



Echoes from the Past



History and pictures provided by Brother Jerry Vincent, FSC

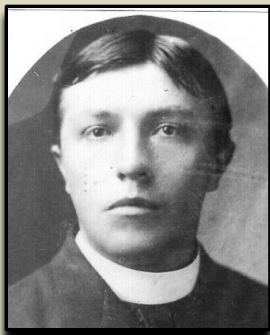
Saint Paul's is home to many wonderful things: scholars and musicians, championship athletic teams, and two communities of Christian Brothers. What often happens hurrying across campus to class, a meeting, an athletic competition, or a fund raising event, is that we miss the plethora of monuments and memorials that call the campus home.

The following series of articles will be to give the visitors to campus an introduction to the memorials. We begin with Founders' Circle. It is set in the footprint of Dixon Hall, the dormitory destroyed by fire in the early 1980's. It was the home of Dixon Academy (1900-1909) and the oldest building on campus. The circle now is one of the first monuments visitors encounter. It consists of a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus atop a pedestal and at its base a jasmine garden surrounded by brass plates embossed with the names of the three Benedictine Monks and more than a dozen Christian Brothers. Why Benedictine Monks? They purchased Dixon Academy from Dr. Dixon and renamed it Saint Paul's College after the Abbot Paul Schaub. They came from Saint Joseph Abbey in 1911 to start the "professional school" for the town of Covington.

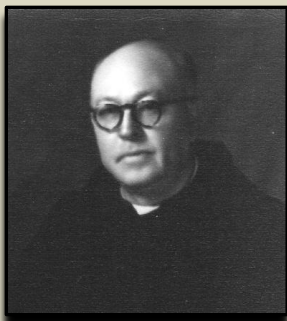


Founders' Circle

by Robert Simpson '88



Father Augustine Unser, OSB - Father Augustine was born on October 31, 1878 in Muggensturm, Baden, Germany. He was ordained a priest on November 26, 1903. On September 11, 1911, Father Augustine moved into Saint Paul's. Under his direction, Saint Paul's grew from nothing into a very well respected business college and became known statewide through its sports program. Father Augustine died on January 2, 1919 a victim of the Swine Flu epidemic of 1918-1919.



Father Aemilian Egler, OSB - Father Aemilian was born in 1881 in Ferdinand, Indiana. He came to Louisiana and entered Saint Joseph Priory, making his first profession on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception in 1903 at the recently erected Abbey. He was ordained on October 11, 1908. He taught in the seminary and directed a brass band. In 1911 Father Aemilian was sent to the newly acquired Saint Paul's School. He became pastor of Saint Peter's in Covington and in 1939 purchased a square of ground, equal to one and a half city blocks, facing Jefferson Ave. as the site for a proposed new church. The cornerstone for this new brick church was laid on July 7, 1940. Father Aemilian died in 1948.

Father Adalbert Svrcek, OSB - A native of Texas Father Adalbert was born on October 29, 1882. He entered the seminary at Gessen in its first class in 1895-1896. He joined Saint Joseph Priory and was ordained a priest on December 23, 1905. On September 11, 1911 he was sent to Saint Paul's with Fathers Augustine and Aemilian. He remained at Saint Paul's until 1918 when the Christian Brothers took over. After serving as pastor of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in New Orleans until March 1958, Father Adalbert became the resident chaplain at Saint Paul's. He served there as a devoted chaplain to the Brothers and the boys until he retired to the Abbey in 1962. Father Adalbert died on September 8, 1964.

The End of the Benedictine Era

Our last article introduced us to the monks of Saint Joseph Abbey that founded Saint Paul's College. The professional school did very well and the Covington community was delighted with the Saint Paul's students as evidenced by the ever growing enrollment from 1911-1914. However, the Benedictines found themselves in something of a problem, albeit a nice problem. The successful Saint Paul's College was the second school started by the Benedictines, the first being Saint Joseph Seminary College. It was growing and demanding more personnel than expected. The monks needed to make a hard choice, to close one of the schools but which? The community of monks decided that the older school, the seminary, the one the whole Archdiocese of New Orleans used in the formation of priests would be the better choice. This did not sit well with a few of the monks especially Father Adelbert Svreck who lamented the loss but did return to serve as resident chaplain from 1958-1964. The Monks needed to find a buyer for the school and looked for another Religious Order to take over. The property was offered to the Sacred Heart Brothers (Brother Martin, Catholic of Baton Rouge, St. Stanislaus) and the Christian Brothers.

The Arrival of the Christian Brothers

Who are these religious that speak in French and Spanish? The basic and very generalized story of the Christian Brothers that came to Covington in 1914 through 1918 is this. They were forced out of France due to government persecution of the Catholic Church in the early 1900's. The brothers took up their work in Mexico but were forced out of Mexico due to religious persecution of the Catholic Church by the Government in the 1910's. The Biographies of the Founders that follow will help paint a picture of the fidelity of these men to the church but especially their fidelity to education. They are truly '*Signum Fide'i*', Signs of Faith!

I owe all thanks to Brother Jerry Vincent FSC, the archivist of the brothers' community here at Saint Paul's. His diligent work and effort help us know the history of our school. Thank You Brother Jerry!

by Robert Simpson '88



Brother Adelbert Marie (Sylvain Duret) - Brother was born in Paris in 1888, made his novitiate in Belgium in 1905, and was sent to Mexico in 1909. After fleeing the country in 1914 with his confrères during the Carranza Revolution, he was assigned to the District of New York. On August 22, 1918 he arrived at Covington, Louisiana, to be in the founding community of Brothers who took over the operation of Saint Paul's College. He was the third director/principal of Saint Paul's, 1926-1929. He was responsible for many improvements on the Campus. He remodeled the Infirmary Building and examined other activities on Campus and was the one who shortened the graduation ceremony.



Brother Adolphe Basile (Emile Cottet)- He was born on July 1, 1876, in Colombey-Muraz, Switzerland. He received the brother's garb on December 15, 1899, at age 23 in the novitiate in Paris. After several years in France and having earned a superior teaching certificate in 1903, he volunteered to go to Mexico. Departing from Barcelona, they arrived in Puebla in December and opened two schools in January, 1907. He was assigned to several different schools in Mexico and arrived in Querétaro in 1913. He was there in the summer of 1914 when the Carranza revolutionaries overran the city and forced all foreign priests and religious out of the country. He was among some 65 of the 175 French brothers in Mexico who accepted the offer to go to the United States. After being assigned to the District of New York, he moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1916, and then in the first community at St. Paul's College (high school) in Covington, Louisiana, in 1918.

The Brothers' Immigration to the United States

The Founding Brothers that came to us from Mexico had endured a persecution of faith for a second time. In Mexico many of the brothers witnessed members of their community shot. They had to escape the violence of the Carranza Revolution. Some fled Mexico by train and took refuge in the USA.

The Brothers' immigration was far from smooth. They seemed to take up residence wherever a community would take them and did whatever work they could do speaking only a little English. The offer of the Benedictines to staff and run a secondary school presented an opportunity to continue the Lasallian tradition of quality schools. The Brothers took the offer in 1918 after a multi-year discernment and earnest negotiation with Archbishop Shaw about the benefit of another religious order in the archdiocese. The archbishop finally allowed the Brothers to begin their work.

The Founding Brothers made a deal with the Benedictine monks at Saint Joseph's Abbey for what today would be called a "Lease to Own" package due to the shortage of money. The diligent brothers paid off the purchase price before the time allowed, allowing the tradition of Lasallian education to come to Covington in 1918 as World War I raged.

by Robert Simpson '88



Brother Agbert (Jean-Pierre Rettel) - Brother Agbert was born on February 14, 1883, in Dalheim in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, and entered the junior novitiate at Buzenval, near Paris, France, on August 1, 1898, where his first challenge was to master his second language, French. He received the brother's garb in the novitiate in Paris on October 22, 1899. He was given three instead of two years in the scholasticate and received his teaching license in 1903. The school to which he was assigned, St. Nicolas in Buzenval, was closed in 1904 as a result of the anti-religious laws of that year. After a few more years in France, he went on to Mexico and escaped to El Paso, TX during the Carranza Revolution.

Brother Alain Félix (René Tigréat) - was born on October 30, 1883, in Plouneventer in the French department of Finistère, entered the novitiate in Paris at age 17 in September, 1900, and received the brother's garb there on December 18. He left for Mexico in November, 1908, and was assigned to a community of four in the small town of Acatzingo, near Puebla, where the brothers taught the poorest of the poor. When they had to leave in 1914 on account of the Carranza Revolution, he was sent to the District of San Francisco, California. In 1918 he was in the first community of brothers at St. Paul's College (high school) in Covington, Louisiana. Throughout the years, he was sent to several schools in Louisiana, Texas and Colorado. He returned to Saint Paul's at age 73 and passed away in 1973.



Brother Alton (Pierre Boncompain) - was born on May 3, 1872, in Yssingaux in the French department of Haute Loire and attended the brothers' school there. He entered the junior novitiate in Paris in November 1888 at the age of 16. In the St. Joseph scholasticate in Paris he fulfilled the requirements for the elementary teaching license and was assigned to St. Nicolas d'Igny school in Paris in 1891 and taught there 15 years. The French antireligious laws of 1904 forced the closure of the school in 1906, and Brother Alton, along with most of the brothers of his community, chose to leave his native land to continue his religious life and educational mission overseas. In 1916, Alton scouted the Southwest and Louisiana for places where the brothers might open schools. He found two in Louisiana and in 1918 negotiated the contracts for schools in Covington and New Iberia. He was a member of the first community at St. Paul's College (high school) in Covington.

Brother Amateur Victor (Victor Amblard) - was born in Aurouzet in the French department of La Lozère on May 14, 1877, entered the junior novitiate in Paris on January 17, 1893, and received the brother's garb in the novitiate there on October 1 the same year. He taught in St. Nicolas orphanage in Paris, 1896-1909. When the school was closed by the French anti-religious laws of 1904, he joined many of his confrères in taking a course in Spanish in Caluire, near Lyon, in the fall of 1909 and then was sent to Mexico in 1910. While he was teaching in a school in Zacatecas, Mexico in June 1914, the Carranza revolutionaries attacked the city and shot two brothers and the community chaplain to death. The surviving brothers escaped by railroad in a cattle car to the United States through El Paso, Texas. He was in the founding community at St. Paul's College (high school) in Covington, Louisiana, 1918-1923. He was in the community at De La Salle in Lafayette, Louisiana, 1924-1927, and after several moves was sent to the district's ranch in Bernalillo, New Mexico in 1930 where he died at the age of 61.



Brother Anect (Jean-Baptiste Fraisse) - was born in St. Just in the French department of Canatal on March 1, 1881, and was taught by the brothers in the school in Saint Flour. He entered the junior novitiate in Buzenval, near Paris, in 1894, and received the brother's garb in the novitiate in Paris on October 24, 1897. He taught in France until the French anti-religious laws closed his school. He went to Mexico with his colleagues in 1909 until they were run out of Mexico by the Carranza revolution in 1914. He was called to be a member of the founding community of Saint Paul's College (high school) in Covington, Louisiana in 1918-1919. He returned to Saint Paul's in 1927 for 3 years, but he spent the majority of his time in New Mexico. He retired to Saint Michael's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico at the age of 72 and passed away when he was 87.



Brother Baptiste Pierre (Valette Ludovic)- was born on April 8, 1888, in La Chapelle Graillouse in the French department of Ardèche, and entered the junior novitiate in Vals in France on Nov. 13, 1901. When it was closed in 1905 on account of the French anti-religious laws of 1904, he was moved to the newly-established junior novitiate at the brothers' international motherhouse in Lembecq, Belgium, and two months later to the international novitiate in Bettange in another country, the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. He received the brother's garb there on October 28, 1905. He left for Mexico on June 12, 1908, and arrived in Puebla and taught at Colegio San Pedro y San Pablo and at Colegio San Juan Bautista de la Salle in that city until the Carranza revolution. He was assigned to the District of Baltimore then was sent to Louisiana in 1919 to teach at Saint Paul's College (high school) in Covington for two years. He was called back to Mexico in January 1922 and taught in several schools there until 1935, when he returned to France. In 1967, at age 79, he was sent to the retirement home in Athis-Mons and remained until his death at age 97.



Listed below is a glossary of words that are common amongst the Brothers.

Novitiate: A time period of training to become a brother. Usually novitiates last one year but some orders have a two year novitiate. A novice will pray and live in a brothers' community to be formed or molded to the brothers' way of life.

Scholasticate: A brother that is sent to school to earn their degrees and live in a community with other young brothers. Most commonly, brothers were sent to a Christian Brothers' owned school. For instance, a number of our own Brothers at Saint Paul's where sent to the College of Santa Fe.

Habit (Religious Habit): The distinctive garb worn by the brothers or any other order.

Religious: A term that refers to those that have taken vows and serve in a community and its work. Brothers and nuns are considered 'religious' or 'consecrated religious'. This term is not to be confused with 'Holy Orders' which refers specifically to those ordained a priest or deacon.



Brother Barnabé de Jésus (Jean-Baptiste Nouet) - He was born on May 11, 1872, in Cubièrette in the French department of LaLozère. Following an older brother's example, he entered the junior novitiate at Vals in the department of Haute Loire on December 16, 1885, and the novitiate at the motherhouse in Paris in 1888. After a year of study in the scholasticate, he received an elementary teaching license in 1890 and was assigned to St. Nicolas d'Issy, where he taught for eight years. He was a very short man with delicate health and a timid, impressionable character. Brother Barnabe was sent to Mexico, where he enthusiastically taught the poor. When forced from Mexico, he travelled to New York and then to Covington where he took over the operation of Saint Paul's College. He was in charge of health services, purchasing and accounting and started the vegetable garden. It was written that Brother Barnebe "...loved nature and wrote poems describing its beauties, especially the pine groves at Saint Paul's. In spite of his accomplishments, he remained the kind, humble Brother Barnabé whose ambition was to serve God and his brothers." Brother passed away in New Orleans at the age of 67.

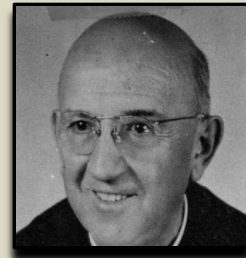
Brother Basile de Jésus (Jean I. Fosses) - Brother Basile was born in Manejoles, France in July of 1882. He entered the novitiate in Paris on May 15th 1900 and received the religious habit on July 2 of that year. He was among the French Brothers who left their homeland in 1906 to go to Mexico and then to the United States in 1914 during the Carranza Revolution. He taught at Manhattan College in New York City until 1918, when he was called to be in the founding community of Saint Paul's College in Covington, Louisiana. From Covington, he was sent to Teach at St. Peter's College (high school) in New Iberia, Louisiana, and Cathedral High School in Lafayette, Louisiana. After a stay in El Paso, Texas, he returned to Saint Paul's in 1937 due to the deterioration of his health. He recovered enough to teach in New Mexico for several more years but returned to Louisiana during his final year and died at the age of 71.



Brother Bertaud Marie (Gondret Philibert) - Brother Bertaud was born on March 27th in 1871 in Pelly, France. He entered the Paris novitiate on June 2nd 1886 and received the habit in July of 1886. He arrived at Saint Paul's from Santa Fe on July 6th 1918 and left Saint Paul's for another assignment on August 3rd 1919. Brother was among the group that was dispersed from Mexico during the Carranza Revolution. Later, he returned to Mexico and became a science teacher. Because of the lack of textbooks in chemistry, he wrote his own which was used in many schools in Mexico. While his stay at Saint Paul's was short, his contribution was to prepare a short prospectus which was mailed out to families of future students. We have not able to find a picture of Brother Bertaud Marie or any other information about his life after he left Saint Paul's.



Brother Gauthier Victor (Pierre M. Gibelin) - Brother Gauthier was born on May 12, 1891, in La Chaze in the French department of La Lozère and entered the junior novitiate in Lembecq, Belgium, on November 11, 1905. He was sent to Luxemburg, for the novitiate in Bettange, where he received the brother's robe on October 28, 1907. A year later he returned to Lembecq for two years of study in the scholasticate and in June 1910 was sent to Mexico to teach. During the Carranza revolution of 1914, he escaped by ship from Vera Cruz to Cuba. He was among some 65 of the 175 French brothers in Mexico who accepted the offer to go to the United States, and he was assigned to the New York District. In 1918 he was sent to Louisiana and spent the rest of his life there. He was part of the community of Saint Paul's from 1918 to 1925. After serving in several schools, he suffered a stroke and spent his remaining years at De La Salle in Lafayette until he passed away at the age of 67.



Brother Geoffrey Alexis (Jean Baptiste Hostalier) – Brother Alexis was born on December 7th, 1887 in Le Puy, France and arrived at the Novitiate in Clermont, France on April 27th, 1903 and received the religious habit in December 1903. He traveled with his confreres to Mexico and was stationed at the school in Puebla, Mexico. During the Carranza Revolution of 1914 he fled the country and was assigned to Pocantico Hills, New York in 1916 and then sent to Philadelphia to a court adjudicated school that was run for the state. He arrived at Saint Paul's on July 12th, 1918. He was reassigned to Santa Fe, New Mexico on July 18th, 1919, where he taught history. He was named director of the scholasticate at Sacred Heart Training College in Las Vegas New Mexico in 1929. He served as director there from 1929-1947 and at St. Michael's College (named the College of Santa Fe in 1961), when the scholasticate was moved to that institution in 1947. In 1951 he retired from this position and was named custodian of the Old San Miguel Mission in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the oldest Church in the United States still in use for worship. When his health started to fail in 1970 he retired from that job and in 1974 he was brought to De La Salle in Lafayette, where he died.



Brother Hérène Stanislaus (Jean Serindat) – Brother Hérène was born in Ambert in the French department of Puy-de-Dôme on July 24, 1883, and entered the junior novitiate in Montferrand on September 7, 1898. He received the brother's garb in the novitiate in Clermont-Ferrand on July 6, 1899. He taught in several schools in France and then travelled to Mexico in time to be on the faculty of the brothers' first school in that country, Colegio de San Juan Bautista de la Salle in Puebla, and taught there during the school years 1906 to 1910. In January 1911 he was on the founding faculty of Colegio San José in Toluca and taught there until August 1914, when all foreign religious and priests were forced to flee the country by the Carranza revolution.

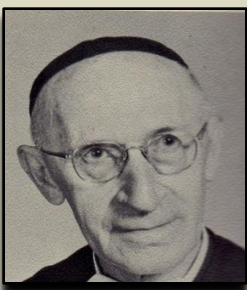
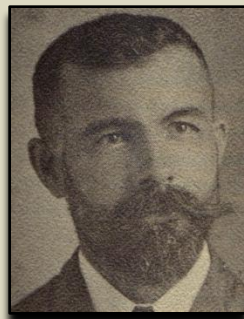
After being assigned to the New York district, he was sent to Saint Paul's as part of the founding community. After Saint Paul's he was assigned to schools in Lafayette and New Mexico. He returned to France in 1937 where he spent the rest of his life.



Brother Nauphary Marie (Joseph Cortial) – Brother Nauphary entered the junior novitiate in Vals in November 1892 and received the brothers garb at the noviate in Le Puy on October 28, 1900. He earned an elementary teacher's license and taught in France until the anti-religious laws of 1904 caused the closure of the schools. He was among the brothers that travelled to Mexico. He was in Monterrey, Mexico when the Carranza revolutionaries captured the city in July 1914 was arrested and imprisoned. Yielding to pressure from the foreign consuls in Monterrey, the governor released Brother Nauphary on the condition that he show up at the railroad station to be deported to the Texas border.

Brother Nauphary was sent to the New York District where he struggled to master English. In 1918 he was assigned to the community taking over the operation of Saint Paul's College in Covington. He managed fairly well teaching the lower elementary students. One of the novices wrote: "His English was terrible, but his conviction when he talked to us about spiritual matters and the spirit of St. John Baptist de La Salle left us with the impression that he was living what he spoke about." In 1940 he was assigned to De La Salle in Lafayette where he stayed until he died.

Brother Nilammon (Jean B. Laurent) – Brother Nilammon was born on February 23, 1874 in the Loire Valley, France and received his religious habit on November 24, 1890. He too was driven from Mexico during the Carranza Revolution of 1914. After leaving Mexico, he was assigned to one of the schools in Las Vegas, New Mexico. He arrived at Saint Paul's from Las Vegas on June 25, 1918 as the first director of Saint Paul's College. His task was to recruit students to the new school. Brother Nilammon was shy and was not equipped with the necessary skills needed for Public Relations. He was a great success with the prefects and students, but not so much with the brothers. After two years, he was returned to Mexico where he worked as a procurator for the Province. He later returned to Europe where he died in a retirement home in Le Puy in 1966.



Brother Osmond Paul (Pierre Charbonnet) – Brother Osmond Paul was born on January 18, 1885 in Cubelles (Sauges) France. He entered the novitiate in Le Puy on May 29, 1901 and received the religious habit on July 2, 1901. He taught in France until 1909 and then joined his brothers in Queretaro, Mexico. He left with them during the Carranza Revolution in 1914 and taught in Syracuse, New York. In 1918 he was in the founding community that took over Saint Paul's College in Covington. He was the head prefect at that time. His stay was short for he was assigned to St. Peter's College in New Iberia, Louisiana in August of 1919. He returned to Saint Paul's in

1935 as the assistant principal and was appointed principal from 1935-1941. **Brother Osmond started the first football game with Covington High School. Saint Paul's won 19-7.** He taught in many of the schools of the district including Landry Memorial High in Lake Charles, Louisiana, Mullen High School in Denver, Colorado and Saint Michael's College in Sante Fe, New Mexico. He retired to De La Salle in Lafayette and died on February 16, 1974.



Brother Nanthier Prosper (Jean P. Alle') - Brother Nanthier was born on January 10, 1882 in the village of Chassagnes de Ribennes and entered the junior novitiate in Mende at the age of 16 and received his brother's garb in the novitiate in Le Puy on July 12, 1899. He earned an elementary teaching license and was one of the brothers that left France during the anti-religious laws of 1904 and moved to Mexico. When he was forced out of Mexico with his fellow brothers and priests in 1914, he then moved to San Francisco. In 1918, he was called to help with the running of Saint Paul's School in Covington. In 1923, he was sent to Lafayette until 1927 when he was assigned to Sante Fe, New Mexico. He provided health care services to the students at Saint Michael's College for 22 years. In 1949 he returned to Lafayette, Louisiana and died at the age of 87.

