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The Sisters of St. Joseph and Their Foundations in America: A Brief Account of the Origin and Ideals of the Congregation and of Its Work in the Middle West: 1650-1930

M. Aquinas Caffrey

Loyola University Chicago

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The Sisters of St. Joseph and Their Foundations in America
A brief account of the Origin and Ideals of the Congregation and of its work in the Middle West.
1650-1930
by
Sister M. Aquinas Caffrey C.S.J.

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PREFACE

When in the middle of the seventeenth century Bishop De Maupas of the diocese of Le Puy, with the assistance of Father Madaille a French Jesuit, founded the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph, he imbued the infant Congregation with the spirit of St. Ignatius of Loyola and of St. Francis de Sales. Through long centuries of holy and heroic endeavor, the Congregation has preserved the spirit of these great masters of the spiritual life. Its manifold labors for God and for souls in the old and in the new world make a history truly edifying, but nowhere do we find more strikingly evident the finger of God and the impress of the saints than in the story which Sister Mary Aquinas has so admirably given to us in her chronicle of the rise and the development of the Congregation of St. Joseph in the archdiocese of Chicago. Thirty six years have passed since the Congregation began its work in our archdiocese. Without money or powerful worldly patrons, but with the rich coin of prayer and sacrifice, and the heavenly favor of the saints, seven holy women formed a little religious family that has grown and prospered until today it contains one hundred and thirty-seven sisters who are laboring successfully in three flourishing academies and in
fourteen parochial schools. And so Apostolic was the zeal of the sisters of the La Grange parent house that in 1912 ten of its daughters travelled to far away California where they have grown into a large Community that cares for the sick in five hospitals, and trains in religion and virtue the little ones of Christ in fifteen parochial schools.

I am glad of this opportunity to offer my humble but heartfelt tribute to this noble Community whose members I have known and admired from the days when the Congregation began its works of religion in our archdiocese.

Francis A. Purcell.
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The Sisters of St. Joseph

and

Their Foundations in America

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Ideals of the Congregation and

of its work in the Middle West

1650-1930

FOREWORD

Religious communities of men and women are numerous. A common purpose, Ad majorem Dei gloriam, unites their diversified labors. Yet the spirit and the works of the various orders and congregations are as different from each other as are the religious garbs that so uniquely distinguish them. So, too, the history of each, though each is a story of divinely inspired love revealing itself in deeds of Christian charity, each is influenced and modified by the circumstances of the age of which it is the product; each constitutes a narrative possessed of elements of human interest and endeavor, peculiar to none but itself.

Because the particular history of every Congregation reveals incidents that serve to bring into strong relief the characters of all connected with its foundation,
because knowledge of the hardships and difficulties of pioneer days enhances appreciation of present achievements, and because such appreciation inspires emulation, it has seemed good to me to collect the data that would enable me to write the story of the foundation of a distinguished Sisterhood in the great archdiocese of Chicago, namely, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of La Grange, Illinois. You will find this history to be a record of toil and arduous efforts, of deprivations and sufferings to which the perspective of distance may lend a certain attractiveness.

The history of a religious community must be especially dear to those who have participated in the very beginnings of a foundation. A feeling of pardonable pride must fill their hearts as they view the progress of the community toward the fulfillment of those ideals which were the cause of its inception. On the other hand to later members of the same community the examples and ideals of the pioneer Sisters is a continual inspiration to give their best into the treasury of personal holiness, and of common endeavor in the cause of Christ. It is to these pioneers of our community that this history is dedicated.
Chapter I

In presenting the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph of La Grange, Illinois, it may be helpful to include a brief account of the original foundation of the Sisterhood of which this particular Congregation is a branch.

It was in the middle of the seventeenth century, a period fraught with trials and calamities to the Church, that the Congregation came into existence. With the rise of numerous sects, Christian unity among the European states of the North was destroyed, as one after another the Teuton rulers foreswore allegiance to the center of orthodoxy and closed to their subjects the road to Rome. The Southern nations were for the most part loyal to the Holy See, and the Catholic Hapsburgs of Austria had successfully overcome every attempt of the Reformists to separate the states from union with the See of Peter. Even in Catholic France, internal religious strife had already begun to manifest itself.¹.

During this crisis, as always, God was with His Church. He saw her need; He raised up a host of defenders, of men who quickened her with renewed life, not only by their personal holiness, but by their devoted service to God and

¹. Resume taken from readings on the Religious Revolution in Europe, especially in France.
to their fellow men. Among those destined to sow anew the seeds of piety in the hearts of men were the Bishop of Geneva, St. Francis de Sales, who gave to Catholic education the Order of the Sisters of the Visitation, and St. Vincent de Paul, who bequeathed to the poor and suffering members of Christ, his Order of the Sisters of Charity.²

To this century belong two other men, illustrious alike for virtue and learning, who were destined in the Providence of God to inaugurate in a new Congregation, that namely of the Sisters of St. Joseph, the plan reluctantly abandoned by the Bishop of Geneva. These were Msgr. Henri de Maupas, Bishop of Le Puy and later of Evreaux, and Jean Paul Medaille, a missionary of the Society of Jesus.³

Msgr. de Maupas was a member of the distinguished family of Gondi to which Vincent de Paul was for a time attached, as preceptor and spiritual guide. Very little is known of his early life, except that from his tenderest years, encouraged by his pious parents, he showed a decided inclination to the priestly life. Faithful to the inspirations of grace, he renounced all the earthly advantages of which his birth would have assured him and gave himself unreservedly to the service of God and His Church. While yet young he was nominated to the Abbey of St. Denis of

Rheims, the revenue of which he dispensed in favor of the poor. Later a more extensive field was opened to his zeal, when in 1641 the See of Le Puy was offered to him by King Louis XIII. In spite of his natural repugnance for a position that would bring him into prominence before the world, he took possession of the See on January 10, 1644, and devoted himself henceforth wholly to the labors of his Bishopric. Among the works to which his zeal and charity gave rise, one of the most remarkable was the foundation of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the diocese of Le Puy.

In this foundation Msgr. de Maupas had an ardent collaborer in the person of Rev. Jean Paul Medaille, S. J. In the course of his missionary labors, Father Medaille had met several pious women, anxious to devote themselves in a special manner to the sanctification of their own souls, and at the same time to engage in works of charity for their neighbor. Being convinced that an association of religious women that would embrace this two-fold purpose would be of inestimable value to the Church, Father Medaille communicated his desire for such a foundation to the Bishop of Le Puy. That prelate entered heartily into the plan as it gave him an opportunity to carry into effect the unrealized project of St. Francis de Sales, namely, to establish a Sisterhood that would unite the external works of mercy with the
interior life of contemplation.4.

We, who have been accustomed to the active religious orders of the Church, and are familiar with their diversity of purpose and of organization, can hardly realize the problems and difficulties confronting the first founders of communities of women devoting themselves to a life of active service. In the earliest centuries it was thought that the cloister was the only form of consecrated life adapted to woman. By the seventeenth century the sphere of woman in religious service had already begun to expand. Today there is scarcely a branch of human benevolence from which the religious woman is debarred.5.

The establishment of a Community which would unite external works of charity with its spirit of contemplation had been the first conception of St. Francis de Sales. His plan, as we know, did not meet with ecclesiastical approbation. That the idea of the Bishop of Geneva was an inspiration from heaven seems to be proved by the fact that shortly after his death a number of active orders were established. Among the first of these was the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Unlike their co-laborers in

FIRST RECEPTION OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH
October 15, 1650, in Le Puy
the service of the Master, they did not have cloistral re-
strictions placed upon them; they were sent by their founders
as "mothers to the bedside of the sick, to the attics of the
poor, into isolated huts, to far distant missions, among
savages, even to the soldiers' camp, 'with the city streets
and highways for their convent, obedience for their inclos-
ure, the fear of God for their grate, and holy modesty--for
their veil.'"6.

The generous and courageous women who formed the nu-
cleus of the new Congregation were prepared for their labors
by Father Medaille. He procured for them a dwelling place
in the home of Lucrece de la Planche, the widow of M. de
Joux. In the home of this zealous lover of the poor, those
who were preparing to consecrate themselves to lifelong
service of the poor were instructed by Father Medaille in
the principles of the religious life. On October 15, 1650,
in an orphan asylum of the city, which had in the meantime
been fitted up for them, the little Community was presented
by their spiritual director to the Bishop of Le Puy, who
invested them with the religious habit, gave them rules for
their future guidance, and gave to their Congregation the
name of Sisters of St. Joseph.7.

6. Journal of Sister M. Louise Cuff, Ph.D., Marymount
College, Salina, Kansas.
7. Abbe Rivaux, Life of Mother St. John Fontbonne, Benziger
Bros., 1887, p. 53 (translation).
The rules for the Congregation were drawn up by Father Medaille in concert with Msgr. de Maupas. The rules given by St. Francis de Sales to the Order of the Visitation, because the Bishop thought these "the best guarantee for the future of the new institution," were used as the basis of the rule of the Sisters of St. Joseph. In the arrangement of their practical details, however, Father Medaille was guided almost entirely by the Constitution of the Society of Jesus.8.

The rapidity with which the work inaugurated by Msgr. de Maupas and Father Jean Paul Medaille extended to all parts of the world is itself a proof of the fitness of these two men to organize the new Congregation and prepare its original members for the work to which God had called them. The extensiveness of the labors of that Sisterhood at the present time, and above all, the all-embracing spirit of Christ-like charity which pervades the numerous communities of that Sisterhood, three hundred years after its inception, is unmistakable evidence of the perfection with which they fulfilled the work which God entrusted to their zeal.

Msgr. de Maupas strove incessantly, after the Congregation had obtained formal approval, to obtain for it the

favor and protection of other French prelates. In 1661 when he was transferred to the See of Evreaux, his successor Msgr. Armand de Bethune continued the good work and bestowed the most paternal care on the institution, which he again approved and confirmed in 1665. A year later the civil power lent its aid to the development of "a Society so useful to the public welfare," and Louis XIV confirmed by letters patent, the first establishment at Velay. From that time the Congregation began to spread rapidly under the patronage of the Bishops of Le Puy, Clermont, Vienne and Lyons.9.

Its Constitution, which for several years was in manuscript form only, was printed in 1693 by order of the Bishop of Vienne. The later edition printed at Lyons 1729, was approved by Msgr. Veuville, then Archbishop of that city. The original manuscript in the handwriting of Father Medaille is still preserved in the convent of Le Puy.10.

The almost phenomenal growth of the Institution went on unimpeded until 1789, when the clouds of the Revolution which had for some time threatened the Church in France, burst forth into such a deluge of persecution as seemed almost to engulf her. Altars and thrones were overturned;

educational and charitable institutions met with a like fate; the members of religious orders were dispersed, impoverished and executed. This Congregation did not escape the common fate; its houses were pillaged, its precious records destroyed or carried off and its inmates thrown into prison.

Among the many who gave their lives for their Faith during this persecution there appears on the roster of the execution list, five Sisters of St. Joseph: Sister Marie Aubert and Sister Marie Anne Garnier, who were guillotined on June 10, 1794 in the Department of Haute Loire, Sister Marie Aubert of Argentiere, Commune of Beaune, a member of the community of St. Georges L'agricol, wherein she bore the name of Sister Alexius. She was thirty-eight years old. Sister Marie Anne Garnier belonged to a remarkable family, the Garniers of Lissac, which had given many members to the Visitation, to the Trappists, the Carthusians. The most widely known is Reverend Don Louis Garnier, who died in 1876. This pious disciple of St. Bruno ascribed his conversion, his vocation, and his entrance into the Grand Chartreuse to the merits of his martyred aunt. Her name in religion was Sister St. Julien. In those days of terror, on October 5, 1794, three Sisters of Saint Joseph,

REV. MOTHER ST. JOHN FONTBONNE

Born March 3, 1759
Died November 22, 1843

Restorer of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph
Suffered for the Faith in the Revolution
"Martyrdom escaped her, though she sought no escape from martyrdom."

ORPHAN ASYLUM OF LE PUY
First Mother-House of the Sisters of St. Joseph
were taken from the little Community of Vernosc, Ardeche, namely, Mother St. Croix, Sister Madeleine and Sister Toussaint and they were executed in a most barbarous manner at Privas. There is every reason to believe that these are not the only Sisters of St. Joseph, who, to the merit of long detention in foul prisons patiently endured, added the crown of martyrdom.12.

The name of Mother St. John Fontbonne shines with special luster at this crisis of religious persecution. Having refused to take the prescribed oath of the Revolutionary Republic, she, and two of her companions were thrown into the prison of St. Didier to await death. After a few days, they saw the prison door open to admit other prisoners among whom was Mother St. John's aged aunt, Mother St. Francis. The four captives spent those terrifying days in prayer and contemplation calmly awaiting their death. After long detention in the course of which, they had seen many of their fellow prisoners go forth to meet death, the executioner entered their department and cried aloud, "Citizens, it is your turn tomorrow." No terror seized the intrepid women, but joyfully they replied, "Deo Gratias", and immediately set about to prepare themselves for the coming of the Bridegroom. When the doors were thrown open and they arose to

go forth to the scaffold, the jailor said calmly, "Citizens, you are free, Robespierre has fallen, your chains are broken." At this unexpected news Mother St. John exclaimed, "Ah, my Sisters, we are not worthy to die for our Holy Religion, our sins have been the obstacle to so great a favor."

After their release from prison, these holy women were received into the house of Mother St. John's parents, where they lived for twelve years in retirement and seclusion, observing the rules of the Congregation as far as was in their power to do so. Finally, August 14, 1807, Mother St. John Fontbonne was called to the city of St. Etienne in Forez, where she met several pious young girls, the former members of religious orders, who were desirous of consecrating themselves anew to the service of God, and had established themselves in an apartment in the Rue de la Bourse. On July 14, 1808, the little band, known as the "black Sisters" laid aside the secular dress which had been so regretfully worn, and were reclothed with the habit of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

When the perilous times that followed the storm period of the Revolution had passed, other houses of the Congregation were restored in a similar manner to that of Mother St. John.

John's Foundation. Until the time of their dispersion, the different communities of the Congregation had been entirely independent of one another. However well adapted, self-government might be for the separate foundations of cloistered religious, it was found to be wholly unsuitable for religious engaged in active and external duties, especially with the unsettled state of affairs in France. For this reason the reorganized community was founded under the direction of Cardinal Fesch, and later under a decree of Napoleon I requested to have a Central, or Motherhouse, that would be responsible to the civil authority, for the secondary houses affiliated to it.\textsuperscript{15}

Of the reestablished communities of the Congregation, those destined to be the greatest Central Communities were the houses of Lyons, Clermont, Le Puy, Bourge, Gap, Bordeaux, and Chambery, in France. From these central Houses and at first dependent on them, numerous communities were formed in Italy, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Denmark, Great Britain, India, Australia, Africa, Canada, United States and also in different countries of South America.\textsuperscript{16}

The story of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the United States is no less interesting than that of the first foundation of the Congregation in France. In 1834 Right Rev. Joseph Rosati, Bishop of St. Louis, Mo. while on a visit to France to obtain co-laborers for the ministry in his vast missionary field, applied to Mother St. John Fontbonne for a colony of her daughters. Anxious to grant the wishes of the bishop, yet unwilling to impose the hardships of the missions upon any of her Sisters, Mother St. John contented herself with making an appeal for volunteers, counseling her daughters to weigh well the sacrifices implied, and to seek to know the will of God through prayer. She had scarcely finished her appeal when a number of Sisters came forward, and offered themselves for the distant mission, among them her own two nieces, Sisters M. Febronia and Delphine Fontbonne.

A noble benefactress of the Congregation in France at this time was the Countess de Rochejacquelin. She had been a sharer in the fortunes of the Bourbons, by her marriage to the Count Rochejacquelin, and like all members of that

17. Rivaux, op. cit, p. 206.
fated family, was compelled to leave France after the Revolution of 1830. She retired to Annecy, where she was instrumental in establishing a foundation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in "La Galerie" the very house in which St. Francis de Sales had established the first Visitation nuns; a house of which the Sisters have to the present retained possession. The Countess who had cooperated with Mother St. John in numerous foundations, entered heart and soul into the project of an American establishment. It is said she even helped to defray the expenses of the voyage. 18.

Although Bishop Rosati had made an urgent appeal for a contingent of Sisters, there seems to have been some delay on his part in making the final arrangements for their foundation in St. Louis. In a letter to his Lordship, written on June 20, 1835, the Countess sets forth her reason for so ardently desiring an American establishment of the Congregation.

LETTER OF MME. THE COUNTESS DE LA ROCHEJACQUELIN TO MONSEIGNEUR ROSATI, BISHOP OF ST. LOUIS REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH IN HIS DIOCESE.

Monseigneur:

I believe that the excellent Abbe Odin; also the Abbe Cholleton, Vicar General of Lyons, have written you several times regarding the

desire not to say "vow" which I have formed to send Sisters of the Order of St. Joseph of Lyons to America. Your silence on the subject convinces me that either you have not received those letters or you are not desirous to have such an establishment. If it is really true that you have objections, I ask myself what can they be. Permit me, then, here to answer such as naturally present themselves to my mind.

First, you think, perhaps, that this establishment is not the most urgent work, that to have priests, to have missionaries, is more necessary than to have Sisters. But Monseigneur, the two things are different. My desire to do this good work in America is not a vague one.

The Abbe Odin can testify that I have labored with all my heart, even to the most trifling means for the success of the mission and God has granted me to be able to give much help. He is content; he has gathered together not a little of the necessary funds and also not a few subjects.

But the project I have in view with regard to the Sisters is entirely another thing. Protected by Divine Providence in an extraordinary manner in all the difficulties and anxieties to which I have been exposed, I have promised myself and I have promised God in as far as He will deign to bless this design, that I would send six Sisters of St. Joseph to North America, with a view to their converting the savages, instructing the little ones, and educating and converting the children of Protestants where the missionaries are too few or too much engaged to go often. The reading of those admirable accounts of the Propagation of the Faith has made me shed tears over those harvest fields so ripe for which there are no reapers. These incomparable Sisters once established (with you) could be sent two by two, into little congregations, there to prepare the way for Baptism, Confirmation, First Communion, and the like. An establishment near the lands of the Indians, built somewhat large, could in a short time be of very great use.
But Monseigneur, you are not perhaps aware how good are these Sisters of St. Joseph. They follow the Rule of St. Augustine and make perpetual vows; they devote themselves unre­
servedly to all the works of mercy. Their rule obliges them to all the virtues of the cloister joined to those virtues which require an ardent charity for the neighbor. This was the primary idea of St. Francis de Sales in founding his Visitation, an idea which he gave up with regret. Hence the Sisters devote them­
selves to piety, interior recollection, abnega­
tion, humility, prayers of one kind or another;-
Again they can take charge of free schools or boarding schools, hospitals, asylums for found­
lings or for the aged; they may look after prisoners; attend on the poor and the sick in their homes; take care of the infected--they are ready for anything. They keep little phar­
macies; they teach sewing, mending, here in Lyons, even how to weave ribbons.

And, Monseigneur, if you could see as I do their spirit of poverty, of lowliness, it is evangelical! I speak of what I know, of what I have witnessed for thirteen years during which I have established or helped to establish several of their houses. The eastern part of France is full of them: I have sent them to the West; there are not Sisters enough to answer the demands. But I have interested the Abbe Cholleton in my project and he has chosen excel­
tent subjects. I know you have already many estimable institutions, but in your country so vast and so new, where there is so much to be done, are you not willing to sow every kind of good grain? It will fructify there all the more because in this Order a foundation according to rule is not so restricted as in some other Orders; it accommodates itself to times and circumstances. The Abbe Brochard (their Spiritual Father in Lyons) sends them wherever they are asked for, saying to them "Go at once here." I know of a foundation begun with thirty centimes in a little stable. But God was there; after the example of the Crib, this establishment has prospered, as also many others begun like it.
Monseigneur, the spirit of this Order of St. Joseph is something incomparable, it is that poverty, that abjection which has been taught us by our Lord and which has conquered the world. It may be that you confound these Sisters of St. Joseph with those of whom the famous Madame Javourck is the superior, but this Order is in no way the same. It seems to me that if I contribute to establish the Sisters in America near the Indians who are still in your diocese, and near so many outside the Church who live on your prairies, I shall have done in my life something very pleasing to God, something that will win His mercy for my sins. I know that what I have given up to the present is not enough, but I will give more: I will get the means; only tell me, Monseigneur, what you think is necessary for a beginning. If you so disappoint me as to refuse, then I shall knock at other doors until some one gives entrance to my angels. I have so much wished your answer would come in time to have the sisters set out under the protection of the Abbe Odin.

One thing I have forgotten to mention: the Sisters' method of teaching is so well planned that it does not fatigue the teachers; they do not talk too much, their discipline is good, the pupils obey in silence, and in this way the lungs of the young Sisters do not become so often affected, as I have seen, alas, too often among other Communities.

I beg you, Monseigneur, to send me your answer as soon as possible; I am eager to have this work accomplished. I know I am unworthy to be a cooperator in it, but since God has given me this desire and it has never left me during several years, I feel I must work for its accomplishment:— how ardently I hope you will approve it!

Do not think, Monseigneur, that I wish to interfere with your wishes in this establishment; take whatever measures you think best as to any place or employment which is the most urgent. I have only one desire, that the Sisters be not too far from the Indians and that they labor for the conversion of the souls of those poor.
creatures, or for those unhappy ones that belong not to the Church. I have had an idea which I submit to you, Monseigneur, that is to consecrate most specially the Sisters of this foundation to pray for the souls of our erring brethren and of all poor * * * * sectaries who without the knowledge of others, have at the moment of death, submitted their mind and heart to God and the truth, and promised to seek it with all their heart, if they were to live; in a word to make such an act as: "My God, I believe all that you wish me to believe." Do you not think that this foundation of prayers would be good in the spirit of the great love of our Lord for the salvation of souls, and would be at the same time a great consolation for Protestants who become converts? The idea of having to believe in the Eternal loss of their relations and friends would be an obstacle to deter the conversion of many.

I beg leave to trespass on you, Monseigneur, whose time is so precious, by asking you to remember me to Madame de Kersaint, my cousin, a religious of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis. I ask her to pray for me; and you also, Monseigneur, very specially, while begging you to accept my sentiments of respectful consideration and devotedness in our Lord.

With respect, I have the honor to be, Monseigneur, Your humble and obedient servant, Felicite De Duvas, Countess de la Rochejacquelin. Chambery, 10 June, 1835.19.

After the receipt of the Countess' letter the Bishop lost no time in sending for the Sisters. The little band of missionaries, who had volunteered for the work comprised six Sisters, Sisters Febronia and Delphine Fontbonne;
Sister Febronia Chapellon; Sister St. Protais; Sister Marguerite (called thenceforward Sister Felicite, after the Countess de la Rochejacquelin, who wished one of the Sisters to bear her name) and Sister Philomene.20.

Sister Febronia Fontbonne was appointed Superior of the new mission. Followed by the blessing of Mother St. John and cheered by the good wishes and prayers of their Sisters the heroic band accompanied by Rev. Father Fontbonne, a nephew of Mother St. John and two seminarians, left Lyons on January 4, 1836. They were detained in Havre for eleven days as the vessel in which they were to set sail was not in readiness. They finally embarked on the 17 day of January. The Countess was overjoyed at the speedy fulfillment of her desires and wrote to that effect to the Bishop of St. Louis in the following letter:21.

MADAME, THE COUNTESS DE LA ROCHEJACQUELIN TO RT. REV. BISHOP ROSATI OF ST. LOUIS

Monseigneur:

It is a great happiness to me to think that this letter will be handed to you by the dear Sisters whom you deign to accept among your flock. I hope that God will bless their labors.

They expect to encounter hardships, and far from encouraging them by promise of resources, I have repeated what their rule prescribes, that they should rejoice at and desire above

all things, to be very poor, very lowly, very humble. They set out, I am convinced, very happy at the thought of suffering privations for the love of Jesus Christ. Hence Monseigneur, they go to you in the spirit of submission, of great good will, and will be content with whatever you will apportion to them, however simple, however inconvenient.

It seems to me as to you, Monseigneur, that it is best to establish them provisionally in a lowly way in the city, and a habitation only large enough to house the children. Then, they can seek, when occasion offers, a larger place that will afford them greater space and suitable conveniences. You will know Monseigneur, what will be best as to time, place, and all other things that may tend to the prosperity of the establishment; it seems to me it will be better to go slowly, step by step until God shows His will that they advance to greater things.

To build is somewhat terrifying to our European eyes; I know it is undertaken more readily among you.

In accordance, Monseigneur, with your desires for the future instruction of deaf-mutes, two Sisters have already been sent to St. Etienne to study the methods. We hope also to have a charming young girl, a deaf-mute, take the habit of St. Joseph. It is a great pleasure to me, Msgr., to send you this reinforcement.

I have asked these good Sisters not to forget in their prayers their unworthy benefactress; and I have asked that they pray particularly to draw down the mercy of God on all unhappy sectaries, especially on those who, in the hour of death sincerely offer their heart to God wishing to adhere to the true faith. It seems to me that an association of prayers for such an object would be as consoling, as encouraging for all protestant children who, attending their schools, would wish to become Catholics.
I have asked these dear Sisters never to refuse a mission to these poor children; I have also recommended them to try to do everything to this end; to keep, as their Holy Rules require, the spirit of recollection and contemplation of the cloistered orders with the spirit of ardent charity and zeal of those non-cloistered. As children of both St. Teresa and St. Vincent de Paul, they should be all to all, to gain all to Christ, and be ready to gather all, at any time, without ever murmuring, without being troubled; always to preserve the spirit of poverty, of humility, which will keep them near the Crib. I have also advised them in all difficulties little or great, after having done everything that duty and prudence require, never to employ any other defence than prayer; to obey, to suffer, and leave all to God. I hope, Monseigneur, you will approve of this my testament if I may so call it, that is these few words I have tried to draw from the Holy Gospel, and which I have said to these poor angels, the first, and without doubt, the last time I shall see them in this world. No one could be more unworthy than I of giving them such advice and I have excused myself for giving it. They have taught better things, and I cannot say how deeply I have been moved by their dispositions. I hope, I am sure, they will carry to America the true and admirable spirit of their Order, and that the mustard seed which is about to fall in St. Louis, will under your protection, Msgr., develop into a great tree. I have begged the Sisters also, as far as they can, to go care for the poor sick, also to work for the Indians. I dare hope that as soon as this is possible, you, Monseigneur, will consent to this. --------. The interest I feel toward these poor savages, so docile to the voice of God when they have been made to hear it, has been my primary motive in this undertaking, and I can never forget it. All my hope is that in time, the fruit of the establishment of these good Sisters in America will be immense and will take in without exception all those good works which Charity has brought forth on this earth.

I wish ardently to be informed exactly about our humble little venture, and I promise myself
additional pleasure in helping it as far as necessary, by every means in my power.

Accept, Monseigneur, the expression of the greatest respect with which I have the honor to be

Your very humble and obedient servant,

FELICITE DE DUVAS, COUNTESS DE LA ROCHEJACQUELIN

Lausanne 4 January, 1836.22.

The voyage of the Sisters was long and perilous and the missionaries suffered from seasickness. After forty-nine days sailing they landed at New Orleans, where they were met by Bishop Rosati and Rev. J. Timon, afterwards Bishop of Buffalo, New York. The Ursulines of the old French city, received the Sisters with the most cordial sisterly affection, and lavished every kindness on them until they were able to proceed on their journey. They took the boat on the Mississippi on March 15, and after ten days reached St. Louis. They were hospitably received by the Sisters of Charity, who were in charge of a hospital there. Here they remained until after Easter Sunday, and had the great satisfaction of attending all the exercises of Holy Week at the Cathedral.23.

Though Carondelet was destined to be the future home of the Sisters of St. Joseph, their first mission in America was at Cahokia, Illinois. This town, situated across the river from Saint Louis and three miles southeast of the center of that city, was one of the five early French villages in the Illinois country, and after Kaskaskia, the oldest white settlement in the Mississippi valley.

Reverend Peter Doutreluiningue, pastor of Cahokia, a village three miles from St. Louis, had long awaited the coming of the Sisters. Hearing of their arrival at St. Louis, he immediately went to petition the Bishop for a contingent of Sisters for his village, inhabitants of which were for the most part French Canadians. For years this heroic missionary had deprived himself of even the necessities of life in order to be able to support an establishment of Sisters who would aid him in his work.24. Touched by such zeal the Bishop decided to send three Sisters to Cahokia, and the choice fell upon Sister Febronia Fontbonne, Sister Febronia Chapellon and Sister Protais. To the people of the village, the Sisters were ministering angels sent in answer to prayer, and they vied with one another in their zeal to provide for their wants.25.

Severe trials awaited the missionaries here, but one

25. Abbe Rivaux, Life of Mother St. John Fontbonne, p. 211.
was of outstanding character. On account of the heavy rainfalls in 1844 the Mississippi River over-flowed its banks and submerged the entire village. The water rose to the second story of all the houses. The Sisters were in great peril, but Mother Celestine, then Superior in St. Louis, and Rev. Father Fontbonne, having chartered a boat, hastened to their assistance. The Sisters were rescued from the porch of the second story, whence they stepped into the boat. The waters retired slowly, and fevers broke out which caused great havoc among the inhabitants. Returning to the fields of their labors, the Sisters suffered much from sickness, and they were, a second, and a third time, driven away by the flood.26.

Shortly after the establishment of the Cahokia mission, Bishop Rosati decided to open a convent at Carondelet, about six miles from St. Louis. This foundation was placed under the direction of Mother Delphine, who took with her Sister Felicite and Sister Philomene. Carondelet, was at that time, a mere collection of huts and log cabins tenanted by woodsmen, who were not only poor and rude, but were also without love for religion or education.

The Convent of the Sisters consisted of a rude log cabin containing but one room, which was made to serve

various purposes at different hours of the day. At meal
time it was both kitchen and refectory, at other times
parlor or oratory, while at night it was converted into a
dormitory. When the weather was inclement, the Sisters
had to put up umbrellas to protect themselves from the
rain which came through the apertures in the roof. Such
privations and hardships would have undoubtedly discouraged
less heroic souls, but they were borne by these gentle
French women with joy and lightheartedness.27.

In 1837, the little community had the inexpressible
consolation of welcoming two additional Sisters from Lyons,
Sister Celestine Pommerel, afterwards Superior of Carondelet,
and Sister St. John Fournier, the foundress some years later
of the Congregation of Philadelphia. These two religious,
who in 1836 had been sent to Saint Etienne to prepare them­selves for the instruction of deaf-mutes on the American
mission, had been long and anxiously expected. The Bishop
was informed of their departure from Brest on the 17 of
April, 1837; but as the months rolled by bringing no tidings
of the travellers, both he and the Sisters gave them up as
lost. The vessel meanwhile, had put in at the West Indies
and it was only in September that the two Sisters having
reached St. Louis by way of New Orleans, presented themselves

27. Record in Nazareth Archives, Rochester, New York.
to the Bishop. He, however, would not at first believe they were the Sisters of whose coming he had despaired; and to assure himself of their identity he bade them converse before him in the sign-language. Whether or not they had their letter of obedience, the Annals do not say; if they had, probably the Bishop feared its authenticity. This reception, serious though it was, had its humorous aspect for the tired and apparently hungry travelers were somewhat at a loss for a subject of conversation. But there was no alternative. Prove themselves to be the deaf-mute teachers they must, so Sister Celestine, turning to Sister St. John, asked in sign-language, "What are you thinking of, Sister?" to which the latter, in all the simplicity of truth, replied: "I am thinking of the bread we ate in France."28. So unexpected and evidently so candid an acknowledgment overset Sister Celestine's gravity, and she could not restrain a laugh. The Bishop insisted on knowing what had been said, and whether or not hunger was a sufficient proof of their being the expected travelers, so they had to undergo no further examination. Going to a closet in the room, the Bishop took therefrom a piece of brown bread, which he gave to Sister St. John with the injunction to eat it.29.

They had brought letters for Bishop Rosati, among them the following from Father Charles Cholleton, which rendered assurance doubly sure:

It is a very great consolation for me to present to your Lordship the two Sister teachers of the deaf-mutes for whom you asked me last year. The first, Sister Celestine is twenty-three years old and is professed; the second, Sister Saint John, a novice of twenty-two years. She will esteem herself happy to make her profession in your hands whenever you find her sufficiently disposed. They are both animated by the best dispositions, and are sufficiently capable of carrying out your noble and saintly views. Madame, the Countess de la Rochejacquelin, has given them 3000 francs. If you desire to thank her for it, her address is Lausanne, Switzerland.30.

The weary and belated travelers were detained at the orphan asylum in St. Louis for several days. Bishop Rosati, evidently fond of planning surprises, sent no word of their arrival to the community in Carondelet. On September 10, the private conveyance of a Catholic physician, Doctor Rodier, who was well known to Mother Delphine and her Sisters, was secured. The surprise of the Sisters there on beholding in the flesh, those whom they believed dead, was scarcely greater than their wonder and amusement at finding the two strangers better informed than themselves about conditions past and present in the village of Carondelet.31.

The two Sisters delivered a letter to Mother Delphine from the Bishop sanctioning their obedience to work in her new mission field.

There were many messages, in fact, from the dear ones in France; and when the great trunks from Lyons, were emptied of their abundance—clothing for the Sisters and orphans, fine things for the chapel, which as yet existed only in dreams of the future—the Sisters felt that the great heart of Mother St. John Fontbonne was beating very near them, and that the power of her love, bridging the ocean, minimized the distance between her and her daughters in America.32.

The log cabin convent was now crowded, but its doors were opened wide in October 1837, to admit another occupant, Anne Eliza Dillon, the first American subject of the Congregation. Anne Dillon was the daughter of Patrick McAndrew Dillon, a wealthy Irish landholder of St. Louis. She was born at St. Charles, Missouri, in 1820. Her mother died when she was a child, and together with a younger sister, she was placed with the Ladies of the Sacred Heart at their Academy in St. Louis, where she received an excellent education and acquired great fluency in French. It was here at school in 1836 that she met Sisters Delphine and

32. Sister Lucida Savage, op. cit., p. 50.
Felicite, who during their first few months in America went to the Sacred Heart Convent everyday for English lessons. The young girl was drawn irresistibly toward the life of the two Sisters. Like St. Francis of Assisi, she was attracted by poverty; and on finishing her education she gave up everything that she possessed of this world's goods, and with the reluctant consent of her father, went to Carondelet and asked for the poor habit of a Sister of Saint Joseph. This she received January 3, 1838, with the name of Sister Francis Marie Joseph. On the same day, Sister Philomene Vilaine made her vows. Bishop Rosati, assisted by Father Saulnier and Father Fuerre Chandy of the Congregation of the Mission, officiated at the ceremony, which took place in the Church of our Lady of Mount Carmel.

In the spring the convent was enlarged by the addition of a second story, two small rooms on the west end, and broad porches on the river side. A covering of rough weatherboards changed the status of the building from a log house to a more pretentious frame building. Though the convent had changed its exterior from logs to rough boards, it left much to be desired in the matter of comfort, but it provided the necessary room for the admission of four

34. Madame Kersaint, a cousin to the Countess de la Rochejacquelin was a religious in this Convent at the time.
deaf-mute girls. All were more or less dependent on charity, and the resources of the convent were barely sufficient to provide for six Sisters, four mutes and five orphans. An addition was made to this number in the course of the year in the person of Victoire Cherbonneau, whose father, a Rocky Mountain trapper, placed her with the Sisters as a boarder. He was killed by Indians soon after while on a western trip, and his motherless little girl remained an inmate of the convent.

Writers of Carondelet history divide it into ancient and modern periods, distinguishing one from the other by the different styles of architecture in vogue at different times. The modern period was ushered in by the building of brick houses in the early forties of the nineteenth century, though many of the log huts had already given place to others of native stone. One of the first of these modern houses was commenced by Mother Celestine during 1840, when on a ground story of stone, she built two stories of brick. It was north of the frame structure, which it adjoined, and consisted of a parlor, infirmary and girls' refectory on the first floor, chapel and study hall connected by folding doors on the second, and dormitories on

the third. Mrs. Mullanphy of St. Louis was a generous contributor to this, the nucleus of St. Joseph's Academy, which was at first known as "Madame Celestine's School." 37.

It was ready for use in the spring of 1841 and formed the north wing of the large convent completed by successive additions during the next few years.

The commencement exercises of 1841 were held in the new convent. The boarders had increased to twelve; and the pupils all told numbered ninety-four. 38. The vacations were short, as school closed the first week in August and reopened in September; "still no vacation was permitted to pass by without our going to spend days with the Sisters before returning for the next term." 39.

The language of the school was French, in which most of the instruction was given. Sister Francis Marie Joseph, or as she was called, Sister Mary Joseph, was at first the only English teacher. A homelike atmosphere was cultivated, and the discipline was one of love. 40.

37. Community Annals from St. Louis Carondelet, p. 332, also quoted from Sister Lucida Savage, p. 58.
38. The Catholic Almanac for 1840, p. 118, says: "There are six sisters in this institution, seventy-five day scholars and three deaf and dumb girls. This same statement is made for the years 1842-3."
The happy convent life at St. Joseph's was disturbed in October, 1842, by the Angel of Death, who took from the midst of those who loved her well, Sister Mary Joseph Dillon. First fruit of the sweet example given by our early Sisters in their poverty, she was the first sheaf garnered by the Reaper from the tiny field sown at Carondelet.

Her death was the result of a cold contracted one day when she and several of the Sisters were returning from Cahokia. They were overtaken by a heavy rain for which they were unprepared. Sister Mary Joseph was always delicate, and her cold developed into quick consumption. All that loving care could do failed to restore her waning strength; and on October 30, 1842, she rendered up her pure soul to its Maker. The village carpenter made her pine coffin, which the Sisters covered with black cloth, and lined with snowy white. After Vespers on a Sunday afternoon, the Sisters, followed by her white-haired, sorrow-stricken father and her young sister, bore her to her last resting-place in the little cemetery beside the village church. The chapel windows looked out upon the plain white cross that marked her grave; and soon a path was worn across the grassy plot that lay between it and the convent.41.

Sister Mary Joseph's place as English teacher in the Academy was taken by Sister Mary Rose Marsteller, a native of Alexandria, Virginia, and a resident for many years of Baltimore. Sister Mary Rose, though still a novice, was in her thirty-first year, a woman of mature and ripe experience. Possessed of superior talent and ability, she had received a splendid education, was an accomplished linguist and musician, and her assistance proved invaluable to Mother Celestine.

After the death of Bishop Rosati, which occurred in Rome, Italy, in September 6, 1843, Rt. Rev. Peter R. Kenrick was appointed his successor. Under Bishop Kenrick's supervision, the Community in St. Louis had a rapid development. First a school for colored children was given to their charge. Next several parish schools were placed under their direction and as these schools were a means of encouraging education and the religious life, the Sisterhood was soon strengthened by the addition of many new members. Within a few years, the Bishop saw the necessity of a change in the plan of government. It was thought wise to make the American foundation an independent diocesan community no longer subject to the Motherhouse in France. The change was affected by mutual concurrence on the part of the French

42. Nazareth Archives, Rochester, N.Y.
and American Bishops and was not in the least detrimental to the bond of affection that had so long united the Sisters here, to their companion religious and devoted Superiors across the Atlantic. Under the new order of things, the Sisterhood rapidly became a thoroughly American Congregation: Its constitution was admirably suited to conditions here and the Bishops of the various dioceses of the country sought Sisters to make foundations in the particular portions of the Lord's vineyard confided to their care. In the last half of the twentieth century the Congregation was spread over the United States. According to the book issued in 1930 by Elinor T. Dehey, Religious Orders of Women in the United States, foundations of the Sisters of St. Joseph numbered approximately twelve thousand religious, working in nine Archdioceses and fifty-four Dioceses.44.

43. Abbe Rivaux, Life of Mother St. John Fontbonne, p. 220.
44. Elinor T. Dehey, Religious Orders of Women in the United States
Chapter II

FOUNDATIONS MADE IN NEW YORK STATE

Scarcely two decades had elapsed since the coming of the Sisters of St. Joseph to America and the establishing of the Sisterhood in St. Louis, when a branch of St. Joseph's fruitful tree was planted and took firm root in the fertile soil of the Empire State. Watched over and cared for by zealous gardeners, the tender shoot grew and flourished and in time became a stately and beautiful tree. To the women who planted it, cared for it, and brought it to a healthy growth, we owe grateful remembrance.

Today, as we look about us from the vantage ground of seventy-five years, we see splendid work being accomplished by the Sisters of St. Joseph in many cities and villages of the Diocese of Rochester, New York. Our vision penetrates the mist of time and gazing down the long vista of years that are past, we behold a picturesque village on the shores of Canandaigua Lake.¹

On the eighth of December, 1854, a day forever glorious in the history of the Church as that on which the Christian world accorded to Mary the title of the Immaculate Conception, four Sisters of St. Joseph invoked the blessing of

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¹ Records of Sister Mary Teresina, Rochester, New York, Nazareth Convent.
Mary Immaculate on the first Foundation of the Order in New York State. Mother Celestine, Superior of Carondelet at this time, sent four Sisters, with Mother Agnes Spencer as Superior, to form the band of new missionaries.

To understand the difficulties attendant on any Catholic enterprise of importance in 1854 we must go back in spirit to that time. It was an era when bigotry was rampant in the country; it was the time when the evil Genius Know-nothingism was stalking abroad in the land bearing the insidious pamphlet "No Popery" in one hand, and the torch of incendiariism in the other. During the two decades of years immediately preceding the Civil War, the Catholics of the United States, the victims of this religious fanaticism were misunderstood, and even their loyalty as citizens was questioned. Among the Catholic leaders, however, were such intrepid and fearless souls as Archbishop John Hughes, "the Lion of the American Hierarchy", and Archbishop Martin John Spalding of Baltimore.\(^2\) It is to their efforts and to those of a great body of loyal American citizens who opposed the intolerance of the fanatics as un-American, that the movement was finally defeated. We can readily see that to initiate any important Catholic work and especially

that of Catholic education, with such a spirit of religious intolerance in the atmosphere, required no little courage.\(^3\)

It was a time too, when travel was not so convenient, as it is today and a journey of any length often entailed severe hardships. A journey from St. Louis to Rochester had to be made, either by coach over long stretches of prairie land, or by rudely constructed boats up the Mississippi River, as far as Alton, Illinois. The intolerant spirit of the times also, forced the members of religious orders to travel for the most part in secular attire to avoid the annoyance peculiar to that period.\(^4\)

The first priest ordained by Bishop Timon after he was made Bishop of Buffalo was Reverend Edmund O'Connor, who in 1851 was appointed pastor of St. Mary's Church in Canandaigua, with care of the surrounding Missions. Three years later Father O'Connor, "in order to give his parish such establishments as would perpetuate the faith," applied to the Bishop for a group of Sisters. St. Louis, Missouri, had long been the scene of Bishop Timon's missionary labors in the West, where he had known and appreciated the work of the Sisters of St. Joseph. In response to Bishop Timon's appeal the services of four Sisters were secured from the Motherhouse in Carondelet. Those who formed the nucleus

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of the new foundation were Mother Agnes Spencer, Superior, sister Francis Joseph Ivory, Sister Petronella Roscoe, and sister Theodosia Hageman. The following are the particulars of the journey.5.

The Sisters left St. Louis on December 3, 1854 and did not reach Canandaigua until late in the evening of December 7. The journey was very tedious. The party traveled by boat to Alton and thence onward over the Illinois prairies by rail to Chicago, where they were most kindly received by Bishop O'Regan, former President of Carondelet Seminary, who had been recently consecrated Bishop of Chicago, and was a friend of the Community in St. Louis. The trip from Chicago to Buffalo was made memorable by severe snow storms which blocked the tracks in several places, and caused a delay of many hours.6. Arriving in Buffalo on the evening of December 6, the Sisters were obliged to remain there for the night.

The next morning they set out for Rochester and upon reaching that city they were told that it would be impossible to proceed to Canandaigua until the tracks could be cleared of snow. To add to their annoyance and embarrassment they had not sufficient funds to carry them the rest of the journey. The only thing to do was to look for a

5. Sister Francis Joseph Ivory, Carondelet Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.
Catholic Church, see the Pastor and trust to his charity for assistance. Scarcely had the travelers started out on their quest, when they saw in the distance a cross-crowned steeple. With the sacred symbol as a guide, they soon reached a Church which proved to be old St. Patrick's. Here they were informed that the building adjoining the Church was an orphanage in charge of the Sisters of Charity. The Superior received them most kindly, offered them comfortable quarters, until such time as they could proceed on their journey and relieved them of all anxiety regarding the necessary funds. Fortunately the delay at Rochester was not long, and the Sisters were able to start for Canandaigua on the evening of the same day, December 7. It took nearly three hours to make the trip and when the train reached the village station it was almost ten o'clock, P.M. In the absence of the pastor they were met by Mr. Cochran, a railroad official and prominent Catholic of the city who conducted them to the residence of Father O'Connor, where the housekeeper, Mrs. Tracy, made them as comfortable as possible. The next morning the good priest himself gave them a most cordial welcome, and from that day his kindness never failed them.

The house which had been prepared for the Sisters was

a little white frame building on Saltonstall Street, set in the midst of a cluster of fruit trees and neat gardens. On the morning of December 9, Father O'Connor said Mass for the Sisters in the Convent Chapel. According to an old resident of Canandaigua, the Holy Sacrifice had been offered in this little building some time prior to 1844 when there was as yet no Catholic Church in the Village.8

Early in January following their arrival the Sisters opened an Academy and a free school in the Convent building. A little later the building was incorporated as an Academy and Orphan Asylum. This Institution was known as St. Mary's Convent and Academy and from the first it met with remarkable success. A school, exclusively for boys, was located in the basement of the Church and had, up to this time, been under the control of Catholic lay teachers. It was now placed in charge of the Sisters. The place was both unsuitable and unsanitary for school purposes, nevertheless, it had to be used in that capacity for several years. Surely the Sisters who succeeded one another as teachers of the boys' school deserved the highest commendation for the good accomplished there despite the unfavorable conditions.9

The privations of those early days were cheerfully borne and the school prospered so, that by April, 1855, two more teachers, Sister Julia Littenecker and Sister Bruno Nolan were sent from Carondelet to assist with the work. The story is told that these two Sisters had a narrow escape from death on their way to their new home. Near Detroit, through which they passed, a bridge had been swept away by the bursting of a mill-dam and the miller who knew that a train was due at midnight succeeded in stopping it by wildly waving his lantern. The Sisters had reason ever after to be grateful to Divine Providence for their preservation in that time of danger.10.

Teachers trained especially for the work among girls were in charge of the Academy. The teaching which was based on French methods aimed to give particular attention to the development of the character and the spiritual life of the child; for the Congregation has always recognized the fact, that true education does not consist in the imparting of mere intellectual knowledge, but rather in developing with special stress the moral and ethical side of life.

An edition of the Buffalo Sentinel at the time contained the following extract from a letter written by Father O'Connor:

The Sisters of St. Joseph in Canandaigua, are devoting themselves to the various good works contemplated by their Rule. They have opened an Academy which is numerously attended

and which enables them to undertake other works of mercy. Besides an orphan asylum, they have founded a Home for poor girls of good character. As the Sisters have opened a Novitiate there is every prospect that the Order is firmly planted in Canandaigua.

Three years after the Sisters had settled in Canandaigua, and during the administration of Mother Agnes Spencer, a young girl scarcely sixteen years of age, Miss Margaret Leary of Corning, New York was admitted into the Community. She received the habit of the Sisterhood on February 14, 1857, receiving the name of Sister Mary Stanislaus. As she later became General Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Rochester, the details of her reception will not be uninteresting. We have the following account of the event written by Sister Mary Anastasia Donovan of Buffalo.

It was in old St. Mary's Church, Canandaigua, that the late Mother Stanislaus and I were clothed with the religious habit. Our reception took place on Sunday, February 14, 1857. As the good Bishop Timon had been instrumental in having us enter the Community at Canandaigua, he made it a point to come from Buffalo to invest us with the habit. Father O'Connor had made elaborate preparations for the occasion. Father Lee, who was in charge of a nearby Mission, also announced to his Congregation that the Bishop would be in Canandiagua the following Sunday morning, and he invited all his parishioners to be present for the Reception of two prospective nuns. The Church was well filled on that memorable Sunday morning. At ten-thirty we walked up the main aisle arrayed in our bridal robes and preceded by the usual procession of

cross-bearer and bridesmaids, while the choir sang the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. The ceremony of religious reception then took place, after which the Bishop spoke feelingly to us. Such a ceremony had never been witnessed by those present and, as we left the Church, we felt that we had been a spectacle to angels and to men. Our Reception was the first one held in the Church. The following year the religious clothing of Sisters M. Nativity, Alphonsus and Nicholas took place in the convent chapel. They were the last received in Canandaigua, as the Novitiate was soon removed to Buffalo.12.

In 1857 the Canandaigua Community was called upon to open an Institution for deaf-mutes in Buffalo, New York. Three Sisters who had studied in France the best methods of instruction for such unfortunates, were sent from St. Louis to take charge of the work. This new idea was slow in materializing, but through the indomitable will of its founder Bishop Timon, it was kept in existence until such time as it could make its worth known and obtain State aid. From the day that the Institution received its first approval, its prosperity was insured and it has since been recognized as one of the most efficient and useful institutions of its kind in the State. The foundation of Buffalo was under the care of the Motherhouse in Canandaigua until 1861, when the Novitiate was transferred to Buffalo and placed under the Superiorship of Mother Magdalen Weaver, who in Philadelphia had been a companion of Mother St. John.

Fournier, one of the original six who came from France. 13. When Mother Agnes Spencer left the diocese of Buffalo for that of Erie, Pennsylvania, in 1859, she was followed as Superior by Mother Julia Littenecker. The Buffalo Community owed much to these two worthy religious and the other Sisters who came from Carondelet. Their recall in 1861 was a cause of great regret but St. Louis had begun negotiations for centralization of government and the Bishop of Buffalo preferred the Sisters under his care to remain diocesan. At the request of Bishop Timon valuable assistance was obtained from the Philadelphia Community in the persons of Mother Magdalen Weaver and Sister Stephen Hesse who came after the departure of Mother Julia, the former as Superior and the latter as Mistress of Novices.

Mother Magdalen Weaver was a native of Conewaga, Pennsylvania. She entered the Carondelet Novitiate where she received the habit in 1843 and was professed in 1845. She accompanied Mother St. John Fournier to Philadelphia and in 1847, was placed in charge of St. John's Orphan Asylum and later, of St. Joseph's Hospital. In 1861 she was called to Buffalo as Superior of the Community and so remained until the death of Bishop Timon in 1867 when Philadelphia recalled her to preside over the Community at McSherrystown, which office she filled until her death in 1875. Mother

Mary Magdalen was greatly esteemed by the Buffalo Sisters as an able administrator and much loved as a Superior. Her departure was considered a calamity second only to the loss of the good Bishop Timon. It was truly said of her that "her name was in benediction with all who knew her or had the grace of her guidance."[14.

In May, 1857, the Sisters were called by the Bishop to take charge of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum at Limestone Hill, New York. Mother Veronica was appointed head of the band with Sister Anselm McCourt, Sister Anastasia Donovan and Sister Petronilla Roscoe as her companions. The asylum had for a short time been under the care of the Sisters of Holy Cross who were recalled to their convent at Notre Dame, Indiana.

At the formation of the diocese of Buffalo in 1847, a small orphanage was already established in Rochester, New York, which became over-crowded during an epidemic of cholera in 1849 and made it necessary to open two small asylums, one for girls at Ellicott Street, and another for boys at Niagara Street, Buffalo. Bishop Timon purchased a tract of land at Lancaster, New York, on which a brick building was erected and fitted up as an industrial school and to this the boys from Rochester and Buffalo were brought

and placed under the care of a French Brotherhood. The work did not prosper and after four years the home was broken up and the boys taken to an asylum on Best Street in Buffalo.\textsuperscript{15} In 1856 the Limestone Hill property was acquired and the orphanage for boys opened in a small frame building at "White's Corners" opposite the site of the present St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum. The little home consisted of two apartments separated by a curtain, one of which was occupied by the Sisters and other by the orphan boys. The brick building on the opposite side of the street, part of which is still standing, was begun and was ready for occupancy by November, 1857, under charge of Reverend Thomas F. Hines who had been ordained only a short time before and appointed pastor of the rising parish of St. Patrick. Resources were very limited and debts for building piled up so that sacrifices on the part of both Sisters and children were innumerable. It was no uncommon thing for the Sisters to deprive themselves of food so that the orphans might be fed, and for the older boys to go hungry that the little ones might have enough to satisfy their hunger.\textsuperscript{16}

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\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid: op. cit., p. 89.
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Living conditions were primitive enough in the orphanage, although the building was new, for it had none of the accessories of the modern institution. The furniture was meager, the bedding scanty; light and heat were at a minimum. The Sisters often went from door to door in Buffalo begging for food or for clothing to make the boys presentable for school and for money to provide the necessary equipment for the classroom. Only intrepid souls in their first religious fervor could have been undismayed in the face of the hardships of those early days in the orphanage, yet, viewing all in the light of God's love, they saw nothing in such a life, but His holy will and that was sufficient to make them happy. The school was ungraded, books were few and teachers scarce, but what was lacking in equipment was made up by earnest work on the part of instructors and hearty response on the part of the pupils who went out prepared to earn their living or to continue their education in higher fields. The intimate association for a few years with those holy "first Sisters" filled the boys with love and reverence for beings in whom they seemed to have caught a glimpse of that other and happier land of heaven. The secret of the influence of heroic souls as these were must be sought, not in their learning or their efficiency as the world judges, but in their union with God and their devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.
The devotion of Father Hines, who shared the burdens of the Sisters, and the charity of the people of St. Patrick's parish contributed in many ways to the comfort of the orphans and of those who cared for them.17.

As the years passed, conditions improved slightly but there was no notable change until the appointment of Reverend Nelson H. Baker to the pastorate of St. Patrick's Church. Father N. Baker came to Limestone Hill as assistant priest to Father Hines in 1876, shortly after his ordination, but it was not until 1882 that he was given charge of the parish and of the institutions already established. The intervening period had given him an opportunity to become acquainted with existing conditions and to study the methods that might be followed to insure successful working of the charities that had been undertaken. The trying period of the Civil War and the Panic of 1873, together with the struggle to build the orphanage, the Church, and St. John's Protectory, had placed the whole organization in a desperate financial condition. Everything seemed destined to failure when Father Baker assumed charge of affairs. But he was a man of great faith of tried business ability, of rare prudence, of deep charity and full of zeal for souls; the aspect of things soon

changed. The delicate tact with which he approached the conditions in his future field of labor at once established confidence in his power to succeed and before long the burden of debt was lifted.\textsuperscript{18}

It was deemed best by the Community Superiors to give the orphan asylum into the hands of the new pastor who assumed the financial responsibility in all that pertained to the care of the establishment.

The old St. John's Home was replaced by a modern brick structure, the first unit of which was erected in 1888; the cornerstone of the final building was laid in 1897; this received the name of "Our Lady of Victory Home for Homeless Boys" and as such, under the protection of Our Lady of Victory, it has achieved a remarkable record, caring for and educating thousands of boys who otherwise would find their way into paths of crime.

The original band of Sisters of St. John's Protectors, the traditional three, were Sister Francis de Sales Delahanty, Sister Philomena Fitzgerald and Sister Vincent Callanan, all of whom began their religious career here as apostles among boys, many of whose histories had illuminated police records; who entered the Home as rebellious, reckless characters,

criminals in the making, but who learned to live good, normal, happy lives under the beneficent influence of Father Baker under whose roof they were privileged to be; under the motherly influence also of these and many who followed them, of patient humble daughters of St. Joseph whose consecrated lives were, indeed, lives of self-effacement. 19.

On December 8, 1914 a local celebration was held in Canandaigua to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the coming of the Sisters of St. Joseph into New York State. The occasion was made memorable by the unveiling of a tablet on which were inscribed the names of the four Sisters who formed the first Community, the name of the priest who received them, and that of the Bishop of Buffalo, at whose request they came.

Reverend Father J. T. Dougherty, Pastor of St. Mary's Church for eighteen years pays the following tribute to the Sisters who labored there:

No local chronicle records the coming of the good nuns to Canandaigua. They wore the garb of ordinary women on their journey from St. Louis in order to avoid any unpleasant treatment that might be accorded them in those days of bigoted excitement. They came in silence and having continued their labors for sixty years, not caring for worldly plaudits but looking only for the Master's approval. Their work constitutes one of those unwritten chapters in the history

of our country which tell the things that have made for finer citizenship and better Christianity—the effect of hallowed lives in their up-lifting influence upon three generations of this community.20.

To Mother Agnes Spencer and her little band belongs the honor of being the pioneers of the Order in New York State. To them it was given to plant the first off-shoot of the parent stem in these fertile regions.

It cannot be amiss here to sketch briefly the life and works of Mother Agnes Spencer. She was of English birth and she came to this country at an early age with her parents, who settled in Utica, New York. While still a child, Mother Agnes became a convert. She entered the Community of the Sisters of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Carondelet in 1846 when scarcely nineteen years of age. Her marked ability was soon recognized and she was successively appointed to places of trust and she entered vigorously into the plans of establishing new houses of the Congregation. Previous to the opening of the Buffalo foundation she had been in charge of St. John's Orphan Asylum in Philadelphia. Mother Agnes was sent to Wheeling, West Virginia, in charge of a hospital there and after a few months was recalled to Carondelet to prepare for the opening of

the Buffalo foundation. When the Novitiate was removed from Canandaigua to Buffalo Mother Agnes came to Buffalo, as Superior. In 1858 she opened a mission in Dunkirk and remained until the summer of 1859 when she left the diocese of Buffalo for that of Erie where she made a foundation at Corsica, Pennsylvania. At the request of Right Reverend Bishop Young, Mother Agnes opened a hospital and an orphanage at Erie. The convent in Canandaigua which she opened in 1854 was the beginning of the present Communities of Buffalo and Rochester.21. In 1861 she established a hospital in Meadville, Pennsylvania, which still bears the name of Spencer Hospital. Other establishments soon branched out from these, and they continued very successfully to the present day in the work begun by the venerable foundress.

A few years prior to her death she asked for and obtained relief from the post of General Superior of the Community in Erie and confined her labors to the care of the patients in St. Vincent's Hospital in that city. Over-exertion in the care of the sick at last told on her enfeebled frame. It was her happy lot to receive from her Sisters that same tender care that all her life she had so generously lavished on others. After several months of patient suffering Mother Agnes died at St. Vincent's Hospital, March 22, 1882, in

in the fifty-nineth year of her age and the fortieth of her religious life.22.

The Catholics of Rochester at the outbreak of the Civil War were well supplied with churches and with charitable institutions but the ravages wrought by that internal strife created new demands for other religious organizations who were engaged in the work of charity. It was at this important crisis in the nation's history that the Sisters of St. Joseph were seen for the first time ministering in Rochester. The War had been desolating the land for three years and still no hope of immediate victory was in sight. All over the land, in the North as well as in the South, the terrible consequences of the mighty conflict were being felt. Thousands upon thousands of Union and Confederate soldiers lay upon the battle fields. Of the many post-war conditions claiming a nation's sympathy that of the war orphans are the most appealing.

Very Reverend J. M. Early, Pastor of St. Mary's Church on South Street applied to Bishop Timon in the Fall of 1864 for aid in establishing an orphanage for the housing and care of the Catholic orphan boys of the city and surrounding districts, especially those whose fathers had fallen on the field of battle. The zealous prelate, whose heart went

22. Ibid: (Unpublished Records)
out to the helpless ones of his flock, called upon the sisters of St. Joseph of Buffalo for a group of Sisters to begin work in Rochester.23.

At the Bishop's request Mother Magdalene Weaver,24. then in charge of the Congregation in Buffalo, appointed four Sisters for the new foundation. Two of the recruits, Sister M. Stanislaus Leary and Sister M.F. Xavier Delahunty, then employed in a mission in Dunkirk, New York, where they were just beginning to enjoy the conveniences of a new convent after years of hardships in the old one, were called upon to take charge of the new school. On one occasion Sister M. Stanislaus had remarked to her companion: "What if we were to be recalled from Dunkirk, now that we have things so much to our liking here." She realized how prophetic were her words when a short time afterwards she found herself, at the head of a band of Sisters enroute for Rochester.

On the feast of All Saints, November 1, 1864, the four pioneers, Mother Stanislaus, Sister F. Xavier, Sister Clara, and Sister Martina took possession of the two story brick building adjoining the convent of the Sisters of Mercy on


24. Note: In two sources I have found Mother Madalene Weaver's name misprinted, Weber in Carondelet, p. 69 and Buffalo, p. 88. Sister M. Assisium in Philadelphia proved it should be Weaver by consulting the records of the Cemetery.
They were the first Sisters of the Congregation to offer their services to the city. They entered upon their labors the very day of their arrival and opened the Institution under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and received two little orphan boys. This feast of All Saints was the birthday of the Congregation in Rochester. The asylum was organized under the Laws of the State. The avowed purpose of its Incorporation was declared to be "the maintenance and tuition of orphan children of the male sex and in particular of the male orphan children of soldiers who had lost their lives in the service of the United States."

In Mother Stanislaus' journal we find the following notice:

"St. Mary's Orphan Boys' Asylum was opened November 1, 1864 by the Sisters of St. Joseph, in a building known as the Park House, located on South Street near St. Mary's Church. The building was purchased by the Very Reverend J. M. Early from Mrs. S. Hughes for the sum of $4000. Trustees,

Rt. Rev. John Timon
Very Rev. J. M. Early
Sister Stanislaus Leary
Patrick O'Brien
James McRodden

The years following the war were years of financial distress for the nation at large. Money was scarce, prices exhorbitant and the country had little hopes of gaining

credit abroad. But even in those days of struggle and privation the Sisters in charge of St. Mary's Asylum enlisted the sympathy and the cooperation of the civil authorities in the work they had undertaken for the welfare of humanity.26.

A time worn yellow copy of the "West End Journal" of Rochester, New York, of 1868, after commenting on the foundation of St. Mary's Boys' Asylum quotes:

The present property is paid for, and this principally by good management and the generosity of friends; for notwithstanding the debt which the public owes every such institution, the asylum has never received but one grant of one thousand dollars from the State, despite the earnest petition to the legislature for some substantial aid. To Mother M. Stanislaus great praise is due, and we would be negligent in our duty were we to omit her name from this short sketch of the Institution and its workings. In the days of its infancy, she watched over it with more than ordinary vigilance and guarded its every interest with prudence and economy. Her solicitude in attending the personal wants of the orphans had elevated the character of the Asylum, so that it now stands second to none in the State. This is not alone our opinion but the opinion of the Committee of Charity, Dr. Hoyt and Dr. Anderson, who were loud in their praises of the condition of the Institution and of the intellectual and physical condition of the orphans. Remarks of these gentlemen show clearly that they have hearts that are honest, since they give praise where it is justly merited.27.

In the year 1868 the diocese of Buffalo was divided and the Episcopal See of Rochester was created. On January 26.

27. West End Journal, Rochester, New York, 1868.
of that year Rt. Rev. Bernard J. McQuaid, Founder and for many years President of Seton Hall College, Newark, New Jersey, was consecrated Bishop of Rochester by His Grace Archbishop McCloskey in the Cathedral of New York and a few days later was formally installed in the new diocese. The late Archbishop Quigley of Chicago, who as a boy stood among the crowd that welcomed Bishop McQuaid on his arrival in Rochester, quoting many years later the Bishop's memorable words on that occasion, said,

I remember distinctly Bishop McQuaid's first greeting to the Catholics of Rochester, as in a clear and decided tone of voice he announced his purpose in accepting the Bishopric: 'I came here without fear, knowing what is to be done. If God gives me health and strength and length of life I shall do it.' That the Bishop fulfilled this promise is too well known a fact to emphasize.28.

Almost immediately after his arrival here, the Bishop determined that his first care should be the establishing of parochial schools throughout the diocese. With this object in view he was desirous of obtaining the services of a community of women adapted to the work, and having examined the Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of St. Joseph, he became convinced that they, better than any other religious order, could second his design. What pleased him most in the Rule was the diocesan character of each

establishment of the Congregation and especially the advice of the Venerable Founder enjoining upon the Sisters obedience to their Bishop and their Superior, and entreating each Bishop to show a paternal solicitude for the spiritual daughters thus confided to his care.29.

Bishop McQuaid visited the Sisters at St. Mary's Orphanage and proposed his plan of diocesan Community to the Superior and Sisters there. He emphasized that this change would necessitate their severance of official relationship with their Mother Community of Buffalo. The attitude of the majority of Sisters on this occasion is noteworthy and bespeaks their disregard of personal feeling or personal advantages and their practical realization that their consecration placed them entirely in the hands of Providence for the accomplishment of God's greater glory. To the Bishop's proposal, the Sisters replied that if their religious superiors called them to Buffalo, they would obey but if the authorities of the Congregation did not recall them, they would remain in Rochester.30.

In the autumn of the year 1868, we find the Community at Rochester dissolving all affiliations with the Motherhouse at Buffalo, opening its own central house and Novitiate there, with Reverend Mother Stanislaus Superior General

and Right Rev. Bishop McQuaid ecclesiastical Superior.

There were at this time two houses of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Diocese of Rochester, St. Mary Academy and Orphanage in Canandaigua and St. Mary's Asylum for boys in Rochester. In the latter house the novitiate of the Sisterhood was temporarily located. While the separation from Buffalo was being effected each Sister was left perfectly free to return to the Motherhouse, or to remain with the Rochester Community. Eventually a few of the Sisters went back to Buffalo while the following twelve remained in the Rochester diocese; Mother Stanislaus Leary, Sister Francis Xavier Delahunty, Sister M. DePazzi Begley, Sister M. Claver Hennessey, and Sister M. Lucy Gorman, Sister M. Patrick Walsh, Sister M. Clare O'Shea, Sister M. Michael Brown, Sister M. James O'Connell, Sister M. Ambrose Keogan, Sister M. Camillus Temprain, and Sister M. Paul Geary.31.

Under the wise direction of the new Bishop, the little Community in Rochester entered upon its new career with more than ordinary zeal, for its members were now to prepare themselves for the distinctive work of Catholic Education. The field was large and they were few in number so they immediately began to look about for new subjects. Soon several young women wishing to consecrate their lives to

service of God and their neighbor, presented themselves as candidates to the Community. The first reception of the newly organized Community took place on New Years day, 1869, when two young women received the habit--Miss Lucy Pigot of Canada received the name of Sister M. Bernard and Miss Nellie Leary of Corning that of Sister M. Josephine.\textsuperscript{32}

The first annual retreat of the New Community was conducted at St. Mary's Orphan Asylum from July 25, to August 2, 1869 by a Rev. Father Anderson, an English Jesuit. At the close of the retreat the habit was given to Miss Mary Hines of Rochester who received the name of Sister Mary Agnes and to Miss Teresa Lee of Avon, New York, who received the name of Sister M. Aloysia. Sister Mary Agnes was in time elevated to the most important office of the Community as Mother Stanislaus' successor and was destined to be God's chosen instrument in the advancement and care of its career in this diocese.

In 1868 when the See of Rochester was created and the new Motherhouse was opened there, Canandaigua became the humble subject of her own grandchild, Rochester; for Canandaigua was the Motherhouse of the Buffalo Sisters and Buffalo was the Motherhouse of the Rochester Sisters.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32} Record of Reception, Community Annals, Rochester, New York, 1869.
\textsuperscript{33} Nazareth Academy Archives, Rochester, New York.
In November of 1870 an event occurred which was a source of regret to the members of our Community, as well as to the Sisters of Charity, who for twenty-five years had conducted St. Patrick's Girls' School on Frank Street. They were recalled to their Motherhouse in Emmetsburg, Maryland, and the Sisters of St. Joseph according to the direction of the Bishop were to take charge of the School. During the twenty-five years here the Sisters of Charity had endeared themselves to the people and it was with great reluctance that the Catholics of Rochester saw them depart from the school which had the honor of being the oldest religious institution in the city. The Sisters left St. Patrick's on the morning of November 11, 1870, and in the afternoon of the same day Mother Stanislaus took Sister Mary Agnes and several other Sisters to the school, where they entered upon the duties of their new charge. There were one hundred and ten orphans to care for, besides a select School and a Free School which were attached to the Orphanage. In connection with this first year at St. Patrick's, Sister M. Evangelist furnished us with the following notes:

When the School came under our control, three Sisters were required for the select School, two Sisters for the Orphanage and two for the Free School, which was in the rear of the building with an entrance on Vought Street (now Kodak Street). It seems marvelous to me now, when I look back on those days with so many classes in the same building, the children of the separate departments,
never came in contact with one another, not even on the playground where the space was so limited. During our first year at St. Patrick's our trials were many. The people looked upon our residence there with disfavor. They believed that no one could take the place of the Sisters of Charity, to whom they were still devotedly attached, and rightly so, for that Sisterhood had done a magnificent work in Rochester, not only at St. Patrick's but also at St. Mary's Hospital. God gave us the grace, however, to bear our trials patiently till finally the attitude of the people changed. We felt from the first that the blessing of God would be with us, as we had undertaken the work in obedience to the Bishop, and we knew that obedience would at last speak of victory.34.

The first difficulties over, the work at the school had a greater prosperity than the Sisters could have hoped for. The attendance at both the Select School and the Free School continued to grow and Mother Stanislaus saw that she had in the Select School the nucleus of a future Academy.

In January, 1871, the Novitiate was transferred from St. Mary's to St. Patrick's and the first religious reception was held there on January 5, when five Sisters were invested.35.

In April of 1871 at the request of Bishop McQuaid a woman of more than ordinary note, Sister M. Hieronymo O'Brien, previously a prominent member of the Sisters of Charity was received into the Community. For thirteen years Sister Hieronymo had labored in Rochester in connection with St. Mary's Hospital. She had founded the

34. Sister M. Evangelist's Diary, Rochester, New York.
Institution, the first in the city, and under her direction it became a foundation of great civic importance and usefulness through extending care to the wounded soldiers of the Civil War. The charity and excellence of her service won the recognition and gratitude of the citizens and when she was transferred to another field of labor by the Superior of her Order, resolutions were drawn up at the meeting of the City Council over which Mayor Lutes presided which expressed an appreciation of her service to the city and regret at her recall and requested that she be sent back to Rochester.36.

On the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 8, 1871 a notable event, the first of its kind among the Catholic of Rochester, took place. The Catholic Sunday School children of the city with their Sister teachers met in the afternoon, in their respective Church and their pastors leading, filed in procession through the streets of the city to Jones Square. Here they gave a short program consisting of songs and addresses in English, French and German after which they knelt and received the episcopal blessing of the first Bishop of Rochester. The children made a splendid showing when massed on the common at Jones Square, and in them the Bishop saw that vast army of little ones for whose souls

his energies should never slacken, until he had them safe within the Christian Free School, which even then he so clearly visualized.37.

It was after this occasion that the Bishop suggested discarding the bonnet and veil which the Sisters then wore as a part of the regular street costume. The Bishop was a strong advocate of decorousness in the dress of religious, often counselling in his weekly conferences, that the habit be modestly and reverently worn, not out of vanity which in the religious is childish, but out of respect for her position as a Sister teacher. "Children", he said, "are critical observers. They are as keen to notice faultiness in dress, as they are quick to admire and imitate the teacher whose dress and manner are marked by a simple grace, worthy of a Spouse of Christ."38.

For some time the quest of a suitable location for a commodious Motherhouse claimed the attention of the Community. In February 1871, the purchase was made of a handsome and centrally located residence, which had formally been the home of Major John Williams of Civil War fame.

On the feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1871, the house destined to be the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Diocese of Rochester, was formally opened

37. West End Journal, Rochester, New York (week of June 8, 1871)
38. Conference Notes of Bishop McQuaid, Nazareth Archives, Rochester, New York.
and blessed by Bishop McQuaid. The beautiful and suggestive name, Nazareth Convent was given to this new abode and the Sisters fondly hoped to practice within its walls the virtues of the Chosen Three of the Nazareth of Scripture. Before the Sisters had taken possession of their new home a wing had been added to the building, which was to serve for school purposes. The Select School at St. Patrick's having been closed, its pupils were now transferred to the Academy known as Nazareth Academy, which had been opened at the Convent on Jay Street. This Academy offered accommodations for boarders as well as for day pupils. The records show that sixty students were enrolled at the opening of school. Mother Stanislaus was the first Directress of the Academy. She was assisted by Sister DePazzi Begley and Miss Lawton, a postulant.39.

One of the boarders who came to Nazareth upon the opening of the Fall term and who remained there as a pupil for years, writes the following account of her early impression:

How lasting are the early impressions for good or evil that are made on the mind of a child: the holidays were not over when I was entered as a boarder at the Academy. How well I remember the kindness shown me, as a child of ten by every one of the Sisters. I looked upon each one of them as a real living saint. The cheerfulness, peace, silence and piety that reigned in that blessed abode of my childhood are a sweet solace to me yet. There was an indefinable something

in that secluded place, 'a garden enclosed' that attracted me strongly and that lingers with me still despite the lapse of years.\textsuperscript{40}.

In 1873 the Rochester Home of Industry was founded. Mother Hieronymo O'Brien was placed in charge of this important foundation and no one was better fitted to undertake such a work. She was a remarkable woman whose soul over-flowed with charity for the poor and unfortunate. Her business ability, too, was of the highest order, as previously exemplified in the building and equipping of St. Mary's Hospital under the most trying financial embarrassment. The object of the new institution was the proper training of young girls, who might not have the benefit of a good home, in domestic science and in the art of practical housekeeping. These young women so trained would become useful members of society and at the same time be capable of gaining their own livelihood.

The first Home was made in two small buildings on Edinburgh Street which were purchased at a cost of $17,000. A short time after the deal was made the original owner feared the undertaking would prove a financial failure and foreclosed the mortgage. Mother Hieronymo was then obliged to look for another site, but having no means, she found herself in a very humiliating position. She was, however,

\textsuperscript{40} Letter in the Journal of Sister M. Teresina, Rochester, New York. (Sisters of St. Joseph Annals)
sustained through this trial by her remarkable trust in Divine Providence, and by the encouragement given her by Bishop McQuaid, who having known and appreciated her labors as a Sister of Charity had the utmost confidence in her. In later years when referring to this difficulty the venerable Mother said, "God surely watches over and cares for those who place their trust in Him. In the midst of my trials I never doubted that He would come to my assistance in His own good time."41.

In noting the progress of the Sisterhood at this time, we are impressed with the spirit of faith and confidence that animated the early members. They are so constantly occupied in the works of zeal that especially claimed the attention of the young Community and at the same time preserving a simplicity and recollection of mind truly admirable considering the trying conditions under which they labored. The year 1874 and 1875 was fruitful in the opening of three parochial schools, within a short distance of Rochester, namely at Lima, Geneva and Avon.

In January 1875 at the earnest request of Rev. U. Mulheron, Mother Stanislaus sent three Sisters to open a school in Lima with Sister Bernard Pigot in charge. The accommodations were poor, but the fervor of the little

41. Diary notes of Mother Hieronymo, Sisters of St. Joseph, Pittsford, New York. (Community Annals 1873)
Community and the good will of the Irish families, which made up the greater part of the populace, amply supplied for the comforts that were lacking. The school in Lima from its beginning enjoyed the privilege or rather the same rights as the other public school in the district. The Sisters were permitted to teach only the secular branches during school hours, religious instruction being allowed only at the close of the school day. The influence of these religious teachers was at once felt in the locality, and this influence was permanent and far reaching.

In September 1875, Mother Stanislaus, was called upon by Father McMannus, the pastor of St. Francis de Sales Church in Geneva, to supply seven Sisters for his large school of three hundred and fifty pupils. From Sister Matilda Flaherty one of the six, we have the following account of the opening of this mission:

The Catholics of Geneva, who were mainly of Irish origin were true to their racial characteristic possessing an abiding faith in the teachings of the Church. To them the Sisters were messengers from Heaven sent to instruct their little ones in the things of God. On the evening of our arrival the streets of Geneva were crowded from the station to the Convent with eager onlookers, all anxious to get a glimpse of the nuns. Their respectful demeanor and pleased countenances bespoke louder than words the welcome that was in their hearts, and that kindly attitude of the Catholics of Geneva has never changed.42.

Owing to the rapid increase in the membership of the community, more room was again needed at Nazareth, and in January 1877 Rev. Mother Stanislaus proposed the gradual completion of the convent according to a plan furnished by an architect, Mr. Warner. It was resolved to raise the western wing to the height of the main building. The work was immediately begun and was completed in the July following 1878, thus providing the community with better sleeping accommodations and with other available rooms. A piece of property adjoining the convent grounds on the north side was purchased from Ambrose Cram for $1641.43.

As the Congregation in this dioceses rapidly grew in numbers, its field of labor became more and more broadened, and with the advancement came the need of greater preparation. With a keen insight into the needs of the future and absolute will to meet those ends, Mother Stanislaus had been for some time contemplating sending sisters abroad for the more perfect mastery of the French language and for the study of the best European methods of teaching. She was encouraged in this project by Bishop McQuaid, who not only desired, but insisted that no expense should be spared in preparing the sisters for their life's work, the education of the young.

In selecting a school for this purpose the greatest

43. Diary of Events, Mother Stanislaus, Rochester, New York.
care was exercised by the Bishop, who was at this time in Europe for his Ad Limina Visit. After a careful survey of some of the best Normal schools in Belgium, a decision was finally made in favor of "L'Ecole Normal de St. Andre" located in ancient Bruges. In this Academy were children of the first families of the land who were educated in all the accomplishments proper to special conditions. There is also a Normal School for the training of teachers under the patronage of the Bishop of Bruges.

On February 18, 1879, Sister Seraphine O'Kane, a young professed Sister, and Sister de Sales Feely a novice, embarked on the steamer Celtic, a Cunard Liner between New York and Liverpool, to begin their course at Normal School.

Sister de Sales by letter gives an extensive account of the storm at sea through which they passed. In one of the severe gales the Celtic lost its propeller and the crew and passengers were left to the merciless waves for hours. All trust and confidence were put in the prayers of the Sisters and at last the vessel was discovered by a passing ship and towed into the port of Liverpool.

The two Sisters arrived safely by land at the Normal School at Bruges and began at once their intensive studies. As the representatives of many religious Communities in Belgium were sent to this school for their training, the regulations and rules of the institution demanded a more
or less austere mode of life. While this was good spiritually, it was somewhat trying to our American Sisters, who physically were not able to endure the strain.

Just as the Sisters in Rochester were in the midst of things for the annual June Closing, word was received from Belgium that Sister Seraphine O'Kane, who had just completed the course in the Normal School was seriously ill having developed a species of rapid decline. According to the advice of the Bishop, Mother Stanislaus accompanied by Sister M. Berchmans left for New York, where they secured passage on the first out-going boat of the Red Line, the Nederland. After an unpleasant voyage of nearly two weeks they reached Antwerp, then took the train to Bruges. They found Sister Seraphine in a very weak and exhausted condition. The physicians advised that if there were no delay in setting out, the sick Sister might reach home alive. Sister Berchmans had barely time to pay a visit to her aged father when she was summoned to Antwerp to set sail on the return voyage. The passage was rough; terrible storms arose but the group reached home safely.

The unexpected return of Mother Stanislaus and the Sisters, after an absence of scarcely six weeks, had upset the plans that were being made to give them a joyous welcome.

45. Note: In Our Lady of Bethlehem Archives there are a number of hand sketched programs, addresses of welcome and spiritual bouquets that were given to the Sisters on their return from Belgium.
Then too, the illness of Sister Seraphine cast a gloom over an otherwise happy home-coming. As many of the Sisters were at Hemlock, (a private summer home loaned to the Sisters by a good friend of Mother Stanislaus') Mother Stanislaus hastened there to pay them a short visit.

Sister Seraphine lingered in a dying condition till November 1, when she passed on to join her companion Sisters in the perfect school of the Master.46.

About the middle of March 1880, Mother Stanislaus suffered from a severe attack of illness. For some days there was great anxiety among the Sisters lest they should lose their beloved Superior, and many were the prayers that were said for her recovery. Finally the danger passed and with it the calamity which threatened the Community. The Catholic Union and Times for that week contained the following notice:

Reverend Mother Stanislaus, the respected Superioress of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Diocese of Rochester, was seriously ill last week. We are pleased to be able to state that she is now recovering for her death would prove an incalculable loss to religion in this portion of the vineyard.47.

In December, 1880, the Bishop sent a distinguished visitor to Nazareth in the person of Lady Alice Seymour, a writer and former teacher of English to the children of

46. Record of the deaths of the Rochester Sisters of St. Joseph.
47. The Catholic Union and Times, March 1880.
the Archducal family in Austria. Mrs. Seymour had recently returned from Europe and being in poor health, she was desirous of retiring into a convent for some months of rest. Reverend Mother Stanislaus was glad to give her hospitality. Later on the illustrious teacher was engaged by Reverend Mother Stanislaus to instruct the Sisters at Nazareth. Besides giving a course in elocution, Mrs. Seymour taught classes in Rhetoric and in the dramas of Shakespeare.

In September 1881, the Community was called upon to open a school in Danville, a pretty little village at the head of Canaseraga valley in Livingston county, New York. A number of German and Irish Catholics had settled there early in the 80's and as time went on and their number increased, it became necessary to build a suitable place of worship. The corner-stone of St. Mary's Church was laid in 1845 on the site that had previously belonged to Colonel Nathaniel Rochester.

As St. Mary's was the oldest parish in Danville, so it was the first to undertake building a parochial school which was opened by the Sisters of St. Joseph with three teachers in charge. (This was the last mission school begun under Mother Stanislaus' administration as Superior.)

On February 14, 1882, Reverend Mother Stanislaus celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of her religious clothing.

She had been invested with the habit of the Congregation in old St. Mary's Church, Canandaigua, on February 14, 1857, and she and Sister M. Anastasia of Buffalo, bore the distinction of being the first Sisters of St. Joseph to receive the veil in the State of New York.49.

The Reverend Mother wished to spend the day quietly without any outward demonstration. For this purpose she resolved to go in company with Sister M. Adelaide to Canandaigua and there, in the little church, the scene of her early espousals, to assist devoutly at the Holy Sacrifice, which should be offered for her intention, as a most fitting act of thanksgiving to God for his tender mercies to her. However, Reverend Father English, the pastor of St. Mary's in some way received intimation of Mother's intention and, despite the protests of the Sisters made preparations to give some degree of solemnity to the celebration, the account of which we find chronicled in the "Ontario Messenger".

On Monday last, February 14, the very interesting ceremony of the Silver Jubilee of Reverend Mother Stanislaus took place at St. Mary's Church in this village. Twenty-five years ago, at the age of fifteen, Mother Stanislaus entered the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Although the Church in her wisdom and economy never encourages the imposing of such obligations on minors, an exception was made because of her piety, and she was permitted to assume the obligation of the rules and customs

of the order. That her superiors acted wisely in permitting her to do so is evident since this esteemed lady has from that time down to the present day, proved herself faithful to her high vocation, and to the confidence reposed in her, not only as a simple member of the Community, but as a wise and prudent Superior.

Since 1868 she has been in charge of the Congregation in the Diocese of Rochester and by her foresight and prudent management of affairs, she has accomplished wonders under the most trying circumstances. When she became a member of the Order, it could count but twelve members in this diocese; at present there are under her care and direction nearly one hundred religious.50.

According to the expressed wish of Mother Stanislaus, the Sisters at Nazareth decided to defer the celebration of her Jubilee to the twenty-fifth anniversary of her profession. Mother Stanislaus had now governed the Community for a period of fourteen years. She fulfilled the duties of her office with exemplary zeal and she had the consolation of seeing the membership of the Sisterhood greatly increased, and the sphere of its usefulness broadened. The chief work confided to the Community was the education of the young in the parochial school, and to the furtherance of this sublime trust, Mother Stanislaus directed all her energies.51.

In the Spring of 1882 the Bishop, though fully appreciating the administrative ability of Mother Stanislaus, thought it desirable to make a change in the government

of the Community. The Sisters were devotedly attached to
Mother Stanislaus who was the only Superior they had ever
known, and it was with concern that they read the Bishop's
official communication of May 25, in which he announced
his intention to effect a change in the administration of
affairs. For this purpose he addressed a letter to each
professed Sister, enclosing blank slips on which she was
instructed to write the names of the three members of the
Community whom she should judge worthy and capable of fill-
ing the office of Superior General. 52.

We have here a copy of the letter:

It is now nearly fourteen years since this
Community of the Sisters of St. Joseph began
its work as an independent organization in the
Diocese of Rochester. During these years, the
Community has become a large and flourishing
one. The work accomplished by it, under the
helping hand of Providence, has been worthy of
devout religious, whose lives are truly conse-
crated to God for the salvation of their own
souls and the spiritual welfare of those en-
trusted to their care.

So far the direction of the Community has
been in the hands of Mother Stanislaus who has
ably and successfully managed the important and
responsible task confided to her judgment and
zeal. But the time has come when it seems ex-
pedient to bring the government of the Commu-
nity more in harmony with the spirit of the
rules under which it exists. The rules pre-
scribe that Superiors shall hold office for
three years, although the same superior may be
elected and re-appointed. In the Constitution

52. Dr. F.J. Zwierlein, The Life and Letters of Bishop
McQuaid, Rochester, New York, p. 86. (The Art Print
Shop contains this letter.)
In the Constitutions of the Sisters, it is directed that such election shall take place on the Tuesday after Ascension Thursday.

The order to be followed this year is this: First, each Sister entitled to vote shall offer Communion on the Sunday within the octave and recite daily the Veni Creator to obtain light and grace to be guided aright in giving her vote. Secondly, she shall hold no conversation with anyone, Superior, or fellow-Sister, or extern, concerning her intention; nor shall she disclose to any one the names she has written on the enclosed paper. Thirdly, on Tuesday after Ascension Thursday, after having heard Mass and received Holy Communion, each Sister shall write the names of three Sisters, best suited in her judgment, and, according to her conscience, most capable of filling the office of General Superior for the next term. She shall place the paper in the prepared envelope, seal it, and deliver it to the local Superior for immediate and direct transmission to the Bishop. Fourthly, no Superior has any right to ask from the Sisters under her care any information regarding the vote she has given. Fifthly, the vote will be given to secure for the Community the Superior best fitted to carry on its good work, to be a source of edification to her fellow-Sisters, and to further the ends for which the Community has been instituted. Sixthly, local Superiors shall collect the sealed envelopes from the members of their houses, place them all in a large envelope and, without delay, mail them to the Bishop.

You will readily appreciate the importance of your wise selection in effecting a change in the government of your Community. Much depends upon the freedom of the Sisters in giving an unbiased expression of judgment with regard to the Sisters best adapted by their virtues, prudence, experience and ability to rule over a Congregation large and growing as is that of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester. I trust that the plan here proposed will secure this freedom.53.

It would be difficult for anyone not connected with the Community to realize what the change mentioned in the Bishop's letter meant to the Sisters. As we have said, they had never known any other Spiritual Mother than Mother Stanislaus and the bond that united them to her was close and affectionate. Many of them left the warmth and affection of a happy home and the tender care of a loving mother while still in their girlhood. They had come into the Community with their hearts still bleeding from the sacrifice of separation from all that they held dear to life. To Mother Stanislaus they had looked for help and guidance in the new life they had voluntarily chosen, and they were not disappointed for in her they had found a true mother, generous, unselfish, kind and devoted to their every interest. And now that strong bond of union between the mother and her daughters was to be broken. We do not wonder that the Sisters were filled with sorrow at the thought of the impending change. However, there was but one course to pursue; their duty lay clearly in the path of obedience. In this path Mother Stanislaus wisely counseled them to walk.

In a letter dated May 22, she points out this duty in a clear, forceful and religious manner:

Dear Sisters:

As our good Bishop has thought fit to make a change in the government of the Community, it
is your duty as good and obedient religious
to submit in all humility and show no opposi-
tion of any kind as all authority comes from
God.

My wish is that in returning the blanks
you should act according to conscience. Do
not be influenced by the natural affection
you bear to any one. Do not return the blanks
unfilled, as this would give offense to the
Bishop. Surely out of such a large Community
three persons can be found to fill my office.
If, in your judgment there are not three per-
sons, then write the names of two or one.

This change will not deprive me of watch-
ing over the Community and its interests, which
are the dearest objects of my life. I would
be a miserable religious indeed, if I could not
bear it with resignation and conformity to God's
will. I will try to make myself happy in what-
ever work may be assigned me. I have always
tried to do my duty as well as I knew how. None
of us can do all things perfectly.

Now, my dear Sisters, pray that God may
direct your choice. I trust that as good reli-
gious you will try to be satisfied with the
one that the Bishop appoints. Show the obe-
dience and respect due to her office and love
and obey your rules.

My beloved Sisters, I ask your prayers
that God may give me humility and meekness.

Yours affectionately in Christ,

Mother Stanislaus 54.

It was well understood in the Community that the Bishop
intended a change in administration and in his letter he
had asked each Sister to write three names of her choice.

Note: An original copy is now in the possession of
Mother M. Alexine, La Grange, Illinois.
Many of the Sisters, however, consonant with the letter of the Bishop as referring to the Rule which allows a re-election of Superior, wrote on their ballots but one name, Mother Stanislaus.

Doubtless because of this, the Bishop made use of the right given him by the Rule, of appointing a Superior and named Sister M. Agnes Hines as General Superior of the Community, with Sister M. Evangelist assistant. (Mother Agnes Hines governed her Community for thirty-nine years, that is from 1882 until her death 1921.)

The newly appointed Superior on her knees besought the Bishop not to lay the heavy burden upon her, but fully cognizant of her worth, and inspired no doubt by the Holy Spirit, the Bishop replied, "Obedience, Sister." To such an answer Sister Agnes could not reply. Her duty she felt was to obey and to obey implicitly. Placing her trust in Him who says to every leader in the House of Israel, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake," she took up the burden imposed upon her. To the fulfillment of its arduous duties and heavy responsibilities she has ever since dedicated the highest power of her mind, heart and soul.

Mother Agnes modestly, yet resolutely set about the accomplishment of the onerous duties of her office. "In religion as elsewhere, there must of necessity be contradiction of all sorts. The works of God are operated amid
such things," says an old Bishop.55.

Some time after the installation of Mother Agnes Hines, Mother Stanislaus accompanied by Sister M. Ursula, left for an extended visit to the South, where she hoped to obtain a much needed rest. While there she decided to accept the invitation of a Western Bishop, Right Reverend Louis Maria Fink to make a new foundation in his diocese. For this purpose she sought and obtained from Bishop McQuaid the necessary permission to leave the Diocese of Rochester. The Bishop likewise gave to any Sisters who wished it, permission to accompany Mother Stanislaus to her new field of labor. Among those who availed themselves of this opportunity were her two natural sisters, Sister M. Francis Joseph Leary and Sister M. Josephine Leary.

The departure of the Sisters was regretted by all who knew and appreciated their good qualities and especially their years of devoted and disinterested service. We all realize the sacred ties that bind us to our early associates and co-workers in religion. To rend such ties after years of intimate companionship, must have caused deep sorrow to those who were departing for other scenes. Only those who have experienced the strength and sweetness of the bonds that unite the Sisters of the same Community can understand what such a parting means. Through Mother Stanislaus the work of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Central West was
greatly extended. At this time there were in the Diocese of Rochester besides Nazareth and the three city schools, twelve mission houses. The formative period of the Community was now well nigh passed and its continued growth and future development were assured.
CHAPTER III

BEGINNINGS IN KANSAS

In the previous chapter the growth of the Congregation of St. Joseph in New York was briefly sketched. It is the purpose of the present chapter to continue the story of the spread of the Congregation in the United States, particularly in the State of Kansas. The Sisters of St. Joseph were not the first community of religious women in Kansas. In 1841 the Ladies of the Sacred Heart came to Sugar Creek Indian Mission in Linn County to take charge of the Indian girls. The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth began teaching the children of the prairies as early as 1858, and the Sisters of St. Benedict at Atchinson began their work in the State in the year of 1863.1

Reverend Mother Stanislaus, that strong and fearless pioneer in the cause of Christ, who, as we have seen was the instrument in the hands of God for the establishment of the Sisters of St. Joseph in New York, was chosen by Him to further spread His work in the West. Mother Stanislaus was a woman of strong character and great urbanity, whose confidence in God and filial reliance on the paternal care

of St. Joseph for his religious daughters had aided her greatly in her work of the foundation in the East. 2.

The events preceding Mother Stanislaus' advent in Kansas are very ordinary. Railroad building, cheap lands, and a vast area for homesteading gave real estate and rail-road companies an opportunity to spread a great amount of propaganda concerning the Golden West, throughout the East and even in European countries. This caused an influx of settlers to Kansas in the early 80's and a great "boom" period occurred. Not only were the European newspapers full of "Boom news" and real-estate advertisements concerning the State, but Bishop L.M. Fink, the Ordinary of Kansas, headed a Colonization Bureau to attract settlers.

At the height of the boom—in the summer of 1883, Mother Stanislaus, came with two companions, Sister Joseph-ine and Sister Joseph Leary, her natural sisters, from Rochester, New York to Newton, Kansas. This town is located twenty-eight miles north of the "Peerless Queen City of the West", as Wichita called herself. A hundred miles north from Newton lay Concordia, the Mecca of a Canadian Hegira. By 1884 eight hundred French families settled in Cloud County, which comprised four parishes, and whose principal city was Concordia. The Sisters have labored to the present time among these people with the greatest

2. Father Joseph Conway, St. Joseph Academy, Abilene, Kansas.
cooperation and satisfaction. Novices from Rochester and Scranton, New York, and many Canadian girls from Kankakee, Illinois, Concordia, Kansas, and neighboring places joined this pioneer band of Sisters, as many members were needed to take care of the schools which were rapidly being established.

The first year at Newton was not one of sunshine though the priest was as kind as his means allowed and the many little tokens received from the people were doubly appreciated by the Sisters, who were laboring in a strange land and among strangers. The little Community lacked many of the necessities of life and there were no household conveniences; help was greatly needed in the school. The first building in which the Sisters lived was donated by a parishioner and as it was unsuitable for a Convent, it was sold for a hotel and a two story building erected on a lot adjoining the church property. This new convent building had eleven rooms, eight of which were used as the Sisters' quarters and three for class rooms. The Sisters could not afford to buy any text books for class preparation, and manual labor took the time that should have been given to study. Mother M. Antoinette, a Pioneer of the early times, tells this little anecdote. She had a class in arithmetic which was working on

4. Nazareth Convent Archives, Concordia, Kansas.
circular measurement, and a certain problem had been given to the class to solve for the next day. All the children had taken their books home, which fact left Mother Antoinette without a text as a guide in preparing her lesson. After laboring into the small hours of the night she went wearily to bed wondering what she would say to her class the next day. Immediately she was sound asleep and subconsciously started struggling with her problem. On suddenly awakening, Mother Antoinette had the clearest conception of the work, and even before rising from her bed she took her slate and pencil from the box nearby and wrote out the correct formula.\(^5\).

In all the privations which the Sisters had to undergo, not one little corner of God's garden was neglected; even the poor were supplied with remedies which were paid for by the pin money donations the Sisters received. Herbs were gathered and made into medicine for the needy ones of the Master; the sick were aided and comforted by these holy women, who spent many an hour going cheerfully from house to house, often having to endure many more hardships than those whom they visited.\(^6\).

It might well be mentioned here that in contrast with the early history of Canandaigua, Rochester, and Buffalo,

5. Journal of Mother Antoinette, Marymount College, Salina, Kansas.
the hardships in the Kansas foundation were nearly all of a material nature. That rampant bigotry from which the Sisters suffered in the East (New York) was not found in the wide open prairies of Kansas. Many non-Catholics and even Jews who were well disposed toward the Sisters and the Catholic religion, sent their children to the parochial school.

Schools were growing, and both money and Sisters were needed to carry on the work. When the schools closed in July instead of taking a needed rest the Sisters were sent out to canvass for the purpose of gathering funds. As Mother Stanislaus intended to open a school in Concordia where the population was predominately French and there was a great need of French speaking Sisters, Sister Francis Joseph and Sister Antoinette were sent into Canada. All the money that was collected on the way to Montreal was sent back to Newton. In Montreal they began collecting again, but their efforts were unsuccessful. On one occasion a woman gave them three cents and said to them: "You must understand that we need more money here than you do in the United States, and if charity is to be given it should be bestowed on our own people, who need it so badly." That ended the collection trip into Canada. They had no carfare with which to return home, so they borrowed ten dollars from a priest, who told them he was giving it in real charity as he never expected

7. Nazareth Archives, Concordia, Kansas.
to see the value returned. On their arrival Mother Stanislaus forwarded the first ten dollars she could get together, to the priest to encourage his kindness toward anyone in future need and to increase his confidence in the good intentions of the Sisters.8.

In regard to subjects, the Sisters were more successful; for on their return to the United States, Sisters Dominic Rioux, Cecelia St. Dennis, Avilla Raillefer, and Clare Cuff accompanied them. None of these Sisters are living now.

When the Sisters had been in Newton for about a year, Father Joseph Perrier, pastor of the Church in Concordia, asked Bishop Fink for Sisters for a school which he intended to open in Concordia; the Bishop informed him that he had no Sisters to give him, but advised him to go to Newton and ask Mother Stanislaus if she could spare any of her Sisters; therefore he came to see her and told her of the ideal location it would be, not only for a school, but also for a Motherhouse, and promised her money and assistance. He returned to the Bishop and told him that Mother Stanislaus would try to give him Sisters and that she herself would go to Concordia to investigate matters. This pleased Bishop Fink and he encouraged Mother Stanislaus to take

8. Nazareth Archives, Concordia, Kansas.
the school. She then accepted Father Perrier's invitation to settle permanently in Concordia and in 1884 the Mother-house was built and the Sisters moved there retaining Newton as a mission.9.

Besides the difficulties which usually accompany early foundations, and which came upon Mother Stanislaus and her companions with more than ordinary force, another trial was visited upon her, which was sufficient to have caused a woman of weaker faith and less determined will, to falter and perhaps even to desist from her efforts. This was the division and reapportionment of the dioceses in Kansas, in such a way that the Congregation was under the jurisdiction of three several Ordinaries in the short space of fifteen years. The story of this reapportionment of the various counties to different dioceses is one that seems on the surface to have been of little importance, but to the Sisters it was a period of stress. The strain of uncertainty --not knowing from one day to another who was the principal Superior of the Community was a trial the severity of which can hardly be overestimated. The history of this reapportionment follows:

When the Sisters of St. Joseph came to Newton, Kansas, the diocese of Leavenworth comprised the whole territory

of Kansas, and thus they were under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Leavenworth. In 1887 an order came from Rome, dividing the territory into three dioceses, namely Concordia, Wichita, and Leavenworth, the latter to constitute the eastern third of the State.\(^\text{10}\)

Concerning the succession of Bishops—the first appointee to the See of Wichita, was Father James O'Reilly, who died on July 26, 1887 before his consecration. Bishop J.J. Hennessey was appointed Bishop of Wichita in 1888 to succeed Bishop-elect James O'Reilly.

The first Bishop to occupy the See of Concordia was Bishop Richard Scannell, the period of whose administration extended from 1887-1890, when he was transferred to Omaha on January 30, 1891. Father Thaddeus Butler of Chicago, anxious to be appointed to the Concordia diocese, went to Rome to be consecrated but died on the eve of his consecration July 17, 1897. Right Rev. J.J. Hennessey, in addition to his own work in the Wichita Diocese, was appointed administrator of the Concordia Diocese for seven and a half years, that is, from the removal of Bishop R. Scannell (1891) to the fall of 1898. After carrying on the heavy work of these two Sees for five years Bishop Hennessy petitioned

\(^{10}\) Diary of Father Joseph Conway, St. Joseph Academy, Abilene, Kansas.
for a redistribution of the diocesan areas of Kansas. Rome being averse to obliterating Concordia—a feeling heartily shared by the Concordia clergy—decided to cut off a goodly number of counties from the Leavenworth Diocese, and apportion five of them to Concordia and the remaining sixteen to Wichita. At that, Leavenworth still greatly surpassed each of its sister dioceses, in institutions, population, wealth and influence. This last redistricting took place on July 1, 1897 and the following Prelates were permanently installed.11.

Right Rev. J.J. Hennessey was responsible for the Wichita See only.12.

Right Rev. J.F. Cunningham, the Vicar General of the Leavenworth Diocese under Bishop L.M. Fink, was consecrated the new Bishop of Concordia Diocese on September 21, 1898. He made Father Joseph Perrier (who had been raised to the rank of domestic prelate with the title of Monsignor) his Vicar General.13.

Bishop Fink still held jurisdiction over the Leavenworth Diocese from which he had been governing all of Kansas as one diocese since May 22, 1877. He died on March 17, 1904 and was succeeded by Bishop Thomas F. Lillis, who was later appointed coadjutor to the Bishop of Kansas City, with the right of succession—March 14, 1910.14.

The map inserted will aid in clarifying the location of the three dioceses. The history of the Sisters of St.

14. Ibid.
KEY TO MAP

From 1851 - 1874 Kansas was a portion of a territory which was a Vicariate Apostolic under Bishop J. B. Miege.

From 1874 - 1877 the entire State of Kansas was a Vicariate under Bishop L. M. Fink.

From 1877 - 1887 the entire State of Kansas was a Diocese under Bishop Fink.

In 1887 Kansas was divided into three dioceses:

Leavenworth AMQB
Concordia MODC
Wichita OQLD

In 1897 the three dioceses were redistricted:

Leavenworth ANIYZ
Concordia CMZYOD
Wichita DOYINEQL
Joseph is so closely interwoven with the history of these dioceses that I felt it quite necessary to explain thoroughly each apportionment.

The effect of these constant changes upon the Sisters of St. Joseph in Kansas was far-reaching. In 1886 after a few missions were organized and a little surplus amount was on hand, the Motherhouse intended for Abilene was started. In 1887, when Right Reverend R. Scannell came to Concordia as Bishop and learned of the intended change, he would not allow the Motherhouse to be moved. Mother Stanislaus then opened Abilene as a mission and sent the following Sisters to take charge; Sister Bernard Sheridan Superior, Sister M. Domitilla, Sister M. Angela Costella, Sister M. Amelia Fitzgibbons, Sister M. Armilla Toole, and Sister M. Sebastain Collins.

From among Mother Stanislaus' personal notes we have the following letter written by Bishop L.M. Fink to Mother Stanislaus, which proves how Bishop Fink insisted upon keeping the Sisters of St. Joseph under his immediate jurisdiction.15. It implies, what was really the case--that he resented the necessity of permitting a transfer of his authority over the Sisters to Bishop R. Scannell--a condition which resulted from the reapportionment of the diocese.

15. Journal of Mother Stanislaus, Nazareth Archives, La Grange, Ill.
Leavenworth, Kansas
March 8, 1887

Rev. Dear Mother Stanislaus:

I send you these few lines to inform you about matters at Abilene. Poor Father Leary has accomplished a great deal of late and some time next week the whole business can be closed, and I think, very satisfactorily to all concerned. As you were at Abilene when Father (J. F.) Cunningham was there about a month ago I need not repeat the status of affairs. -- -- -- It will be necessary now to have the Sisters go to Abilene. I in-close the paper containing the names appointed for that mission. Good Bishop Scannell saw it when he was there. I do not think it necessary, however, that the whole number be sent there at present.---

For certain reasons of my own, I would like you to be Superior there yourself, as a good deal of experience is required to get out all right. However, if good Bishop Scannell would not wish to let you go some other reliable and good Sister should be appointed, who would have some experience in governing and managing temporal affairs. The Sisters will have a good chance to do good and will not interfere with Concordia; there is no academy between Leavenworth, Wichita, and Concordia so that each will have a large territory tributary to the houses now existing. -- -- --

In the meantime each of these Sisters has to make her will conveying her property to those of her companions that may survive her; all of which to be kept by the Superior, or by myself in the Diocesan Archives. -- -- --

As good Bishop Scannell seems to have been under the impression that Concordia would be involved, I told him that Concordia was not expected to burden itself with the Abilene business. Please tell him so again; for which reason I want matters tended to as set forth above. Bishop Scannell seems to object to the two houses having but one Novitiate for four or five years, as the inclosed request of the Sisters show. If the Bishop has any objection and desires a separation, his wish must be respected and everything will come out alright at the latter end, although it may be a little more
difficult for some time. Now please see the Bishop—so as to make a beginning since everything turned out better than we had reason to expect. ———

With best wishes, I am

Yours resp.
L. M. Fink, O.S.B. (16.)
Bp. L'wth.

In a letter received by Mother M. Stanislaus a short time later, Bishop Fink renews his request for the Concordia Sisters to take charge of the Mother-house in Abilene.

——— the Sisters must go there this year and stay there taking possession of the place to open school by Fall. Now, I would suggest the road of humility. ———

I will not allow those connected with the institution to run things at their own wills, but as directed as I have now a better hold than I had. All I want is good Religious, and good Teachers.
I had a little talk with Bishop Scannell regarding the Sisters and the appointment I made through you last year. If he objects to it I will not quarrel with him. I would like you to be the Superior there, but if you do not want to come, or your good Bishop does not wish you to leave I must have one as Superior, who has the proper religious and financial qualifications. I expect you to find your way there as soon as you may go out of office in the near future. However, I leave everything to God's ruling and that of His Servants. ——— Let me know what you think about the work so far.

Yours resp.
L. M. Fink (17)

(16) The original letter is in the archives of Our Lady of Bethlehem Convent, La Grange, Illinois.
(17) Ibid.
As stated before it was in this same year August 2, 1885, that the Order came from Rome reapportioning the State of Kansas to constitute the Dioceses of Concordia and Wichita as well as the Diocese of Leavenworth, which had already been organized. This automatically destined Abilene to be included in the Diocese of Leavenworth. Through an agreement therefore, of the Right Reverend L.M. Fink, who was Bishop of Leavenworth, and the Right Reverend Richard Scannell, Bishop of the new See of Concordia, the mission at Abilene was established as a foundation by a Community of Sisters of St. Joseph under the jurisdiction of Right Reverend L.M. Fink, with Mother M. Bernard Sheridan as Superior (March 22, 1888).

The convent had been begun in 1886. The building which was made possible by the labors of a certain Father Leary S.J. of Abilene, and his parishioners, was not complete when the Sisters moved into it. Mother Bernard Sheridan started immediately soliciting funds in the East, to complete the structure. Within the next seven years enough money was collected to meet their obligations.

In 1897 when the word came from Rome again, that a few adjustments were to be made in the territory to be taken in by these three dioceses, the Motherhouse at Abilene again fell into the Concordia Diocese. Bishop L.M. Fink having a premonition that this would come about, transferred the
contingent of Sisters from Abilene to Parsons, Kansas, feeling sure that Parsons would be in the Leavenworth Diocese. In the final arrangement Parsons was included in the Wichita Diocese, therefore no Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph was founded in the Leavenworth Diocese. Right Reverend J.J. Hennessey transferred the Motherhouse from Parsons to his Episcopal See of Wichita. Mount St. Mary Convent was built and still remains the Motherhouse from which center at this time (1930) the Sisters conduct eight hospitals and twenty-five schools. The old Motherhouse in Parsons is now used as a hospital.

In regard to the House at Abilene at the time of the third reapportioning in 1897 the Abilene property was included in the Concordia Diocese but the Sisters of Wichita continued to hold the property and Academy until 1916, when Bishop J.J. Cunningham purchased it for $2500 from Bishop Hennessey. At the time of the purchasing it was thought that the building would be used as an orphan asylum, although there was no real need of an orphanage in the Concordia Diocese. The building was in a very dilapidated condition but the Bishop set to work and had it painted inside and out, a new roof was put on and every room refloored. A barn, poultry house, laundry and heating plant

20. Archives in Concordia, Kansas.
were installed and water and light accessories were added to the unit. The total expenditure was over $60,000 of the Bishop's personal money used only in repairs and improvements. The finishing touches were added by Bishop F.J. Tief. The school is still used as an orphanage for boys under the title of St. Joseph's Orphanage.21.

Although Mother Stanislaus remained in Kansas but fifteen years the founding of the following missions is a proof of her zeal in the cause of Catholic education.

The first mission to open in 1885 was at St. Joseph, Kansas. This school was a public school taught by the Sisters who were paid by the taxes of the citizens. Sister Francis Joseph Leary was in charge of the school and Father Mollier was pastor. Clyde, Kansas was the second mission opened, and within the next two years establishments were made in Beloit, Kansas, Herdon, West Kansas, and Saint George, Illinois. In 1890 Tipton, Kansas and North Platt, Nebraska were organized, and the next year Grand Island, Nebraska was founded. There is very little detail on record regarding these establishments but what tradition could be gathered from the older members of the Concordia Community has been stated in the brief review of these missions.

When the Sisters took charge of Clyde, Kansas, the

second mission, Father Leonard was the Pastor. He had built a church and school, but as the town had never grown in population, the school attendance had been small. Some years after this Father J. Maher took charge and made a number of improvements on the property and in a short time the whole unit looked like a new place. He remained in Clyde for only a year. 22. He was succeeded by Father Joseph Perrier. Shortly after Father Perrier's appointment the church was entirely destroyed by a fire, but was soon replaced by a large brick building.

Beloit, Kansas mission was taken over in 1887 by our Sisters. The Fathers and Sisters of the Precious Blood had been in Beloit for a number of years but at this time they were recalled to their respective Motherhouses. Father Keifer was Pastor after the Sisters came to Beloit and following him were Fathers Hineman and Bitters. In 1898 Father Heitz was sent to Beloit to build a splendid Church, after which he built the school, and later a house for the Sisters. 23.

Tipton, Kansas was opened in 1887. The first Sisters sent there were Sister M. Antoinette, Sister M. Alphonse, and Sister M. Albina. They were followed soon after by Sister M. Celestine Wehrle, Sister M. Bonifice Bachle, and

Sister M. Seraphica Martin. Father Able was in charge of the parish. As there was no house for the Sisters, Father gave up his home and lived in the sacristy.24.

St. George Mission in Illinois was opened September 8, 1889 by Sisters M. Josephine, M. Antoinette, M. Aurelia Cayer and M. Euphrasis Caron. This school was opened as a public school and consisted of grammar and high school departments. Father J.C. Le Sage was Pastor when the school was opened. Within a year he was transferred to Brighton Park, Chicago, Illinois and commissioned to build a church for the French Settlement there. The next year he asked for the Sister of Concordia to take charge of his new school. Mother Stanislaus sent ten Sisters to this parish, the first of the Chicago Missions, and the school has grown rapidly with the years. Many of the Sisters lived at Brighton Park during the Summer so that they might take advantage of its convenient location to the educational centers of DePaul and Loyola Universities. In 1904, when Reverend J.C. Le Sage was stationed in Aurora, Illinois, he asked for the Concordia Sisters to take charge of his school in the Sacred Heart Parish. The Sisters succeeded the Sisters of Notre Dame from whom Father Le Sage purchased the school property. In 1905, owing to ill

Ibid.
health, Father Le Sage resigned his pastorate and was succeeded on November 15, by Reverend J.C. Simond. 25.

Father Waldron in charge of North Platte, Nebraska Mission opened a school on September 18, 1891. The first Sisters sent there to teach were Sisters M. Francis Joseph, M. Madeline, and M. Alphonse.

From the Journal of Mother Stanislaus we here quote a letter from Reverend W. Wolf to show the type of generous cooperation extended to the Sisters in their work on the missions;--

Grand Island, Nebraska
September 2, '93

Venerable Mother Stanislaus:-

I have visited the school in North Platte several times and I have always admired the system and success of your sisters in that school.

I shall help the sisters here all I can but I shall leave to them and to you as you advise them--the complete control and management of the school. I prefer the "graded" system too.

With best wishes I remain, Ven. Mother
Yours Very Respectfully,


From the beginning this mission proved to be a successful as there were sufficient pupils to conduct both a grade and high school department. In December of 1891

26. Original letter in Our Lady of Bethlehem Convent Archives La Grange, Illinois
Sister Francis Joseph sent for Sister Antoinette to assist her in her work. The second year Sister Antoinette took charge of the school and in June of 1895 the first class was graduated. Sister Antoinette opened a new Mission at Monett, Missouri in September of 1895.27.

Lake Linden Mission in Michigan was opened in 1895. The mission proved very fruitful in vocations and many young girls of the parish were received into the Community of Concordia.28.

In looking over the records of Mother Stanislaus which are filed in the Archives in Our Lady of Bethlehem, La Grange, Illinois, an interesting and surprising incident came to light. In 1891 Mother M. Katherine Drexel requested Mother Stanislaus, in terms that were almost equivalent to a command, to prevail upon her Sisters to assume the work of instructing the Indians at St. Stephen's Mission in Wyoming. Mother Drexel was making her Novitiate under the direction of the Sisters of Mercy in Pennsylvania. This is the reason why she could not take up the work herself at this time. Mother Stanislaus immediately referred the matter to Bishop R. Scannell but he refused to give any advice on the subject because he said he knew nothing of the work among the Indians. We quote his letter of July 31, 1891 concerning this undertaking:

27. No records can be found concerning this mission.
28. Ibid.
Dear Mother Stanislaus,

After mailing a letter about Jackson to you this afternoon, I received yours of the twenty-ninth about the Indian Mission. After you have a talk with Mother M. Katherine and have learned more about the circumstances you will be better able to decide what to do. I really know so little about the matter that I feel I ought not to give any advice.-------

Yours sincerely,

Richard Scannell

In the meantime repeated appeals continued to come from the Indian territory and from Mother Katherine Drexel, begging our Sisters to take over the work for at least three years, or until such time as Mother Katherine would be adequately prepared to take actual part in the labors of her chosen field. Mother Stanislaus feared that the hardships would be too great for her young Sisters, but they in their zeal prevailed on Mother to permit some of them to go to this neglected spot. From among twenty-four volunteers five Sisters were chosen for the work, namely, Sister M. Theresa, Sister M. Angela Costello, Sister M. Amelia, Sister M. Alfonses and a postulant.

The journey to this remote Indian Mission required four weeks of hardships on slow-moving trains, and across prairies by wagon, until they finally reached the Mission

of St. Stephen, which is located in Western Wyoming, just north of the city of Landers. Father Ignatius Tanken, S.J. was the missionary in charge. The details concerning the founding of this Mission are very few, but we are fortunate to have found in the Archives a letter written to Mother Stanislaus by Father Tanken:

Sister M. Stanislaus
Concordia, Kansas

Dear Mother

I have just received a letter from Mother Katherine Drexel, giving particulars about you Sisters taking the Mission of St. Stephen's. We are gathering in crops--alfalfa-hay is being cut--oats are nearly ripe. Over 500 bushels of potatoes expected, beets, onions, tomatoes look well. About 800 head of cabbage, turnips, also 30 head of cattle are around the Mission. The rest on the prairies have to be brought in yet. The Indians are well disposed toward the Sisters. I trust you have gotten my letter explaining manner of travelling. The house is 55 by 55 feet, three stories high, substantial building in brick. Rock foundation. Mother Katherine has explained how many Sisters can be used, fully employed here. The Priest's house is half a mile away from the Convent. Mother Katherine will build a new one. Please let me know soon the day of starting and by what route.

I remain very respectfully yours, in the Sacred Heart.


The work of the Sisters at St. Stephen's continued for three difficult years. Many of the Indians were

friendly but many also were treacherous, and caused untold trouble to the group of missionaries. At the end of the period of three years, the Sisters were forced to give up the Mission, and returned to the Motherhouse.

The Missions established during the fifteen years of Mother Stanislaus' administration as Superior in the Concordia Congregation are listed below:

Nazareth Academy, Concordia, Kansas
Parochial School, Concordia, Kansas
'' '' Clyde, Kansas
'' '' St. Joseph Kansas
'' '' Beloit, Kansas
'' '' Herndon, West Kansas
'' '' Zurich, Kansas
'' '' Plainville, Kansas

Academy at Abilene, Kansas
Parochial School, North Platte, Nebraska
'' '' Grand Island, Nebraska
'' '' Gainsville, Texas
'' '' Brighton Park, Illinois
'' '' St. George, Illinois
'' '' Escanabe, Michigan
'' '' Lake Linden, Michigan
'' '' Gladstone, Michigan31.

CHAPTER IV

The Diocesan Foundation of the
Sisters of St. Joseph in the Archdiocese of
Chicago, Illinois

Reverend Mother Stanislaus Leary who had been instrumen-
tal in the hands of Divine Providence for the foundation
of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Diocese of Rochester,
and in Concordia, Kansas, was also the Foundress of the
Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in La Grange,
Illinois.

Her coming to the Chicago Diocese was surrounded with
providential circumstances. In 1898, the strain of many
years of heavy responsibility began to take its toll of
Mother Stanislaus' health and strength. In this event
she was advised by her Bishop to take Sister M. Alexine
Gosselin as her companion and to go to Excelsior Springs,
Missouri for the benefit of her health. The two Sisters
arrived at the Springs on November 15, 1898. No recupera-
tion, however, resulted from her sojourn there and the
advice was given that she should consult specialists in
Chicago. Owing to her physical condition, the Chicago
doctors recommended her to remain near Chicago for examina-
tion and consultation. They suggested further that a

1. *Journal of Mother M. Alexine*, Nazareth Convent,
La Grange, Illinois.
2. "Bishop" is Bishop J.F. Cunningham of Concordia, Kansas.
Chicago suburb would be more beneficial to her declining health than the dry, hot climate of Kansas.

Negotiations had previously taken place between Bishop J. F. Cunningham of Kansas and Archbishop P. A. Feehan of Chicago to open a House of Sisters of St. Joseph in the Archdiocese of Chicago. A request had also been made by the Reverend James M. Hagan, Pastor of St. Francis Xavier's Church in La Grange, Illinois to open an Academy with this Congregation in charge. He argued that this beautiful suburb just fourteen miles west of Chicago would be an ideal place for a Convent. As a consequence, it was decided that Mother Stanislaus should found a Diocesan House of the Sisters of St. Joseph in La Grange, Illinois.

This foundation is not to be confused with the houses already existing in Chicago but attached to the central house at St. Louis or to that at Concordia. These were mission units and were in no sense diocesan in nature. The missions belonging to St. Louis were: Nativity of Our Lord School at 37 and Union Streets, Chicago, Illinois, St. Viator School at 4170 Addison Street, Chicago, Illinois, and St. Joseph Home for the Friendless 739 East 35 Street, Chicago, Illinois; those dependent upon the Concordia Motherhouse were: St. George School, St. George, Illinois, St. Joseph School, California Avenue and 38 Place, Chicago, Illinois, and St. Joseph Hospital, Belvidere, Illinois.
On the feast of the Holy Angels, October 2, 1899, Mother Stanislaus' two sisters, Sister Frances Leary and sister Josephine Leary, Sister M. Liguori McDonald, Sister M. Berchmans Gray, Sister M. Constance Ryan, and Sister M. Alexine Gosselin obtained their obedience from Concordia and came to La Grange. Here they lived for a short time in a rented, furnished residence near St. Francis Xavier Church; later the Sisters found another house, at 131 Spring Avenue, smaller, and less demanding on their meager purse. They moved to their modest home on the eve of the Feast of St. Stanislaus. The morning brought great happiness to the little Community, for once again they were privileged to welcome their Heavenly Guest in their own little Chapel, humble and poor as it was. Earnest prayers were offered that morning for the speedy recovery of their good Superior.

Many trials assailed this new venture of Mother Stanislaus. It seemed sometimes the ship would flounder beneath its heavy load of opposition and poverty and with health and strength insufficient to carry on the gigantic task. In this as in all the great undertakings of Mother Stanislaus' life, she put her trust in Divine Providence, and God's guidance never failed her.

Finally, ill health overcame her buoyant spirit and

she knew that her mission on earth was nearly accomplished. When she realized this, she called Sister Alexine to her bedside and implored her to take up the work and carry it on, when she would lay it down. On February 14, 1900, after nearly one-half century of Religious life, on the fortieth anniversary of her Religious Reception, Mother Stanislaus breathed forth her pure soul to her Divine Spouse. Never did she realize the far-reaching merits of her Chicago Foundation, nor the wisdom of her choice of a successor in Sister Alexine.4.

The grief Sister Alexine experienced at her Superior's death may be more easily imagined than described because Mother Stanislaus had always been held in the highest esteem and respect by her spiritual daughters. After her beloved superior had been laid to rest, Sister Alexine wished to return to her convent home in Concordia, but Our Lord designed otherwise. Another zealous soul was needed to fill the place of her whom God had so recently called to Himself.

Archbishop P. A. Feehan decided Sister Alexine was to carry on the foundation which Mother Stanislaus had begun. She laid before His Grace the many difficulties to be encountered in such an undertaking—her inexperience, her youth, her utter lack of means, but His Grace was not to

be discouraged by any objections brought forward, however plausible. He, therefore, appointed Sister Alexine as Mother Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Archdiocese of Chicago. This took place on June 21, 1900.

With a fervent "God Bless You" and many good wishes, the Archbishop sent her forth to do the Master's will. When Mother Alexine returned to her home that afternoon she was not a little depressed, but her heart abounded in confidence in her Lord and in her Patron, St. Joseph, whom she knew would never forsake her. In the evening Mother Alexine related to the Sisters the wishes of the Archbishop, in regard to their future prospects. She laughingly placed on the table the contents of her purse—33¢, an amount coincident with her age. She told them, that this was all the capital she had to establish the Community.

Soon, new recruits came to enlarge the little band of Sisters. Among them were Sister M. Gertrude Green, and Sister Ernestine Le Pitre, and Sister M. Bernard Gosselin, a natural sister of Mother Alexine. These Sisters asked permission of the Bishop of Concordia to come to the aid of Mother Alexine. Other souls were attracted to join the daughters of St. Joseph and on July 2, 1900 the first Religious Reception was held at St. Francis Xavier Church.

5. Records filed in Our Lady of Bethlehem Archives, La Grange, Illinois.
6. Community records at Our Lady of Bethlehem Academy, La Grange, Illinois.
An excerpt from the New World of July 2, 1900, gives the following account:

The impressive ceremony of receiving a postulant into the Novitiate of the Sisters of the Congregation of St. Joseph, whose headquarters are at Nazareth Academy, La Grange, Illinois, took place in the Church of St. Francis Xavier on July 2, Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The young lady who had the happiness of being invested with the habit of this humble sisterhood is Frances M. Smith, of Washington, D. C. She was given the name of Sister Mary James.

The ceremony began with a procession of the officers of the Mass, the acolytes and the cross-bearer. Rev. James M. Hagan, rector of the church in La Grange, celebrated the Mass and conducted the ceremony of reception. After the Holy Mass was concluded the celebrant blessed the religious habit, and in accordance with the ritual of reception of candidates she was received into the sisterhood.

Sister Mary James is a convert to the faith, and was received into the Church by the Very Rev. James A. Lanigan, late administrator of the Diocese of Buffalo. She was educated at Madame Nardin Academy, Buffalo, N. Y., by the devoted religious, the Madames of the Sacred Heart of Mary, of Paris, France.

She has completed her course in music and art and will prove a valuable acquisition to the sisterhood at La Grange.7.

The young Rev. Mother Alexine, for the first time taking up the responsibilities of an entire Community, felt that the world was upon her shoulders, and serious fears of failure possessed her. Regarding her daughters in the

7. The New World (week of July 2, 1900).
Community she wondered how she would be able to support them. This great question of immediate personal needs stared her in the face like the actual wolf at the door.

Shortly after Mother Alexine's appointment as Superior, there was a period extending over three weeks, when the little Community was without any means of support. Father Hagan, the pastor, requested the Sisters to eat their meals at the Rectory, but they felt it would be better if Father would leave food in a basket on the ledge of the basement window of the Church, where the Sisters could easily get it. They did not wish to have their destitution known. Thus, during the time mentioned above, the Sisters, as one laughingly said, "ate like little tramps in the basement." 8.

The question of how Mother Alexine was to support her little band of workers was an ever present anxiety. In this extremity, a plan was conceived of sending out "brick cards" as a means of collecting money for the support of the Community, and to establish a building fund. No one had any idea of the proportions to which this simple plan would develop. The "brick cards" were to be sent broadcast through the mail and each card was sold for such a price as favored the donor, who through his generosity, gained the sincere and hearty prayers of the Community. Meanwhile the small group of Sisters must be supplied with means of

existing and Mother Alexine tremblingly approached the autocratic grocer to ask for credit for a short time. To this request he graciously agreed. The printer offered his services and the "brick cards" were printed gratis. The stamps were purchased by means of a donation of five dollars made by Mrs. John Blaser. This was the first donation from any person in La Grange. At first, the returns were slow in coming in, only small donations were received. With this a little furniture was purchased and the grocery and light bills paid. Their first Christmas dinner was to consist of bacon and eggs, and the Sisters were indeed grateful they had so much. On Christmas Eve, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the door bell rang. When the Sisters answered it, no one could be seen, but two large hampers full of provisions had been pushed into the hallway. Everything in the way of food was in the hampers in abundance and the Sisters had sufficient provisions for two weeks. The Altar and Rosary Society of St. Francis Xavier parish was responsible for this great act of charity.

In a short time the appeals from "brick cards" brought an aggregate sum of thirty-five dollars. How our good Mother and her faithful children thanked their Holy Patron, through whose intercession they felt sure their poor prayers had

been heard. Encouraged by these kind gifts and with renewed prayers and confidence in St. Joseph, Reverend Mother continued to send out these appeals, and each day received help from kind benefactors. While the sum helped to keep starvation from their midst, the Sisters felt that something more tangible must be planned.10.

The Council decided to open a school to be named Nazareth Academy, in October, 1900. Six resident pupils at ten dollars per month, and eight day pupils at fifty cents per month had to find accommodations in the small residence of six rooms. School closed in May, 1901 because the heat was so intense in the small apartments that neither pupils nor teachers could carry on.11. The following September, 1901, the Sisters looked forward to the opening of a full year of school work with great enthusiasm. Those who were to take up the work of teaching spared no pains or energy to have everything in readiness. The rooms to be used for class work were equipped with the furniture that could be spared from the Sisters' quarters. The money to purchase desks, and text books was very scarce. The teachers were most agreeable and arranged their classes so as to be able to lend books, and the one blackboard, from one class to another. At this time they were living in the first house

10. Ibid.
called "Nazareth Academy", at 120 Spring Avenue, La Grange. Previous to this, the little Community lived in a house at 131 North Spring Avenue where Mother Stanislaus had died.

The Community intended to erect a building, spacious enough for a Convent and boarding school for girls, as soon as sufficient funds were available. Plans drawn by Mother Alexine were submitted to the architects, of the firm of Egan and Prinderville. Negotiations were at once entered into with them. What was their amazement when they learned that the capital to be invested was only thirty-five dollars. The Company was assured, however, that an earnest attempt would be made to raise funds so that they would lose nothing after figuring on the plans.12.

In October of 1900, Mother Alexine and the Sisters interviewed Mr. W...., a certain noted financier, and generous-hearted man of Chicago, as to ways and means of carrying out their building plans. He was informed that the Community Treasury contained only thirty-five dollars, but that the Sisters had launched a project to accumulate a building fund by the "brick cards". Mr. W...., saw the Superior's determination and felt confident that she was deserving of assistance. He told her to call again a week later and they would talk the matter over. During this

interval, fervent prayers were offered to inspire this good man to espouse the cause. At the end of the week Reverend Mother called on Mr. W.... again, as requested. "Well, how much money have you today?" The happy reply was, "Seventy-five dollars." Mr. W.... laughed and said, "That is find", and told her to keep on increasing the sum. Mother insisted that the building was an immediate necessity even if she had to beg from door to door to procure the necessary funds. Mr. W.... could not resist her sincere appeal for aid and told her to proceed with the work at once. The generosity of this benefactor removed a load from the hearts of the Sisters and gave them greater enthusiasm to continue their labors. So engrossed was this good man in the success of the new Academy that every bit of architectural work was superintended by him personally and with as much care as if the building were his own, and his own it truly might be called, for had it not been for his charity it could not have been erected.

On March 19, 1901, the second Religious Reception and Profession took place. Sister Ernestine Le Pitre made her perpetual vows and Sister M. Joseph Williams and Sister M. Theresa Lancue received the Holy Habit. From then on, the Community began to increase in appreciable numbers. At this period Archbishop P. A. Feehan made a concession in

the time of probation regarding the reception of subjects, as a privilege of the New Foundation.

The patience with which the members of this small Community bore extraordinary trials was remarkable. As the living quarters for the Sisters were converted into class rooms, the Sisters were obliged to rent an attic in a house near them. This attic was used as a dormitory.

Shortly after the Profession and Reception of March 1901, Reverend Mother decided that she should look about for another house because the Sisters were not being comfortably lodged in their sleeping apartments. A large enrollment of pupils was expected in the Fall and the necessary accommodations had to be made for them.

The house on the corner of Ogden and Brainard Avenues was occupied by a Mr. N..... and his family. Mr N..... found room on the second floor of his home to allow the Sisters the necessary space for a dormitory and storage room.14.

On the 12 of September, (the day made memorable by the assassination of President McKinley), the Sisters took possession. After dusk the ten selected to reside in the new apartments were moving their belongings consisting of bed clothing, wash-stands, wash basins, toilet articles,

etc. to their rooms, when unexpectedly whom should they meet on Ogden Avenue but their Chaplain, Father P. L. Hassett. One may imagine his astonishment when confronted with this parade, for he was not aware of the fact that the Sisters had procured new apartments. All alarmed he hastened to the Reverend Mother to find out if "she knew her Sisters were running away."

Of all the inconveniences endured during their stay at this house the most unbearable was the lack of heat during the very severe winter of 1901. The water which had been standing in the washbasins over night had frozen solid by morning, and each Sister was prepared for a wide-awake meditation by washing her face with a piece of ice.

Were it not for the kindness of many of the prominent people of La Grange, the Sisters would never have been able to carry on their work. The property on which the first Motherhouse was built was purchased for $4000. Even though the "brick cards" were proving a success and other minor donations were coming in, the large amount demanded for the property could not be paid. To help the Sisters meet their obligations, Mrs. John Blaser and Miss Jean Fox, under the auspices of the Ladies Society of St. Francis Xavier Parish sponsored a bazaar for the benefit of the Community. The success of the undertaking was beyond all expectations.15.

15. Chapter of Affairs Record, Nazareth Archives, La Grange Illinois.
An excerpt from The Suburban News gives the following account:

The bazaar at the new town hall, La Grange, in aid of the Sisters of St. Joseph, came to a close Saturday evening, December 1, after a successful run of three nights. The attendance on each evening was very encouraging to the ladies of St. Francis Xavier's parish, who had the bazaar in charge, and also to the Sisters for whose benefit the bazaar was given. The brilliantly lighted new town hall formed an artistic and beautiful spectacle. On either side were arranged the various booths, laden with a great variety of beautiful and useful articles. Among the attractions was the fish-pond, which was arranged in the centre of the hall, decorated in the oriental colors; from the ceiling was suspended the American flag, a relic of the Cuban war. This interesting feature was designed by Mrs. J. A. Marshall.

The bazaar was opened by the Tetson Opera Co., on Thanksgiving night. An operetta was presented and heartily enjoyed, and amused the audience for about forty minutes.

Friday afternoon from two to five o'clock, a "tea" sponsored by Mrs. F. Cossitt, was given at the bazaar, at which a large number of ladies responded to the invitation sent them to meet the Sisters of St. Joseph. In the evening the program under the direction of Professor Thomas Taylor Drill was a real musical treat. The enthusiastic applause which followed the rendition of each number was an evidence of the hearty appreciation of the audience. A quartette composed of the Misses Harbison and McAllister, Professor Drill and Mr. H. G. Lytton, manager of the "Hub", fittingly closed the program of the evening. To the above performers and to Thomas Taylor Drill, the entertainment committee extends its most sincere thanks.

Saturday evening an immense audience gathered to welcome P. H. O'Donnell and Congressman Feely. Both spoke a few words in behalf of the work of the Sisters in La Grange, and wished them continued success in their arduous undertaking. Mr.
P. H. O'Donnell, in his usual humorous style, created a great deal of amusement and enjoyment for the audience, and was the winner of the beautiful doll donated to the bazaar by Mrs. Carter H. Harrison.

Taken all in all, the bazaar was one of the greatest artistic and social treats that La Grange has ever had, and will long be remembered among us.

The ladies of the committee extend sincere thanks on behalf of the Sisters to all the kind friends who aided in making the bazaar a success.

A purse of over $900.00 was presented to the Community. The Sisters shall always be grateful for this and many other deeds of kindness conferred on them by their loyal benefactors in La Grange.

At this writing (May 4, 1935), one who has proved a sincere friend through all the years, Mr. Joseph Connell, has passed to his eternal reward. The prayers of the Sisters shall follow him for his generosity to the Sisters shall ever be gratefully remembered.

On June 6, 1901, the sod was turned for the foundation of the Motherhouse. The members of the Community assisting at this ceremony were Mother Alexine, Sisters Bernard, Gertrude, Ernestine, Mary Joseph and Theresa.

The third Religious Reception took place August 15, 1901. Thirteen young ladies were invested with the holy habit. The ceremony was held at St. Francis Xavier Church.

16. The Suburban News, La Grange, Illinois (week of Nov. 29, 1900)
In the unavoidable absence of the Most Reverend Archbishop P. A. Feehan and the Right Reverend P. J. Muldoon, the impressive exercises were conducted by the pastor, Reverend J. M. Hagan. Owing to the fact that Father Hagan was scheduled to lecture at a caucus some miles from La Grange, the Reception had to take place before five o'clock Mass. Anyone who knows what work is entailed in preparing thirteen candidates for a memorable occasion such as this, will understand that the Community must arise at three o'clock to prepare, so that the services may not be delayed. One good simple novice patiently kept her head dress pinned to her scalp throughout the day knowing that in such excitement it was not the proper time to ask questions or to take time to have evils remedied.17.

As is customary in all religious houses, a retreat of several days was given previous to the receptions. This one was conducted by Reverend Michael A. Quinlan, C.S.C. professor of English Literature in the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.18. This was the first general retreat held in the Community. The other Receptions had taken place after private retreats.

Needless to say, all who were clothed with the habit in those early days, did not persevere in their intentions.

18. The New World, Chicago, Illinois (week of Aug. 15, 1901)
Indeed there was little of future prospect, in a material sense, to encourage timorous souls to cast their lot with this struggling young community. Among those who withdrew from the Community were the religious who had accompanied Mother Stanislaus and Mother Alexine from Concordia.19.

Much can be said in praise of three of the pioneers who entered the Community on August 15, 1901. They have labored perseveringly through the many hardships and trials of the formative period of the Community and their lives serve as guiding lights and inspirations to the present religious of the Congregation. The three who have so generously devoted their lives to the call of the Master are, our present Reverend Mother M. Thomas, her devoted Assistant, Mother M. Aloysius, and Sister M. Anthony.20.

The first annual catalogue issued in 1901, contained only seven pages but the Sisters were very proud of it. In spite of the fewness of its pages, it was instrumental in obtaining for Nazareth, a large enrollment. The Sisters tried in every way to make a good impression on prospective patrons of the old Nazareth, 120 N. Spring Avenue. Many necessary articles of furniture were lacking, especially carpets for the floor. When company was announced the Sisters would run to scatter the few rugs they had, to give

Certificate Number 17053

STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF
THE SECRETARY OF STATE

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

I, LOUIS L. EMMERSON, Secretary of State of the State of Illinois, do hereby certify that the following are true, a true copy of Articles of Incorporation of NAZARETH ACADEMY; Certificate of Cancellation of Charter,Filed July 1, 1903; Certificate of Cancellation to the Attorney General, Under Date of July 1, 1918;

the original of which is now on file and a matter of record in this office.

In Testimony Whereof, I have set my hand and cause to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Illinois, Done at the City of Springfield the 1st day of July 1903.

Louis L. Emerson
SECRETARY OF STATE
the reception room an inviting appearance. The students often assisted in placing the rugs while Sister met the company.21.

These little inconveniences did not disturb the tranquillity of the little Community for they looked forward to the day when the foundation of the new Convent would be completed. On July 14, 1901, the laying of the cornerstone of the Sisters' permanent residence, took place.

From The New World issue of that week I quote:

On Sunday afternoon, July 14, the feast of St. Bonaventure, the cornerstone of the New Nazareth Academy was laid, the Very Rev. M. J. Fitzsimmons, V. G., officiating, assisted by Rev. Thomas E. Judge of St. Finbarr's Church, Chicago; Rev. J. A. Ryan, of Nativity Church, Chicago, and Rev. P. L. Hassett, assistant of St. Francis Xavier's Church, La Grange. 

The day was an ideal one and several hundred people were gathered on the ground long before the appointed time to witness the ceremony which commenced at four p.m. A number of the Catholic Foresters, together with their High Chief Ranger, the Hon. Thomas Cannon, were present on the platform arranged for the officiating clergy.

The cornerstone was donated by the Most Rev. Patrick A. Feehan, D.D., Archbishop of Chicago. It is a beautiful piece of art being richly carved. One side bears the letters, A.M.D.G., which mean "to the greater glory of God", and also the year. On the other side is the square with a lily gracefully thrown over it, emblematic of the trade and virtue of the Patron Saint of the Order, St. Joseph.

After the blessing of the corner stone Rev. Thos. E. Judge delivered an eloquent discourse in which he beautifully and forcibly showed the necessity of Catholic schools, the great good being accomplished by the various religious orders, the rapid growth of Catholic schools and of their ever increasing superiority. He also congratulated the people of La Grange on the beautiful Academy being erected in their midst and urged the parents to avail themselves of the opportunity of having their children educated in a Catholic school, saying that such a school is a blessing which ought to be greatly appreciated.

This new convent is not only to be used as an Academy but also to serve as the Motherhouse and Novitiate of the Order until such times as the Sisters will be able to erect a building exclusively for that purpose.

We hope to see the good Sisters prosper, for they are certainly doing a good work and they should be encouraged in their noble efforts which are not made without many and heroic sacrifices.

The new convent is on a beautiful plot of ground on the corner of Ogden and Brainard Avenues. The building will be of brick, four stories high, and will be completed for the fall term of school.

On December 8 of that year Reverend Mother encouraged the Sisters with the good news, that if the building progressed as rapidly as the overseers promised they would celebrate Christmas in their new home. Promises materialized, and a few days previous to Christmas Eve the Sisters prepared the chapel for the reception of the Master of

22. The New World, Chicago, Illinois (week of July 14, 1901)
the House. Then other rooms such as, kitchen, refectory and dormitory were put in order for immediate use. All labored hard until a late hour on Christmas Eve. When the signal was given for night prayers not one was sorry as all were exhausted. For many of them, the prayers were that of the three apostles in the Garden—they began fervently and ended in dreamland. Only the pioneers can adequately relate the joy of at last having a spot that they could call "home". During the following months, time was spent in trying to clean the new house and in teaching.

The old adage, "All joy should be one-third sorrow", proved true in this happy Convent. For three years in succession, near the feast of New Year, fires broke out in various quarters of the house. Two were of a disastrous nature. The first one, in 1901, occurred in the laundry. The American Clothes Dryer Company had installed a hot air dryer and the novel machine was a great curiosity to the laundress. She was very anxious to finish her week's wash before New Year's Day and in order to complete the task she built an enormous fire with dry wood. The fire found its way into the dryer. In a short time, the dry clothes were all ablaze. Terror prevailed throughout the house. No water could be obtained to quench the flames, except that which was pumped from the soft water
cistern. No alarm could be sent to the fire department because the telephone was not yet installed. Providentially, the flames were prevented from extending any farther than the clothes dryer, although the walls were badly smoked and the woodwork scorched. The damage amounted to over two hundred dollars. Fortunately the loss was covered by insurance.

The second fire, which nearly destroyed the interior structure, occurred on December 31, 1902. The origin of the flames was a mystery. It was discovered in a waste paper chute that led from the first to the fourth floor. Apparently, the fire had been smoldering within the walls for a number of hours. As the firemen tore away the flooring the flames burst out between the joists and showers of ashes poured through the aperture. Every one in the neighborhood came to the aid of the Sisters and helped pack and carry out all movable articles, as there seemed no hope of saving the building. The Sacristan had called Father Hassett to remove the Blessed Sacrament. The Chapel equipment, of great value, was carried out into the street. The Sisters were most disheartened when they saw their hard labor threatened with disaster.

Amid all the excitement, Reverend Mother came running

through the hall with a book clinched tightly in her hand. She nervously entrusted the text to Sister Thomas' care with the warning that nothing should happen to it, as it was very valuable to her. An hour later the good news was noised about that the fire had been extinguished and the danger was over. The Sister to whom the book was confided was anxious to know what it contained. She was much surprised in perusing its contents to find that it was, "a book of etiquette."24.

The work of the Community advanced very prosperously during the year of 1902. On January 8, classes were resumed in the new Academy with an enrollment of forty-eight pupils. To celebrate the opening of the school a program was given by the Nazareth Academic and grade students for the enjoyment of patrons and their children.

On the afternoon of March 19, 1902, Right Reverend P. J. Muldoon visited Nazareth for the purpose of receiving eight young ladies into the Congregation. Just before the ceremony of reception, Bishop Muldoon dedicated the new convent.25.

Many times during the formative period of our Community our beloved and revered Bishop Muldoon visited the Convent and by his kindly, fatherly advice directed us through many difficulties.26.

25. The Suburban News, La Grange, Ill. (week of Mar. 19 1902)
The first closing exercise took place on June 24, 1902. Mary Merklee of Oak and Lillian Graves of Summit were the pioneer High School Graduates.

The fifth Religious Reception took place on August 23, 1902. One young lady, Agatha Scheible, received the holy habit and was given the name of Sister M. Bonaventure. On June 4, 1921, Sister passed to her reward. Her kind and prudent administration of the office of Directress during the school days of many, who later became religious of this Community, has endeared to us her simple, humble soul. I feel it a privilege and a partial expression of gratitude to relate the providential manner in which she was guided to our Congregation. 27.

Sister Bonaventure was born in Tettuang, Wurttemberg, Germany. She was educated in a select boarding school conducted by the Benedictine Sisters. After completing her course in languages, she engaged in teaching for a short time. On account of her superior ability she was selected as governess to a family of the French nobility. Here she lived for a number of years, or, till her entrance into the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph at La Grange, Illinois. This was brought about in a providential manner. One day she was out on the lake with her charges

27. Sister M. Boniface, Diary Notes, Rochester, New York.
and the oarsman who was leisurely guiding his skiff and reading the newspaper at the same time, accidentally dropped his paper into the water. It glided past Miss Scheible (Sister Bonaventure) who picked it up when she noticed it was an English paper. Perusing the contents of the paper her attention was drawn to an appeal for teachers in the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph at La Grange, Illinois. She considered this an answer to prayer as she had been contemplating consecrating her life to God. The next day she laid the matter before her confessor who advised her to act upon this inspiration immediately. She corresponded with Mother Alexine who urged her to follow her calling and to prepare at once to set sail for America. Mother Alexine and her little community were overjoyed at this answer to their prayers, for this message came to them in the midst of their novena for vocations.28.

After Sister Bonaventure had completed the time of her Novitiate, she was chosen as Directress of the Academy, which post she held for many years due to her experience and capability.

Great advancement was made in education during the year 1902-1903. The Council deemed it advisable to publish a school magazine which would be of great benefit to the

28. Retold by one of her pupils.
pupils. Everyone entered into this work with a wondrous will. The publication appeared in January 1904, under the title of, "The Nazareth Chimes". The hopes of the promoters of this idea, were fully realized because after having obtained permission to secure subscribers the publication did prove quite an educational and financial success. The High School Department contributed articles to each monthly issue. Putting out a magazine of this type, containing as it did, over a hundred pages, entailed many expenses; therefore, it was necessary for the Community to install a printing press which was operated by competent Sisters. For nine years, the Nazareth Chimes' Staff continued their interesting work. In 1913, the Right Rev. Archbishop James E. Quigley requested the Community to take charge of some of his newly organized parochial schools. Owing to a lack of Sisters to carry on both phases of work, the publication was discontinued with the June issue of the year 1913.

Attics seem to be the specialties of the Sisters of St. Joseph!!

For the fourth time since the Sisters came to La Grange, the sleeping apartments, this time the Nazareth dormitories, became over-crowded and the Sisters had to be satisfied with less convenient apartments in order to give their

29. Compiled copies of "Nazareth Chimes" 1904.
rooms to the Academy girls. When the new house was built no one realized that there would be a lack of room for years to come, but in 1904 it became necessary to open the attic and convert it into a dormitory. A general renovation of the whole top floor was made. The walls were white-washed, floors were scrubbed and beds arranged in long rows. It was impossible to place a dresser of any height near the bed because the ceiling was only about four feet from the floor. Much practice was necessary to enable one to arise from her bed and walk, in a bent position, to the stairs leading to the lower floor without bumping her head on the rafters. The Sisters occupied these quarters from 1905 to 1922 when a new addition was built, the details of which belong elsewhere in this paper.30.

Every year since the establishment of the Community, the Reverend Mother and her Council make it possible for the Sisters to take advantage of University work which was presented by competent instructors. Nothing was spared for each Sister's advancement, according to her talent. Music, art, science, and various other courses were given. During the summer of 1907 a dress-making course was introduced into the school. It was attended by adults as well as the Nazareth pupils.

The year 1905 presented the Community with great financial difficulties notwithstanding the fact that the school was rapidly growing, and the "Nazareth Chimes" a success. These devices of advancing funds took care of only the running expenses of the Community, so that it was necessary to adopt another means of income.31.

Through the advice of some of the patrons of the Academy the Sisters decided to try laundry work. All necessary equipment being installed, the Sisters started out on their new endeavor to raise funds for carrying on their work. Just as they reached the zenith of their hopes, some of the pupils were taken ill with measles and the patrons refused to send in their laundry; hence this enterprise failed, having yielded the community no greater profit than a better knowledge of laundry work.

At the earnest solicitations of the patrons of Nazareth Academy, a school for boys was organized July 14, 1909, with the enrollment of six small boys. A residence opposite the Convent was rented for this purpose. The pioneer Sisters who were in charge until the official opening were: Sister M. Sacred Heart, Superior, aided by Sister M. Teresa, Sister M. Vincent, Sister Margaret Mary, and Sister M. Beatrice. The Superior of this pioneer school has given me these two

incidents of the first night in the new house.

During the months of preparation the house was being papered. Pans of paste were under beds and on every available space. Candle light was used as the electric wires were not installed. One night the Sisters were sitting on the stairs in the dark talking (as there was no other place to sit) when they were terrified by loud knocking at the door. The Superior took a candle and followed by all the Sisters went to the door. There stood three 'big burly darkies' with a heavy rope. Consternation and fear are mild words to describe this situation. At last one of the three negroes said, 'We are movers and have come to lift the big sewing table, through the window to the second story sewing-room.' Very little sleep took place that night until late. All had just begun to rest when the Superior heard Thud! Thud! on the roof of the house. She was too frightened to call the other Sisters for fear of stepping in the pans of paste. Finally she took courage and went to the window. There were two large apple trees with branches overhanging the house. The wind had arisen during the night and the little green apples were hitting the roof.32.

Among the pioneer teachers were Sister M. Stella, Sister M. Austin, Sister Anthony, and Sister M. Gilberta. Sister Thomas directed the first play which was held in the little old gymnasium. The boys who first enrolled were: Joseph O'Connell, well-known singer on the Irish Hour; Carlton and Donald Snyder, Garvey, James and Thomas Cavanaugh, the latter a prominent lawyer in Chicago; Willis Brandt, a Boston dentist; five Carraher brothers, of whom Bernard is an officer in the Navy; Joseph Allegritti, of

chocolate candy fame; Francis Leis, Lee Haney, Robert and Leroy Reidy. This school, bearing the title of St. Joseph Institute was officially opened on September 14, 1909. It was the beginning of a long cherished hope. Its progress was so rapid, that at the end of the opening year 1909, the enrollment had increased to such an extent that an addition was necessary. A portable was built near by to be used as a gymnasium and a play room.33.

The year 1911 closed with a roster of forty-six pupils. The apartments became so crowded that in order to insure the health of the students a more suitable building had to be erected. Archbishop Quigley had seen the handicap under which the Sisters were working, hence he permitted two Sisters to seek financial aid from an influential friend in the East. When the problem confronting the Sisters was presented to this friend he graciously appropriated the proper amount, requesting at the same time that the Community pray fervently for his intention. With this first donation that the Sisters received they purchased the land that is now known as "Nazareth Park". This piece of property containing eighty acres was a portion of the Babcock Estate. Part of the land purchased was used as the "farm" as we were wont to call the present site of our Motherhouse.34.

33. Journal of Sister Sacred Heart Murphy, La Grange, Ill.
34. Clipping from scrapbook, Nazareth Archives, La Grange, Illinois.
A group of buildings was erected one of which was a magnificent "Palace Barn" to house the live stock. Well equipped rooms were arranged in one section of the Barn for the accommodation of the farm men; other units which bear mentioning were a modern laundry, bakery and a residence for the Sisters in charge of the farm.

In the fall of this year, (1910) a Country Fair was planned to be held in the "palace barn". The Sisters and various lay committees were busy in preparing to make it a success. It opened the first week in October with many unusual features which attracted a great many people. This activity, due to the enthusiasm of the good ladies and men of La Grange, proved a wonderful success. Special credit may be given to the committee of the affair.35.

Shortly after this another generous donation presented by a friend made it possible to add a new wing to Nazareth Academy, in the form of a much needed kitchen.36.

THE FIRST SILVER JUBILEE IN THE COMMUNITY

Among the many activities that were outstanding in the young Community, the one that bears special perpetuity is the Silver Jubilee Anniversary of our co-foundress Mother Alexine. The Jubilee was inaugurated by Solemn High Mass in the Convent Chapel, March 17, 1911. The celebrant was a

35. Taken from the Program of Nazareth Park Country Fair.
devoted and loyal friend Reverend F. A. Purcell, D.D. Rector of Quigley Seminary, Chicago, Illinois. He also delivered the address, in which he outlined in eloquent language the arduous work of Mother Alexine in the founding of the Community.37. In the afternoon a musical program was given by the boys of St. Joseph Institute. The events of the day of March 18 began with Solemn High Mass celebrated by the Pastor, Reverend J. A. Bollmann. The impressive sermon which he delivered on the occasion was on "The True Spirit of the Religious Life". A short extract of his sermon is herein enclosed:

The great virtue which is the touchstone of the religious life and without which there can be neither stability of character, nor solid piety, is humility. It is the foundation of all spiritual progress in community life. This congregation has made great strides spiritually as well as materially in the few years that it has been under my eye, and I can truly say from my intimate knowledge of conditions existing here, that this meritorious advancement is due to the practice by this religious family of that essential virtue which is the foundation of all others.38.

The day was brought to a glorious close by an exceptional program given by the students of Nazareth Academy.

The climax of the rejoicing took place March 19. A Pontifical High Mass was celebrated by our revered Archbishop James E. Quigley. The Gregorian Mass was chanted by the

37. Silver Jubilee Book of Mother Alexine, La Grange, Ill.
38. Excerpt from Jubilee Sermon delivered by Rev. J. A. Bollman, March 18, 1911.
Quigley Cathedral College Choir. Reverend Francis C. Kelley now Bishop of Oklahoma City delivered the sermon. Many eloquent addresses were given during the program featured in the course of the day by prominent men, both ecclesiastical and lay.39.

The Jubilee will long be remembered for it was "indeed an occasion for joy in heaven and on earth, an inspiration to the Community, a lesson to the world."40.

Among the many valuable gifts and donations bestowed upon the jubilarian were purses from the Alumnae and Nazareth Club, but perhaps that appreciated most by her, because it stamped, as it were, the approval of His Holiness upon her works and efforts, was the bestowal of the Papal Benediction. A picture of the Holy Father, set in a beautiful hand-carved gilt frame, the gift of a dear friend, stood in the sanctuary on the morning of the Feast of St. Joseph while the Papal Benediction was being given. Beneath was inscribed the Pope's blessing and autograph. This benediction was obtained for Mother Alexine by the Very Reverend F. A. Purcell D.D. and came in the form of a cablegram from Right Reverend Thomas Kennedy, Rector of the American College in Rome.41.

39. Silver Jubilee Book of Mother Alexine, La Grange, Ill.
41. The New World, Chicago, Illinois (week of March 19, 1911)
As stated before, the need of a larger building to accommodate the boys enrolled at St. Joseph Institute at the close of the year 1911, and the increasing number of registrations during 1912 made it imperative that the work of the building under construction should be more rapidly advanced. By October 13, 1912 the corner stone was laid.

From the Archive scrapbook the following account is taken:

In the presence of an assembly of 3,000 people the corner stone of St. Joseph Institute for Boys of La Grange, Illinois was laid last Sunday. It was a beautiful day for the ceremonies, and the country surrounding the new home never looked more inviting.

The good sisters have reason to feel proud; for the occasion, was an auspicious one. The boys of the Institute dressed in their surplices, together with the full membership of Nazareth Council and countless automobiles, gathered at the railroad depot to meet the Knights and visitors from Chicago, who arrived by special train.

Headed by Calument Council band, they formed a procession and marched to Nazareth Academy, where the good sisters, clergy and students of the academy joined in line with the procession and proceeded to the new building where the ceremony was to take place.

Rev. J. A. Bollmann, the dearly beloved pastor at La Grange was the officiant at the ceremonies, assisted by Rev. F. A. Purcell of the Cathedral College, Father F. X. McCabe and Father George of De Paul University and Brother Peter, C.S.C of Holy Trinity School. Following the official ceremonies was a splendid musical and speaking program. Homer J. Buckley, the Grand Knight of Nazareth Council, was chairman and presented the boys of the Institute to the large assembly.
Following this, the chairman presented Father F. X. McCabe who was the principal speaker and his eloquence held the large assembly spellbound. Many non-Catholics in attendance were enthusiastic in their commendation of his splendid address. His presentation of the subject, "Catholic Education", was a revelation to many present.

John J. Guthrie, Grand Knight of Father Perez Council, spoke in behalf of the Sisters expressing their appreciation and thanking the Knights and visitors for their cooperation and presence on this occasion.42.

On the twenty-first of June, 1913 the St. Joseph Institute was completed and ready for dedication. His Grace the Most Rev. Archbishop James E. Quigley conducted the ceremony of dedication, assisted by Very Rev. F. A. Purcell D.D. Rector of the Cathedral College; Very Rev. F. C. Kelley D.D. President of the Catholic Church Extension Society; and Rev. F.V. Shannon of Wilmette. Hon. Carter H. Harrison, Mayor of Chicago, Hon. William McKinley, Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, and Edward J. Tobin, Superintendent of Cook County Schools were among the prominent speakers on this occasion. The Knights of Columbus of Nazareth Council and a large delegation of Knights from neighboring Councils were also in attendance. Fully 15,000 people attended the services during the afternoon and evening.

The Sisters had been teaching for some months in the

42. Suburban News, La Grange, Illinois (week of October 17, 1912)
south wing of the building while the remainder was under construction. The light and water supply had not been installed. The spring weather was very sultry. The moist walls and kerosene lamps enticed the bugs and mosquitoes which gained entrance through unfinished windows, and disturbed the needed rest of the Sisters and children.

Soon the building was finished and in a short time filled to its capacity. Everyone was grateful to have such large rooms in which to work and study. The grounds of Nazareth Park supplied ample space for sports and hikes through "the woods".43.

At the time of the dedication of St. Joseph Institute, Archbishop James E. Quigley gave permission for the erection of a large grotto in Nazareth Park, the type to be a miniature replica of the Grotto at Lourdes. The plan was designed and executed at Daprato Statuary Company of Chicago, Illinois. It was at that time one of the most beautiful of its kind in the vicinity. On September 7, 1914 the Shrine was dedicated by Msgr. F. C. Kelley. Surrounding the grotto is a natural setting of trees. Artificial lakes and bridges have added greatly to the beauty of the Shrine. During the month of May the Sisters and children make daily pilgrimages to it. For several years it has been the custom of St. Joseph Institute boys to

43. Journal and clippings compiled by Sister Regina, Supr.
crown Our Blessed Lady at the grotto on the last Sunday of May.44.

One of the most outstanding events which occurred at Nazareth Park on September 16, 1918 was the Military Mass celebrated by Reverend W. A. Murphy, Chaplain at the time of the Great Lakes, assisted by Reverend Thomas Burke, Pastor of St. Mary Church, Chicago, Illinois, and Reverend John T. Hayden, Chaplain of Nazareth Academy. The Mass was attended by over two hundred jackies, several soldiers, and over three thousand visitors. The ceremony took place in the grotto which contains a permanent altar prepared for services. The Mass was offered up for the intention of obtaining Our Lady's Protection on this country in her dire distress.45.

The Community has always been favored by loyal friends both among the clergy and laity. One who has aided the Community in its early foundation was Monsignor Kelley, President of that noble work of "The Catholic Church Extension Society." On one of his visits to the Academy he organized the Society of the Child Apostle under the patronage of St. Joan of Arc whose recent beatification aroused untold interest in the hearts of the students.

Accompanying him was his assistant Reverend W. D.

44. Directory of Events, Nazareth Archives, June 21, 1913.
45. The Chicago Daily Tribune, Monday, September 16, 1918.
O'Brien, now Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, Illinois. Both prelates have assisted the Sisters in many educational enterprises and have proved staunch and loyal friends.

To Monsignor F. A. Furcell D.D., Pastor of St. Mel Church the Community owes much. The spiritual aid given to the Sisters in his many conferences and the beautiful gifts donated to the sanctuary are just a few of his great acts of kindness to the Community.

To the First Vicar General Monsignor F. A. Rempe special mention is due. Under his fatherly guidance the Community was tided over the most severe crisis that this Congregation has ever known. Surely he was an instrument in the Hand of Divine Providence guiding the Community through this time of trial.

The Congregation also owes a debt of gratitude to the Holy Cross Brothers of Notre Dame, Indiana especially to Brother Paul, now deceased, who so kindly gave much of his valuable time to the landscaping of Nazareth Park.46.

The laity were not less interested in the advancement of the Community. Two patrons of outstanding generosity were Hon. W. J. Onahan, K.S.G. and Eliza Allen Starr. The former bestowed upon the Congregation many favors, one of which was a large endowment to the library and another that

of promoting through his historical lectures, the education of the pupils. Eliza Allen Starr, may be called the chronicler of the early history of the Institute. She also gave a large portion of her personal library to Nazareth Academy.

During the last year of Mother Alexine's term of office as Superior of the Community she was granted a leave of absence and her place was temporarily filled by Sister Daniel.

On July 3, 1918, Reverend Mother M. Patricia was chosen by the Chapter of Affairs, to assume the charge of the Sisters of the Congregation of St. Joseph, La Grange, Illinois. This Chapter was presided over by His Grace, Archbishop Mundelein, assisted by the Vicar General, Right Reverend Monseigneur R. A. Rempe. Mother Patricia's election was confirmed and its announcement made to the Community by Archbishop Mundelein. The first Councillor elected was Sister Mary Michael, as Mother Assistant.

Because of difficult conditions, financial and otherwise, her administration inherited from the first very perplexing problems. In August of 1918 the amount of indebtedness on the Community's property was $198,000. In six years it had decreased to $40,000. due to the excellent business capability of the governing body of the Community.

Mother Patricia had no sooner assumed the charge of
Superior than she was faced with the necessity of adding a new wing to the boys' school. St. Joseph Institute was the only boarding school for small boys in the Archdiocese at this time and consequently had many applications on the waiting list. Even though the Community was heavily in debt, the new wing was necessary and the income from the boarders was the greatest asset; therefore, the wing was added to St. Joseph Institute during the early part of 1918 at the cost of $40,000.

Four years afterwards an addition was made to Nazareth Academy, providing adequate dormitory space for the Sisters and a large refectory for the boarders. During Mother Patricia's first term, these as well as other lesser improvements were made.

Archbishop J. E. Quigley had given the Sisters of St. Joseph charge of various missions since 1912. The Community was called upon again by the Archbishop to take charge of several other new missions in the diocese. An account of these will be given in another portion of this paper.

Mother Patricia's management of external affairs and the confidence she inspired in the Sisters justified her reappointment for another term. The election was held on July 3, 1924 and presided over by Msgr. R. A. Rempe, who

47. Record of Administrations, Sister Sacred Heart, Sec. Nazareth Archives, La Grange, Illinois.
confirmed the reelection of Reverend Mother Patricia as Superior for the next six years, in which greater advancements were made along every line.48.

One day that will always be one of the happiest memories for all, was August 15, 1927, when three pioneer members of the Community celebrated their Silver Jubilee --Mother Thomas, Mother Aloysius and Sister Anthony. On the same day the ground was broken for the stupendous undertaking of building the New Motherhouse. This was a colossal enterprise which after long years of prayer and effort, was finally to become a reality. The Archbishop suggested that the title of "Our Lady of Bethlehem" be given it. While many of the Sisters did not like this name, it was accepted cheerfully because it had the approbation of obedience. Work was begun on September 14, 1926, Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, a fitting day to lay the foundation of a house dedicated to the promotion of the honor and glory of God.49.

The corner stone of this beautiful new building was laid October 3, 1926, the day which coincided with the date of the foundation in La Grange, Illinois. The Mass for the day was celebrated out of doors where an altar had

48. Record of Events, Nazareth Archives, La Grange, Ill.
49. Journal of Mother Patricia, Our Lady of Bethlehem Archives, La Grange, Illinois.
been erected. Up until nine o'clock of this day the rain came down in torrents. The Sisters were urged to change their plans and have the Mass indoors; but they insisted that the sun would come out in time. Their confidence was rewarded and the Mass was begun at 12 o'clock with a blazing sun overhead.

The New World for that week contained the following account:

At Nazareth Park, La Grange, Illinois more than 3,000 people heard Msgr. F. A. Rempe sing a solemn High Mass, in the presence of His Eminence George Cardinal Mundelein, under skies that smiled for the first time in weeks. The occasion was the double celebration of the silver jubilee of the academy and the laying of the corner stone of the new motherhouse of Our Lady of Bethlehem.

Fathers J. Campbell and T. S. Shewbridge acted as deacons of the Mass, and Fathers John H. Nawn and John T. Hayden were assistants to the Cardinal. Father F. A. Ryan was master of ceremonies.

His Eminence, in a short but eloquent talk, paid tribute to the work of the sisters in the Chicago diocese. The Sisters of St. Joseph, were peculiarly our own, he said, because their work was largely concentrated here and their ranks recruited chiefly from among our girls. He pleaded for cooperation in their wonderful work and asked God's blessing on its future.

Father E. A. Baxter, O.P., delivered the sermon. He spoke of the convent as a source of civilizing influence and said that the present state of Catholic church in America was in no small measure due to the educational work carried on by the teaching order. To the Sisters of St. Joseph, he extended, on behalf of the throng present, congratulations and good wishes.
The choir of St. Francis Xavier's church, La Grange, under the direction of Hubert Lang, and accompanied by Elizabeth Dreveney, sang Yon's Mass, Regina Pacis, and an Ecce Sacerdos Magnus by Lewis-Browne. The De La Salle band of Chicago furnished music.

At the ceremony of laying the corner stone, a short address was made by Robert M. Sweitzer, K.S.G. Benediction of the blessed sacrament was held at the field altar in the afternoon, Father George T. McCarthy officiating.

St. Francis Xavier's branch of the Holy Name Society, and Nazareth Council, 1595, Knights of Columbus, were conspicuous in the procession which preceded the mass.50.

The new institution when completed will consist of several units, Motherhouse, Novitiate, Chapel and a Boarding School for Grammar School students. It is impossible to give here a detailed account of the size, beauty and architecture of the New Academy and Novitiate which is to complete the first unit of buildings. The structure is built of pressed brick with the latest modern facilities for convenience and sanitation. Especially is the new Novitiate admirably adapted for the health and education of the young religious subjects preparing for their future work in the Vineyard of Our Lord. The cost of the new buildings was estimated at $985,000., which did not include furnishings, nor landscaping the grounds.51.

We feel that no better account of the dedication services could be given than that contained in an extract taken from The New World:

The new Catholic girls school on West Ogden avenue--the Our Lady of Bethlehem Academy--will be the mecca for several thousand worshipers next Sunday, June 17, 1927. His Eminence, George Cardinal Mundelein, D.D., archbishop of Chicago, is to bless the new edifice and is to deliver the commencement address.

Accompanying the archbishop to La Grange will be a group of church notables including the Rev. William Agnew, S.J., former president of Loyola university; the Rev. Joseph P. Morrison of the Holy Name Cathedral, the Right Rev. F. A. Purcell, D.D., president of Quigley preparatory school and many others. Knights of St. Gregory will accompany His Eminence to the village, arriving here shortly before 10 a.m.

Nazareth council, K. of C., with headquar ters in La Grange, has been asked to furnish an escort from the high school building at Ogden and Brainard avenues to the new structure.

Knights of Columbus, the Fourth Degree Knights, and others will join the dedication procession which is to encircle the building and then visit each room of the school for formal blessing by Cardinal Mundelein. Deacons of honor to His Eminence will be the Right Rev. Purcell, the Right Rev. T. P. Bona, and the Very Rev. Msgr. W. R. Griffin, of St. Mary Queen of Heaven parish, Cicero. Rev. Father Morrison will be master of ceremonies.

Holy mass will be held in the gymnasium at 10:30 o'clock, with the Rev. John H. Nawn of St. Francis Xavier church, La Grange, in charge. Deacons will be the Rev. J. Campbell of St. Leonard's church, Berwyn, and the Rev. William Long of St. Bonaventures, Chicago. The Rev. William Agnew, former president of Loyola university, will deliver the sermon and the Rev. George T. McCarthy of St. Margaret Mary's,
Rogers Park, will give the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Pupils of the academy will sing during the mass.52.

The Sisters had gone on their Missions long before the new Academy was ready for occupancy in the Fall of 1927. Unforeseen delays in the completion of a building of its size are sure to happen. Despite all precautions many delays occurred. But the boarders were coming in for the new Academy and Reverend Mother thought it best for the Sisters to be there. On Labor Day, 1927, one of the hottest days of that summer, the Sisters moved to the new Home. At first there was no telephone, there were no lights—then, lights but no window screens! From the nearby woods bugs and insects swarmed into the dormitories by the hundreds. During the day, plasterers, plumbers, electricians and floor layers were going in and out of the class rooms unannounced and shouting up and down the halls.

In the sweltering heat the Sisters washed the mortar off the many windows only to have them bespattered again. Some times after the floors were scraped and scrubbed, armies of workmen began to tramp over them. Gradually the work was completed and the new building began to take on the appearance of a home. When the Sisters from the 

52. The New World, Chicago, Illinois (week of June 17, 1927)
missions came home for Christmas, they were delighted with everything. The building was spacious and homelike.

Other units were to be erected at the time of the building of the Motherhouse, but owing to the lack of funds the plans could not be carried out until the next year. In the Fall of 1928 a new laundry was erected at a cost of $50,000. It was furnished with modern equipment. The following year a gymnasium for the boys of St. Joseph Institute was completed at an additional cost of $30,309.53.

During this administration the material growth was not the only concern of the governing body of the institution --the secular and religious growth was likewise promoted. The necessity of greater efficiency in the work of the parochial schools resulted in especial efforts being made on the part of Mother Patricia to strengthen the qualifications of teachers and to provide facilities for more thorough training of pupils. Summer sessions for teachers were better organized and noted lecturers were obtained to supplement the work of the Sister teachers. Excellent courses were given by professors from De Paul and Loyola Universities, Chicago, Illinois. During the last year of Reverend Mother Patricia's administration the Constitution of the Congregation was rewritten and rearranged in strict

53. Our Lady of Bethlehem Archives, La Grange, Illinois.
accordance with Canon Law by an officially appointed Canonist. The tentative Constitution was to be given one year's trial to prove its practicability before it would be officially adopted.

During the twelve years of her administration Reverend Mother Patricia was closely associated with and had the cooperation of Sister Michael as Mother Assistant, a woman of unusual strength of character and great financial ability. She possessed and practiced an impartial solicitude toward all the Sisters. Mother Michael had a large share in every work undertaken for the advancement of the Congregation.54.

At the election in 1930 Sister Thomas, one of the first members of the Community in La Grange, was chosen Superior with Sister Aloysius, another pioneer, as Mother Assistant. It has been the task of Mother Thomas during the years of her administration to shoulder the tremendous task of carrying on the community under the severe financial strain which the depression caused. The work has proceeded in spite of obstacles and the Community has bravely faced these difficulties which are bound to be righted with the aid of Divine Providence and fatherly solicitude of the good St. Joseph.

54. Ibid.
THE MISSIONARY WORK OF THE CONGREGATION

As St. Joseph was appointed to be the guardian of the Child Jesus, so the life work of the Sisters of St. Joseph is to guide youth in ways of truth and holiness. The Congregation was still in its infancy when it was called upon by Archbishop Quigley to aid him in teaching the youth of the Chicago Diocese. The first mission under the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph, La Grange, Illinois was opened on December 8, 1912, at Mount Carmel School, Chicago Heights, Illinois. It was a venture promoted by the zeal and sympathy of his Excellency Archbishop James E. Quigley for the Italians of the Archdiocese of Chicago. He was responsible for the finances of this zealous undertaking and so pleasing was its success that in a few years other schools were put in operation on the same basis.

Great credit is due to Reverend P. M. Renzullo, now deceased, of St. Rocco Parish, for the success of Mt. Carmel School and the subsequent opening of other schools. He was a most zealous priest and educator and of such a generous and magnanimous nature that his influence was far-reaching with all classes of people. To the five Sisters, who went out on that first mission his memory will always be sacred, and his optimism and kindness will never be

55. Ibid.
forgotten.

Father Renzullo who had a most sincere devotion to the Blessed Virgin wished to open the School on a day dedicated to her and so the registration took place after Mass on December 8, 1912. Ninety-one pupils who had previously attended the public schools were enrolled. The attendance grew rapidly until the roster contained the names of two hundred pupils.  

The Sisters lived in three rooms in the school building as their home was not yet begun. The next September the Sisters moved into the new brick Convent which was built during the summer. The pioneer Sisters were: Sister Sacred Heart, Superior, Sister M. Ambrose, Sister M. Stella, Sister M. Benedicta and Sister M. Gilberta. The Sisters were esteemed by the people and as the school has prospered year by year they are still held in highest regard by the loyal people of Chicago Heights. Their graduates are many and have become prosperous men and women.

The second mission our Sisters were sent to open was in the St. Bonaventure Parish located on Ashland Avenue and Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois. A combination church, school and residence for the Sisters was erected in 1913, under the pastorate of Reverend M. J. McGuire.

56. Sister Sacred Heart Murphy's Journal, La Grange, Ill.  
57. Ibid.
Although this mission was situated in one of the most prominent factory districts of Chicago it was less prepared for the Sisters coming than any of the other missions. In a short time, due to the generosity of Mrs. J. C. Smith and a few other kind women of the parish, the Sisters became comfortably housed.

The school was opened by Sister Patricia, Superior, Sister Austin, Sister M. De Sales, Sister Gilberta, Sister M. Adelbert, Sister M. Philomene and Sister M. Edward. The enrollment for the first year was about three hundred pupils.58.

Archbishop Quigley’s interest in the Italian immigrants directed his attention to the people of this race living in the suburbs of Chicago as well as those in the city. He opened a parish under the title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in Melrose Park, Illinois, where he appointed as Pastor Father Benjamin Franch, a member of the Congregation of the Precious Blood, whose work it is to minister to the Italian immigrants.

Shortly after the Church had been built Father Franch saw the need of a school. The Sisters of St. Joseph of La Grange were chosen by Archbishop Quigley to assume the responsibility of conducting this mission.

58. Mission Records, Our Lady of Bethlehem Academy, La Grange, Illinois. (No details are available concerning this mission.)
In the September of 1913 the following Sisters were assigned to the new school. Sister M. Louis, Superior, Sister M. Celestine, Sister M. Benedicta, Sister Gilberta, Sister M. Carmella, Sister M. Matilda, Sister M. John Francis and Sister M. Arthur. The Sisters lived in the school building for the first year, but the following year the present beautiful convent was built. The Archbishop was greatly interested in this new parish and many personal visits were made during the first years of its erection.

Due to the untiring labors of the Pastor and with the aid of the Sisters this school has been very successful. Some of the former students and graduates are now holding very prominent civic positions in Chicago and in outlying suburbs. God has particularly blessed this missionary field by directing many of its young women to the Sisterhood in La Grange.59.

The fourth mission opened during Mother Alexine's term of office was St. Anthony School, Kensington, Illinois, in September of 1914. The house intended for the Sisters was not completed at the time; this necessitated the Sisters sleeping in one of the rooms of the school. They took their meals in the home of the Pastor Reverend H. D'Andrea.

Many and humorous were the incidents which occurred during the early days of acquaintance between the overawed children and their teachers. It would amuse the Sisters very much when a child in quest of the Superior would very innocently inquire, "Where is your Mother?"

Great work was accomplished in the hearts of these little ones and today finds this mission one of the largest conducted by the Community of La Grange. The pioneer Sisters were Sister Patricia, Superior, Sister M. Stella, Sister M. Gilberta, Sister M. Edward, Sister M. Mercedes, Sister M.J. Francis, Sister Celestine, Sister M. Mechtilde, and Sister M. Augustine. On account of its proximity to the Loop, the Convent has been used during the summer by the Sisters who were attending the neighboring colleges.60.

On account of the mutual friendly relations that have always existed between St. Francis Xavier Parish and our Community we considered that a brief review of the origin and growth of the parish would make interesting reading.

Before the coming of Father J. M. Hagan to La Grange, Illinois, the Catholics who desired to attend Mass had to hitch up the "horse and buggy" and drive to Lyons, Illinois, which was about five miles from La Grange. At various times missionary priests found their way out here searching for

"stray sheep." The first Mass in La Grange was said at the home of Dr. G. M. Fox. Later, Mass was celebrated on Sundays at the Country Club. Father Hagan built the first church which was dedicated June 5, 1892. He died in 1903 and was succeeded by Reverend Joseph A. Bollmann. To him is credited the building of the school in the year 1916. It was opened the following September with Sister M. John as Superior, Sister M. Virginia, Sister M. Angela, Sister M. Wilfred, Sister M. Hildegarde and Sister M. Gertrude as grade teachers. Many difficulties attended the opening of the parochial school. The parishioners saw no need of a school as it had been so long without one. Then too, on account of its position, the South Side parishioners objected to the children's crossing the Burlington tracks. Despite these objections the school became one of our best missions.

The pastor, Reverend J. A. Bollmann, now deceased, was a true priest, a man of piety, learning and great zeal for any enterprise that would promote the glory of God. For many years he acted as Chaplain and Confessor for the Community. Those who were so fortunate as to be under his guidance consider themselves privileged indeed. His words and actions were filled with a love for God. No wonder then, that every Sister whom he guided acknowledges that she owes to Father Bollmann a debt of gratitude and appreciation which
she can repay only in terms of true holiness of life; only by endeavoring to live a life motivated like his, by a purpose eminently spiritual. Father Bollman's death, which occurred on March 23, 1922, brought inexpressible grief and sadness to the Sisters of St. Joseph. 61.

A mission in Franklin Park was taken over by the Sisters of St. Joseph in September 1916 at the urgent request of the Pastor, Father L. P. Hurkmans, of St. Gertrude Church. The school had been under the care of another community for some years and was therefore well established. The Convent accommodations were most convenient, and the school well equipped. It was a great pleasure for the Sisters to work among the people who were very kind and cooperative. Our Sisters began with an enrollment of nearly one hundred children. The Sisters who reopened the school were Sister M. Cecelia, Superior, Sister Stella, Sister Hildegarde, Sister Virginia and Sister M. Casimir.

This mission seemed to be very promising as Franklin Park is a railroad center and the home of many railroad employees, but in the year 1926 the Sisters were recalled to the Motherhouse and the Sisters of St. Francis of Milwaukee took charge. 62.

62. Record of the Missions, Our Lady of Bethlehem Archives, La Grange, Illinois.
Assumption School, Coal City, Illinois was opened January 3, 1920, with an enrollment of one hundred and thirty pupils. This school was the first opened under the jurisdiction of Reverend Mother Patricia. Two or three other communities of Sisters were asked to take this unpromising mission, and were about to accept, but when they learned of the existing conditions they refused. The school is situated in the mining district near Joliet where most of the people are in very moderate circumstances. When Cardinal Mundelein asked Mother Patricia to accept the unsought for field, she fully realized that it would be a great sacrifice; but this was not the greatest difficulty as sacrifices are a part of the religious life. There was a more serious problem to solve—there were no teachers available. However, she gladly accepted knowing that the good Lord would provide.

Many Sisters volunteered for this new work. Those appointed were: Sister M. Euphrasia, Sister Stella and Sister M. Alice. To make it possible to send three Sisters, Mother Patricia found it necessary to assign temporarily as Superior, the acting Treasurer of the Community, Sister Euphrasia.

The Pastor was Reverend James A. Griffin, now Bishop of Springfield, Illinois. The Sisters will always be grateful that they had the opportunity to labor under the guidance of such an experienced educator, whose daily life was an
inspiring example, and who ever encouraged them in the carrying on of their work while he was always appreciative of their efforts.

The following telegram which was sent on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Foundation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in La Grange, is a proof of his appreciation of the work of the Sisters in the "Coal Fields."

Springfield, Ill. Oct. 2- 1926
Mother Patricia,

Nazareth Academy La Grange Ill.

I wish to congratulate you on this the Silver Jubille of your foundation and express my appreciation and gratitude for the very excellent work in the "coal fields." The three pioneers measured up to their opportunities and did a good days work. I feel the entire population of Coal City will heartily endorse this expression of gratitude. May God reward you for the fine work performed in this part of his vineyard. Best wishes to His Eminence.

Bishop Griffin63.

Reverend Geo. T. McCarthy organized St. Margaret Mary parish March 27, 1921 for the growing Catholic of West Ridge section of Rogers Park Chicago, Illinois. The first Mass for the new parish was celebrated in the home of Frank Lenz 2400 Touhy Avenue. Property was purchased and a temporary stucco building was erected: Church, rectory, school and convent. The School was opened the following September with one hundred and forty-seven registered pupils.

63. Telegram from Bishop Griffin, October 2, 1926.
The majority of the people of this parish were blessed with an abundance of this world's goods which in the generosity of their hearts they lavishly shared with the Sisters who were sent to work amongst them. It can truly be said here, that they bestowed ten times more than their biblical tithes. While the Sisters are indebted to many of these good people, special mention should be made of the Thinnes and Phillips families who were outstanding benefactors during the pioneer period. For three years Mrs. H. Thinnes supplied all the butter, vegetables and milk for the Sisters, besides conferring many other acts of kindness on the Community. Mr. J. Phillips was as generous with his time as he was with his material assistance. At any hour, in or out of season, his car was at the disposal of the Sisters. Anyone acquainted with the "nuns" may rightly surmise how often his car was in use.

St. Mary School, West Chicago, Illinois was opened by Reverend Father M. J. Fennessy. This school had just been completed at Christmas time and the Pastor was most anxious to have the Catholic children from the Public School enroll before the Midyear Semester. As a consequence, the Sisters went to West Chicago on New Year's Eve, 1925 to begin their work. They did not think it necessary to bring supplies, so New Year's Day found them with very meager provisions. The people of the parish did not know the Sisters were
coming so soon but it did not take long for them to learn
of the Sisters' predicament--no food--no dishes--no rooms
in readiness. The Sisters, on recalling this occasion
have often since laughed at Sister Thomas, who when facing
this sorry plight said, in all sincerity, 'Never mind,
Sisters, you will have a good dinner on St. Joseph's Day.'
Many times before this Community Feast Day arrived, the
Sisters were the recipients of many acts of kindness due
to the generosity of these noble hearted people. The Sis-
ters who taught there the first year were: Sister Thomas,
Superior, Sister M. Benedicta, Sister M. Alberta, and Sister
Mercedes.64.

The Catholic people of this town considered the Public
School adequate for the education of their future generations,
as they themselves had attended this Institution, and many
of the mothers had been teachers in the same school. In
consequence only seven children were present in the seventh
and eight grade on the opening day of St. Mary School, Jan­
uary 4. Due to the zealous efforts of a number of Catholic
young women, especially Miss Margaret Crawford, who was
teaching in the public school, the number increased remark­
ably. The attitude of the people soon changed when they
saw that the work accomplished by these religious teachers
was on a par if it did not surpass the standards of those

64. Mission Records, Our Lady of Bethlehem Archives,
La Grange, Illinois.
of the public school. The friends and benefactors of St. Mary's are many and they are generous in their cooperation.65

Reverend J. M. Kiely, Pastor of St. Attracta Church, Cicero, Illinois erected a very practical school in 1923. The following September 1924 it was ready for occupancy. Four Sisters, Sister Alice, Superior, Sister M. De Lourdes, Sister M. Alfred and Sister M. Gregory were placed in charge and registered on the first day one hundred eighty children, which number increased to two hundred at the close of the first year. The Sisters' home was temporary in a five room cottage north of the school but it was moved to a better location the following year and was remodelled into the present convent. Due to the untiring zeal of the good Pastor and Sisters, many young ladies and young men of the parish were inspired to devote themselves to the work of the Master.66.

St. Barbara Parish was first organized as a mission from St. Francis Xavier, La Grange, Illinois. In October 1916 a resident pastor was appointed. In 1920, as a result of the rapid growth of the parish, it was necessary for the Pastor to plan a new church. The cornerstone was laid for the new church and school in October 1923. The building

65. Journal of Mother Thomas, Our Lady of Bethlehem Archives, La Grange, Illinois.
66. Records of the Missions, Our Lady of Bethlehem Archives, (No records available.)
was completed February 7, 1924, with an enrollment of one hundred and twenty children in the school. Later, in 1931, under the pastorate of Reverend J. J. O'Brien, two beautiful classrooms and an assembly hall were added. The Sisters who opened the school were: Sister Virginia, Superior, Sister M. Agatha, Sister M. Fidelis and Sister M. Elizabeth.67.

St. Leonard Parish in Berwyn was organized in 1924 by Reverend Bernard Brady. The Ursuline Sisters who had been in charge of the four room school for one year were recalled to their Motherhouse at Springfield, Illinois. They were replaced by the Sisters of St. Joseph for the following term. Those in charge of the school were Sister De Lourdes, Superior, Sister Agatha, Sister M. Etheldreda and Sister M. Imelda.

The living quarters of the Sisters were above the school during the first year but an increased enrollment made it necessary to use these rooms for classes. The Sisters moved into the comfortable red brick house which had served as the rectory. Ground was purchased between the convent and the rectory and today after ten years a magnificent school stands there.

In 1926 one Sister and a secular teacher joined the

teaching staff as the attendance was rapidly growing. Soon the old building became more and more inadequate so Father Campbell who succeeded Father Brady undertook the gigantic task of erecting a beautiful twelve room school with an auditorium and the best possible equipment for the four hundred children who are fortunate to be in attendance at the new St. Leonard School.68.

The present parish of St. Hugh, Lyons, Illinois was established by Reverend J. B. Murphy in 1925 for the Catholics who had attended St. Mary Church Riverside, Illinois, but were most anxious to have a parish of their own. Property was secured and a combination school and church was erected the following year. The school was opened by three competent young women, Miss M. Campbell, Miss E. Ebertshauser and Miss M. Sauber, directed by the Reverend Pastor in their work for the first four months. The task of establishing a parish, let alone conduct the management of a new school, was more than one person could successfully accomplish, therefore, Father Murphy requested Mother Patricia to send at least one Sister to take charge of the school. Mother Alexine was appointed Directress for two terms.

The Sisters who have since labored in this school are

greatly impressed by the simplicity of the children, and
the generosity of the people who for the greater part are
not blessed with this world's goods but, "of their little
have given much." The kindness of these simple folk will
always be remembered by those who have labored among them.69.

St. Mary Riverside, Illinois is an old parish which
was situated in rather a remote spot making it very incon­
venient for the parishioners to attend Mass. Consequently,
ground was purchased closer to the business section and
about midway between the two residential districts on either
side of the Burlington tracks. The present edifice built
by Reverend Thomas Shewbridge in 1927 is a combination
building of church, rectory and school. Up to the time
that this building was erected the parish of Riverside had
no parochial school.

As the parish had been so long without a parochial
school the people saw no reason why such an institution
should be supported. Furthermore the public schools were
of such high standing that it was difficult for Father
Shewbridge to proceed with his plan. The list of enrollment
showed but very few children were in attendance. Two Sis-
ters, Sister M. Austin, Superior, and Sister M. Winifred

69. Mission Records, Our Lady of Bethlehem Archives,
La Grange, Illinois.
were in charge of the school as only the first six grades were taught. When the people saw the good work of the Sisters and the progress the children were making, the attendance increased. The second year Father was obliged to open another room, which was presided over by Sister M. Columba. Now there are four rooms in session and an enrollment of about two hundred children. Reverend H. J. Walsh is the present pastor.70.

The mission of St. Isaac Jogues, Hinsdale, Illinois was opened in 1930 during the first year of Mother Thomas' administration. This parish which was recently organized by Reverend Thomas Tormey was part of St. Francis Xavier in La Grange, Illinois. The parishioners had to travel at great inconvenience to attend the Sunday services. After several requests were made, the Cardinal's permission was given to establish a new parish. Services were first held in a small Community Hall, then later in the Theatre Building.

By the year 1932 the new edifice, which is a combination of church and school, was ready for use. Sister Columba, Superior, Sister M. Fidelis, Sister M. Margaret and Sister M. Gerald are the pioneer teachers.71.

THE FIRST INDEPENDENT FOUNDATION ESTABLISHED

The Right Reverend Thomas Grace, D.D. Bishop of Sacramento, California, having learned of the proficient work and the progress made by the Sisters of St. Joseph of La Grange, Illinois requested that they open a house in his diocese. After mature consideration, Reverend Mother Bernard Gosselin, who is a sister of Mother Alexine, volunteered in 1912 to undertake the work in the West, provided that a sufficient number of Sisters would be willing to make a sacrifice of separation from their beloved community in La Grange, Illinois. Twelve Sisters offered their services for this distant mission and they were later transferred there to form the nucleus of a new independent foundation.

From this small beginning five hospitals and fifteen parochial schools have been established. The first parochial school which was opened a few months after the arrival of the Sisters was conducted in the Y.M.I. Hall, but, in a short time through the untiring zeal of Msgr. L. Kennedy V.G. and Rector of St. Bernard Church, Eureka, California the present Nazareth Academy was completed. It has proved to be one of the leading educational institutions of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the state of California.

In 1921 the Community was called upon by the Paulist Fathers to open a mission among the Chinese in San Francisco.
The St. Mary Catholic Chinese Mission then became a field for the exercise, at home, of a foreign missionary spirit. More than three hundred Chinese were baptized at the mission during the first year of its existence.

Under Mother Bernard as Superior, well-equipped, modern boarding and day schools, academies, and hospitals were established and are conducted in north, south, and central California by the Community, among whose recent enterprises has been the opening of a cosmopolitan school with an enrollment of more than five hundred pupils, at the old mission of Our Lady of Angels, at the Plaza, in the city of Los Angeles.

Owing to the wide geographical range of the institutions in the Sisters' charge a decision was made to transfer the Motherhouse from Eureka--the site of the Community's first establishment--to a more central location at Orange, California. On June 23, 1922, the Right Reverend John J. Cantwell, D.D. Bishop of Los Angeles and San Diego, officiated at the blessing and opening ceremonies of "Nazareth", the new Motherhouse and the center of activities of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange, California.

As a testimonial of the Sisters' zeal and according to the designs of Divine Providence many Missions have been organized along the coast of California.72.

72. From data and material supplied by the Sisters of St. Joseph, Orange, California.
In this brief work only an outline of the history of the Congregation has been attempted. The exterior life of a Community visible to the world is measured by the world's standards. Little can be written of the real life, the inner life, of a religious for it is adequately known to Him alone in whose Service the members are enlisted; yet it is safe to say that the interior life is the animating principle of all that a Community accomplishes. And so, it may be true that many devout and humble souls who have labored faithfully as Sisters of St. Joseph, quite unknown to the world, may by their close union with God have brought down the blessings of Heaven for which the Congregation owes gratitude in the present. Their deeds if unrecorded here are indelibly written on the Heart of the Master.

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The Thesis "The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Archdiocese of Chicago, Illinois. A Brief Account of Its Origin and Its work in the Middle West, 1650-1930," has been approved by the office of the Graduate School, with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is therefore accepted as a partial fulfilment for the requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts in Loyola University.