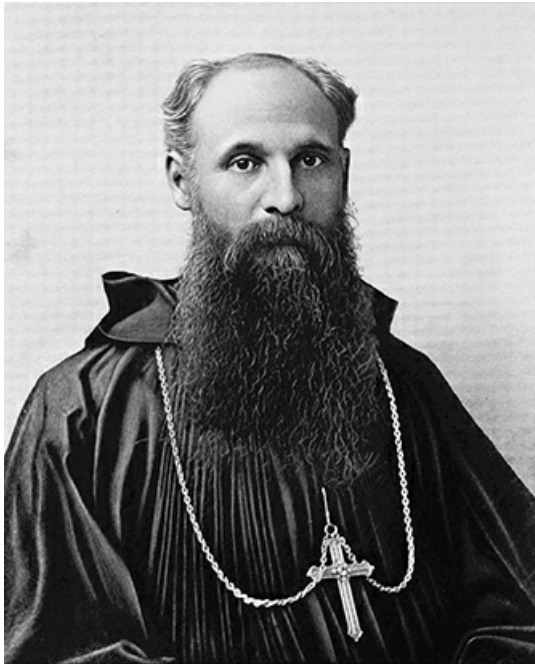


Haid, Leo ^[1]

Haid, Leo

by Catherine Myers Bennington, 1988; Revised by SLNC Government and Heritage Library, July 2023

15 July 1849–24 July 1924



A 1906 engraving of Bishop Leo Haid from Samuel A. Ashe's *Biographical History of North Carolina*, Volume 4, published 1906 by Charles L. Van Noppen Publisher, Greensboro, North Carolina. Presented on Archive.org.

^[2]Leo Haid, D.D., O.S.B., Roman Catholic ^[3] abbot, orator, and educator, was born in Latrobe, Pa., the son of nurseryman John Haid and Mary A. Stader Haid. The family name originally was Hite. After preparatory education in the local schools, Haid entered the Benedictine Order's St. Vincent's College near Latrobe in 1862, was graduated from the theological seminary, and was ordained on 21 Dec. 1872. He also received an M.A. degree from Duff's Business College. After his ordination, Father Haid taught at St. Vincent's for thirteen years; in addition, he was secretary of the college and chaplain. In 1885 he was elected abbot of the faltering Maryhelp Abbey, located in Belmont, Gaston County ^[4], an area in the Scot-Irish Presbyterian ^[5] Catawba Valley described as perhaps the most non-Catholic country in what was "without doubt the most non-Catholic state in America." Under Haid's leadership, for seven years the abbey added new buildings and extensions and over 200 acres of land with accompanying growth in clergy, lay staff, and students. Maryhelp became a mother abbey to the Benedictine schools Haid erected in Florida, Georgia, Virginia, and West Virginia.

On 1 July 1888 Haid was consecrated Bishop of Messene and Vicar Apostolic of North Carolina, and by decree of Pope Pius X ^[6] was allowed to continue as abbot of Belmont—a double honor accorded no other ecclesiastic in the United States. Besides his service as president of the American Cassinese Congress of the Benedictine Order of the Southern Benedictine Society of North Carolina, he presided over the World Council of Benedictine Abbots in Rome in 1893. On 18 Oct. 1910, the silver jubilee year of Haid's abbacy, Pope Pius designated Belmont Abbey ^[7] as an "abbatia nullius" or cathedral abbey, of which Haid had been made Abbot Ordinary on 13 June. In recognition of Haid's preeminence in the American Catholic hierarchy, on 15 July 1914 the pope named him assistant to the papal throne and a member of the Roman Patriate or nobility. Although Haid could not participate in political affairs, he was identified by vote with the Democratic party ^[8].

After a year of declining health and hospitalization in Charlotte ^[9], Bishop Haid died at age seventy-five. Funeral services were held on 30 July 1924 in the abbey cathedral at Belmont, where he was buried in the monastic cemetery.

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