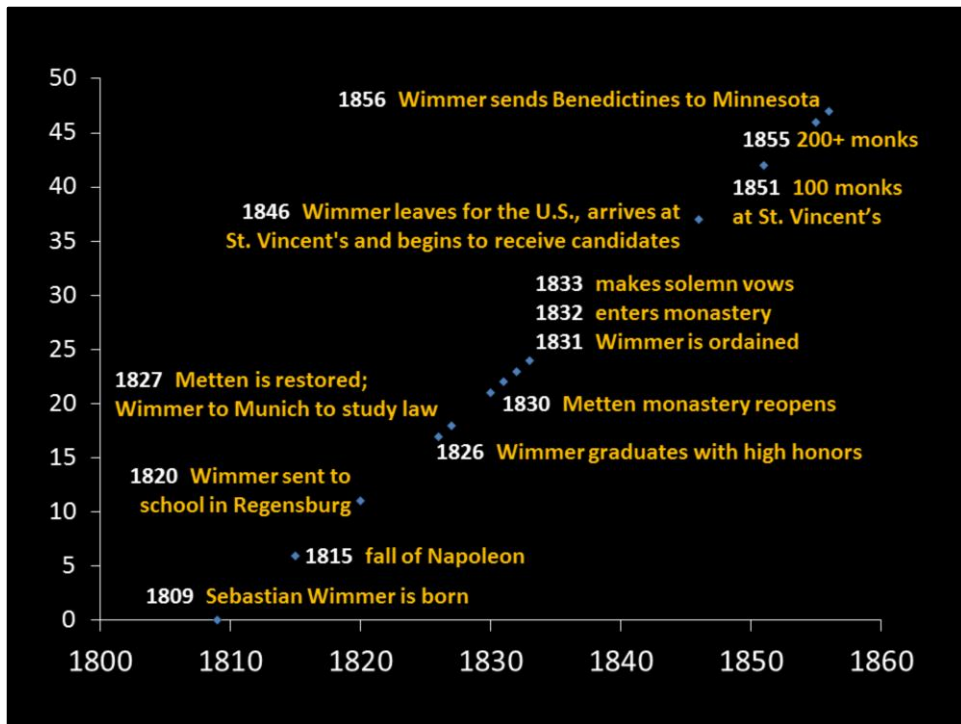
In Brief: Boniface Wimmer, OSB



In Brief: Boniface Wimmer, OSB



That's a quote from
Abbot Boniface Wimmer,
founder of the
Benedictine order in the U.S.





1876- establishes communities in North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Illinois and Colorado

1883 becomes Arch-Abbott

1887 dies at St. Vincent's



Images from http://gallery.stvincent.edu/current_exhibition and St. John's Abbey Archives

Boniface Wimmer's "firsts" for the Benedictines in the U.S.

- Established the first Benedictine monastery in North America despite the doubts of many church leaders both in America and Europe
- Created the first modern Benedictine monastery whose monks were predominantly lay brothers upon whom the prosperity of the community at St. Vincent depended.
- Convinced the bishop of Pittsburgh to name him the first "irremovable" pastor in the U.S. by granting him and his successors perpetual rights to the parish at St. Vincent.
- Persuaded the Holy See to establish St. Vincent as the first exempt religious community in the United States.

What seemed unattainable goals to others were merely challenges to meet and overcome for the *Projektenmacher* of Metten.

Oetgen, Jerome. *An American Abbot: Boniface Wimmer, O.S.B. 1809-1887*. Catholic University Press, 1996, p. 200

**An 1860 Letter from Wimmer
to Metten's Abbot, Utto Lang**

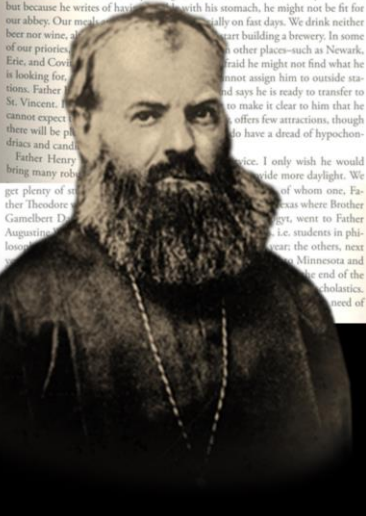
TO UTTO LANG

60

St. Vincent, May 17, 1860

Right Reverend Father Abbot, Dearest Confere: I was not able to answer your last letter until now because of pressing business. Your cleric will be very welcome, but because he writes of having trouble with his stomach, he might not be fit for our abbey. Our meals are still very rough, especially on fast days. We drink neither beer nor wine, although in the near future I shall start building a brewery. In some of our priories, the food is even worse than here. In other places—such as Newark, Erie, and Covington, Pa.—the food is much better. I cannot assign him to outside stations, but I will make it clear to him that he cannot expect too much. The mission life, in reality, offers few attractions, though there will be plenty of work for him to do. I have nothing against it. I just want to make it clear to him that he cannot expect too much. The mission life, in reality, offers few attractions, though there will be plenty of work for him to do.

Father Henry speaks of him in his letter and says he is ready to transfer to St. Vincent. I have nothing against it. I just want to make it clear to him that he cannot expect too much. The mission life, in reality, offers few attractions, though there will be plenty of work for him to do. I have nothing against it. I just want to make it clear to him that he cannot expect too much. The mission life, in reality, offers few attractions, though there will be plenty of work for him to do.



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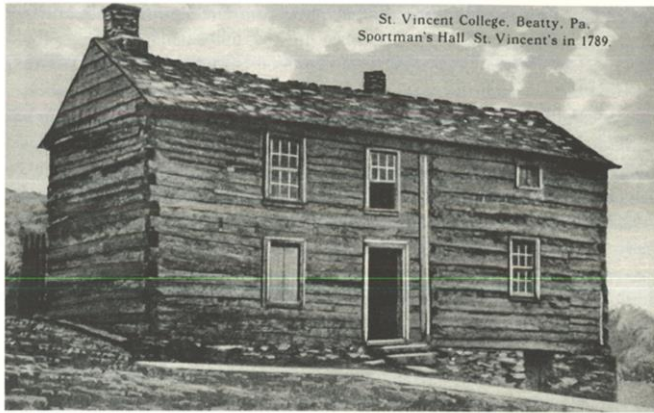
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here. In other places it is much better.

Father Henry speaks of him in his letter and says he
is ready to transfer to St. Vincent. I have nothing
against it. I just want to make it clear to him that he
cannot expect too much. The mission life, in reality,
offers few attractions, though there will be plenty
of work for him to do.

Still, I do have a dread of hypochondriacs and
candidates that lack mental stability.

Oetgen, Jerome, ed. *Boniface Wimmer: Letters of an American Abbott*. LaTrobe, PA: Saint Vincent Archabbey Publications. 577 pages. BX 4705 .W58 A4 2008. p. 233-235. Original letter is in the Metten Archives, with a copy at St. Vincent's. Image from <http://www.bonifacewimmer.org/About>

Father Henry has rendered me extraordinary service. I only wish he would bring many robust brothers so that our forests could provide more daylight. We get plenty of students. This year two were ordained priests.... In addition, we have 24 clerics, i.e. students in philosophy and theology.



St. Vincent College, Beatty, Pa.
Sportsman's Hall St. Vincent's in 1789.

Sportsman's Hall, the oldest building at Saint Vincent when Wimmer and the Benedictines arrived in 1846.

We have some 20 scholastics. As a result, I have no need for a new generation, though I am always in need of money.

Oetgen, Jerome, ed. *Boniface Wimmer: Letters of an American Abbott*. LaTrobe, PA: Saint Vincent Archabbey Publications. 577 pages. BX 4705 .W58 A4 2008. p. 233-235. Original letter is in the Metten Archives, with a copy at St. Vincent's. Image from <http://auntheather.com/tag/saint-boniface-wimmer/>

[In June] a frost killed our whole winter wheat crop. I got more than \$3,000 (8,000 florins). I got only half a bushel and now must buy wheat at a cost of as the same in Carrolltown, Indiana, and St. Marys. We had to buy wheat everywhere because for a radius of 100 miles, everything was killed by the bitter cold.

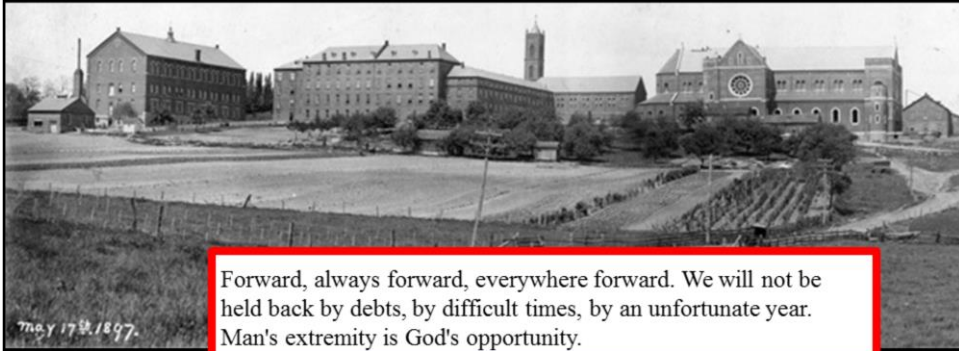


ST. VINCENT IN 1869.

This year there is wonderful outlook on nature. May it please God to keep it that way. Otherwise, it will be very bad for us because we feel the pressure of not having money. Everywhere commerce and business are at a standstill, and at the same time, there is not enough on the table for certain hypochondriacs. Something has to be done.

Oetgen, Jerome, ed. *Boniface Wimmer: Letters of an American Abbott*. LaTrobe, PA: Saint Vincent Archabbey Publications. 577 pages. BX 4705 .W58 A4 2008. p. 233-235. Original letter is in the Metten Archives, with a copy at St. Vincent's. Image from <http://www.saintvincentarchabbey.org/files/abbey1869lg.jpg>

In such cases, all the trouble is piled on the poor abbot. Nevertheless, we must move on.



Forward, always forward, everywhere forward. We will not be held back by debts, by difficult times, by an unfortunate year. Man's extremity is God's opportunity.

(a great quote, in the midst of Wimmer's rather mundane commentary)

I did not sell an excellent stallion even though I was offered \$600 (1,500 florins).

Everywhere there is a need for priests, both in the East and especially in the Far West. Often I must turn down an opportune offer for the simple reason that I do not have the people or do not want to divide the work of my priests...

Oetgen, Jerome, ed. *Boniface Wimmer: Letters of an American Abbott*. LaTrobe, PA: Saint Vincent Archabbey Publications. 577 pages. BX 4705 .W58 A4 2008. p. 233-235. Original letter is in the Metten Archives, with a copy at St. Vincent's. Image from <http://www.saintvincentarchabbey.org/files/may1897edit2copylg.jpg>

A few images of St. Vincent's: note similarities to St. John's!



A NEW VIEW OF ST. VINCENT ARCHABBEY, COLLEGE, AND SEMINARY

Image from <http://www.usgwarchives.net/pa/cambria/images/benedict/ben012.jpg>



Image from http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/img/college-photo_3865..jpg



Wimmer statue, up close

Image from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/saintvincentcollege/6079804263/>



Image from <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/4/4e/SaintVincentBasilica.jpg>



Image from http://cis2.stvincent.edu/bioinformatics/images/basilica_in_shadow.jpg

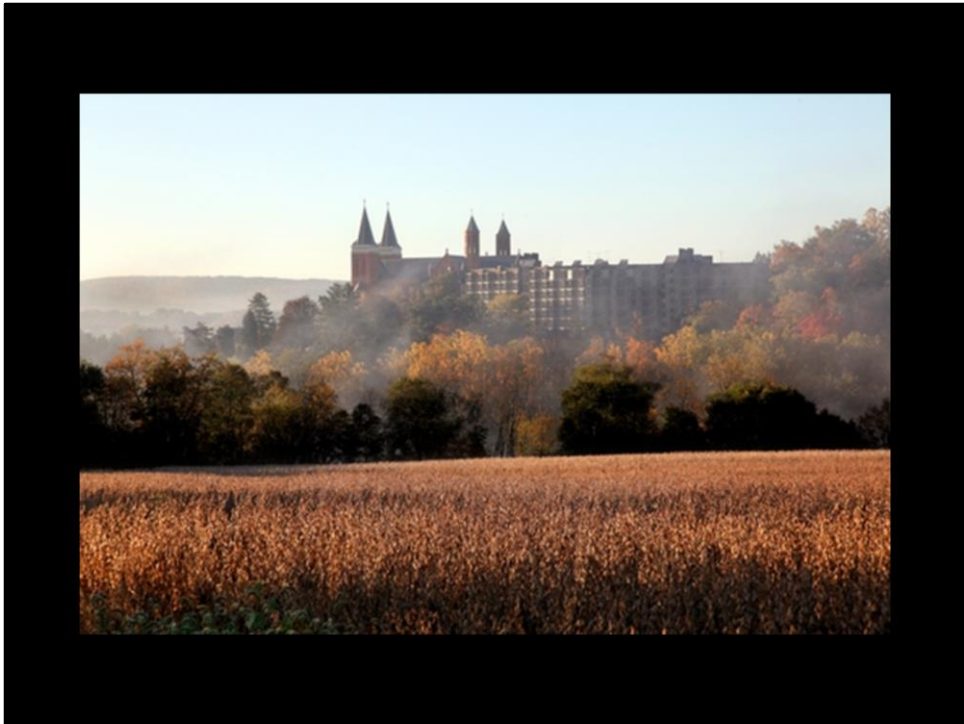


Image from http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/img/college-photo_3849..JPG



A similar view - in Collegeville

Arboretum in the mist – photo by Peggy Roske, October 2008

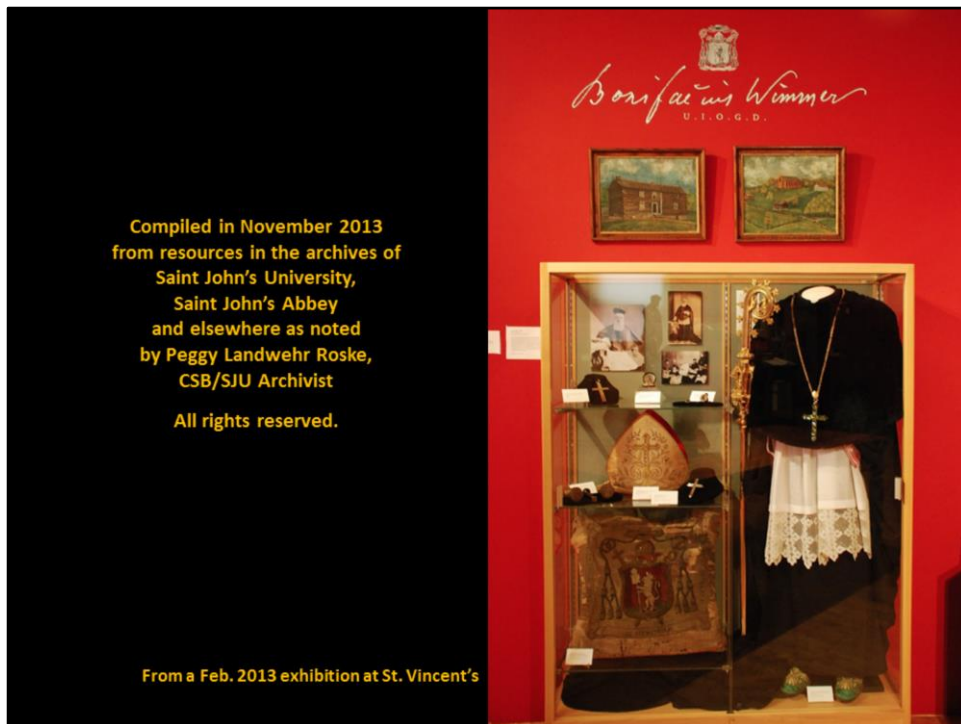


Image from http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-JzmtXIGri3Y/USQZI3rKxPI/AAAAAAAAXmk/Ozo4hIFrEN4/s1600/Saint_Vincent_Gallery_Wimmer_Case_1.jpg