

1976 Catholic Sentinel Article on Mt. Angel

The following was taken from the Catholic Sentinel (with permission) and rewritten so future generations might know what it took on the part of the Catholic Church, especially Abbot Anselm Villiger OSB of Engelberg, Switzerland, Father Adelhelm Odermatt OSB, Father Nicholas Frei OSB, Archbishop Charles J. Seghers of Oregon City and the German settlers of the surrounding area of Fillmore (Mt. Angel), Gervais and Sublimity to start a mission church and a religious community in a new land.

When I read this I thought this was a fascinating account of what happened starting in 1881 and what effect it had on our ancestors and still has on us today. The articles by the Catholic Sentinel were published over a period of three weeks.

I realize that there are a great many grammar mistakes in the following story but you must remember that much of this was translated from German to English by the authors. I tried to copy the text with what I hope was a great deal of accuracy. I want to thank The Catholic Sentinel for their research and the help given to me.

Louis B. Schwab

Catholic Sentinel — Friday, March 12, 1976

Mt. Angel Abbey

Benedictines Sought 'New Engelberg' ...in American West

By Gorman Hogan

Mt. Angel – Fertile soil, timber, abundant water, nearby mountains and hilltop site for a monastery.

That it what Father Adelhelm, OSB, and his companion, Father Nicholas Frie, OSB, were looking for when they set out from Missouri in search of a place to establish a “New Engelberg” in the American West.

They found it all in the broad Willamette Valley of Oregon.

“I hunger and thirst for mountains,” Father Adelhelm wrote nostalgically in January, 1881, to Abbot Anselm Villiger of the Benedictine monastery in the little mountain valley at Engelberg, Switzerland, “for during seven years in America I have not yet seen a decent hill (such as, for example, the Lusthauschen at home.)”

At the time, the two Swiss monks were preparing to head West on a scouting trip for a suitable location for a monastic foundation as authorized by the abbot. The two had decided not to remain at the abbey Father Adelhelm had help to found at Conception, Mo., as a daughter house of the Engelberg Abbey. Father Nicholas had been Missouri a year.

Their ensuing travels, trails, accomplishments, joys, worries and anxieties as well as their spiritual devotion and abiding faith in God—the early struggle to establish a Christian center are graphically if somewhat repetitiously recounted in Father Adelhelm’s letters to Abbot Villiger and the abbot’s carefully kept diary between 1881 and 1900.

The diary was transcribed in 1949 by Father Ambrose Zenner, OSB, former prior of the Benedictine Priory at Cuernavaca, Mexico, and now pastor of Sacred Heart Parish, Tillamook. Father Luke Eberle, OSB, editor of Abbey Newsletter, translated the diary in 1974, and Father Adelhelm's letters which were transcribed by Benedictine Sisters in Switzerland in 1935.

The Westbound priest stopped off in Nebraska and Dakotas, "investigated Colorado from one end to the other, " noted Utah and Nevada in passing and headed on to Sacramento. From there they went to San Francisco.

THE ARCHBISHOP of San Francisco was anxious to have them stay in California, and he offered them a little mission...as well as a beautiful valley on a little lake where peaceful Indians live all around the place and await conversion." The archbishop suggested that two Fathers and three to four Brothers "who would have to teach the Indians how to work could do very well there."

He also directed them to the Santa Inez valley in southern California where the School Brothers were planing to leave a college they had opened and return to San Francisco.

A letter from Father Nicholas, included in the Abbot's diary, described the college as "the most miserable to its kind I have yet seen.

Otherwise, the erstwhile Engelbergers were highly impressed California—the agreeable climate, the promise of abundant fruit and farm crops and the ocean breeze which, according to Father Nicholas, "makes the evenings cooler and fresher then is the case even in Engelberg." High praise.

The need for schools was evident, too. The letter from Father Nicholas quoted "a highly respected priest near San Francisco" as saying "if there is no success in winning the youth by that extent the Church in California must die out."

"It is almost unbelievable," Father Nicholas wrote, " what unrestricted freedom is allowed the children of America. Even Catholic parents sometimes bring their offspring to school with the cheerful declaration that their child has to learn only what it pleases and may do whatever it wishes. Almost all those who go to public school are being lost to the church. The same complaint is prevalent among believing Protestants."

Meantime, Archbishop Charles J. Seghers of Oregon City had invited the Benedictines to Oregon and the two made the trip by ship from San Francisco to Portland. Since the Archbishop had called the synod to meet the week before he was to receive the pallium he asked Fathers Adelhelm and Nicholas to go to Jacksonville to temporarily replace F. X. Blanchet. He also proposed that they inspect the area as a possible site for a foundation.

An account of this visit of this visit is given in a letter from Father Nicholas included in Abbot Villiger's diary:

"Half the way we could travel by train, then for 19 hours we were packed into a clumsy, extremely massive mail coach with six horses and began the craziest trip I have ever made. The feelings that are aroused in (the backside) by this reckless speeding up hill and down dale may of course not be described here. Sometimes one actually had to summon all one's strength to keep one's cranium from being crushed, a fate which my new straw hat did not escape."

THEY FOUND Jacksonville "situated in an extraordinarily fertile and really beautiful valley... The Catholics and even the Protestants showed more then little joy at our arrival and continuously urging us to respond to the valley's deeply felt need of a Catholic school for boys. Four Sisters are taking care of the girls. It really seems that the people would be ready for great sacrifice. A man we did not know made an offer of \$200 for this purpose. Several others promised \$500. I believe we would easily be in a position to buy a fine big piece of property with house and barn and would not have to worry about firewood and provisions for both are available here in abundance."

Father Nicholas described the fertility of Oregon's soil as second to few states. "What has especially impressed me," he continued, "are the magnificent forests and an abundance of fruit such as I have never yet found anywhere else."

The two monks stayed six weeks, then returned to Portland and the Archbishop directed them to the Willamette Valley.

While the two monks continued to flirt with the notion of three foundations all along the Pacific Coast in Oregon, Washington and California they had really found a home in the great West in the area which encompassed Fillmore (later renamed Mt. Angel), Sublimity and Gervais.

On Oct. 19, 1881, Father Adelhelm wrote Abbot Villiger that the Willamette "is a charming big valley. Only it rains there in winter even more than in Jacksonville; people say, often a week long, night and day, so for that reason they call the valley a frog pond. However, that does not permit a missionary zeal for souls to be discouraged. There are better things to report right off. Instead of travelling day and night in a miserable carriage up hill and dale to Jacksonville, here one can go by rail to the little Church at Fillmore.

"Twelve Catholic families are there," Father Adelhelm continued, "and their head man is a good Swabian named Matheus Butsch. Good hearted people who offer everything to us. Up at the little church is a hill 200 to 300 feet high with a magnificent view, some 320 acres of good and also poorer land, pasture and some timber. We told the people that if they get the five parties who own the hill (all Yankees) to donate it to us, we would possibly start something. One of them whom I asked, showed himself willing as regards his part."

The letter continued:

"Meanwhile we visited another likewise German settlement of 40-50 families some 18 to 20 miles away, three miles from the railroad, called Sublimity. It has a high location like Fillmore, so these areas are not under water as the valley in general is.

"HOW SURPRISED we were when on the eve of the feast of St. Placidus we found a modest little church there with a nice Sacred Heart altar. We decorated it with finery for the feast and celebrated the lovely feast of our Order with fine vestments. This place has had no priest since Easter.

"There are 20 acres of church property with a rather old two story schoolhouse, but no rectory. Some land is still available there. Otherwise it is pretty well taken, just as Fillmore.

I think it providential that for the time being I take at least this parish work, according to the wish of Father About who without knowing about this advised us to do something of the sort.

"I asked the Archbishop whether he would give us these two German communities in case the people would provide us with sufficient help," Father Adelhelm wrote, "and he gladly agreed to do so and even promised to add a still better (mixed) community six miles from there." (This turned out to be Gervais). "These two German places have very good land, too, and more timber than St. Inez or Jacksonville. Furthermore they already have the benefit of the railroad, only 42 to 60 miles from Portland. And then I think it would be nice to have an exclusively German settlement for those who do not yet know English."

In a separate letter under the same date and addressed only to the Abbot, Father Adelhelm broached two personal subjects. One dealt with his return to Engelberg and the other was the appointment of a superior.

"More and more I feel the need to talk to you by word of mouth," he wrote. "One time last winter you wrote me that you wished I could once more see the renovated church and the new organ, as I too wish, but at that time I could not think of it. Perhaps now...it might be done before a beginning is made anywhere. Around the stove (in conversation) plans for a generation could be made. Actually it should be done. It is important enough...Father Nicholas... said that I could bring back some people and perhaps do some begging here and there and thus gain instead of lose (financially and personally). What do you say to such thoughts?"

He advised the abbot that Archbishop Seghers "asked us immediately which of us was the superior. We looked at each other and laughed. Then I said that Father Nicholas was the senior, but that was of no help; he (Father Nicholas) told me afterwards when we were alone that it would be better if one had to obey the other, I replied that at present we were merely making an exploratory trip and that you would of course appoint a superior as soon as we were settled somewhere. He repeated that in this country it is necessary because of the people who otherwise like to flatter both parties, etc. And we ourselves have experienced this.

"THE PEOPLE and the priest are always asking questions. In this country one has to make an impression or else not undertake anything. The people make so much of titles. It seems that these make

more of an impression than laudable missionary work does. The Archbishop also asked me what position I hold in the American-Swiss Congregation. I told him I was a common soldier, a common monk-priest. He laughed but was not impressed.”

The letter continued: “One of us should be able to present himself everywhere and say: I am Prior So and So... As long as it is merely Father the Americans are indifferent, or less, for in English every priest is called Father so again that doesn’t make enough of an impression, I should have written this to you long ago but I was ashamed to; it was imposing myself, or as if I could not wait for the hour to strike from on high... So the Archbishop here wanted me to write this to you and ask you to make one of us two the superior. Do entirely as you think best, of course.”

Father Adelhelm expressed the opinion that Father Nicholas “wants to go to San Francisco to the School Brothers to learn English... He wants me to make a start in Fillmore so that possible candidates do not slip away from us.”

Sometime after October 1881 letters were written, Archbishop Seghers offered Father Adelhelm the parish at Gervis in addition to Fillmore and Sublimity and his pleasure with the entire locale is indicated in a letter to the abbot dated Jan. 6, 1881.

“On St. Gertrude’s day I offered my first Mass here in the tidy country church (80 feet long and 40 feet wide) with the alters,” he wrote. “On the alter stood eight flower vases with fresh flowers. At Christmas there was, besides, a vessel filled with cut flowers in front of the Child in the crib.

“The hill in Fillmore is above one mile long and one-half mile wide. Half of it is open land and half of it woods. There are big trees on it that are four to five feet in diameter. There is a great deal of stone on it too, and on St. Nicholas day a water-seeker found it at two places, 52 feet deep at one and 64 feet deep at the other. The view from the hill is magnificent. The Archbishop and other competent people thing that a monastery should be there.

“There is timber on almost all the pieces of property; millions of trees too many. In the mountains (perhaps 15-30 miles distant) thousands and thousands of acres for sale at \$2.40 per acre.

But the rigorous schedule of pioneer parish priest was as impressive as the countryside was beautiful. And Father Adelhelm explained why it had been impossible for him to write sooner.

“ On Christmas eve, for example, I had to preach twice, in three languages-French, English and German; sit in the confessional from 7 p.m. till midnight then celebrate Mass and Preach; then into the confessional again until 3 a.m.—and from 6 to 8 a.m., after the second Mass again 10:30; then say Mass again, preach and attend to the needs of all the people till 1: 30 p.m. Then I could put on street clothes and go to a restaurant for breakfast.”

THIS DID have its complications, though. “The Christ Child had, however, also put \$80 in my purse as a Christmas gift from my sheep.” The letter went on. “A Protestant brewer had sent a little barrel of beer as his Christmas gift, but unfortunately could not make use of it for long hours. As I took the money into my hands it seemed to me that the Christ Child was sending it to me as the first contribution for the prospective trip to glorious Engelberg where I shall eventually be able to rest up from such labors.”

Even so, the monastery remained uppermost in Father Adelhelm’s mind and he has visited the owners of the hill in Fillmore “to see whether they would be prepared to do something. The first promised to donate 10 acres; the next three, five acres apiece; that would be the acres on top for nothing for a building site.”

In two days the Catholics had collected \$1200 in pledges toward a monastery and had promised a cow. And they expressed hope of raising \$3,000 in cash in case the Benedictines decided to settle there. The monk told them “the mother-house will decide whether the offer is acceptable or not. It will soon be clearer what prospect of success the collection has.”

A few days latter, Father Adelhelm reported that collectors had obtained another \$2,000 in pledges for the monastery “with more cows promised, one this year and one next.”

At about the same time, the Abbot from St. John’s Abby in Minnesota showed up and when they found out the Swiss already had settled there he “went off vexed and headed for Los Angeles to see the bishop.

This disturbed Father Adelhelm because he and Father Nicholas still had hopes of getting hold of land in St. Inez Valley where they figured \$8,000 - \$10,000 could be realized from 640 acres in one year of good crops. Father Nicholas, too, went to California. There was talk of his becoming a land agent if property could be acquired from the bishop of Los Angeles and part of it sold by advertising in the newspapers. Father Adelhelm referred to such an agency as "a good milk cow."

Although the Archbishop of San Francisco kept urging Father Adelhelm to return to California he failed to make a suitable offer and Archbishop Seghers was persuasive in arguing that the Benedictines would be better off and happier among the German farmers.

"I am remaining in Oregon" Father Adelhelm wrote, "where the harvest of souls is greater at present as is the lack of priests. St. Gertrude, through circumstances, has shown us the place which is most practical right now.

"The annex to the church here for sacristy and rectory is 50 feet long and 39 feet wide, consisting of seven rooms on the first floor; sacristy, parish room, three small bedrooms, big dining room and kitchen. The second floor, not yet finished inside, could be arranged for eight large and small rooms to make the whole clumsy American structure usable and habitable. Besides, the parish definitely wants to build a school and Sisters' house. It has the means at hand.

Meanwhile, Abbot Villiger in Engelberg had been approached by a group of German noblemen with a plan for joining with a Religious Order in founding a rather large settlement in America.

In a letter from N. Baron R.F. von Stotzingen of Radolfzell, Grand Ducy of Baden in southern Germany, included in the abbot's diary, he proposed that perhaps families make the settlement "with the monastery the center in every regard; it would have to be the hearth on which the flame of religion would be maintained, the spiritual focal point, but also the intellectual by means of its school, The Monastery would have to be founded first and the settlement of lay families be grouped around it... The families concerned would retain the liberty, according to the uniform plan agreed to with the monastery, to have colonists come and make homesteads available to them in the manner of hereditary fiefs

"The baron noted that "in America farming pays only if the owner himself takes a hand in it, but the emigrants I have in mind could not very do this. But there is an alternative. According to highly trustworthy reports from America... The forest are being devastated to such an extent that within 20 years at most a shortage of timber will definitely set in. Therefore quite a bit of forest land would be purchased and crops would be cultivated only for the needs of the settlement. Forest property does not require any especially expensive care and grows as is said, without money."

HE PROPOSED 50 families subscribing 25,000 marks each (a mark was worth about 24 cents) with an immediate payment of 5,000 marks each. "Out of the first payment of 250,000 marks, 100,000 marks would be assigned to the monastery for its foundation, the balance of 150,000 marks to pay for land purchased. The families would have to obligate themselves to give tithes to the monastery for the first 50 years."

By way of explanation Baron von Stotzingen wrote:

"Our prospects for the future are, as elsewhere, anything but reassuring. In regard to religion, I believe that we are still far from a satisfactory solution. On the one side we are faced with the demonic hatred of social democracy, on the other side with the attempt to make the Church a slave of the state. In political matters, I fear the Prussian (German) centralized state which is threatening us as the source of great disorder and conditions not to my liking. The economic situation of the medium landowner is hopeless; on the one hand he is almost crushed by debts and taxes, on the other he is without defense at the mercy of competition from foreign countries that produce more cheaply."

When the Abbot informed the Baron about the Benedictines' activity in Oregon and the vast expanse of timber in the state and in Washington he was more than enthusiastic and arranged for a later meeting with the Abbot.

Father Adelhelm liked the idea, too, and wrote a letter in March, 1882, to the Baron in which he detailed forest land prices, the selling price of cordwood and the problems of transportation by rail and water. He thought the project would do better in Washington, which he had visited extensively on first coming to the Northwest.

Nothing ever came of the proposal although the Baron's brother-in-law, Baron Otto von Boeselager-Hessen of Westphalia, did buy some acreage in Oregon later.

On Feb. 4, 1882, Abbot Villiger wrote in his diary: "I have summoned Father Adelhelm from Oregon to Engelberg for discussion. It costs a great deal, but the thing is important and fraught with consequences."

When Father Adelhelm received the Abbot's letter on March 8 he was ecstatic and on the same day he replied:

"Most excellent Spiritual Father!

"God alone knows what joy your unforgettable letter of Feb. 5 gave me today because in it I found the good, wise and helpful father so beautifully mirrored. I knelt down before the tabernacle to hear its message and while I thanked our loving Savior and kissed our loving Savior and kissed the various passages in the letter I was almost beside myself with joy. And this already because of the joy and hope of meeting again, but most of all because of the sure expectation that finally everything is going to be straightened out and our mission bear hundredfold fruit.

"**HOWEVER** much I would like to come soon, and the sooner the better, it will be quite a while yet. Father Nicholas could hardly take care of pastoral work in the three places, apart from his English—if only because of preaching, which he has never done and cannot, not even in German, and therefore he would be of no help to the French and English and Americans. Moreover, Father Nicholas is needed in St. Inez."

Father Adelhelm wrote on April 10, Easter Monday from St. Vincent Hospital that he had been laid up for a few days "but the risen Savior has put me on my feet again." Archbishop Seghers "who was much worried that I was going to die, very willingly gave me permission today to start the trip as soon as possible and in case Father Nicholas would or could not come he is prepared to steal a priest somewhere and send him to replace me until late autumn."

The archbishop had just returned from a visit to San Francisco and, Father Adelhelm advised the Abbot, "he told me that we would not be as welcome down there in California as up here because so many Irish are there and a bad spirit toward Religious priests is prevalent among them." The priest of the Archdiocese of Portland, the Archbishop added "are very satisfied with us, like us, are interested and he believes that if we concentrate our efforts here he can be certain of our success."

The letter mentioned too, that Bishop Jungers of Vancouver, B.C., "assured me again today that we are welcome wherever we please in his diocese, Puget Sound. He also thought I should make a quick trip there again before I return home. So I intend to do that yet in a few days. And then the earliest possible, happy and long meeting again and repose in the bosom of my father.

"May God reward you a thousand times for everything! Begging your blessing for the sea voyage, I remain in J.M.J.

Your most devoted
Father Adelhelm

On June 17, 1882, Abbot Villiger noted in his diary:

"Today Father Adelhelm arrived here from his mission in Oregon. He traveled for 34 days, first on the Pacific Ocean to California, then by rail through the heart of North America to New York and on the Atlantic Ocean to Cherbourg.

"He looks exhausted and tense, but makes a fine appearance with his black beard and is lively. His stories are interesting. He is begging hard for Fathers, Brothers and candidates. We shall pray, ponder and consult about how the zealous missionary can be helped."

(To be continued next week).

Catholic Sentinel Friday, March 19, 1976

At \$28 an Acre

Acquiring Farmland Preoccupation ...in Early Days at Mt. Angel

By Gorman Hogan

Mt. Angel—Father Adelhelm had been in America eight years when he was summoned back to Engelberg to discuss the establishment of a new abbey.

He and a companion, Father Nicholas Frei, OSB, had located an ideal site—a hilltop in the fertile Willamette Valley adjacent to the German settlement of Fillmore (later renamed Mt. Angel). They had traveled extensively on the Pacific Coast and in those heady pioneer days Father Adelhelm envisioned three abbeys, one in Oregon, another in Washington and a third in California. The first would be in Oregon, where Archbishop Charles J. Seghers had turned over to him the churches at Fillmore, at another German-speaking settlement, Sublimity, and at the thriving community of Gervais on French Prairie, where many of the French-Canadian trappers who had worked for the Hudson's Bay Co. had settled with their wives, some of them Indian.

Abbot Anselm noted on June 17, 1882, the day of Father Adelhelm's arrival at Engelberg, he began begging for Fathers, Brothers and candidates for the mission. On July 3, the community met in chapter and Father Adelhelm was appointed Prior of the new foundation and Abbot Villiger named as coworkers Fathers, Nicholas, Beda, Horat, Barnabas Held and Anselm Wachter and Brother Theodule Wuersch. Another brother was first named but he decided later not to go. The chapter approved and the Abbot wrote in his diary:

“This undertaking entails for me the near prospect of much worry, suffering and big expenditures again, 1400 francs (\$280) apiece travel money. If salvation of souls, the honor of the Order and monastery did not urge it, I would prefer to give it up.”

“No one can imagine what is required to begin a new foundation no matter how unpretentious,” the Abbot lamented. “By sending away these fathers especially Father Barnabas and Father Anselm who are so highly gifted, I am making a great sacrifice. A battle is raging in my heart and I think it must not, may not be. The education (in music) of Father Barnabas has cost so much money and now he is to be lost to Engelberg. Father Anselm has so much enthusiasm for theological studies and now we are to lose him. He who desires the end must also will the means.” And then he wrote in Latin: “I offer you, O God, our most dear confreres, begging and pleading that you send us others no worse than these.”

THE ABBOT commented again on the cost and on Sept. 8 he noted:

“Beds, even the mattresses, abundant four-to-five fold clothes, linens, shoes, vestments, chalices, shoemaking tools, kitchen utensils, farm implements, a great quantity of books, devotional items, music, writings, transcripts, etc., were packed into 30 large boxes for them (the missionaries) but they want still more and are still not satisfied. That makes a bad impression on me. What displeases me even more that they have recruited too many people to go along, among them even First and Second Syntaxers who are still too immature to choose their state in life. Against this latter I intervened. I do not place real confidence in this expedition because for me those who are departing, with the exception of the Prior and Father Anselm, are too insufficiently missionaries. The results will tell. I am thoroughly disgusted with the irritations such expeditions cause.”

The recruiters were busy all right, and on the day of departure for America, Sept. 25, 1882, the Abbot noted “almost 40 persons” were leaving and he named some of them including candidates for the monastery, Sisters, convent candidates and lay men and women. Abbot Villiger wrote: “By apologies, the departees done amiss through boldness and turbulence. They are full of courage and zeal. May God and Mary accompany them! This expedition of our Fathers is costing me almost 10,000 francs (\$2000) cash, not counting all that was so abundantly given them to take along.”

Father Adelhelm and 27 others arrived in Oregon Oct. 30. Besides the priest and Brother Theodule, there were 10 Brother candidates, students and mechanics. With him, too were the Very Rev. Mother Prioress Bernardine, OSB, six sisters and four postulants.

The Prior set to work acquiring property and on Nov. 16, only two weeks after arrival, purchased from **Josephine Schwab** 215 acres at \$28 an acre. On Nov. 22 he bought 140 acres for \$5,000 from Wilhelm Glover and received assurances of some of the other owners that they would sell.

It was not until Dec.4, though, writing home to Engelberg, and he wrote two letters the same day—one to the Abbot and the community and one to the Abbot alone.

In the first, he apologized for the “turbulence” his visit had caused. “I cannot help but ask for public pardon again, most sincerely and from the heart, for everything whereby during my sojourn at home I offered you, Father Abbot, or any dear confrere by my unabashed begging or anything else. Likewise, I hope that all of you for the sake of God will forgive all my subjects...”

THEN HE turned to report on the business at hand:

“The other Fathers have no doubt reported all the news so I am restricting myself to what is most important, namely the hill intended for the new monastery. The wooded site of the hill is assured, as also the land lying at the foot of the hill on the same side, likewise a home on the open south side (Mr. Cleaver’s) – but we are still lacking an important piece of property belonging to Messrs. Gibson (father and son). Up to now they haven’t wanted to hear anything at all about selling. Do pray, all of you, that the Lord may soften their hearts and make them favorable to us.

The letter addressed only to the Abbot began:

“Finally the die has been cast. I did not want to write to you and could not until I had the most necessary land of the hill. The money from Mr. Lussy through Mr. Falk (European financiers for the Engelberg Abby) arrived here safely...”

“Mr. (John H.) Palmer, Who previously would never name a price for this land, recently sent me word that he was willing to sell, but at \$60 an acre. He had 475 acres equaling \$28,500. Another neighbor asked \$35 an acre for his farm; this lies at the foot of the hill, and I quickly went and bought it (because Palmer too wanted it). Afterwards I went to Palmer and he was furious because I put one over on him; but I said that naturally I first bought what was cheap so I would not have to pay \$60 for it, too. He had already said that if I did not take his land today at \$60, tomorrow it would be more, nearly \$80-\$100. I asked him how long he would wait for the money. “Until April 1.”

“I took the farm because for us it is the most necessary and the best. He almost wept and wished that I would take back the money (\$100) which I thereupon paid. I did not do it, so that he would be bound. Immediately afterwards he wanted to buy (Benjamin) Cleaver’s from me. I said: \$60 an acre (I had paid \$35 an acre a few hours earlier). He offered me \$47 an acre for Cleaver’s, which comes to some \$10,000. I acted as I didn’t hear it. He had set the price for the land in the neighborhood. Now he should pay it to.

“But now to the business at hand,” the Prior went on. “We have to pay about 209,500 francs (\$41,900) for the land bought last and this by April 1, 1883. Would you most kindly and very soon let me know whether and how much can be raised at home. I will investigate here...and report what can be obtained...”

ABBOT VILLIGER had been receiving letters from others in Oregon, and on Dec.11 he noted: “Father Barnabas writes that their community life in St. Gervais is very congenial. The parish house is large, carpeted from top to bottom, every Father has his own room, clean but neat. The church is simple but in good taste and acoustically structured. They are singing High Masses in chant and four-voice harmony. Fathers and Brothers are at present making wood and are fetching whole wagonloads of apples from orchards abounding in fruit where they are allowed to pick it. Father Barnabas presents such a description of Fillmore with mountains, valleys, forest, vineyards, a view seen from there, that’s makes one’s mouth water.

January 25, 1883, was the anniversary of the election Abbot Villiger and Prior Adelheim was able to send him good news:

“Dear God could not have given me and all of us greater joy ...then to send Saul Gibson here from Fillmore—and indeed converted, so it was possible to reason with him because death is staring out of his eyes and the Lord himself has softened him up. A terrific amount of money, true! Father and son together have 451 acres which at \$60 comes to \$27,600.

“I consider these two homesteads the cheapest because they have the best land and the best buildings... and without them the rest of the hill would never have been really satisfactory.

“We already have the deeds for five farms paid for; The others will follow. We intend to straighten out the insurance, too, in due time. So once again I ask you, most humbly and earnestly, to see about the loans.... To pay for these last two farms. If necessary, we could, of course, give good mortgages on the land.”

The farms which Father Adelheim rather blithely described as paid for were with borrowed money, some at interest as high as 9 per cent.

In a Feb. 22 diary entry, Abbot Villiger listed the cost and acreage of the five farms as 370,000 francs (\$74,000) for 1,250 acres and he observed:

“**I AM** surprised that our Fathers have so much credit at the banks in America. But perhaps they don't have it and then these purchases are void.”

By now some of the Swiss Sisters had gone to the Indian reservation at Grande Ronde, and the prioress, Sister Johanna, complained to the Abbot:

“I have never yet perceived the expressions of and religious or even human feelings in these Indian children. If I say something to them about God at the industrial school they laugh and by signs show there contempt! The smallest reprimand roils them and they revolt. Their greatest joy is to act contrary to the orders of the Sisters. No question of obedience; they consider the Sisters there servant girls who have to obey them, not the other way around, because they are getting paid for it, etc.”

On Feb. 18, Father Adelhelm gave what he called a “detailed economic report to all of you’ and in it he recalled that Archbishop Seghers had put him in touch with a California company operating in Portland from which he borrowed money at 7 1/2 per cent for an undetermined period. He gave a detailed description of the hill and surrounding land he had acquired from eight owners.

“Everyone says we are in possession of the best grain, meadow and pasture land far and wide and the hill is also suitable for raising grapes... A part of the hill is excellent pasture land for cattle. We likewise have several very productive orchards with more than enough apples and pears, very luscious as dessert!”

Some of the land was being leased out, but the Prior was itching to get under cultivation by the Benedictines themselves.

“Anyone can easily see that the whole complex of property will really pay off only if a group of Brothers is available so we can farm it ourselves.” He called for prayers for vocations to the Brotherhood not only in Switzerland but among American farm boys. “Then the whole business will pay off handsomely...Nevertheless we still hope to get \$4,000-\$5,000 in wheat and oats this unfavorable year. Furthermore we plan to dry apples, which is very profitable here ... We also intend to go into raising sheep and pigs, cows and horses and expect that eventually the livestock will repay our expenditures.”

He reported income from pew rent and stole fees in Gervais as \$1,200, in Fillmore \$500 and Sublimity \$300. “We hope to derive our living and pay interest from all these from all the sources of income listed and later to make a nice proposition... There is one consolation we have with our debts, that because of them we do not have to pay any taxes. According to State law, the money-lenders to whom the land still belongs are taxed”.

But this consolation turned out to be only temporary.

In early March he gave an even more detailed report, tracing his activities from the time he left Missouri in 1881. In concluding, he wrote: “with all this temporal business I almost forgot the principle thing. In Gervais since Jan. 1, 1876, there have been 247 baptisms, 34 weddings, 69 burials, 38 confirmations (first confirmation Nov. 7, 1880), 67 confirmations (second confirmation April 8, 1883). Last year I had three conversions, two so far this year.”

IN LATE June, Father Adelhelm had bad news for Abbot Villiger: “The... weatherman gave you a daily report of the fine spring and summer weather we were having in March. Next fall we are going to pay for the beautiful weather. At that time everything was wonderfully in bloom, the trees were filled out—afterwards it got cold—frost killed... all early fruit... Moreover it is too dry now and if rain does not come soon, the late wheat will also be a partial failure. We must hope for the best; otherwise we will suffer heavy loss.”

But he had a “consoling” report too. “UP in the hills, 15 miles from Fillmore, we found pasture land where the cattle are round as a ball yet throughout the year get no hay nor anything else other than themselves hunt and find in rich abundance in the bush and on the mountain, along with the best running water. We found a level area miles long with abundant grass along with magnificent endless forest; partly government, partly railroad land and forest.”

He then explained the methods of acquisition—homesteading 110 acres with an entire cost of \$34, and purchase of a section 110 acres) of railroad land at \$2.50 an acre, payable one-tenth annually for 10 years at 7 per cent interest.

“If we could get some Brothers or candidates who could live on it... we could soon take up a fine piece of mountain land and beautiful forest at ridiculous price.”

Subsequently Prior Adelhelm acquired about 2,000 acres with four homesteads and purchases from the Oregon and California Railroad Co. and three individuals.

On July 11, four candidates received the habit and one, Medard Fuerst “has grown so much that he is wearing my habit without alteration.”

The same letter spoke of the urgent need for \$3,000 for “a large steam saw, a threshing machine, mountain land with some cows,” and another \$3,444 for a dairy barn.

It was at this time, too, that the monks had their first experience with forest fires. “Right now” the Prior wrote, “the whole valley is full of smoke (like fog in the fall at home) from forest fires in the hills around us. In the mornings and evenings one can look into the face of the sun which is blood red) for hours through the smoke. Often it is also quite hot and sultry, between 90-100 degrees ...but generally afterwards a cool, little ocean breeze and the nights and mornings are really refreshingly cool and invigorating so it can be called a wonderful climate—but the little attic rooms as here in Gervais, it is Purgatory.”

WHILE FATHER Adelhelm was dealing in thousands of dollars with the banks and others, he was having trouble at the general store.

“As far as I can judge offhand,” He advised the Abbot, “we owe \$300-\$400 to the store in current bills and when these bills are repeatedly sent we are really embarrassed and hardly dare allow ourselves anymore without money; and this is especially hard for us because we are considered rich and we must keep it a secret that we are in debt. Dear Pappa, for your sake and for the weal and for our motherhouse, we had to risk so much, plunge so deep into debt—help us as much as you can, something extra, too, from time to time to give renewed courage to us. For that is indispensable with all the unspeakable difficulties.

Although temporal affairs kept Abbot Adelhelm occupied and caused Abbot Villiger many sleepless nights with worry, spiritual matters at New Engelberg were not neglected.

“We have the same order of seniority as at home,” the Prior wrote, “together with all the customs. However, we all have breakfast in common with the exception of the weekly server; more over, during it silence is observed in an exemplary manner, perhaps better than ever before at any time.”

Besides the other Fathers who helped with the teaching, Father Adelhelm wrote, “I give the Frater Novices one hour on the Holy Rule and one hour of exegesis of the Psalms every day, the Brothers one hour on the Holy Rule extra, hence three hours of instruction on top of everything else. If the Fraters do as I teach them daily, they will have enough work for the novitiate, besides English and Latin.”

In the summer of 1883, the chapter at Mt. Angel voted unanimously to postpone “the building of the monastery even it is so badly needed,” the Prior informed Abbot Villiger. “But necessity knows no law... We agreed that it is to wait patiently another year, to get stone ready for the foundations and the cellars, kitchen, woodshed and furnace room, and likewise saw wood with our steam saw; furthermore, to procure roof shingles, everything when and where it can be had most cheaply. That way will be a bit easier on us and it may be hoped dear God will send us still more help, especially work Brothers.”

“**THINGS WILL** get better, once we have survived the few first, hardest years. But this year and next there can as yet be no rosy prospect. Why? Because we, as far as I can see now, still won’t even make the American interest.”

He pointed to the apple crop failure and the lack of rain. "And what can we expect from the crops?" he asked. "Nothing more than bread and meat and vegetables for the family and feed for the many cattle and then we will have to consider ourselves lucky if we don't need to buy anything in addition. That will be quite an achievement."

To top it off, there was dissension among the fathers. Father Nicholas, who was procurator, said he wanted to resign from the monastery. And, Father Adelhelm wrote, "Father Barnabas told me that Father Nicholas is supposed to have said he wasn't going to write to you any more and Father Anselm the same. Both think Father Beda has been frightfully unjust to them, whereas Father Beda says that his whole crime lies in his being loyal to me..."

"I called a chapter meeting and made Father Barnabas procurator. He, however, asked for two weeks to think it over. He is afraid that we may be left in the lurch by everyone, even by home, which latter I denied and said if we as Religious do our duty and stick together and work fraternally, you and our motherhouse will not abandon us in our need."

Yet, despite all his problems, the prior was still able to sign off on one of his letter.

"Your Grateful, much harassed but never disheartened.
Father Adelhelm, Prior."

(To be continued.)

Catholic Sentinel—Friday, May 28, 1976

Work, Happiness, Disappointment...Involved in Building Mt. Angel Abbey

By Gorman Hogan

(This is the third and final article on the foundation of Mt. Angel Abbey in Oregon. Like the first two, it is excerpted from letters written by the first prior and later Abbot, Father Adelhelm Odermatt, OSB, to Abbot Anselm Villiger, OSB, of the mother house Abbey of Engelberg, Switzerland, and from Abbot Villiger's diary between 1881 and 1900.)

Contrary to some of the concerns of the Fathers at the foundation at New Engleberg and the worries of Abbot Anselm Villiger at the motherhouse in Switzerland, the priory in far-off Oregon continued to make headway with preparations for future construction of the monastery in the spring of 1884.

But instead of at the top of the hill which was the ultimate goal, they prepared to construct the first buildings at the bottom where timber would be readily available and construction more convenient.

However, before the actual building could begin, another disaster struck. The tragic news is reported in Abbot Villiger's diary on Sept.30, 1883.

"The worst has now happened for our new foundation in Fillmore. With the encouragement especially of the Archbishop of Oregon City and some American banks, our Fathers had bought about 2,000 acres of grazing and pasture land, for which the banks gave them the money. In addition they bought a big mount comprising 2,000 acres.

"Meanwhile a law has been promulgated in the State of Oregon to the effect that owners must pay taxes on their property where it is located. Now two banks have recalled 280,000 francs, (equals \$56,000) from our Fathers as of New Year's 1884, because they can not invest their money in States where it is subject to taxation but must invest in States where this taxation does not exist. What can be done?

"If our Fathers do not pay off this sum by New Year's the four or five farms in Fillmore will be sold at auction and the enterprise will be ruined. The only hope in this terrible predicament are the German Noble Families who has been approached by the Prior and myself for a loan with the aforesaid farms mortgaged to them until repayment. With this collateral the Noble Families are indeed doubly secure. And because they are think of settling in Fillmore, the land has the highest imaginable value for them."

"Oct. 15-21—I was in Wonnenstein and Leiden Christi.

From there I went to Baron R. von Stotzingen in Steisslingen, (Germany). In the evening I discussed the loan for our Fathers in Oregon with the gentlemen. They showed themselves favorable to a good mortgage but would not be satisfied with a mere obligation. The next day the question of a loan was discussed.

“Nov. 1—The past three weeks I have been suffering great anxiety, which often made me sleepless, about a loan for our Fathers in Gervais. I rather expected to receive a court decision from the Noble Families that without a mortgage from me Falk could not fully raise the money. Finally I gave orders to call on National Representative Nic. Benziger in Einsiedeln. Then yesterday a star of hope suddenly arose. Baron von Stotzingen writes me that on Nov. 5 there will be a meeting of the Noble Families during which the Question of a loan will be discussed. That provisionally Count Gundt has declared himself ready to lend 30,000 marks (\$7,500); Count von Galen, 15,000 marks (\$3,750); Baron von Bodmann, 25,000 marks (\$6,250); Baron von Hornstein, 10,000marks (\$2,500); Baron von Stotzingen, 20,000 marks (\$2,000).

If only the assembly in Constance for the sake of God decides to help!

“Nov.8—The conditions of the loan from the Noble Families: 5-½ % interest—the deposit of a dead pledge with the abbot in Einsiedeln, etc.-unacceptable. I declined.” (Later entry; “The Nobles failed to do anything at all.”)

The Abbot continues:

“Nov. 14—Flak has returned the notes signed for Prior Adelhelm and wants them signed differently. The fall of 1883, so replete with worry, trouble and labor, with sleepless nights, will be unforgettable for me.

“Nov. 15—Anxiously I am waiting to see whether Falk will accept the notes and send the money. And what if the American banks do not accept Falk’s notes or do not advance the money by Jan. 1, 1884. Thus I shall remain on the rack until the end of January when news may arrive.

“Nov. 17—Falk sends the notes. By Christmas they should be in the hands of Prior Adelhelm. Hence help would be given being provided the notes are accepted in America and the money advanced by New Year. In exchange I have burdened myself for five years with much trouble and worry in that the whole loan with interest must be repaid in five notes.”

Then the good news:

“Dec. 20—The notes from Falk have arrived safely in Oregon and have already been cashed. Praise and thanks to God! Thus liquidation has been happily averted. I end this year with most heartfelt thanks to God for helping in the American crisis and directing everything so well. This fall this business almost crushed me.”

There was a constant appeal from Mt. Angel for additional Fathers and particularly working Brothers so that Father Adelhelm and his foundation could pursue their many activities, not the least of which was promoting the collage and seminary. And while they conducted their studies, a major occupation was building the monastery with all the help they could get, Voluntary and hired, and it did progress.

But there was a commentary worth noting in the Abbot’s diary. On Feb. 11, 1884 he writes:

“Today I am beginning the 60th year of my life. When I look back over the 59 years of my life I have much, much to regret and I am truly sorry for everything whereby I have sinned against God, against my neighbor, against my confreres, against my duties in my various positions as prefect, pastor, prior, and abbot. I won’t have much longer to live.

I really would like to die too, if only I was better prepared. But so many, many cares still bind me to this life. Especially the foundation in the State of Oregon lies heavy on my heart and if I wish to live a few years yet, I wish it for the sake of the foundation in Oregon. Once this business has been wound up I will gladly say my Dimittis.”

The days of days, of course, occurred on May 11, 1884, when the cornerstone was laid for the new St. Benedict Prior at Mt. Angel.

No can tell it with such feeling than Father Adelhelm himself. His letter is quoted in Abbot Anselm’s diary:

Gervais, Ore., May 12, 1884

Rt. Rev. Father Abbot!
Rev. and Ven. Confreres!

May 11, the feast of St Majolus, was the long-desired day on which we had the great joy of laying the cornerstone of the new St. Benedict's Priory at the foot of the hill of Engelberg, Ore. Although there was no publicity, quite a few people gathered and at the touching of the blessed cornerstone left the respectable little sum of \$44 or something over 200 francs.

You will no doubt ask surprise: But why build at the foot of the hill and not at top of it, the site I so strongly favored. Our means did not permit it. For we are in great need of money aside from this and hence we found it necessary to locate a temporary monastery of wood where it is cheapest to put it up and most convenient for the economy. If only we once get together under one roof, the entire family, we shall be satisfied and then can take our sweet time slowly but surely getting the stone ready for a building of stone on the right spot. Time will tell!!

In our financial difficulties, where the need was greatest God's help was nearest. Once not long ago when I comforted the Rev. Manager Barabas with the above words and handed him an unimpressive light little letter, he came back in a few moments beaming with joy, and said that the proverb had proved true—here was a check for 3,000 francs (\$600) from the Archbishop in Minnesota for us. This patch (band-aid in modern parlance! -Transl.) felt good, although we would have preferred that the money go to you as travel money for candidates. But it seems Providence thought that at present we needed it most, which by no means deny.

So, too, dear God sent an old man here (Jakob Ringeli from Baden Aragua); he had \$480 in gold sewed into his vest pocket. You will all believe me when I say that I was happy to play the tailor, and my little scissors quickly liberated the wad of gold. The venerable old man (75 years old) still works diligently in the garden and knows a lot about raising grapes. We are taking him for the rest of his life and he is bequeathing his money to us in writing. Deo gratias!

Vivat sequens! Here he comes. This one is a German Jew from Gesia, Saxony, Aaron Gruebauer by name, tailor and basket maker by profession. It was a hard job to drive the Jew and the Methodist out of this Nathaniel-soul. But the Holy Spirit—by whom he claimed to be guided—triumph and give him light concerning Confession and Communion until he bowed and said the Credo. I baptized him on Holy Saturday. He, too, has already brought \$150 and still has about \$100 owing to him. He is providing us with fine baskets for the fruit harvest.

These are as it were little stars of hope for help from God and good people, but they are merely like a few drops into the vast ocean of unavoidable expenditures if the economy, the mountain and the saw are to pay. The first years there is almost nothing but purchasing and paying out, and infrequent and only small income. The wheat and fruit crops, indeed, give very good promise but they nevertheless plug only a few of the big holes. But then neither was Rome built in one year. In decades and centuries to come Engelberg in Oregon will stand there wholly honorable and prosperous, but for the present there is call for prayer and sweat.

Heartily thanking the entire beloved community for all the holy prayers and acts of kindness and ever commending all of us to you most earnestly, I remain, with greetings to abbot and community, in the most holy heart of Jesus, Mary and Joseph,

Your most grateful son and confrere, P. Adelhelm
Gervais, Ore., N. America
Feast of St. Anselm
April 21, 1884

Immediately following the letter was a last will and testament leaving the entire property of Mt. Angel Priory to Abbot Anselm and his successors, detailing the holdings.

The year 1884 rocked along with work and study and the Abbot was occupied with other matters, and he found on March 27 "that the situation at Mt Angel had been put pretty much at rest—Thanks be to God! All is going very well." He even noted that Father Adelhelm owed only \$32,518 and he listed ownership of some 800 head of sheep, cattle, pigs, horses and goats.

Mount Angel lies at the foot of the hill. All around it are grouped the drier, cheese plant, carpenter shop, cider press, flour mill, machine shop, fruit house, sheep barns, several cow and horse barns. Pig pens, hay and straw barns, living quarters for the hired hands, large lumber shed, two smokehouses, bakery, kiln, smith, bee houses, chicken house. The land complex consisting of seven farms lies all around the hill.

But on Jan. 3, 1886, the good Abbot in Engelberg, Switzerland, again had some doubts:

“The course of the past year brought me many a secret concern about Mt. Angel which still weighs on heavily upon my mind. They are young people, inexperienced and unhardened, who must be entrusted with all too important matters there. If there were people available the worry would be cut in half. But bitter things come also from within the cloister.

Let everything be offered to the Lord, Who never punishes more then deserved but always less. May God graciously support me in the new year and not permit my courage to fail.”

On Feb.13 the Abbot noted in his diary:

“In order to reassure us regarding the burden of the debt, Prior Adelhelm writes: 1,400 acres near the monastery will be worth \$100 an acre, hence \$140,000. Buildings, livestock and inventory, \$30,000. The land in the hills, (3,400 acres), only after 25-50 years to be sure, will be worth \$72,000. Hence around 1,200,000 francs in all (\$14,000). If only this statement were correct. Father Prior shows himself ready to go collecting throughout America.”

But then a tragedy:

“May 5—Today a cablegram arrived saying that the monastery Mount Angel has burned down.

So our priory in Oregon has burned down! At first the news hit me like a stroke of lightning. I was just before the Blessed Sacrament when the valet brought me the cablegram. If you so will it O Lord, may your will be done! I offered up my will to the will of God. So be it, no matter how much anxiety, how much suffering it brings me.

“At one moment the news causes me deepest distress, then again I am able to submit without difficulty to the will of God and what He ordains. For what is better, holier, wiser and more adorable then the will of God? Is there ever anything in heaven and on earth that we have to consider other then the will of God? It alone is decisive, holy, just, good—why should we not submit to it? What has happened brings suffering, anxiety, worry and sacrifice, to be sure, but God alone knows why.

“May 20--- Finally news about the fire at Mt. Angel. Prior Adelhelm writes:

“On May 3 fire broke out in the kitchen chimney of the monastery. Everything was tried to save the monastery, but because of the wooden roof it was all in vain and moreover there were no fire engines here. So monastery, church, seminary, mill, carpenter shops quickly fell prey to the flames. With the help of seminarians, students, neighbors, we could pretty well clean out the rooms and cells and save the books and furniture, although much was ruined. Everything together is insured for 35,000 francs (\$7,000) and what ever we receive from the insurance will be applied to the California dept and reduce it by that much.

“Thanks be to God that the larger college building was saved, for it caught fire repeatedly and in many places. But all worked like lions.

“The loss is great, but God knows how to make the best of it all. Everyone sympathizes with us; our neighbors are helping as much as they can. One of them came to me right after the fire and pressed \$100 into my hand. Fathers, Brothers and students had there evening meal and breakfast at the convent and in neighboring homes. Fr. Leo and I kept watch at the collage during the night. I telegraphed the Archbishop. He is going to come with the first train tomorrow. He, Portland and all of Oregon won't leave us in the lurch. After this fire we can go out collecting much more optimistically – especially in the East, where the bishops can hardly refuse us permission to collect.

“For the time being the college is large enough to take in the 24 seminarians too. On the ground floor we shall set up the kitchen for our entire personnel, which include 100 students and 24 seminarians comes to nearly 170 people.

“The recreation rooms provide space for two refectories. In this way we are going to try to help ourselves as best we can. Some Fathers will still get rooms in the college; the rest together with the Fathers we shall lodge in the guest house and shall send to the hotel any guest who may come.

“Today we have to let the students rest after yesterday’s exertions, because for the sake of safety we cleaned out the college and now everything has to be put back, the rest won’t last long. The students are already sleeping in their dormitory again, and tomorrow, May 5, the school will continue. During the fire the student, from the biggest to the smallest, helped along like family members and worked until they collapsed.

“Fortunately there was no death and no injury of any consequence. The protection of God and Mary and Agatha, in whose honor the students prayed five Our Fathers every day, saved the college in a truly marvelous way.

“During the fire I took the Blessed Sacrament from the monastery up the Mount of Angels to the pilgrimage chapel there and from the college to the Lourdes chapel in the woods.

“The chalices and vestments were saved; the canopy is badly damaged. So too the bake oven and the cook stove are ruined.

“The loss is in any event very great but God and good people, to whom we are grateful for every charitable gift, will not forsake us, just as our dear Americans will not.

But the great loss, the Abbot found it a blessing in disguise. Prior Adelhelm took to the road as a beggar. He covered one end of the land to the other and even went to England.

Sometimes things went well—at others not good at all. On Nov. 11 the Abbot noted: “Serious worry about Mt. Angel still weighs heavily on me. The collections in America are not doing well. The dept in California can hardly be wiped out.”

One day it was good and the next bad. Sample items:

“Nov. 13—Prior Adelhelm writes from Newark, N. J., that in Newark and New York at Benziger he has again received several hundred dollars. He will shortly begin collecting in Newark, where Bishop Wigger has given his permission. I wrote him that he should send the interest for Engelberg and Rickenbach by New Year’s and I extended by loan to him for a further five years at 11%. In this way I hope to help Mt. Angel and to get by here with a great deal of economizing.

“Nov. 28—Prior Adelhelm writes from Newark that occasionally he substitutes for a pastor, preaches two or three times on Sundays, hears confessions for four or five hours, makes sick calls and begs. The results, though tied in with troubles, are still respectable. For several days he was sick in bed with diarrhea, but is now on his feet again. I fear that the good man is wearing himself out. I advised him to take care of himself.

“Dec. 17—A letter from Father William Kramer of Mt. Angel has brought me much consolation. He writes under Father Leo as Subprior things are going very well, that living together peacefully has never been more beautiful than now. The college is flourishing at least in spirit and good discipline. Debts are decreasing. Bequests and legacies contribute to the Priory’s income. The prior may stay as long as there is anything to collect. The Prior will probably never become Abbot and is suitable as Prior but not as Abbot. Practical considerations and costs will probably decide that the new monastery be built not on the hill but at its foot, but this will be put off for years yet.

“Dec. 25—The Christ Child has presented me with a very heavy cross. The Fathers tell me they cannot pay me any interest on the money invested with them until they have paid off the American debts and the debt owing to Falk & Co., have built a monastery, and have everything arranged for a place to live that is at least somewhat passable. This will take years! It will mean a big deficit in my accounts. But in the name of God, when I think of there situation, consider there poverty, I must, so as not discourage them completely and force them to disband, grant them there request and try to find help for myself by other means. If the capital is made secure in this way, the interest can be dispensed for a time being. But what this enterprise in America has already cost me in worry and suffering and sleepless nights! But some day there will surely be peace.

“The most recent reports from Mt. Angel have left a wound in my heart which makes itself felt over and over, 50 to 100 times a day, especially as soon as I wake. Oh, why so many worries? Just leave everything to God; He will see to it; pray and trust and forget! Let this year close with thanks to God.

But dissention continued to crop up from time to time. There were problems with Sisters, too, in which Father Adelhelm was accused by no less then Archbishop Gross of Portland of possibly seeking to influence an election at the convent.

Still there can be no doubt of the Abbot's fondness for Father Adelhelm, and certainly the feeling was reciprocated. There were questions of management of economy and the Abbot again remarked that Father Adelhelm would likely make an adequate prior but he wondered about his ability as an abbot.

One of the final items of the diary for 1893 observes:

"Father Leo Huebscher is coming home to stay. He was subprior at Mt. Angel but not control his temper and did not get along with the Prior."

And further:

"At Mt. Angel there is lively discussion of question whether to build now or later. Wither to build on the lower level or on the hill. Most of the Fathers seem, in opposition to the Prior, to want to build on the lower level. In general, the attitude of the Fathers toward the Prior does not seem to be friendly, whereas the big majority of the Brothers are loyal to him.

The upshot of it was that the Abbot finally removed Father Adelhelm as Prior.

Father Adelhelm took it like a trooper he was and continued to barnstorm the country raising money and acquiring equipment, hogs, sheep and whatever might chance his way. He was "the good soldier of God."

As it turned out, Father Adelhelm's replacement as Prior sent from Engelberg, didn't last long and asked to be recalled.

Father Adelhelm Odermatt was never elected an Abbot of Mt. Angel Abbey but he did hold the Titular Abbot. He lived many productive years and he was able to see the construction of the second monastery on top of his beloved hillside, which he found in the wide Willamette Valley of Oregon.

A second fire in 1926 destroyed this center of Christian learning, but today it thrives and prospers as Abbot Villager hoped and prayed it would.

Abbot Anselm Villager died on Jan. 14, 1901, but one of his last acts on Nov. 16, 1900, was to make this request: "For our loan of \$140,000 to Mt. Angel Abbey I ask them for a legally valid first mortgage on land, forest, buildings, furniture, and at the sane time declared that we, renounce any interest, request only an annual repayment of \$1000."