

Mother Margaret Potts

Side 1:

Mother Potts is former Mother Superior of former school St. Genevieve of-the-Pines (1908-1968).

[1] Introduction: The habit for nuns was developed by French parish priests for warmth and practicality in early 19th century. [Sister Kathleen Winters]

[60] Order founded 1817 to educate girls following the French Revolution.

[74] Change to a simplified habit called 'emerging' was gradual. (see photo enclosure).

[121] Article in the Asheville Citizens Time (enclosed) is discussed. [Nancy Marlowe]

[131] She at age 85 still leads a busy life. She has worked with R.S.V.P. since 1971, is conducting a class in writing and is on the Commission on Disability in Melton, Mass. She is visiting Asheville.

[167] Although she did not enter the Smith-McDowell house until it belonged to the Catholics, she walked by the outside hoping to catch a glimpse of Marjorie Rambeau who was a movie star. There were so many changes on her old campus it took 5 years to get up the courage to return. [Smith-McDowell house, Herman A. Gudger, Marjorie Rambeau, Sisters of Charity, Sister Kathleen Winters, Madonna Hall, Lorin Hall]

[191] A former student urged her to return to see the people, not the buildings. [Betty Pollock Golden]

[198] She writes 500 former students.

[210] When the school opened there was prejudice against Catholics. Founding Mother Superior broke down feeling and 1/4 Jewish and 2/4 non-Catholic were included. [Mother Suzanne Deplanck, Jane Raoul Bingham]

[235] Difficulties faced in starting the school in 1908 with the six nuns from France is reviewed. Details are to be found in newly published book (see clipping). [Kate H. (Mrs. O.C.) Hamilton, Mother Suzanne Deplanck]

[280] She often thinks about a former student at the time they are having difficulty and contacts them when she can. [Virginia Sterling]

[321] She describes the house, out buildings, and what she could see of the property as she walked by. Believes there was a smokehouse and slave quarters. In 1962 she went in to the house and was impressed with the light blond woodwork. In 1990 she saw it decorated. [Smith-McDowell house, Federick Law Olmstead, Sister Mary Gannon]

[376] She describes the Biltmore House before it was fully decorated. [Biltmore House]

[393] On November 21, 1929 the First Bank failed. She tells about receiving the news and the hardships faced by everyone during the Depression. [First Bank, Mother R. Stelling, Miss Katherine Stelling, Richard (Dick) Chiles, Wachovia Bank]

[503] Victoria Inn was the Grove Park of its day. (see enclosure). [Victoria Inn, Grove Park]

[576] She went to summer school to get her degree and in 1934 went to Tournai, Belgium to take her final vows. [Mother Agnes Sharry]

Side 2:

[2/3] She gives history of expulsion of religious teaching orders from France and the relocation in Belgium.

[2/21] The aunt and mother of former student, Ruth Camblos, attended the convent in Tournai, Belgium. [Helen Stewart Hensley, Willie Stewart, Ruth Hensley Camblos, Mother Mabel Monk, Dr. Charles A. Hensley]

[2/32] During the Depression the garden on school property and wholesale grocery prices made it possible to continue to keep the school open.

[2/48] Asheville has always been a tourist city. She feels the mountains give her strength and courage. [Grove Park]

[2/75] During World War II soldiers were sent here and doctors who came to care for them didn't want to leave. This gives Asheville a high percentage of doctors to the population.

[2/93] She was here during the building of all the new halls (now owned by A-B Tech).

[2/130] Parents were always helpful and raised funds. They formed the Mother Guild.

[2/137] Gibbons Hall was built in 1949 for boys (see enclosure). [Mother Agnes Sharry]

[2/158] The size of classes were always restricted. At one time there were 597 students, just under the 600 they decided was the maximum.

[2/161] During the 1960's Sisters started leaving their orders and Catholic Schools could not afford to pay salaries. She does not feel that this was the result of Vatican II but that there was a change in attitude in the culture. Schools had to close and the large buildings used for training priests and nuns are now, if not sold, used as retirement homes for them. [Carl Rogers]

[2/225] During the Civil War, Sherman's march went near her home town. She recounts a story about a neighbor's family. [Sherman, Hitler, Lincoln]

[2/288] She decided to take her vows when she was 20 and a student at St. Genevieve's. Her mother was a powerful influence in her life.

[2/364] In 1990 she went to Rome with a former student and now publisher of W magazine. She had an audience with the Pope who blessed her eyes. [Andrian Clerre, Marion Perley]