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A History of Catholic Orphan Homes in the United States, 1727 to 1884

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A HISTORY OF CATHOLIC ORPHAN HOMES IN THE UNITED STATES

1727 TO 1884

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
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INTRODUCTION

Solicitude, amounting almost to anxiety, has been evinced throughout history for the orphan. The idea of charity, especially toward the young, was characteristic of the first ages of Christianity. We read that the orphans of the martyrs were taken into the homes of the faithful and reared as children of the family. Bishops and priests, in the early ages of the Church, often made their own homes a refuge for the poor and abandoned. As time went on, organized charity developed. Outstanding as an early instance of such charity is the work of St. Basil the Great, Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, who had large buildings constructed to take care of the poor, orphans, and sick.

The Middle Ages, of which men sometimes speak and write disparagingly, were ages in which monasteries in particular sheltered and befriended the orphans and the needy. Care of orphans was considered a duty of the Church. In modern times, charity toward the orphan is nowhere better exemplified than in the life of St. Vincent de Paul, the modern apostle of charity. Orders of women were founded to devote their lives to the care of parentless children. The American continents were discovered and settled. Among the explorers, adventurers, and settlers who came, there were the members of Sisterhoods who were prepared to face the vicissitudes of life in a new country in order to succor the helpless and needy. And so it has been up to the present day. Pope Pius XII, in his Christmas Eve Address, 1952, alludes to

the attempt of the Church to alleviate misery in all its forms:

During the arduous years of Our Pontificate, We ourselves have wished that what has poured in to Us from all parts of the world from the faithful who are well off should pour out in a constant stream to help Our poorer and abandoned children. . . . We have sought out orphans to assure them a roof, bread and another mother.¹

The purpose of this study is to present a history of the orphan homes that were founded in the United States from 1727, when the first asylum was established in New Orleans, to the year 1884. The latter date has not been chosen arbitrarily, for that year represented a milestone in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. John A. Russell, in an essay on the Catholic Church in the United States, expounds on the great changes effected and the great advances made between the time that the first missionaries reached our country and the date of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884. With a feeling of just elation, Mr. Russell states that the

body spiritual has increased until the Catholic Church in the United States numbers seven millions of adherents. The favor of the Holy See has been shown by the appointment of an American cardinal. The growth of the Church has been exemplified by the erection of stately cathedrals and magnificent temples. . . . and with the beginning of this third Plenary Council the American Church stands ready for a new era of activity, clad in a stronger mail of faith than ever before, with a brighter buckler of hope, with a more perfect shield of charity.²

1 "Christmas Eve Address, 1952," The Catholic Mind, February, 1953, 121.

2 John A. Russell, "The Catholic Church in the United States," The Memorial Volume: A History of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, November 9 - December 7, 1884, Baltimore, 1885, 27.

This history concerns itself only with those orphan asylums conducted by Catholic Sisterhoods and those of a comparatively permanent nature. The reader will note that the word "asylum" was generally and consistently used. It is evident that no odium was attached to the word at the time and that the term was entirely acceptable. The word, as employed then, implied a sanctuary or place of refuge and protection. It represented a community's concern for children in need of care. Standards of early foundations may seem relatively low; however, the first asylums were, no doubt, as modern and progressive for their day as were any other contemporary institutions. The nomenclature is unimportant; it is the purpose and achievement in every instance that is highly significant. The present history aims to tell this story.

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS IN THE CRESCENT CITY

The arrival of the first group of religious women in what is now the United States antedates the proclamation of its independence by nearly a half century. Neither was the initial foundation, made by a community of Sisters, established within the confines of what later formed the nucleus of the nation, namely, the thirteen original States. The first convent was planted in the territory of Louisiana at a time when the area was under the French flag. On April 9, 1682, Sieur de La Salle and his men reached the mouth of the Mississippi River and took possession of the land in the name of the King of France.¹ However, sixteenth century explorations by the Spanish along the north shore of the Gulf of Mexico and up the Mississippi River gave the King of Spain a priority of right to the same soil. Towards the close of the seventeenth century, movements of English colonists from the Atlantic seaboard to districts farther inland constituted a possible threat to French possession of Louisiana. France was thus brought to a realization that colonization must be effected in Louisiana in order to maintain a secure hold on the territory.

¹ Jean Delanglez, S. J., The French Jesuits in Lower Louisiana (1700-1763). Dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1935. The Catholic University of America Studies in American Church History, XXI, 4.

Pursuant to these circumstances, Count de Maurepas, the French minister, chose Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville, to govern a colony in the southern portion of Louisiana. Iberville's brother, Jean Baptiste de Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, joined the colonists who sailed from France in four ships on October 24, 1698. On March 1, 1699, they reached the mouth of the Mississippi River. In February, 1700, a spot was selected along the river for a fort and on that site now stands the present city of New Orleans.² Into this city of the South, twenty-seven years later, came the first small group of Sisters. Here, in a most inauspicious manner, they commenced their charitable services, which, through the increasing number of Sisters of many communities, would in time witness an expansion exceeding all initial expectations.

Before taking note of the activities of the Sisters, it may be well to indicate briefly to what extent the government of the Catholic Church had been organized in what is now the State of Louisiana and the adjacent territory. The entire area was strictly a missionary country, for no diocese had as yet been created within its borders. The colonists in the Iberville expedition mentioned above were accompanied by Father Anastase Douay,³ a Recollect, who was charged to care for the spiritual needs of the little colony. On the morning of March 3, 1700, two days after the landing, Father Douay offered the Sacrifice of the Mass on the bank of the river. It was known from the outset that the Recollect missionary was eager to return to France.

² Roger Baudier, The Catholic Church in Louisiana, New Orleans, 1939, 26.

³ Ibid., 25. Father Douay had been with La Salle on the latter's last tragic expedition.

The knowledge of this fact prompted Iberville to apply for Jesuit missionaries. His request received a favorable response and the same year Father Paul Du Ru, S. J., was selected by his superiors for the Louisiana mission. Iberville at once assigned the Jesuit missionary to the Natchez Indian village. In 1700, arrived Father Joseph de Limoges, a Jesuit sent from Canada, to work among the Houma Indians. Shortly after, Father Jacques Gravier joined these missionaries in lower Louisiana. Thus "the first definite effort to establish the Church in the lower end of the valley was undertaken with the coming of Iberville and Bienville, by the Quebec Seminary priests and the Jesuits."⁴

In 1712, the Province of Louisiana passed into the hands of Antoine Crozat, who was granted a lease for a period of fifteen years. Crozat was intent on developing trade with the Spanish provinces in America and interested in exploiting the mines in the area. Nothing was accomplished for religion under him; in fact, no missionaries labored in Louisiana between 1703 and the founding of the Spanish mission of Los Adayes in 1716. Fortunately for the colony, Bienville again resumed the rule of the colony in 1717 when Crozat abandoned his lease.⁵

Events in France now had their repercussions in Bienville's colony. King Louis XIV died in 1715. The notorious John Law, having "found a place at the elbow of the Duke of Orleans,"⁶ prevailed upon the latter to place

4 Ibid., 24-29. The withdrawal of the Jesuit missionaries in 1703 was a source of bitter disappointment to Bienville who was eager to retain them in his colony. Ibid., 29.

5 Ibid., 33.

6 Regent of France during the minority of King Louis XV.

Louisiana in charge of the Company of the West⁷ for a period of twenty-five years. Thereupon the French Government surrendered its control over Louisiana. The Company of the West was granted a complete monopoly but with certain specified obligations: it was to bring six thousand white and three thousand Negro settlers into Louisiana, to build churches, and to maintain the necessary number of ecclesiastics at its own expense. Under the terms of its charter, Louisiana became a part of the Diocese of Quebec.⁸

New Orleans was founded in 1718. Bienville named this first city in Louisiana Nouvelle Orleans in honor of the Regent Duke. Fifty men were set to work "to clear the swamp soil of its rank vegetation, and build huts of undressed wood, moss and wattles, roofed with bark."⁹ Both the Company of the West and that of the Indies were grossly negligent in spiritual matters concerning the colony. Father Delanglez points out that between 1704 and 1724 there were no Jesuit missions maintained in lower Louisiana, but occasionally the territory was visited by itinerant missionaries.¹⁰ Only from 1724 to 1731 did the Company of the Indies provide the colony with an ecclesiastical director in the person of Abbé Raguet, a French priest. No special structure was erected for divine services until in 1727 when the first church, dedicated to

7 The Company of the West later merged with the Company of the East Indies and China; in 1719, they became the Company of the Indies. The latter relinquished its charter in 1731 when religious affairs in the French colony in Louisiana again passed under the direction of the King of France.

8 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 41.

9 The Ursulines in Louisiana, 1727-1824, New Orleans, 1886, 3.

10 Delanglez, French Jesuits, 4.

St. Louis, was built on the site where the present cathedral stands. All the while Louisiana was assigned to the care of vicars-general, personal representatives of the Bishop of Quebec, whose vast diocese rendered it impossible to give more than limited direction. After filling the episcopal office for thirty-five years, Bishop St. Valier died in Quebec on December 26, 1727. His successor to the See was Bishop Francois Duplessis de Mornay who never crossed the Atlantic but ruled his diocese from far-off France.¹¹

In 1726, a new agreement made with the Jesuits, placed all the Indians in the colony in the care of their missionaries. Father Nicolas Ignatius de Beaubois, who had been placed at the head of the Jesuit mission in Louisiana, offered to secure Ursulines from France for the French colony. The Ursulines had a splendid reputation in Europe and for almost a century they had been working in Quebec, where "they had earned high praise." While Father de Beaubois was in France negotiating a new treaty with the Company of the Indies, the missionary "undertook the task of obtaining Sisters for the hospital at New Orleans and for a school." Father de Beaubois went to Rouen where he met the remarkable nun who was to become the foundress of the New Orleans' community, Mother Mary de Ste. Augustin Tranchepain.¹² Two other nuns at Rouen, Mother Marguerite Jude de S. Jean l'Evangeliste and Mother Marianne Boulange de Ste. Angélique, expressed their desire to accompany Mother Mary de

11 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 43, 56, 110-114.

12 The word "tranchepain" means "slice of bread." Mother Mary de Ste. Augustin was a convert and had long been desirous of embarking upon foreign mission fields.

Ste. Augustin on her journey to the mission field of Louisiana.¹³ It is to be noted that the agreement made with the Ursulines in Rouen stipulated that the nuns were to assume charge of the royal hospital in New Orleans and, at the same time, undertake the education of girls. As yet there was no mention made of orphan care; however, the pioneer community was in New Orleans for but a brief time when circumstances greatly altered their original designs.

Public opinion in France was generally averse to the Ursulines going to Louisiana. One of the original band later recorded that their undertaking was conceived as a mad venture by many people.¹⁴ Nevertheless the three Ursulines from Rouen were joined by other volunteers from convents elsewhere in France. Among them was Mother Mary Madeleine de S. Stanislaus Hachard, who is remembered in the Order as the historian of the momentous voyage to New Orleans and of the first year's activities in the colony. The little group of ten Sisters left France on February 22, 1727, aboard the ship La Gironde. Owing to delays and the slowness of travel at the time, the voyagers did not reach La Balize at the mouth of the Mississippi River until July 23. The remainder of the voyage was made in small boats, and at three o'clock in the morning on August 6, 1727, a few of the Sisters arrived in the city of New Orleans. They were met by Father de Beaubois who took them to his house at Bienville and Chartres Streets, where breakfast was served to them. The rest

13 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 87, 103.

14 Mother Madeleine Hachard, Relation du Voyage des Dames Religieuses Ursulines de Rouen a la Nouvelle-Orleans avec une introduction et des notes par Gabriel Gravier, Paris, 1872, 29.

of the little group of nuns reached the city on the following day.¹⁵ It is interesting to note that recorders of the early history of the Ursulines in New Orleans do not agree as to the location of their first home, and, in consequence, neither that of the first orphanage. It was long a tradition that the earliest house of the Sisters was the Bienville home. Baudier states that the Company of the Indies placed the former home of Bienville, located in the square bounded by Bienville, Chartres, Decatur, and Iberville Streets, at the disposal of the Sisters. The Company furthermore agreed to pay fifteen hundred livres rent yearly until a convent could be erected.¹⁶ The author of the small volume, The Ursulines in Louisiana, likewise refers to the Bienville country house as the "best house in the colony" and the "temporary abode" of the Sisters.¹⁷ Other authorities disprove this assumption. Sister Jane Frances Heaney, in her history of the Ursulines in New Orleans, is emphatic in her conclusion that the "provisional house of the Ursulines was not the home of Bienville." As one source of evidence, Mother Jane Frances quotes Mother S. André Melotte, second superior in New Orleans, who recorded that the Sisters lodged in a house owned by a Mr. de Coly.¹⁸ Furthermore, in the Deliberations of the Council in the Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans, there is a

15 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 104.

16 Ibid. Baudier, however, later in his book states that the home in which the Ursulines lived when they came to New Orleans belonged to Madame Kolly. This citation is found on page 124.

17 Ursulines in Louisiana, 12.

18 Sister Jane Frances Heaney, O. S. U., A Century of Pioneering: A History of the Ursuline Nuns in New Orleans (1727-1827). Dissertation, St. Louis University, 1949, 90-91. The name of the owner is variously spelled in the records as Kolly, Koly, or Coly.

description of the procession from the Coly house, maison appartenant à Mr. de Coly, to the new convent.¹⁹ Father Delanglez, gleaning information from correspondence of Governor Perier under date of April 22, 1727, refers to the Kolly house as the first convent of the Ursulines.²⁰

Whatever the locality or ownership of this, the initial convent and orphan home, it is certain that the Sisters were cordially received by the settlers in New Orleans. Governor Perier, Madame Perier, and other personages of mark in the city gathered to welcome the nuns whom "they appreciated as the best treasure the mother country had ever sent them."²¹ Without delay the Sisters began to prepare for the reception of young girls. The first boarders were received on November 17, 1727; the day classes commenced a few days later. Not only French girls, but also Negro and Indian girls were admitted.²²

To the Ursuline Sisters belongs the distinction of having been the pioneers in the field of education for young girls in what is now the United States. The same community can also lay claim to the honor of opening and conducting the first hospital²³ and the first orphanage. It should be noted, however, that the founder of this Sisterhood did not intend that these last

19 Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans. In Deliberations of the Council, 252. (Original in French)

20 Delanglez, French Jesuits, 135.

21 Ursulines in Louisiana, 11. Etienne Perier replaced Bienville as Governor of Louisiana in October, 1726. Ibid., 5.

22 Heaney, Century of Pioneering, 94.

23 The Ursulines conducted the royal hospital in New Orleans until 1770.

two activities form the primary work of her followers. This is plainly indicated by the following statement: "The main purpose of St. Angela Merici in founding the Ursuline Order . . . was the education of young girls. Orphanages and hospital work were taken up by her Daughters only when charity and necessity made it imperative to do so."²⁴

Events occurred shortly which gave the Sisters an opportunity to evince the greatest zeal for a charitable cause. Already during the first year in New Orleans, a poor orphan whom a missionary had withdrawn from a family of dissolute morals was brought to them. The community annals record that

When work of teaching was well initiated, Father de Beaubois asked the Ursulines to undertake a work not agreed upon at first. He brought to the convent a little orphan girl whom he found working in surroundings in which she did not have good example. He wished the Ursulines, to receive the orphan girl under their protection.²⁵

Although their lodgings were inadequate at the time, the Sisters received the child, and, this proved to be the "tiny mustard-seed from which sprang their handsome orphanage."²⁶

The diminutive convent fairly bulged with occupants as the number of boarders and orphans increased. On January 5, 1728, Mother Mary de Ste. Augustin wrote to Abbé Raguet that, "We have already a number of boarders and they come to offer us some every day." A few months later, on April 20, 1728, in another communication to the Abbé, she stated that, "We have also charged

24 Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans.

25 Hachard, Relation, 85.

26 Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans.

ourselves with the care of orphans to provide them with a suitable living, according to their condition. We have so far only 3 in our house but we are expecting others." In an apprehensive vein, Mother Ste. Augustin again addressed the Abbe on November 15, 1728, at which time she stated that "Mr. Perier shows great zeal in our regard and without him and Father De Beaubois I do not know what would have become of us. The number of orphans increases."²⁷ The hardships encountered by the Sisters would have been greater had it not been for the products gathered from a plantation granted by the Company of the Indies. This tract of land with "eight arpents front" was situated at St. Anthony's Point one league from New Orleans. As the charges at the Ursuline convent increased in number, more land was needed. This was provided in 1732 when Father de Beaubois purchased another tract of land of "ten arpents front."²⁸

Despite these material aids, those early years were ones of struggle. Mother Jane Frances, commenting upon the acceptance of more orphans, alleges that the Ursulines were "relying upon Divine Providence," for they did not know where they would find means to support them.²⁹ The community was subsequently greatly relieved when the Superior Council of Louisiana made some monetary provision for each orphan that the Sisters would in future receive in their home. In the minutes recorded at the meeting of the Directors of the Company of the Indies on June 3, 1729, the following notation is found:

27 Ibid.

28 Delanglez, French Jesuits, 282.

29 Heaney, Century of Pioneering, 96.

The Council of Louisiana having provided for the subsistence and support of the orphan children by placing the boys among the inhabitants to whom a ration of bread is given for each and by placing the girls with the Ursuline nuns who have kindly been willing to take charge of them for the sum of one hundred and fifty livres per year for each, this arrangement has been approved.³⁰

The first considerable increase in the number of orphan girls at the Ursuline convent was entirely unforeseen. In 1729, the Natchez Indians completely destroyed Fort Rosalie at Natchez, which was located about one hundred leagues from New Orleans, and massacred many of the French settlers living there. The infuriated Indians, goaded on to a fury of hate and vengeance by the severity of the French Comandant, Chepart, spared the lives of the young women and children but took them captive. A punitive expedition was sent against the offenders. The French succeeded in liberating the captives, but, at the same time, there was created the problem of providing for those who had been orphaned. The French officials then turned to the Ursulines and Mother Ste. Augustin was "too magnanimous to refuse."³¹

The number of orphans was thus greatly augmented. Father Le Petit, S. J., who replaced Father de Beaubois³² for a time as Superior of the Louisiana missions, chronicled these lines concerning the catastrophe: "The little girls, whom none of the inhabitants wish to adopt, have greatly enlarged the

30 Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans. Copy taken from Mississippi Provincial Archives, French Domination, 1701-1729, III, 653.

31 Heaney, Century of Pionsering, 147-148.

32 Father de Beaubois returned to Louisiana from France on March 16, 1732, and brought three Ursulines who joined the New Orleans foundation. Ibid., 153.

interesting company of orphans whom the Nuns are bringing up. The great number of these children only serves to increase their charity and attentions."

Then as an expression of tribute to the nuns, Father added the following:

There is not one of this holy community but is delighted at having crossed the ocean, nor do they seek here any other happiness than that of preserving these children in their innocency and giving a polished and Christian education to the young French men who were in danger of being almost as degraded as the slaves.³³

The Company of the Indies was gravely concerned because of the Natchez massacre. A substantial sum of money had been expended on Fort Rosalie, and the Company was now prepared to relinquish the monopoly of trade and restore Louisiana to the French crown rather than rebuild the stronghold. The Ursulines, too, were uncertain as to the fate that awaited them, for it was with the Company of the Indies that the original contract had been made in 1726. Retrocession would practically nullify the agreement. Furthermore, very slow progress had been made on the new convent building that the Company had promised to erect for the Sisters. On the date of the formal surrender of Louisiana to the French government, July 1, 1731, the convent was still far from habitable. There were forty-nine orphans at the convent by 1731; however, the knowledge of the crowded condition had not spurred the officials on to complete the building more promptly.³⁴ In the meantime, the Coly house had become entirely too small and a second home had been found on a short street

33 Reuben Gold Thwaites, The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610-1791, Ixviii, Cleveland, 1900, 199.

34 Heaney, Century of Pioneering, 149-151.

near the river front. This was named "Nun Street" in honor of the Ursulines.³⁵

Seven years after the arrival of the Sisters in New Orleans the new convent was finally ready for occupation. Appropriate ceremonies were held for the transfer of the Sisters and their charges on July 17, 1734. The Sisters, orphans, and pupils were escorted by Governor Bienville, the Intendant, Edme Gratien de Salmon, leading citizens of New Orleans, and many friends to the new home which was located near the St. Louis parish church. The Blessed Sacrament was carried in this procession from the temporary dwelling to the chapel of the new home. Participants in the procession bore lighted candles and the military band furnished the musical accompaniment for the sacred hymns.³⁶

The Ursulines made haste to guarantee their security. Through Father d'Avaugour, they presented their case to the French court and gave an account of the assistance received from the Company of the Indies and the work that had been accomplished. They petitioned the protection of the crown, good title to the land that had been granted them in New Orleans, an increase in the annual allotment of funds, free passage for the Sisters sent to Louisiana and for those returning to France, and the free shipment of a ton of freight each year. Evidence points to the fact that the King of France, bent upon reducing

35 Ursulines in Louisiana, 14.

36 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 136-137. Baudier explains that the original plan was to make the new building serve as a combination hospital, convent, orphanage, and school. In time, the structure became too small and a separate building was erected for a hospital.

expenditures, was unwilling to continue the customary allowance made for the care of the orphans. The change of officials at the time in New Orleans proved to be advantageous to the cause of the Sisters. Salmon, who reached New Orleans in the capacity of Intendant on October 4, 1731, is described as being "a man worthy of his office." He and Governor Perier placed the needs of the Sisters and the orphans before Louis XV, who then consented to pay one hundred fifty livres annually for each orphan. However, the number of orphan girls thus provided for was to be restricted to thirty. The King, moreover, made it incumbent upon the Governor and the Intendant not to "leave them at the convent too long without getting them married off." It was intended that the expense incurred would benefit the colony as well as the orphans.³⁷

Consonant with the King's policy of making the colony of Louisiana a lucrative enterprise, Governor Perier made the suggestion that some silk-worms be sent to Louisiana in view of fostering a domestic industry. In a letter, Perier indicated that the Sisters were to "employ the orphans that they have in the making of silk and as these girls are destined to marry the inhabitants and as they will know this work, they will instruct their negroes in it."³⁸

Not all the girls confided to the Ursulines were from the French colony of Louisiana. The French kings were accustomed to send young women to

37 Heaney, Century of Pioneering, 151-152, 159.

38 Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans. Excerpt of a letter from Governor Perier to Salmon written between December 1, 1731, and January 9, 1732. (Original in French; translation in Archives.)

the American colonies in order to promote the establishment of permanent settlements. Oftentimes these individuals were persons of disreputable character. Famous in the early history of the Ursuline community in New Orleans were the filles-à-la-cassette, several installments of whom the king sent to be trained and educated by the Sisters. Since these "casket girls" were provided with trunks or caskets filled with personal effects, they were not entirely dependent upon the Sisters for their support. Moreover, the "casket girls" were generally supposed to be young women of good repute, who with the good training of the Sisters would make worthy wives of the soldiers in the colony. Not having their natural protectors to care for them, the Ursulines assumed the total responsibility for them as well as the native orphans that they accepted.³⁹

As a result of the Seven Years' War, the territory of Louisiana passed into the possession of Spain. Don Antonio Ulloa was appointed by the King of Spain to rule over the newly acquired land. In answer to the peoples' protests against Ulloa and his subsequent expulsion, Charles III, in retaliation, sent Count Alexandre O'Reilly with a fleet of twenty-four ships and some twenty-five hundred men to quell the insurrection and fill the office of Governor. The date of his arrival as Governor on July 23, 1769, marked the beginning of important changes in religious affairs in Louisiana. That territory was now placed under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Santiago de Cuba,

³⁹ Ursulines in Louisiana, 13. John Smith Kendall, History of New Orleans, New York, 1922, Vol. I, 9, states that the first "casket girls" arrived in the winter of 1727-1728 and the last company of them in 1751.

who became Bishop of Santiago, Jamaica, and the Provinces of Florida and Louisiana.⁴⁰

Baudier states that "the swirl of momentous events in those first months of Spanish rule swept past the peaceful convent on La Rue du Chartres and left the nuns undisturbed in the conduct of their work."⁴¹ That the pecuniary assistance afforded the Ursulines while under French rule continued under that of the Spanish is evident from the following statement:

The Ursuline Religious received for six religious an annual pension of 120 pesos which alms will be continued.

To the same will be given 30 pesos a year for each orphan that they have and receive with the approbation of the governor general of this province to the number of twelve to which this favor is limited and when this number is complete the expense will amount to 360 pesos.⁴²

Nevertheless, during the years of Spanish rule, it was found necessary to appeal to the crown for an increase in the annual pension of thirty pesos to sixty for each of the twelve orphans that the Spanish government agreed to support.⁴³ Whether or not the request was granted is not clear. The number of Sisters gradually decreased by deaths, while the amount of work grew constantly. Consequently, as already noted, the hospital was closed in 1770. The decision to discontinue the care of the sick was prompted by a

40 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 179.

41 Ibid., 183.

42 Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans. Notes taken from the documents in Archivo General de Indias at Seville; transcripts in the Library of Congress. Correspondence between Alexandro O'Reilly and Julian de Arriaga, dated March 1, 1770.

43 Heaney, Century of Pioneering, 294.

desire to concentrate the efforts of the Sisters, to enable them to devote their entire time to the education of the orphans and the girls in their boarding school.⁴⁴

The policy of both the French government and the Spanish monarchy to direct the affairs of the Catholic Church in Louisiana from far distant points, through the medium of a vicar-general or an auxiliary bishop, "was neither practical nor conducive to the solid establishment and development of the Church in the colony." King Charles IV of Spain realized the futility of the arrangement and applied to the Holy See for the establishment of a separate diocese. Thereupon Pope Pius VI issued a bull on April 25, 1793, erecting the diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas. Thus ended the long-range supervision which had obtained for ninety-four years since the coming of Iberville and Bienville. The new See was bounded on the north and east by the diocese of Baltimore and on the south and west by that of Durango and Linares. Bishop Lius Penalver y Cardenas was appointed first bishop of the new diocese and arrived in New Orleans on July 17, 1795. The St. Louis parish church was raised to the rank of a cathedral. Unfortunately, the Church in Louisiana was again without its spiritual guide when the Holy See assigned Bishop Penalver the office of Archbishop of Guatemala on July 20, 1801.⁴⁵

When the territory of Louisiana reverted to French control in 1803, the Diocese of Louisiana became a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Santo

44 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 183

45 Ibid., 223-228.

Domingo, which See was vacant at the time. Baudier terms the situation "a case of confusion thrice-confounded," for the priests knew not where to turn. On September 1, 1805, Pope Pius VII placed Louisiana temporarily under Bishop John Carroll, of Baltimore, whose jurisdiction already embraced the whole of the United States. To be relieved of some of the burden, Bishop Carroll, on December 29, 1806, notified Father Jean Olivier, chaplain of the Ursulines in New Orleans, of his appointment as vicar-general of the Louisiana territory. When the latter, worn out by age and labors, was no longer able to continue his duties, Pope Pius VII authorized Bishop Carroll to assign Louisiana to an Administrator Apostolic, proposing Father Charles Nerinckx for the office. Appalled at the magnitude of the task of restoring order in church affairs in Louisiana, Father Nerinckx declined the appointment. Bishop Carroll then turned to the Sulpician, Father Louis William DuBourg,⁴⁶ founder of St. Mary's College, Baltimore, and president of Georgetown College. Appointed as Administrator Apostolic, August 18, 1812, Father DuBourg was to preside over the diocese with all the rights of an Ordinary. On September 24, 1815, Father DuBourg was consecrated first bishop of the Diocese of New Orleans.⁴⁷

The transfer of Louisiana from Spain to France had its repercussions in the Ursuline convent. In August, 1802, when the Sisters gained a definite knowledge of the transference, Mother St. Monica Ramos and a number of her community took measures to obtain a release from French Louisiana and to

46 Father DuBourg was a native of Santo Domingo.

47 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 260-268.

secure a place in the domain of Charles IV of Spain. On October 24, Mother St. Monica wrote to the Spanish monarch to inform him that she and eight other Spanish religious, as well as several French Sisters, desired to live under the authority of His Catholic Majesty. They requested permission to go either to Havana or to the capital of Mexico. Sixteen Sisters, accordingly, took their departure from New Orleans on Pentecost, May 29, 1803. Only eleven Ursulines remained at the convent on Chartres Street in New Orleans. An interesting note is found relative to the orphans. Not being sufficiently numerous to chant the Office alone, the Sisters, "trained the orphans to sing and chant it so that the Office was said every day and all was done as usual."⁴⁸

The purchase of Louisiana by the United States in 1803 resulted in a feeling of apprehension among the Ursulines, who feared for the property of the little community. Mother Theresa Fargon referred the matter to Bishop Carroll, of Baltimore, who conferred with James Madison, then Secretary of State. Secretary Madison informed Bishop Carroll that the question had been placed before President Thomas Jefferson and that the latter heartily approved of the work of the Ursulines in Louisiana.⁴⁹ Further influenced by misgivings, Mother Theresa appealed directly to the President for a formal declaration assuring them of the possession of their property. President Jefferson sent a reply to Mother Theresa, in May, 1804, giving her the assurance that the

48 Heaney, Century of Pioneering, 351, 379-380.

49 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 259.

Constitution of the United States guaranteed to her community the title of its property.⁵⁰

Not only were the Sisters guaranteed the possession of their property, but the financial assistance given previously for the support of a certain number of orphans continued under the Stars and Stripes. Information relative to this fact is given on the first page of an old Register in the Ursuline Convent Archives:

Soon after the foundation of this monastery, the King of France, and later on, the King of Spain, paid for the support of thirty poor children in our Orphanage. After Louisiana was ceded to the United States, the City of New Orleans continued to contribute to the support of twenty-four orphans, paying five dollars a month for each of them, until the end of 1824, on which date the Ursulines left their monastery on Condé (Chartres) and Ursulines Street for that on Dauphiné Street.⁵¹

The year 1824 was for the Ursulines and their orphan girls one which is notable for the anxiety and grief that it held in its wake. Convent records state that towards the end of that year, the Sisters were very much calumniated by the city officials. The latter were determined to effect the removal of the twenty-four orphans, for whom the city paid one hundred twenty dollars a month, from the Ursuline convent.⁵² Proceedings against the nuns began in the City Council meetings in the latter part of the summer. A committee was charged to get information concerning the orphans at the Ursulines

50 Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans. The original copy of President Jefferson's letter is preserved in a case in the museum at the Motherhouse of the Ursuline Sisters.

51 Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans. Noms des Orphelines depuis 1801 a 1895.

52 Heaney, Century of Pioneering, 496.

and those at the Poydras Asylum, a city institution for orphans. At the meeting held on October 16, 1824, the chairman of the committee made a report on the conditions in each institution. In acrimonious language, he related, what the committee considered to be unfavorable conditions in the Ursuline home. One of the more greivous complaints was that more than half of the children went barefooted. When the Mother Superior explained to the committee that the children went barefooted of their own choice, the latter were asked to put on their shoes. Thereupon the investigators recorded the observation that the orphans appeared "clad with shoes most of which were new." The account which the chairman gave of the Poydras Asylum made that institution the more acceptable of the two.⁵³

At the next session of the City Council, October 23, 1824, a Mr. Bernard made the motion that the Council take a resolution to withdraw the orphan girls from the convent of the Ursulines and place them in the Poydras Asylum. Mr. Meance rejoined that the motion was premature and that the contract which existed between the city corporation and the Ursulines, relative to the orphan girls, should be further considered. The decision was made, however, at this meeting, to learn from the directress of the Poydras Asylum at what price the orphans from the Ursuline convent would be accepted.⁵⁴

Ill feeling against the Ursulines continued unabated and steps towards the withdrawal of the orphans were taken at the meeting of the City

⁵³ City Archives, New Orleans. Council Meetings, June 1, 1824, to October 3, 1825, 87-88.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 93-94.

Council on November 4. Mr. A. Davezac, who seems to have been the prime agitator in this unfortunate occurrence, presented a resolution to authorize the Mayor to take the orphans from the Ursulines and place them in the Poydras Asylum. The resolution that was adopted read as follows:

Resolved that the Mayor is authorized to withdraw from the Convent of the Ursulines the Orphan Girls that are placed there by the Corporation, and to entrust them to the care of the directresses of the Poydras Asylum under the following conditions, to wit: that the Mayor will pay the directresses of the said establishment a sum of Sixteen hundred dollars a year, payable every three months, for the maintenance of twenty-four Orphan girls, . . . to lodge, nourish, clothe cleanly the said orphan girls and to teach them the French and English languages; to read, to write, arithmetic, the elements of geography and history, as well as the principles of Religion of their respective sects.⁵⁵

The convent records state that the Sisters were obliged, toward the end of 1824, to send the orphans to the Poydras Asylum. There were a few, however, who could not be prevailed upon to relinquish the close ties that they had formed with the nuns. These were permitted to remain. Some of the children had been receiving instructions for their First Holy Communion. When the summons for departure came, those that were sufficiently prepared received their First Holy Communion at the midnight Mass on Christmas of 1824. The Annals describe the event, in which was mingled joy and sorrow, by one brief comment that Bishop DuBourg gave a very touching instruction on the feast and the ceremony.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 103-104. Resolution signed by "D. Prieur, Recorder," and "Callien Preval, Secretary."

⁵⁶ Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans.

Another noteworthy event occurred in the history of the Ursuline community during the year of 1824. The opening of new streets through the convent grounds at Ursuline and Chartres Streets occasioned the removal to a different site. In July, the Sisters left what had been the Ursuline convent for ninety years for a new home located in the lower limits of the city on Dauphiné Street. Here a structure had been erected on property bought in 1818. It was to this new convent that Bishop Joseph Rosati⁵⁷ came on August 7, 1827, to preside at the centennial celebration commemorating the arrival of the Ursulines in the Crescent City.⁵⁸

The Ursuline community had weathered a full hundred years of pioneer work in educational and charitable achievements before a second Sisterhood became established in the trans-Mississippi region. An American community, Mother Seton's Sisters of Charity, had been founded as early as 1809, but its activities had been confined to a few cities near the East Coast. Bishop Rosati was the first to invite the Sisters of Charity to come into the West to establish foundations in the Dioceses of St. Louis and New Orleans. The Superiors at Emmitsburg having responded favorably to the request, assigned Sisters for the New Orleans mission. They departed from Baltimore on December 29, 1829, and after a hazardous sea voyage, during which their ship was pursued by pirates for seven days, arrived in New Orleans early in the following

57 Father Rosati had been appointed Coadjutor to the Bishop of New Orleans on July 14, 1823. In 1827, he became the first Bishop of the See of St. Louis.

58 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 311.

year.⁵⁹ The Sisters of Charity "became officially represented in New Orleans in 1830 when Sisters Regina Smith and Emily [Burot] arrived here from the mother house in Emmitsburg, Maryland. For some time the Ursuline nuns gave them lodgings."⁶⁰ The last statement is corroborated by a note of appreciation addressed to Monseigneur J. Rosati by Sister Regina Smith on May 29, 1830. The message states in part that

We are very grateful to you for the interest you have taken in our regard, viz. by procuring us hospitality in the convent of the Ursuline Nuns, to whom we also return thanks for receiving us.⁶¹

Bishop Rosati was not residing in New Orleans but in St. Louis, as will be noted later. In unfamiliar surroundings and receiving no encouragement from the inhabitants of New Orleans to establish themselves in that city, the Sisters became disheartened. They were on the point of abandoning their efforts and returning to Emmitsburg. Then occurred an unexpected incident which changed the situation entirely; the episode concerned the Poydras Asylum of which mention was made above. The direction of the Poydras Asylum was in the hands of a number of lay women, most of whom were Protestants. As time went on, they wished to be relieved of the task of caring for the orphans. Therefore, when it became known to them that the Sisters of Charity had come to New Orleans to undertake some charitable work, an appeal was made to the Sisters to take charge of the Poydras institution. Sister Regina obtained the

59 Ibid.

60 The Times-Picayune, New Orleans, June 5, 1938, p. 5.

61 Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans. Copy of the original which is in the Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

approval of the Superiors at Emmitsburg, and the kernel which developed into an ever expanding field of charitable endeavors was sown.⁶²

In 1832, sixteen Sisters came from Emmitsburg to assist Sister Regina and Sister Emily and to assume the operation of a hospital which the Sisters of Charity had accepted the same year. Seven of this group were assigned to Poydras Asylum over which Sister Francis Regis was appointed supervisor.⁶³

The death of Julian Poydras, in 1836, caused the asylum which he had founded to pass entirely under the management of Presbyterians. As a result the Sisters of Charity were obliged to relinquish the work with the orphans at that institution. The Sisters, however, were not to be deprived of the opportunity of caring for other orphans in New Orleans. In the same year, 1836, the St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum was founded in an old house, known as "The Withers," on New Levee Street. The home was given rent free by Joseph Kennedy, Esquire, of the New Orleans' bar. The Sisters, entirely without means, opened the home with six orphan girls on October 26. Within three years the

62 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 311. The Times-Picayune, New Orleans, May 8, 1949, 15, gives facts concerning the founding of the Poydras Asylum. In 1816, the city suddenly found itself faced with the prospect of caring for twenty orphaned children who were brought to port on a plague-stricken vessel. Charitable women cared for them in a temporary house. A charter was procured from the State in 1817. Julian Poydras, a New Orleans philanthropist, became interested in their work and donated one thousand dollars and his own home on Julia and St. Charles Streets, which was used for thirty-nine years as an asylum.

63 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 316.

number of orphans increased to ninety and the Sisters were obliged to seek for larger quarters for their charges.⁶⁴

Again the Sisters experienced the blessing of Divine Providence on their work. Concurrent with the overcrowded condition at St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, came the donation by bequest of a suitable piece of property on which to build a new orphan home. On November 18, 1838, the heirs of two prominent families in New Orleans, Madame Louis Foucher and her brother, Mr. Francis Saulet, donated to Bishop Anthony Blanc the square of ground bounded by Prytania, Erato, Clio, and Camp Streets.⁶⁵ One stipulation was attached, namely, that within ten years a church or an asylum be erected upon it.⁶⁶ Bishop Blanc was eager to build a home for the orphans and invited the Sisters of Charity to take charge. The cornerstone was laid on December 16, 1839, and the building was completed the following year. Six Sisters of Charity and one hundred nine orphans took possession on February 18, 1840. On the twentieth of the same month, the institution was dedicated by Bishop Blanc

in the presence of a very numerous and respectable audience of the friends of the institution, whom the Rt. Rev. Prelate then addressed in both French and English languages, expressing in a very lively and feeling manner his gratitude to Almighty God, for fulfilling so bountifully in this Diocese,

64 Register of Admissions, St. Elizabeth's Home, New Orleans. St. Elizabeth's is the successor of St. Patrick's and the New Orleans Female Orphan Asylums. The early history is written on the first pages of the Register.

65 Bishop of New Orleans from 1835 to 1850.

66 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 366. The church was to be dedicated to St. Therese and the first two pews were to be reserved for the members of the Foucher and Saulet families.

His Divine promise, in behalf of the helpless Orphan, thro' their instrumentality.⁶⁷

The asylum was erected at a cost of \$43,000. Besides numerous individual donations, the state legislature contributed generously and a fair netted a substantial return. Thirty-six thousand dollars were raised by these means; Bishop Blanc demonstrated his "proverbial generosity" by assuming the responsibility for the remaining seven thousand dollars.⁶⁸

Sister Francis Regis Barrett was appointed Superior of the new home which was known for many years as the New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum.⁶⁹ The Louisiana State legislature allocated a sum of money each year for the benefit of the orphans. The children of St. Theresa's parish, as well as the orphans, were taught in the asylum until 1846 when a separate school building was provided.⁷⁰ An Act incorporating the institution was approved on April 5, 1843. Sister Francis Regis Barrett is designated as president and Sister Emily Burot as secretary. To these officers in the Corporation, the documents add the names of several other Sisters associated with the asylum

who with their consent shall associate with them, with the view and for the laudable purpose of receiving, harboring, nursing, raising, maintaining, and educating female Orphans, under the age of fifteen years, shall form and be a body

67 Register of Admissions, St. Elizabeth's Home.

68 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 330.

69 Sister Francis Regis spent the remainder of her life in New Orleans; twenty-seven years at the asylum. Her work for the orphans and poor was outstanding, especially during the epidemics which visited the city and, most notably, during the "black year" of 1853.

70 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 366.

Corporate under the name and title of the "New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum"⁷¹

An outstanding benefactress of the orphan asylum and a noted New Orleans philanthropist appeared in the person of Mrs. Margaret Haughery. Mrs. Haughery had come from Baltimore to New Orleans where she became a devoted friend and helper of Sister Francis Regis and the orphans. Her solicitude for the latter was prompted by the memory of her only child, Francis, who had died in infancy. Through a bakery establishment, Mrs. Haughery amassed a considerable amount of wealth and at her death she left a half-million to various charitable institutions in New Orleans.⁷² Baudier observes that, "So beloved was she, that only two years after her death, a monument in her honor was erected in front of the New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum."⁷³

The pages of this first chapter tell the story of two religious communities laboring in behalf of the orphans in the Crescent City between 1727 and the early 1840's. Their work witnessed a great expansion in New Orleans and in other areas of the South. Other Sisterhoods joined in this labor of charity. The history of these developments will furnish the subject matter of a later chapter. Attention will now be given to beginnings on the eastern seaboard where work with the orphans had begun early in the nineteenth century.

71 Act of Incorporation, Act No. 132 of General Assembly, 1843.

72 St. Elizabeth's Home, Private Records.

73 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 396.

CHAPTER II

ORIGINS ON THE ATLANTIC SEABOARD, 1798-1849

Before the Revolutionary War, the various missions which constituted the Catholic Church in America were under the jurisdiction of the parent nations. Florida was administered from Spain; the Northwest, from France. The Atlantic seaboard received the attention of the Vicar Apostolic in London. Unamicable sentiments against England continued after the close of the War and contacts became more and more sporadic. Comparatively little concern was evinced in regard to the missionary priests in the United States. This fact prompted the regular clergy in the United States to request the appointment of a vicar apostolic for the region previously administered from London. Accordingly, in 1784 Reverend John Carroll was appointed to the office.¹

In 1789, when the "prosperity and rapid growth of the Church suggested the propriety of the appointment of a bishop," the clergy applied to Rome for the establishment of an American See. By a Bull of November 6, 1789, Pope Pius VI designated the city of Baltimore as an episcopal see and named Father John Carroll as the first bishop of the newly erected diocese. The

¹ John A. Russell, "The Catholic Church in the United States," The Memorial Volume: A History of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, November 9 - December 7, 1884, Baltimore, 1885, 13-14.

latter comprised the entire portion of the United States lying east of the Mississippi River.²

The United States under the Constitution and the Diocese of Baltimore had existed for a score of years before a Sisterhood was founded to begin, most inauspiciously, those charitable works which within a few decades expanded beyond all initial expectations. The Sisters of Charity, a native community, were the first religious women to inaugurate humanitarian activities in the Diocese of Baltimore. Elizabeth Ann Bayley,³ later Mother Seton and the American foundress of the Sisters of Charity, was fifteen years old when Bishop Carroll was appointed to the See of Baltimore. In 1794, Miss Bayley married William Seton, a highly respected merchant in New York; both were members of the Protestant Episcopal Church and rigid observers of its principles and forms. Nine years later Mrs. Seton was left a widow with five children to support. The Reverend John Cheverus⁴ and Bishop Carroll, hearing of her deep interest in Catholicism, assisted Mrs. Seton and by wise counsel and excellent advice, "contributed in an eminent degree, under God, to dispel the doubts and apprehensions of her soul and inspire her with a fixed determination to seek admission into the Catholic Church." Mrs. Seton's entrance into the Church occurred on March 14, 1805.⁵

2 Ibid., 15-18.

3 Born in the city of New York on August 28, 1774.

4 Later became first bishop in Boston.

5 Charles I. White, Mother Seton, Mother of Many Daughters, New York, 1949, 5, 51, 105-106.

Mrs. Seton found her position among non-sympathetic and apathetic relatives difficult and filled with spiritual dangers for herself and children. At the suggestion and invitation of Bishop Carroll and Father William Valentine DeBourg,⁶ president of St. Mary's College in Baltimore, Mrs. Seton agreed to leave her native city to take up residence in Baltimore and to open a small school there for the promotion of religious and secular instruction. Accordingly, on June 9, 1808, Mrs. Seton, with her three daughters,⁷ embarked for Baltimore in a packet. In the autumn of that year, "the designs of Providence began to manifest themselves more particularly in her regard." Her biographer states that she began to feel "a strong inclination to dedicate herself to the care and instruction of poor children. She wished to organize some plan for the purpose that might be continued after her death." About the same time, another significant circumstance occurred. Mrs. Samuel Cooper, a student at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, offered some property near Emmitsburg, Maryland, where Mrs. Seton might gather around her a band of spiritual daughters.⁸

Through the munificence of Mr. Cooper and his persuasive influence, land was purchased near Emmitsburg, a village about fifty miles distant from Baltimore. Mrs. Seton then moved from Baltimore to what is still referred to as "the Valley." When four candidates had been received into her house,

6 Sometimes spelled Dubourg.

7 Her two sons were at Georgetown College at the time.

8 White, Mother Seton, 142-143, 151, 164-165. A monument dedicated to the memory of Reverend Samuel Cooper now stands near the entrance of St. Joseph's Central House at Emmitsburg.

Father DuBourg, who shortly after became their ecclesiastical director, deemed that the time had arrived for assuming the form of a religious community. On June 1, 1809, Mother Seton and the members of her diminutive community, appeared for the first time in a religious garb consisting of a black dress, a short cape, and a neat white muslin cap. In due time, the final organization into a society obligated to observe the practice of poverty, chastity, and obedience was duly effected.⁹ The infant community was prepared to commence its labor of love for the poor and unfortunate. It is not the purpose of this chapter to present a history of the founding of Mother Seton's Sisters of Charity. Nevertheless, it is believed that a brief reference to Mother Seton's early life, conversion, and the establishment of her congregation is necessary and altogether fitting. This is in view of the fact that early orphan care in several of the eastern cities, which is the subject matter of this chapter, was undertaken by Mother Seton and the community that she founded.

The pages of this chapter will be devoted to a history of those orphan asylums which were established in the eastern States before mid-century. As may be expected, no section of the country had as many child-caring institutions as the East where the density of population was, of course, greatest. Therefore, only a portion of their history can be told in one chapter. Philadelphia was the first city, New York the second, to have an asylum begun under Catholic auspices. It will be discovered that treatment proceeds by cities rather than by strict chronology. This plan prevents reverting to any one

⁹ Ibid., 167-168.

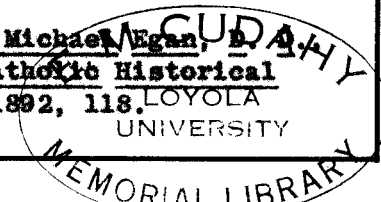
city several times upon the establishment of another orphanage within its limits.

The very first request for Mother Seton's Sisters emanated from Philadelphia, where they were asked to assume charge of the St. Joseph Female Orphan Asylum. This asylum owed its origin to the Reverend Leonard Neale, S. J., who in 1797 organized an association among the parishioners of St. Joseph's parish to care for destitute orphans of Catholic parents who died during the yellow fever epidemic of that year. A number of orphans were gathered into a home located on Sixth Street north of Spruce Street near Holy Trinity Church and were supported by voluntary offerings. In 1806, a forward step was made when an association designed to maintain orphans by an annual subscription was formed. An Act of Incorporation for the Roman Catholic Society of St. Joseph for the Maintenance and Education of Orphans was obtained on December 18, 1807.¹⁰

Martin I. J. Griffin corroborates the above information and adds that Father Michael Egan sanctioned the meeting at St. Joseph's Church, in 1806, to consider the care of Catholic orphans. Reverend Matthew Carr was the first president of the Society. The children of Catholic fever victims were kept in private homes until the house adjoining Holy Trinity Church was rented from Adam Primer and a matron was placed in charge.¹¹ On August 1, 1814, the

¹⁰ John Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884, II, Philadelphia, 1884, 1483.

¹¹ Martin I. J. Griffin, History of Rt. Rev. Michael Egan, D. D., First Bishop of Philadelphia, Vol. IX of The American Catholic Historical Researches, ed. by Martin I. J. Griffin, Philadelphia, 1892, 118.



trustees of the Society resolved to ask the Sisters of Charity at Emmitsburg to take charge of the asylum and signed the following agreement:

We, the undersigned, . . . have unanimously agreed that the Rev. Mr. Hurley apply to the Sisters of Charity at Emmitsburg for a Matron and two Assistant Sisters to take charge of our Orphan Home, and he is hereby requested so to do and to offer them for maintaining said house six hundred dollars per year.¹²

According to the historian of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum of Philadelphia, as recorded in the Emmitsburg Archives, Reverend Michael Hurley, pastor of St. Augustine's Church, had applied to Mother Seton as early as 1809 to take charge of the orphans in Philadelphia. The proposal met with the approval of Bishop Michael Egan, who accompanied by Bishop Cheverus of Boston, visited the Sisters at Emmitsburg in November, 1810.¹³

Upon the receipt of another appeal in 1814, Mother Seton acquiesced in their entreaties, and on September 29, Sisters Rose White, Susan Classey, and Theresa Conroy started on a wagon trip from Emmitsburg to Philadelphia. Father DuBourg accompanied the Sisters as far as Taneytown. Along the route, the Sisters stopped at Catholic families in order to save expenses. On October 6, the Sisters were prepared to take possession of the asylum in Philadelphia, where the community chronicler states Mother Seton

first directed the efforts of her new community having heard of the urgent need in that city of an asylum for Catholic orphan children through repeated representations of the Bishops of the locality and of the Jesuit and Augustinian Fathers in charge of the local parish churches.¹⁴

12 St. Joseph's Central House Archives, Emmitsburg, Maryland.
Hereafter cited as Emmitsburg Archives.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

Sister Rose White, who was placed in charge of the asylum, later wrote an account of the hardships encountered on the journey and during the early days in Philadelphia. Disorder and discomfiture surrounded the thirty children that the Sisters found. Three or four slept in one bed. Notwithstanding the embargo which caused such hard times, God sent the means for obtaining separate beds. Wearing apparel was in a deplorable condition. Again help came when a Mrs. Montgomery knitted twenty-seven pairs of stockings. A debt of five thousand dollars encumbered the house and the few hundred dollars allowed for support were inadequate to purchase the necessities. Prices were high because of the war then being waged between our country and England. Coffee was made from carrots and corn and the only fuel available was that gathered from a nearby tan yard.¹⁵ The Sisters hesitated to make their plight known to the trustees of the Society. Quite accidentally the facts became known one day when a child was sent with twelve and one-half cents to buy a shin of beef for soup. The child returned to the asylum with a supply of meat and other edibles, together with the twelve and one-half cents and an additional fifty cents, all a donation from a generous market owner.¹⁶

By 1836, the need for additional accommodations for the orphans necessitated the abandonment of the old house on Sixth Street. At that time, a four-story brick building located at the southwest corner of Seventh and Spruce Streets was purchased. The newly acquired home was solemnly blessed

15 Sister Rose White, Journal.

16 Emmitsburg Archives.

on the feast of St. Raphael, October 24, 1836, by Father Peter Richard Kenrick, pastor of St. Mary's Church.¹⁷ Records are relatively mute concerning the life of the Sisters and orphans at St. Joseph's except for an occasional morsel of information. Famous in the annals of the institution was Sister M. Gonzaga Grace who was sent there in May, 1830, and who inaugurated the custom of yearly reunions among the girls who had gone out from the asylum. Annually they were invited to "come home" on the Feast of the Holy Innocents to celebrate the day with the Sisters and the orphans. The annalist notes that Sister Gonzaga devoted her energies to building up the asylum and concludes that "much of its success can truly be attributed to her energy and ability."¹⁸

The passage of each year found the number of orphans at St. Joseph's on the increase. Two plans developed to relieve the institution of its overcrowded conditions. As a country home, "for the more delicate members of the large household," property was purchased at Mell Street and Day Lane, in Germantown, where in a small frame house a number of Sisters and children resided during the summer months. Later the erection of a large building on the Germantown property was made possible by the generous bequest of a benefactor named Leondro de la Questra. In addition, the situation gave rise to the establishment of the second orphan home in Philadelphia, namely St. John's Orphan Asylum.¹⁹

17 Later Archbishop of St. Louis.

18 Emmitsburg Archives.

19 Ibid. The asylum at Seventy and Spruce Streets was not enlarged until 1893.

St. John's owed its foundation to the zeal of Reverend John J. Hughes. During 1829, while pastor of Old St. Joseph's Church on Willings Alley, Father Hughes conceived the idea of establishing a new home for boys and girls. The immediate circumstance prompting him to undertake the project was the pathetic plight of a few children whose parents, recent immigrants from Ireland, had died, leaving no provisions for their orphans. That winter a Mr. James Andrews died and left a widow and four small children. A few months later the mother also died. St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum was too crowded to care for the Andrews children. The neighbors, most of them financially unable to provide a home, were unwilling to have the orphans placed in an almshouse.²⁰

Thereupon Mr. Nicholas Donnelly, a Catholic schoolmaster who lived on Lombard Street, called a meeting of a few friends for the purpose of effecting a solution. A charitable society, which within a few months could boast of one hundred fifty members, was formed in St. Joseph's parish. The members appealed to Father Hughes to draft a Constitution. This was done and subsequently an application was made to the Reverend John Hickey at Emmitsburg for four Sisters of Charity to take charge of the eight orphans then in need of a home. The old Shippen home at 410 Locust Street (then Prune Street) was rented at four hundred dollars a year and the orphans, whose number soon increased to sixteen, moved into the home on May 1, 1830. At the time the institution was known only by the names of the streets near which it was located.²¹

20 St. John's Orphan Asylum Archives, Philadelphia, Pa. Hereafter cited as St. John's Archives.

21 Ibid.

During 1832, the Sisters and orphans transferred to a rented house on Broad Street. The possibility, however, of being deprived of the dwelling at any time the owner saw fit, made the need for a permanent home imperative. Fortunately the "Gothic Mansion" on Chestnut Street below Thirteenth, a structure suitable for an orphans' home, was unoccupied and for sale. The property, contiguous to St. John the Evangelist Church, of which Father Hughes had been made pastor, was purchased. When the burden of care fell too heavily upon Father Hughes, the members of the Society were induced to form a corporation. Accordingly a charter was applied for and granted by the Legislature of Pennsylvania on January 16, 1834, and the perpetuation of a steady management insured for the orphans.²²

The two Catholic orphan asylums in existence in Philadelphia by 1834 were authorized by their charters to receive both boys and girls, and for some time carried out this policy. In time, however, the Board of Managers of each institution tended to admit only girls. This was in conformity with the established rule of the Sisters of Charity in France who did not accept boys as their charges. Mother Seton, however, had adopted a more liberal view, but disliked the education of boys and girls in the same institution. The fact that both St. Joseph's and St. John's were crowded afforded a convenient opportunity to admit girls only. The want of a home for orphan boys was keenly felt. This resulted in the founding of a Catholic asylum for boys by the Reverend Francis Guth, pastor of Holy Trinity Church. A house was rented and the place called St. Vincent's Male Orphan Asylum. Here Father Guth for a

time, and under considerable difficulties, supported twenty-five to thirty boys. Suggestions were soon forthcoming that it would be wise to have the two chartered institutions take care of all the orphans. Father Guth, due to his departure from Philadelphia in August of 1836, proposed to the managers of St. Joseph's to admit girls only, but to unite St. John's and St. Vincent's and in it accept boys exclusively. The proposal was concurred in and the first St. Vincent's Home ceased to exist.²³

For a time, St. John's became known to the public as the Catholic Male Orphan Asylum. Few facts are recorded in regard to the day by day happenings at the "Gothic Mansion" for the decade following 1836. The historian of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia points out, however, that the year 1844 was fraught with anxiety because of the "Native-American" riots which harassed the city. It became necessary to scatter the children in various places of safety during that "most violent outbreak of hatred against the Catholic Church that had yet occurred in the United States." In this "City of Brotherly Love" the Nativist riots of the spring and summer of 1844 had shocked and grieved the Catholics of Philadelphia, as well as fair-minded Protestants. Another year memorable in the annals of St. John's was that of 1846 when the Sisters of Charity were withdrawn in compliance with the regulation of their

²³ Francis Xavier Roth, O. S. A., History of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum, Tacony, Philadelphia: A Memoir of Its Diamond Jubilee, 1855-1933, Philadelphia, 1934, 15-16.

institute which required, after the affiliation with the community in France, that their labors be exclusively devoted to girls.²⁴

After the riots had subsided, the asylum enjoyed comparative quiet, but financial conditions had not improved. The necessity of employing lay women to replace the Sisters of Charity aggravated the already dark picture. Such was the state of affairs when the Sisters of St. Joseph arrived in Philadelphia to assume charge of St. John's Orphan Asylum.²⁵

The Sisters of St. Joseph had been engaged in pioneer charitable activities in St. Louis since 1836. The circumstance leading to their coming to Philadelphia was a visit of Bishop Francis P. Kenrick of Philadelphia to his brother, Bishop Peter Richard Kenrick, of St. Louis. The former had been "especially impressed by the evidences he witnessed in St. Louis of these religious women for the orphans of that city. He sought their help, therefore, for the abandoned little ones of Philadelphia."²⁶

Bishop Kenrick's request for Sisters received a favorable answer and on April 15, 1847, Mother St. John Fournier and three companions, Sisters Mary Joseph Clark, Elizabeth Kincaid, and Mary Magdalen Weber, left St. Louis for Philadelphia.²⁷ After a wearisome journey of three weeks by boat and

²⁴ Sister Maria Kostka Logue, Sisters of St. Joseph of Philadelphia, A Century of Growth and Development, 1847-1947, Westminster, Maryland, 1950, viii-ix.

²⁵ Ibid., 28.

²⁶ Ibid., viii.

²⁷ Sister M. Lucida Savage, The Congregation of St. Joseph of Carondelet, St. Louis, 1923, 70, states that the news of the victory of General

stagecoach, the Sisters arrived in Philadelphia on May 5, 1847. The Sisters of Charity at St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum accorded the tired travelers a warm hospitality until May 6 when they were installed in the "Gothic Mansion" with its forty orphan boys.²⁸ A few days later the following announcement informed Philadelphians of the arrival of the Sisters of St. Joseph:

The friends of the orphans will be happy to hear that the Asylum has been placed under the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph, who arrived within the last week from the Diocese of St. Louis. There is every reason to hope that this valuable institution will again be as flourishing as in its best days, if the necessary funds be placed at the disposal of the Managers.²⁹

A location in the country had long been thought desirable. In 1849, Bishop Kenrick found it necessary to provide a new Catholic cemetery for Philadelphia since the small plots that had been maintained by the individual parishes were inadequate. The Fulmer farm of forty-three acres on the Old Lancaster Pike, in West Philadelphia, was for sale at two hundred fifty dollars an acre. The purchase of the property was all but concluded when Mrs. Fulmer suddenly had a change of mind. A certain Marc Frenaye "brought diplomacy to bear on the transaction" by employing an old French custom of presenting a gift to a woman signing a deed. Mrs. Fulmer, presented with a new silk dress, "succumbed to the courtesy" and gave her signature. The fact that the diocese

Scott at Vera Cruz had just reached the city of St. Louis, and the Sisters on their way to the boat, "passed through illuminated streets and scenes of general rejoicing, quite in contrast to their own feelings at parting from Sisters and friends to find a new home among strangers."

28 Logue, Sisters of St. Joseph, 28-31.

29 Ibid., 31, citing The Catholic Herald, May 13, 1847.

possessed land in a desirable section of Philadelphia aroused interest at the same site for a new orphan home. Thirteen acres south of the cemetery, at seven hundred fifty dollars an acre, were purchased and set aside for the orphanage.³⁰

The cornerstone of the new St. John's Orphan Asylum was laid on April 6, 1851. In May, 1852, the orphan boys were transferred to their new home, now Forty-ninth Street and Wyalusing Avenue, in West Philadelphia, then a country site. The large stone, Tudor style, building, one hundred thirty-four feet long and sixty feet wide, with wings each forty feet long, gave ample space to accommodate about four hundred boys. The cost was estimated at about forty-three thousand dollars.³¹

Nothing extraordinary occurred in the history of the asylum as the years rolled on. Asylum records covering a period of over a quarter of a century indicate that the general health was "good" and sometimes "very good." In December of 1862, there were two hundred ninety-one boys in the institution. Before the end of the Civil War, St. John's gave a home to nearly one hundred war orphans. For years no government aid was received; however, at the meeting on June 9, 1869, it was reported that the Harrisburg legislature appropriated five thousand dollars to be paid to the orphanage. It appears, likewise, that for a period of some ten years, a thousand dollar donation was made annually

³⁰ Ibid., 37, 40. The old "Gothic Mansion" was sold and before the new home was completed, its buyers wanted it demolished so that the Philadelphia Concert Hall might be built on the spot without delay. A two-story house, referred to as the "yellow cottage," located where the Church of Our Lady of Victory now stands, became the temporary home for about fifty boys. Ibid., 40.

³¹ St. John's Orphan Asylum Archives.

by the City of Philadelphia. References are found to proceeds from parish collections, to festivals held for the benefit of St. John's, and to a number of legacies.³²

Three years after the Sisters of Charity made their foundation in Philadelphia, Bishop John Connolly, second bishop of New York, applied to Reverend John Dubois, superior of the Emmitsburg community, for a number of Sisters to take charge of an orphan asylum in New York City. Under date of July 14, 1817, Bishop Connolly addressed the following plea to Mother Seton:

Many pious and zealous Catholics of the city are most desirous that we should have here for the relief and education of destitute Catholic children such an Orphan Asylum as exists at Philadelphia, . . . Your friends, Messrs. Francis Cooper and Robert Fox, with other gentlemen, called on me this morning to say that the house which they had purchased for such an establishment, will shortly be ready to receive the orphans. They at the same time, urged me to request that you will send three Sisters of your Society to govern and instruct said orphans.³³

Sister Rose White, who ably directed St. Joseph's in Philadelphia since 1814, Sister Cecilia O'Conway, and Sister Felicité Brady were assigned by Mother Seton to answer the summons.³⁴ On September 13, 1817, they assumed the care of St. Patrick's Asylum, later known as the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum. The Sisters began the work of caring for the orphans in a small frame house, part of which was occupied by a dressmaker, at the corner of Mott and

³² Minutes, 1862-1894, St. John's Orphan Asylum.

³³ George Paul Jacoby, Catholic Child Care in Nineteenth Century New York with a Correlated Summary of Public and Protestant Child Welfare. Dissertation, Catholic University, Washington, D. C., 1941, 90.

³⁴ The Annals of Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson contain the following poignant statement: "It must have been particularly consoling to Mother Seton to confer this benefit on her native city from which she had been so recently exiled for her Faith."

Prince Streets. The dwelling was a gift of Cornelius Heeney, a "never-to-be forgotten friend and benefactor." St. Patrick's was opened with five children but the number grew to twenty-eight before the end of the year. A time of privation followed, but nothing daunted the Sisters in their undertaking and progress was forthcoming. To supplement the efforts of the Sisters, a group of Catholic women formed an organization to assist St. Patrick's during the trying years when it was without fixed resources.³⁵

In December, 1822, Sister Elizabeth Boyle came to take charge of the little orphanage. The same year Sister Rose White succeeded Mother Seton³⁶ as superior of the Emmitsburg community. Consequential changes likewise occurred among the members of the hierarchy in New York. After the death of Bishop Connolly in February, 1825, the diocese was administered by the Reverend John Power until the consecration of Father Dubois as third bishop of New York in October, 1826. Both ecclesiastics were intimately associated with the work of the Emmitsburg Sisterhood.³⁷

Overcrowded conditions in St. Patrick's by 1825 made expansion imperative. Funds for a new structure at the same location were secured through a variety of schemes. Charity sermons by Reverend John Power and the Right Reverend John England³⁸ drew large audiences. An oratorio concert, given on June

35 Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson Archives, New York. Hereafter cited as St. Vincent Archives.

36 Died on January 4, 1821.

37 St. Vincent Archives. Dubois also occurs as "DuBois."

38 Consecrated first bishop of the Diocese of Charleston, September 21, 1820.

22, 1826, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, brought twenty-five hundred dollars to the asylum. Cornelius Heeney again gave a substantial sum of money.³⁹ The dedicatory services of the large three-story brick building were held on October 29, 1826. The transfer from the old quarters occurred on November 23. To insure a good collection towards defraying the balance due on the new home and to give solemnity to the event, Bishop Dubois designated that the ceremony be celebrated at St. Patrick's Cathedral. Invitations were extended to city officials, parish organizations all over New York and Brooklyn, and friends of the orphans. An impressive procession moved from the asylum to the Cathedral where Father Power's appeal to a generous and large audience met with financial success.⁴⁰ Each week day Bishop Dubois read Mass at the altar in the orphanage chapel. As long as bodily strength permitted, he made a supreme effort to be at the asylum for the sacred function. When dying, he asked to be carried to the window of his room that he might look upon the Home once more.⁴¹

Two circumstances arising in the thirties and forties resulted in the expansion of facilities for the orphans in New York. The dreaded cholera made its visitations into the more populous areas in the eastern states. In addition, the tremendous growth of the Catholic population increased child dependency and made further provisions mandatory. Two wings were added to the original structure at St. Patrick's in 1833 and 1834. On October 30, 1832, a branch of St. Patrick's was founded by opening an asylum for the children of

39 St. Vincent Archives.

40 The Truth Teller, November 25, 1826.

41 St. Vincent Archives.

widows and widowers. This Half-Orphan Asylum, as it was called, was located at 68 Sixth Avenue and was initially governed by a board of thirteen managers. Parents and guardians failed to comply with the rules restricting the reception of children and the home became dangerously overcrowded. It was then decided to purchase a large house and twelve lots on New York's famous Fifth Avenue between Fifteenth and Sixteenth Streets.⁴² When the latter became inadequate, lots were purchased at the corner of Seventh Avenue and Eleventh Street and a new structure completed on the site in 1842.⁴³

Funds for these improvements were secured from a variety of sources. In 1833, Bishop Dubois inaugurated the practice of applying the money received in the Christmas collection in all churches of the diocese to defray the expenses of the asylums. The following year the State Legislature of New York passed an Act granting five hundred dollars yearly to the Roman Catholic Orphan Society. These sums were supplemented by private donations, charity sermon receipts, and later by the Easter Sunday collections.⁴⁴

Records indicate that in 1845 St. Patrick's housed two hundred fifty orphans and the Half-Orphan home about one hundred. Again it became necessary to seek larger quarters. Action was begun when Bishop John Hughes⁴⁵ submitted a petition to the Common Council of New York in December, 1845, asking for an

42 Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 93-96.

43 St. Vincent Archives.

44 Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 94, 96.

45 Succeeded to the See of New York, December 20, 1842.

appropriation of land upon which to erect a new asylum. The Council approved a grant and a deed, dated August 1, 1946, conveyed to the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum extensive grounds at Fifty-first Street and Fifth Avenue for a rental of one dollar a year during the pleasure of the Council. In 1857, a new lease granted the land in perpetuity, provided it was used for an orphan home.⁴⁶

Through the zeal and energy of friends of the orphans and the generous assistance of the city, a spacious asylum for boys was contemplated. To the appeal made to Emmitsburg by Bishop Hughes for more Sisters to staff the proposed asylum, the prelate received the determinative response that the Sisters could no longer care for boys. Ensuing developments caused a Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity, entirely separate from the Emmitsburg foundation, to be established in New York City. The Annals of Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson contain the following account of the event:

When the Emmitsburg Sisters of Charity decided to affiliate with France, some changes of discipline were required in conformity with the French customs, one being that the Sisters should no longer care for orphan boys. Bishop Hughes was appalled. What would become of the orphan boys? The Sisters who numbered 50, were put to a severe test. They had to choose between abandoning the orphans of New York, or severing their connection with the Mother House at Emmitsburg, dear to every Sister. It was a crucial struggle, their hearts being drawn in both directions. After much correspondence between Bishop Hughes and the Superior all formalities and necessary dispensations were arranged amicably. Thirty-three Sisters cast their lot with New York and its orphans, and they never regretted the choice. This was the beginning of the Diocesan community of the Sisters of Charity.⁴⁷

46 Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 97-98.

47 Annals in St. Vincent Archives.

The first election of officers for the new community was held on December 31 of the same year. A Motherhouse site was selected and on April 30, 1847, Sister Elizabeth Boyle, who was chosen Mother Superior of the community, "bid adieu to her dear orphans in St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum, Prince street, New York, over which she had presided nearly 25 years."⁴⁸

The new Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum was completed in 1851 and all the boys under the care of the New York Sisters of Charity were transferred to this home on the corner of Fifty-first Street and Fifth Avenue. The Prince Street asylum was then used for girls exclusively. Jacoby states that in order to effect the "coordination of their programs and economy of operation," it appeared advisable to combine St. Patrick's and the Half-Orphan Asylum. Consequently, by an Act of the State Legislature, the two institutions were united under the name of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum in 1852, but the children were not removed from the Half-Orphan home until 1855.⁴⁹

About this time the Association of the Propagation of the Faith and the Leopoldine Foundation of Vienna became benefactors of the eleemosynary institutions in New York thus augmenting the funds received by the orphan homes from other sources.⁵⁰ At this auspicious time, plans were laid for a new home for the orphan girls still housed in the Prince Street asylum. Additional funds were solicited from the municipal authorities of New York. The

48 St. Vincent Archives.

49 Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 98. The building used for the Half-Orphan Asylum became a part of St. Vincent's Hospital.

50 Ibid., 101.

petition was investigated and favorably considered as is indicated by the report made by the Committee on Finance, which stated in part:

The asylums under the control and management of the petitioners, the first of which, located in Prince Street, was opened in 1825, are models of cleanliness, order, and system, and are marked by the exercise of the strictest economy in the expenditures necessary to their maintenance. . . . As incontrovertible proof of the fidelity to the trusts confided to them in caring for and educating the orphans in this city, it is simply necessary to point to the gratifying fact that a strict analysis of the criminal statistics of the State has failed to trace out a single instance where an inmate of the orphan asylums under their charge has been convicted of crime.

. . . hence they regard the proposition contained in the annexed petition, to erect, on the block of ground between Fifty-first and Fifty-second streets, the Fourth and Madison avenues, a large and suitable building capable of containing from eight hundred to one thousand children, with the greatest favor.⁵¹

A resolution was passed to donate a sum of fifty thousand dollars toward the erection of the new asylum.⁵² The Catholic citizens of New York contributed generously to the project, while the Christmas collection in 1864 netted twenty-two thousand dollars for the orphans. Work was commenced in 1866 and, as quickly as quarters were available, some of the girls were taken from the Prince Street home to Fifty-first Street and Madison Avenue where the new orphanage was located. In 1876, over two hundred girls still remained. The number gradually dwindled until the last orphans were removed in 1886 and the historic asylum on Prince Street closed its portals to the orphans.⁵³

51 Report of Committee on Finance of the Board of Aldermen, in favor of donating the managers of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars, to be applied towards the erection of a new orphan asylum, Board of Aldermen, November 26th, 1862, New York, 1862, 4, 10.

52 According to Jacoby, only one-fifth of the sum was ever paid to the Orphan Society.

53 Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 102-103.

The two asylums at Fifty-first Street were among the beneficiaries of the interesting will of William Boland, a sailor. In June, 1866, it became known that he had bequeathed a part of his estate to the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum. According to the provisions of the will, recommendable property and buildings were to be purchased within fifty miles of New York City for the purpose of supporting and instructing on the premises, "in some suitable trade, art, or calling in life," orphan girls and boys over twelve and fourteen years of age respectively. In 1870, the managers of the asylums authorized the purchase of Sherwood Farm at Peekskill, New York. The place then became known as Boland Farm and the Brothers of the Christian Schools were charged with its government. Boland Farm was equipped as a vacation center for children of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum, and, in 1872, Sister M. Josepha and Sister M. Thecla were appointed to care for the orphans who chanced to be spending their allotted vacation time at the Farm.⁵⁴

In point of time, Brooklyn⁵⁵ followed closely in the footsteps of Manhattan Island in providing for the orphans. Late in 1826 the enthusiasm of the Catholics of Brooklyn was aroused by a certain Peter Turner whose efforts terminated in the formation of the Roman Catholic Orphan Society of

54 St. Vincent Archives. A last item of interest in the early history of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum at Fifty-first Street is that the first canonized citizen of the United States, Mother Francesca Cabrini, remained at the orphanage for four months shortly after her arrival in New York in 1889. During the time, Mother Cabrini and her companions collected funds and merchandise and each night returned "loaded down." Information given by the archivist at Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson.

55 The first Catholic church in Brooklyn was dedicated on August 28, 1823, when the village numbered but seventy Catholics.

Brooklyn. Until March, 1830, informal meetings and conferences were held with some regularity. During this month, "a numerous and respectable meeting of the Roman Catholics of the Village convened in the schoolroom attached to St. James Church, on Thursday evening, March 25, 1830, for the purpose of establishing a Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum in the Village of Brooklyn."⁵⁶

Those present resolved to form themselves into a society and to adopt the Constitution drafted by Mr. Turner. Interest continued unabated and on May 6, 1834, the Society was incorporated. Primarily it was organized "for the purpose of relieving the poor and of protecting and educating orphan children." Furthermore, "that it might receive a legal transfer of a house and lot on the west side of Jay Street, south of Concord Street, from Reverend John Walsh, to enable it immediately to open an orphan asylum, the house being at the time the residence of the Sisters of Charity." The dwelling, a two-story house with basement, and the lot were conveyed to the Society in March, 1835. Thirteen orphans were admitted when the asylum opened its doors. As numbers increased, another story was added and an equally large building was joined to it.⁵⁷

The nucleus of this institution was the first Catholic school in Brooklyn which had been opened in 1828 in the basement of St. James Church. Mr. Cornelius Heeney was instrumental in bringing Sisters from Emmitsburg to Brooklyn. The first group included Sisters M. Scholastica, Mary Ann, and Mary

⁵⁶ Minutes of March 25, 1830. Quoted in The Roman Catholic Orphan Society of Brooklyn, 1830-1930, 3.

⁵⁷ The Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum Society of Brooklyn, 1830-1930, 3-8.

Theresa; they were accompanied by Mother Rose White who remained with them until they were settled in the old-fashioned frame building located on the site of the present 277 Fulton Street address. In this home, set in the center of a large orchard, the Sisters began the work of caring for the orphans of Brooklyn. Between 1832 and 1839, the Sisters and orphans lived in the house on Jay Street mentioned above. Another transfer occurred, in 1839, when the orphans were taken to a home at 202 Congress Street, located about one hundred fifty feet to the rear of St. Paul's Church. From this date on, the orphanage seems to have been called "St. Paul's." This new home, built of brick and having two stories and an attic, was surrounded by fifteen lots of ground and an additional four lots for a cemetery. All this property together with eighteen hundred dollars towards the erection of the building was the gift of Mr. Heeney.⁵⁸

Prominent in the annals of St. Paul's Orphan Asylum is the name of Sister M. Constantia Hull, appointed superior in 1847 by Bishop Hughes after the New York Motherhouse was established. In 1850, the Congress Street house was enlarged by being converted into a four-story building and another structure of equal size annexed. Sister Constantia worked untiringly to pay off the debt. There is documentary evidence in the records of the congregation that Sister Constantia, through her indefatigable zeal, raised nearly four hundred thousand dollars for the asylum in Brooklyn. In that day child labor was not as yet frowned upon, and specifications for orders of garments were received and filled. Adept hands of older orphan girls produced thousands of

vests, shirts, shrouds, and other articles of apparel. By 1856, over twenty thousand dollars had been raised to apply on the cost of the 1850 addition. Industrial education had been introduced, and to allow for more expansion along these lines, Sister Constantia promoted the erection, in 1873, at 735 Willoughby Avenue, of a large building to accommodate the younger children. This institution, opened on October 8, 1873, became known as St. Joseph's Asylum.⁵⁹ Over two hundred of the older orphans were left at 202 Congress Street and this branch was henceforth known as St. Paul's Industrial School.⁶⁰

The Catholic Almanac for 1835 lists a St. Mary's Asylum in Brooklyn.⁶¹ No reference to an orphanage by this name is found in the Archive records of St. Joseph's at Emmitsburg or at Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson. Neither Jacoby nor Kemme, whose dissertations review the history of early orphanages in New York, mention a St. Mary's in Brooklyn. Apparently, the only record of a St. Mary's is that of a church and school on Staten Island, and at

59 The Minutes of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum Society contain these passages: "Behold St. Joseph's Asylum, an imposing edifice reared its lofty walls on the high points of land, on the corner of Willoughby and Yates (now Sumner) Avenues in the vicinity of the College of St. John the Baptist." Relative to the cost amounting to \$175,000 there is added: ". . . and that this large sum of money was in great part the earnings of the orphans from the useful trades taught them at St. Paul's Industrial School, we can form some idea of what Sister Constantia and the Sisters of Charity have done for the Roman Catholic orphans of Brooklyn." Cited in The Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum Society of Brooklyn, 1830-1930, 11-12.

60 St. Vincent Archives. As time went on St. Joseph's received all the orphans and St. Paul's was used as a convent for the Sisters of Charity teaching in nearby parochial schools. Sister Constantia died in 1885 leaving the asylum free of debt.

61 The United States Catholic Almanac for 1835, or, Laity's Directory, Baltimore, 1835, 141.

a much later date. Jacoby states that St. Mary's Church was founded in 1852 on Clifton Street (now Rosebank), and a school was opened the following year. By 1865, the parish had an extremely small orphan asylum with no more than six children as an average.⁶²

Several other cities and towns, besides Philadelphia and New York, located along the eastern seaboard witnessed the establishment of orphan asylums during the first half of the nineteenth century. Maryland was favored by having foundations in Emmitsburg, Baltimore, and Frederick. The Nation's Capital, Wilmington in Delaware, and Richmond and Norfolk in Virginia, each had an asylum. In eastern and southern New York State, child-caring institutions existed in Albany, Utica and Troy. Boston was the only city in the New England States to have an orphan home before 1850.

There is documentary evidence that some orphans were maintained at the Motherhouse at Emmitsburg during the lifetime of Mother Seton and for some years following her demise. Apparently it was the desire of the noble founder of the American Sisters of Charity that her religious daughters always have under their charge a number of destitute and neglected children. As more missions devoted to orphan care were founded, those orphans kept at St. Joseph's in the Valley became more selective. Archive notes indicate that in 1845, the "White House," where Mother Seton began her school in 1810, was moved west of its original location and used for orphans, "who were selected from the more promising children in orphanages of the missions" and who were

62 Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 242.

"trained here as governesses." At the end of 1861, this practice was discontinued, as it was thought preferable to let orphans remain in their own localities.⁶³

One month after Mother Seton's death, the Sisters of Charity accepted the invitation of Archbishop Ambrose Marechal of Baltimore to open an asylum in that city. St. Mary's Female Orphan Asylum began as St. Mary's Free School in the Metropolitan parish eleven years before the first public school opened in Baltimore, six years before the Washington Monument was completed, and three years before the Cathedral of Baltimore was dedicated. The idea of establishing a parish school developed at a meeting on February 2, 1818, at the residence of the Archbishop on Saratoga Street.⁶⁴ In the Act to incorporate the school, the education of orphans was named as a purpose:

Whereas the most Reverend Ambrose Marechal, Archbishop of Baltimore, the Reverend Enoch Fenwick, pastor of the Roman Catholic Metropolitan Church, of Baltimore, and sundry other persons, members of said church, have associated for the purpose of maintaining and educating poor orphan and other destitute female children, and instructing them in the christian religion, . . .⁶⁵

Temporarily the school had been committed to the care of charitable and pious women. The Minute Book of the Managers states that Miss Mary Merrick was appointed as teacher at one hundred fifty dollars a year and that one hundred twenty dollars rental was paid annually for a schoolroom. The school was

63 Emmitsburg Archives.

64 A Hundred Years of St. Mary's Female Orphan Asylum of Baltimore City, 1818-1918, Baltimore, 1918, 4-6. Hereafter cited as Hundred Years.

65 Original copy in Emmitsburg Archives.

placed under the patronage of the Blessed Mother of God and the feast of the Purification was designated as a day of special observance.⁶⁶ In February, 1821, the Sisters of Charity were asked to operate the school. The Sisters, under Sister Benedicta Parsons as superior, arrived in June⁶⁷ and took up residence in a rented dwelling at Park and Saratoga Streets. On March 23, 1823, St. Mary's received its first orphan.⁶⁸

The home on Park and Saratoga was never satisfactory and at the meeting in March, 1824, it was resolved to move "this month" to the corner of Eataw and Fayette Streets.⁶⁹ The first death in the asylum occurred in 1824 when Mary McColom died of typhoid fever. It is recorded that two carriages were used at the funeral and the coffin cost \$4.75.⁷⁰ By 1828 a more commodious building was needed and the Society purchased a plot of ground on West Franklin Street. Archbishop Whitfield laid the cornerstone at 70 West Franklin on September 11, 1828. The parchment placed in the cornerstone bore the following inscription:

To the glory of Almighty God, under the auspices of the Blessed Virgin, the cornerstone of this edifice, St. Mary's Catholic Female Orphan Asylum, established by the Most Reverend Ambrose Marechal, A. D. 1819, and of which he was a most liberal benefactor, destined for the education of orphans, poor children, and others who may be entrusted to its protection, was laid by the Most Reverend James

66 Minute Book, St. Mary's Orphan Asylum, 2, 9.

67 Emmitsburg Archives gives the date as July 4, 1821.

68 Hundred Years, 12-13.

69 Minute Book, St. Mary's Orphan Asylum, 31-32.

70 Hundred Years, 14.

Whitfield, the fourth Archbishop of Baltimore, . . . the Sisters of Charity, to whose care the school is now committed, Felicita, Marcelina, Mary Rose, Mary Frances, Mary Aloysia, whose names are here recorded that posterity may admire their zeal and emulate their example.⁷¹

The new home was a "plain semi-colonial brick structure of four stories and a basement." In 1842 another lot of ground was acquired and an addition erected "to follow exactly the facade architecture of the original." Funds were frequently low and the managers were obliged to use numerous means to support the institution. Periodically fairs were held in the Athenaeum; in some years these netted as much as two thousand dollars. Board members solicited clothing and money. In 1830, the Sisters decided to conduct a pay day school in conjunction with the orphanage to increase the revenues. It seems to have answered the need, for over five hundred dollars were realized annually when the day school was in operation. The school had to be discontinued for a time in 1831 when the plague of cholera increased the number of orphans, seriously overcrowding St. Mary's. By 1835, the day school prospered again, for the report of that year shows that there were two hundred day pupils and twenty-seven orphans. Individuals generously assisted St. Mary's. Charles Carroll of Carrollton paid the board bill for the children of a Mrs. Peters. Archbishop Whitfield made several cash contributions.⁷² Among other gifts made by Archbishop Marechal, there were the two spacious galleries in the cathedral, located above the south transept, reserved for the orphans of St.

⁷¹ John Thomas Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County from the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of their Representative Men, Philadelphia, 1881, 594-595.

⁷² Hundred Years, 17-21.

Mary's.⁷³ In 1841, the Very Reverend H. B. Cockery, always actively interested in the orphans, prevailed upon the pastors of all the churches in Baltimore to preach charity sermons. His efforts were not futile, for assistance "was generally and generously extended and some moderate bequests became effective at this juncture in addition."⁷⁴

From 1821 to 1865, the Sisters of Charity acted as administrators, teachers, and guardians in the institution; in the latter year, the lady managers relinquished the management of St. Mary's and the Sisters thereafter filled the official positions. Archbishop Martin John Spalding presided at the meeting on March 7, 1865, when the transfer was made. On this occasion, "a hearty and unanimous vote of thanks was given by the Protectors to the retiring managers for the very faithful and acceptable manner in which they had discharged their duties." In the decade following the Civil War, the asylum was enmeshed in the vicissitudes of the post-war period while business gradually returned to normalcy. Archbishop James Gibbons became president of the Board in 1877. It was during his episcopate that St. Mary's was given a new home on Cold Spring Lane.⁷⁵

73 Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County, 595.

74 Hundred Years, 23.

75 Hundred Years, 26-31. At a meeting on March 11, 1886, a Mr. Thomas H. Hanson, always liberal to the orphans, gave seven acres of land fronting on Cold Spring Lane. The Sisters and orphans did not move to the new home, however, until 1889.

The Catholic Almanac for 1840 lists a second orphanage for Baltimore, namely, St. Vincent's Male Orphan Asylum.⁷⁶ In the volume for 1842-1843, the following brief note is added: "A large three story building has been lately finished, and is now occupied as an Asylum for male orphans."⁷⁷ Little information is available concerning this short-lived asylum. The Reverend J. B. Gildea, pastor of St. Vincent's Church in Baltimore, applied at Emmitsburg for Sisters to take charge of the orphan home which was adjoined to the church. Sisters Ann Alexis Shorb and Julitta Bradley opened the asylum on August 12, 1841. The Sisters were withdrawn in 1846, at which time the Brothers of the Christian Schools assumed charge of St. Vincent's.⁷⁸

Father John Dubois, who for a number of years was the only priest between Baltimore and St. Louis, built the first Catholic Church in Frederick, Maryland, in 1800. In 1832, Father J. McElroy, S. J., took up duties in that area. Recognizing the pressing need for a school for girls, he opened correspondence with the superiors at Emmitsburg relative to establishing a school in Frederick.⁷⁹ A manuscript copy of important events in Frederick, 1824-1834, relates that Sisters Margaret George and Rosalia Green left St. Joseph's about noon on December 23, 1824, and arrived at Frederick at sundown. The dwelling to which the Sisters were introduced consisted of three small rooms. The

⁷⁶ The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory for the Year of Our Lord, 1840, Baltimore, 1840, 95.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 1842-1843, 72.

⁷⁸ Emmitsburg Archives.

⁷⁹ Centenary, Convent of the Visitation, Frederick, Maryland, 1846-1846, 30.

housekeeper of the Jesuit priest brought meals for several days. A letter from Sister Margaret to "Our dear Mother," dated December 25, 1824, tells of Father McElroy taking the Sisters to the church and then to their house--of one-story and very old, with one room opening on the street, intended for a classroom.⁸⁰

The free school began with a total of forty-seven pupils. When the number nearly doubled, another Sister came in June, 1825. According to the manuscript, orphans were first received in 1827. A citation under date of January, 1827, reads: "This day Fr. McElroy earnestly recommended opening Orphan Asylum to the patronage of his Congregation--they warmly seconded his endeavors and a sum of \$200 per annum was subscribed by different persons . . ." The notation is likewise made that Sister Margaret could not make retreat in July as she could not leave Frederick "having several orphans in charge." Another note gives this information:

1828. This year 14 orphans in the Asylum--3 of the larger of whom assisted by Sr. Marcelina and Sr. Mary Angela spun the wool for a piece of Linsey which a good Methodist wove gratis and they wore Linsey frocks of their own spinning for their Sunday suit that winter to the great edification of their friends and benefactors, never saw them put on a dress with as much real satisfaction.⁸¹

In the summer of 1830, a Mr. and Mrs. Atwood proposed that the Sisters and orphans move into their home. The Sisters were to receive the Atwood property in return for caring for the owners. The Sisters hesitated, but Father McElroy and the superiors at Emmitsburg approved of the proposition.

80 Emmitsburg Archives.

81 Ibid.

When Mr. Atwood died, his wife "repented the bargain" and the occupants moved back to the "old school house." On the octave day of St. Stanislaus, 1830, the cornerstone of a new asylum, St. John's, was laid. Inscribed on the parchment were the names of the General of the Society of Jesus, Father McElroy, the Sisters in the asylum and twenty orphans. This laconic statement tells of taking up residence in the new home: "1832. Apr. 1, Ate our 1st dinner in the New Refectory of New Asylum."⁸²

Information concerning St. John's is meagre after the year 1832. An old typewritten sheet tells of a fire on October 8, 1845, and the closing of the asylum. The latter fact is inferred from the following statement:

The orphans who were formerly supported here, are now provided for at the Mother House of St. Joseph's. This is better. St. Joseph's is in the country, and the little orphans will find it more healthy and more agreeable, while their kind guardians, and more than mothers, will be able to support them at a less expense than here.⁸³

Frederick was a prosperous town; its population had increased from three to five thousand between 1820 and 1840; culture and fine arts "were at home." Influential Catholic citizens desired an academy where their daughters might pursue a higher course of studies. It was toward the attainment of this objective that the Sisters opened a boarding school in 1839 and the orphans were eventually removed to Emmitsburg.⁸⁴

The founding of St. Vincent's Home in Washington was achieved by the Very Reverend William Matthews, second pastor of St. Patrick's Church in

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid.

84 Centenary, Convent of the Visitation, 31.

Washington and described as "one of the most remarkable churchmen of his age." To the duties of pastor, he added the presidency of Georgetown University for a time, the establishment of Gonzaga College, mapping out a number of parishes, and erecting a home for orphans.⁸⁵ In a letter to Mother Rose White, dated July 15, 1825, Father Matthews invited the Sisters at Emmitsburg to begin work at St. Vincent's in Washington:

I have long wished to have a branch of your society established here; \$400 are subscribed for this intention, to be paid for three years. A part of the first year's \$400 is already deposited in the bank, and the whole will be paid in a few months. You will, therefore, be pleased to consider what three Sisters you will, with the approbation of the Rev. Mr. Dubois, determine to send to this city.⁸⁶

The invitation received a favorable hearing in the Council at St. Joseph's and Sisters Mary Augustine Decount, Clothilda Council, and Petronilla Smith were assigned to the new mission upon which they embarked on October 4, 1825. A few isolated records of the early days remain. Sister Marth Daddisman, one of Mother Seton's first companions, states that the Sisters were first located in a small house which stood back of F street and later on the corner of Tenth and G, N. W. Another Sister who wrote of primal events at St. Vincent's, wrote that "in the first year the orphans numbered probably thirty." In 1827, Mother Rose was replaced by Sister Augustine at Emmitsburg and the former was sent to St. Vincent's. The spirit of self-sacrifice evinced by

⁸⁵ "One Hundred Twenty-four Years of Service," Holy Agony Bulletin, 1949, 50. Father Matthews, pastor from 1804 to 1854, was popularly called the "Patriarch of Washington." He had the distinction of being the first native of the United States to be elevated to the priesthood in 1800.

⁸⁶ Milton E. Smith, History of St. Patrick's Parish, Washington, D. C., 1904, 17.

Mother Rose is shown in the following account chronicled by a Sister companion in Washington:

The room she slept in was so low that she could not stand up right in it. She had, besides her own bed, one for a poor idiot child, and mine in a corner beside the latter, to keep her in bed, . . . On one occasion three orphans were brought in at once; there was no room in the house; we were literally packed. Mother sent for me and said: "Ann, my lamb! Can't you take the little one in your bed, and Mother will take the other two in hers." ⁸⁷

The well-being of the institution is attested by a letter from Father Matthews to Mother Augustine in which he expressed entire satisfaction with the work of the Sisters. "Indeed," he wrote, "the highest encomium I can pass on them is not adequate to their deserts."⁸⁸ The asylum was incorporated by an Act of Congress on February 25, 1831, and was "to have continuance forever under the name, style, and title of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum." The first meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on March 16, 1831, and Father Matthews was unanimously elected president. The orphanage was at that date located on what was known as Square Number 346, bounded by Tenth and Eleventh, and F and G Streets, N. W. ⁸⁹

87 Ibid., 17-18.

88 Letter dated July 5, 1830.

89 Smith, History of St. Patrick's Parish, 19-20. It might be of interest to readers to know that at this same time there was a short-lived orphan asylum existing in Georgetown. In the Archives at Emmitsburg, there is a brief notation on the "Asylum and School of Mme. Agustin Iturbide." The ex-Empress of Mexico supported this institution in Georgetown. In June, 1831, Sisters Gregory Davis and Agatha Quirk were sent there; however, the Sisters were withdrawn in September "because Mme. Iturbide interferred too much."

St. Vincent's was one of the beneficiaries when Congress made a donation on July 18, 1832, of twenty thousand dollars worth of land to be divided equally between St. Vincent's and the Washington City Orphan Asylum. Seventy lots were awarded to the Catholic orphan home and proved to be the sole public grant of any size ever made. The building which had been used for the girls' asylum originally belonged to Father Matthews. For twenty years it served the double purpose of orphanage and school. However, a new asylum, long a necessity, was not projected until in 1849. The cornerstone was laid by Father Matthews on May 14 of that year. The Minutes of the Board meeting of May 19, 1851, state that the asylum cost \$17,705.⁹⁰

Father Matthews died on April 30, 1854. Both the girls' and a boys' asylum, if erected, were to benefit substantially from his will in which he stipulated that: "I give and bequeath to the trustees of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum, District of Columbia, \$5,000 of my 6 per cent stock of the corporation of Washington, for the uses and purposes of the female department." The remainder of the stock was confided to the trustees toward the purchase or erection of a male branch, provided such a branch be established within five years from his death. If not, the income was to be applied to the girls' asylum.⁹¹

90 Ibid., 21. A boys' asylum was commenced October 29, 1843, at the corner of Tenth and G Streets when Sisters Bibiana O'Mealey, Mary Jane, and Celine were assigned to the institution. The Sisters were withdrawn in 1846 when the Sisters in Emmitsburg adopted the French rule. For a time the orphanage was re-established under the care of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. But the "vexed question of the establishment of a male branch of the asylum" was not finally settled until the founding of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum some years later. Ibid., 21-22.

91 Ibid., 23.

When the frightful cholera struck again in 1852, the Sisters of Charity visited the "cholera sheds" fearless in their ministrations and taking home with them the children left orphaned. The Civil War also brought an increase in the number of orphans and the Sisters harbored lovingly the children of Union and Confederate soldiers alike.⁹²

The oldest child-caring institution in the State of Delaware, a combined parochial school and orphanage, was St. Peter's Asylum in Wilmington. Reverend George A. Carrell, pastor in Wilmington, and later Bishop of Covington, Kentucky, wrote to Sister Augustine Decount on December 1, 1829, the following pleading message:

I have been for sometime past desirous of writing to you about an affair which has not been absent from my thoughts since my appointment to my present station. This affair is the establishment of the Sisters in Wilmington, . . . we have lost a great many children for the want of such an institution. Some years ago an explosion took place at the Dupont Powder Mills, . . . when several children were deprived of their parents, and were taken by Protestants and of course, brought up in ignorance of the religion of their parents.⁹³

The Council at Emmitsburg gave the plea favorable consideration. Sisters Ann Scholastica, Eulalia, and Aloysia left the Motherhouse on April 14, 1830, to undertake the seventh mission of the community. The first site in Wilmington was a small house at Third and West Streets commonly called "Quaker Hill." About a decade later, Reverend Patrick Kenny gave the Sisters a large

⁹² Holy Agony Bulletin, 1949, 52. The old asylum ground at Tenth Street was sold in 1899 for \$450,000. A portion of the sum was used to purchase the Kate Chase Prague residence and estate, nineteen acres, at Edgewood North of the city. A new orphanage was built at this site. Smith, 55.

⁹³ Emmitsburg Archives.

lot located at Sixth and West Streets upon which there stood two or three old houses.⁹⁴

Few records are extant of the early days in Wilmington; however, another letter of Father Carrell, written on June 25, 1831, reveals that there were many difficulties to be surmounted. Much unfavorable prejudice, "which years only will remove," was evident in the town. The Catholic population was small and poor. The problem of support induced the Sisters, in 1840, to open a boarding school. With a select school, a free school, and an orphanage being conducted in the limited quarters at Sixth and West Streets, additional space had to be secured. Accordingly, the Sisters built a brick wing in 1846. When the diocese of Wilmington was created in 1868, St. Peter's became a diocesan institution. Two more additions were made--a small wing was added in 1873 and a year later "a spacious building for the greater comfort of both sisters and orphans" was erected. The home had between thirty and forty orphan girls at the time. On March 8, 1880, a disastrous fire swept through the asylum leaving the children destitute of clothing except that which they wore. St. Joseph's at Emmitsburg graciously lent its assistance by providing clothes and other necessary articles for the orphans. Fortunately, the building itself was saved from destruction.⁹⁵

By a brief dated July 11, 1820, Pope Pius VII created the Diocese of Richmond and appointed as its first Bishop the Reverend Patrick Kelly. The

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

newly elected bishop was in Ireland at the time but arrived in the United States in January, 1821. Bishop Kelly chose Norfolk as his place of residence. Numerous difficulties, among them interference by trustees and financial problems, convinced the Bishop that the erection of a diocese in Virginia had been premature. The request to be relieved of his episcopal duties was granted by Rome, and Virginia again reverted to the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Baltimore; thus it remained until 1840 when the Reverend Richard V. Whelan was named Bishop of Richmond.⁹⁶

The Reverend Timothy O'Brien was sent to Richmond in the spring of 1832. Shortly after his arrival he erected the first permanent Catholic church--St. Peter's. When the cholera epidemic, so widespread that year, swept off many citizens of Richmond, Father O'Brien appealed to Mother Rose White for Sisters to open an orphan asylum. Mother Rose at once acceded and on November 25, Sisters Margaret George, Ann Catherine Reilly, and Mary Editha Barry arrived in Richmond by boat as there were no railroad accommodations to Richmond. The first home of the Sisters was known as "Father Hore's Chapel." Father Hore, a missionary, had built a chapel, thirty by forty feet, on a half lot between Third and Fourth Streets which had been bequeathed by a certain Joseph Gallego. This hallowed structure, dedicated in 1825, was the "first building ever built in Richmond surmounted by a cross." For three years, it had been used for divine services. Now the structure was partitioned into four small rooms and became the first convent and orphanage in Richmond. In

⁹⁶ Francis Joseph Magri, The Catholic Church in the City and Diocese of Richmond, Richmond, 1906, 44-45, 57.

1839, a brick house, built at Fourth and Marshall Streets, replaced the small wooden dwelling which had long since outgrown its capacity. The Sisters then admitted boarders as well as orphans.⁹⁷

Wheeling was made a separate diocese in July, 1850. Bishop Whelan relinquished control over eastern Virginia and the Reverend John McGill was made Bishop of Richmond. When the prelate arrived at his episcopal city, he found fourteen orphans and ninety academy pupils at St. Joseph's. The brick house was overcrowded and the Bishop sponsored the erection of an addition that same year. The following decade the growth of the asylum "was nothing less than phenomenal." The number of orphans increased to sixty-five. The Sisters and their charges suffered many inconveniences because of the total lack of proper living quarters. Conditions were remedied in 1857 when an asylum proper, with ample space for orphans and academy pupils, was built.⁹⁸

In February, 1862, five of the Sisters left Richmond for Georgia and Alabama where they were sent to care for soldiers in general hospitals. The Civil War period was a turbulent one at the orphan asylum in Richmond. When normal living was resumed, improvements and expansion took place again at St. Joseph's. An addition, including a chapel dedicated by Cardinal Gibbons, was erected in 1874.⁹⁹ The community files contain an account, written by Sister Mariana Flynn on September 5, 1878, of the miraculous escape from death

97 Ibid., 50-52.

98 Francis J. Byrne, "The Story of St. Joseph's," The Catholic Virginian, VII, November, 1931, 17.

99 Ibid.

of one little orphan. Two Sisters had taken the younger girls for a walk. On the way home, having been assured that there would be no train for an hour or more, they walked leisurely along the railroad tracks. Suddenly an engine and cars came around the curve. One small child was knocked down by the cow-catcher and the train passed over her. The Sisters expected to see a mangled corpse; instead the child had "not even a scratch." Sister Mariana closes her story with the note that, "We have had three Masses of thanksgiving said this week."¹⁰⁰

The fiftieth anniversary of the founding of St. Joseph's occurred on November 24, 1884. The observation was postponed because of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore being in session at the time. The Golden Jubilee celebration was duly observed "with pomp and splendor" on December 11, 1884.¹⁰¹

The Sisters of Charity had opened a parochial school in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1838. For some reason which is not recorded, the Sisters withdrew shortly after. Ten years later the Reverend Father Hitzelberger, pastor of St. Patrick's Church (later St. Mary's parish), petitioned the superiors at Emmitsburg for Sisters to establish a free school and an orphan asylum. Sisters Mary Aloysia Lilly, Baptista Douds, and Celine Blackburn were appointed for this mission which began on January 29, 1848. Before the end of the year, St. Mary's Orphan Asylum was steeped in financial difficulties and was on the point of closing. The infant institution was saved by the generosity of a wealthy

100 Emmitsburg Archives.

101 Francis J. Byrne, "The Story of St. Joseph's," The Catholic Virginian, VII, November, 1931, 17.

citizen of Norfolk, Miss Ann Herron, who promised in writing to be responsible for an annual payment of one thousand dollars. Miss Herron made the donation every year until her death in 1855.¹⁰²

The original building occupied by the Sisters, pupils, and orphans was at the corner of Fenchurch and Mariner Streets. The yellow fever plague of 1855 and the Civil War caused the asylum to be crowded to capacity. When peace returned and recovery set in, an adjoining building fronting Fenchurch Street was purchased with the aid of friends and benefactors.¹⁰³

Albany can lay claim to the oldest Catholic charitable institution in central New York. In 1828 Bishop John Dubois decided to ask for Sisters for St. Mary's School. The Reverend Charles Smith, pastor of the church located at the corner of Pine and Chapel Streets, warmly seconded the Bishop's petition. The response made by the Emmitsburg community is contained in the following preserved in the Archives: "At that epoch Mother Seton's Daughters formed the only Community doing charity work outside convent walls. Mother Augustine Decount, the second successor of the venerated Foundress, felt privileged to blaze the trail for Catholic Charities in the capital of Mother Seton's native state."¹⁰⁴

The Council assembled on September 1, 1828, to consider the application. It agreed to send Sisters Athanasia Enright, Josephine Collins, and Mary de Sales Tyler. The pioneers left for Albany on October 7. When they reached

102 Emmitsburg Archives.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

their destination on October 12, they found "a dire lack of the very essentials of common life." Their home was a small rented house across from St. Mary's, Albany's sole Catholic church. The school was an old abandoned bakehouse a few blocks away; its only equipment was an old rusty oven, the "rendez-vous for rats." The pastor was forced to seek a better place for a school. At the end of the school term, Father Smith wrote to Mother Augustine: "I am happy to inform you that the Sisters are successful in Albany. The pupils are numerous and increasing every day."¹⁰⁵

The Sisters had been in Albany but two and a half years when cholera devastated the country. Until 1831, the Sisters had only a few orphans whom they housed, fed, and educated. The disease took its toll and orphans were often found crying in the streets. Sister Mary de Sales "sought for ways and means to succor them." An orphan home was opened in May, 1832, in a house adjoining the church; it was paid for and supported by "fairs, charity sermons, and similar activities." A few years later, Reverend J. A. Schneller, "a holy priest but not energetic," succeeded Father Smith. The Sisters could not support themselves or the orphans and a precarious state of affairs ensued. Unless matters were adjusted, the asylum would be forced to close. The St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum Society offered a solution at its meeting of August 18, 1844, when the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved that we hereby agree with the aid and assistance of the pastors of the different churches--viz.--St. Mary's, St. John's and St. Joseph's to erect a suitable asylum for the Sisters and the orphans, and that we also agree to appropriate the proceeds arising

from the sale of the present asylum towards its erection, provided the congregation of St. Mary's are satisfied to purchase the same, and that we agree forthwith to procure a home for their temporary residence and also some lots, where it is understood, . . . namely at St. Joseph's.¹⁰⁶

By November it was apparent that the resolution was not seeing fulfillment. The recall of the Sisters was advised and confirmed by the community Council on November 13. Thereupon the Catholics of Albany hastened to present the Sisters with a set of resolutions, drawn up at a meeting of November 10, which demonstrated deep regret at the likelihood of departure. In part it stated "that we view the departure of the Sisters of Charity as a great calamity and a loss which will be felt by every Catholic more particularly on account of the education of the rising generation and the loss the Catholic Orphans will sustain in being deprived of their motherly care and protection." At this opportune moment, Reverend John J. Conroy, pastor of St. Joseph's Church and later bishop of Albany, was striving to build up his new parish. He was an ardent admirer of the work of the Sisters in Albany and hearing "with regret that bordered on indignation of the departure of our Sisters, he resolved to recover for his own parish what had been lost to St. Mary's."¹⁰⁷

Although progress was slow, by December, 1845, Father Conroy's efforts had so far shaped themselves toward success that there is mention of a Fair sponsored for the benefit of the orphanage then nearly completed. A letter to the editor of The Freeman's Journal announces the event and its happy results:

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid.

In the commencement of December a fair was held in Stanwix Hall for the benefit of the new asylum near St. Joseph's Church. Many of your readers whose sympathies were enlisted in the good cause will be gratified to learn that the receipts of the fair were upwards of \$1100. . . . The building is nearly finished, and is a noble monument of the liberality of our citizens. It is forty-four feet square, and four stories high, admirably arranged for all the purposes of an orphan institution, and from its elevated position commands a beautiful prospect of Albany, Troy, and the Hudson.¹⁰⁸

The new orphanage was located at the corner of North Pearl and Lumber (now Livingston) Avenues. Father Conroy proposed to give the asylum the name of St. Vincent's, in order "that it might have less of a parochial character, and so share in the general contributions of the faithful."¹⁰⁹ To prepare the building for occupancy, many details required attention. A Tea Festival was planned for the evenings of April 16 and 17, "which all who are desirous of promoting so laudable an object are required to attend."¹¹⁰

The Council at St. Joseph's in assembly on July 26, 1846, decided to appoint the following Sisters to St. Vincent's: Sisters Lucy Ignatius, Beata, Hieronymo, Pelagia, and Mary William. The actual date of assuming charge was August 11 of that year. Work at the asylum proceeded happily and successfully until a new crisis confronted the Sisters. This concerned the founding of the New York Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity related elsewhere in this chapter. Bishop McCloskey, coadjutor of Archbishop Hughes and Bishop-elect of the newly formed diocese of Albany,¹¹¹ was deeply concerned. It was his desire

108 The Freeman's Journal of New York, December 30, 1845.

109 Emmitsburg Archives.

110 The Freeman's Journal of New York, April 11, 1846.

111 Made an Episcopal See in 1847.

that the Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg and not New York remain at St. Vincent's in Albany. Much to his gratification, his wish was fulfilled.¹¹²

From the commencement of St. Vincent's until 1860, the institution was exclusively supported by voluntary contributions, fairs, and collections in the churches. The fair in 1849 netted \$3,144.64. A flourishing aid society, founded by Father Conroy and in whose ranks one thousand Albanians were active, proved to be a great asset in supporting the orphan home. The cholera epidemic of 1854 so increased the numbers that it became necessary to build an addition which was completed in 1855.¹¹³ Fortunately for St. Vincent's, in 1860, the Board of Supervisions in Albany began to pay something toward the support of the children sent from the almshouse.¹¹⁴

After the Civil War, the orphanage was again crowded beyond capacity. Sister Valentine, Sister-Servant at the time, solved the problem by transferring ninety of the younger girls to property purchased by Bishop McCloskey at the southeast corner of North Ferry and Broadway. Here they remained for four years until the Bishop bought the Warner Mansion¹¹⁵ at 106 Elm Street, on June

112 Emmitsburg Archives. It will be recalled that in 1850, the Emmitsburg Sisters of Charity united with the Daughters of St. Vincent de Paul in France. On September 27, 1855, all the Sisters of Charity in Albany appeared in the French garb--the blue habit and white cornette.

113 Ibid.

114 William P. Letchworth, Homes of Homeless Children, A report on Orphan Asylums and other institutions for the care of children. Transmitted to the Legislature with the annual report of the Board, January 14, 1876, 48.

115 Ibid., 48, describes the Mansion as being on an elevated site with attractive surroundings. The building was two stories high besides the basement and Mansard roof. The edifice, of brick, had been a spacious and elegant private residence.

23, 1869, for an asylum. The following month another parcel of land was purchased from Mrs. Charles Austin and later a west wing was added to the Mansion. The new home was valued at about one hundred thirty thousand dollars. Among the many friends and benefactors was one Colonel John McArdle, who at the time of his death in 1874, left eighteen thousand dollars to St. Vincent's. It was decided to use the bequest money for the erection of an east wing to provide better classrooms, recreation and dining rooms, and a dormitory. The cornerstone of this wing was laid on October 16, 1876.¹¹⁶

Twelve of the older girls had remained at the old St. Vincent's at the time of separation. This became the nucleus of St. Joseph's Industrial School, 261 Pearl Street. In 1875 twenty-six girls were in the institution. Here they were taught sewing embroidering, and dress-making.¹¹⁷

Utica, a town in central New York, was one of the first settlements in upper New York State. In August, 1821, eleven years before Utica was incorporated as a city, its first church, St. John's, was dedicated. Thirteen years elapsed before central New York made any provisions for its orphans. The founding of St. John's Asylum, in 1834, was made possible through the initiative and generosity of John C. and Nicholas Devereaux,¹¹⁸ pioneer Catholics

116 Emmitsburg Archives.

117 Letchworth, Homes of Homeless Children, 53.

118 Also spelled Devereux..

in Utica. These gentlemen applied at Emmitsburg, in the spring of 1834, for Sisters to teach school and conduct an orphanage.¹¹⁹

Sisters Etienne Hall, Lucina Simms, and Theophillia Williams left the Valley on September 11, traveling to Albany by stagecoach and westward by the Erie Canal. On September 20, their asylum opened with three orphans. The home was a one and one-half story brick structure, inconvenient and small, on John Street. Both house and grounds were the gift of the Devereaux family. The day school was conducted in an adjoining building. Hardships and privations were the lot of the Sisters and children during the first years in Utica. The dormitory, on the attic floor, was reached by a straight ladder, and was so low that only the smaller children could stand upright in it. As the number of orphans increased, support became more difficult. Apparently the only assistance the Sisters received was from the Devereauxs. There is a letter extant, addressed to Reverend Walter Quarter, written by the two men in December, 1834, praising the work of the Sisters in Utica and promising to pay fifty dollars annually to each Sister and to meet each Sister's individual expenses.¹²⁰

In 1848 or 1849, the asylum was incorporated and the Sisters took complete charge so as to relieve the Devereaux family of the burden which it had borne since the establishment of St. John's. The Sisters enlarged the building to a three-story structure and added a wing. About one hundred

¹¹⁹ Loretta Clare Jenny, "A Study of the Historical Development of Saint John's Home and School in Utica, New York," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Fordham University, 1945, 30, 32.

children could then be accommodated. In 1852, Michael McQuade and his wife made a gift of land to the asylum and the grounds were thereby appreciably enlarged. The report for 1856 indicates that the home was out of debt, that the property had been deeded to the Sisters during that year, the State had given a donation, and the citizens of Utica had been generous. Ninety children were present in the institution when the report was made. Another major change in the institution took place in the seventies when a fourth story was superimposed and two covered porches, extending across the entire length of the dormitory floors, were added.¹²¹

Troy, located a few miles north of Albany, saw the establishment of St. Mary's, a composite institution operating a school, a hospital, and a girl's orphan asylum. On March 20, 1848, Sisters Romuald McGauran, Sarah Agnes Baker, and Ann Matilda Campion began work in Troy. In one aspect, this asylum was particularly favored, for as early as 1852 it was already granted State and County aid.¹²²

The orphans occupied rooms at the hospital until in 1854 when they were transferred to a home on the west side of Hill Street between Adams and Washington Streets. The recorded history of this asylum relates almost entirely to a series of moves from one location to another. The Hill Street building soon became unsuitable and in 1858 a home was taken at 185 Third Street. In 1865 the name was changed to St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum and the following year buildings were bought at 20 and 22 Liberty Street. Seven years

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

later the orphanage was removed to its original home--the old Troy hospital at the corner of Fifth and Washington. Here it remained until 1886 when a site on Eighth Street was chosen.¹²³

Almost two centuries of theocratic rule by the Puritan Fathers resulted in a New England "dominated by a mentality decidedly antagonistic to all things Catholic."¹²⁴ It was only in the Revolutionary War years that the first step toward toleration of Catholicity by Massachusetts was taken and the religious attitude in the State moved steadily toward the acknowledgement of freedom of conscience. Catholicity was thus of recent growth in New England. Not until 1788 was a Catholic priest empowered to officiate in Boston and to gather the few Catholics there into a congregation. Repeated petitions of Bishop Carroll resulted in the issuance of the Bull of April 8th, 1808, by Pope Pius VII dividing the diocese of Baltimore and creating four new dioceses: Philadelphia, New York, Bardstown, and Boston. The latter originally included all of New England. The Reverend John L. Cheverus, who had been a zealous missionary in that portion of the country for twelve years, was appointed first bishop of the new See.¹²⁵

No churchman labored more earnestly to further the interests of the Church and Christian charity than Bishop B. J. Fenwick, but "his greatest

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Thomas F. Cullen, The Catholic Church in Rhode Island, North Providence, Rhode Island, 1936, 96.

¹²⁵ John Gilmary Shea, History of the Catholic Church in the U. S. From the Division of the Diocese of Baltimore, 1808, and Death of Archbishop Carroll, 1815, to the Fifth Provincial Council of Baltimore, 1843, N. Y., 1890, 108.

achievement in the field of charity was the establishment of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum, one of his finest creations." It is thought that the idea of such a foundation was with him from the beginning of his episcopate. In launching The Jesuit in 1829, the Bishop announced that any profits accruing from the paper would be devoted to starting an orphan asylum. Unhappily, few or no profits were realized. Three years later, nevertheless, Bishop Fenwick induced the Sisters of Charity to come to Boston, "hoping that their presence and example would stimulate donations and hasten the fulfillment of his plans.¹²⁶

The Sisters of Charity were, accordingly, the first religious women to engage in works of charity in Boston. No charitable institution existed in the city until Sisters Ann Alexis Shorb, Loyola Ritchie, and Blandina Davaux arrived in May, 1832.¹²⁷ The Catholic population had been apprised of the event in the columns of a Catholic paper which announced with rightful enthusiasm that:

The Catholics of this city and its vicinity, will, we doubt not, feel much satisfaction on being informed that the Sisters of Charity, whose Order is so advantageously known throughout Europe and America, for active benevolence and practical utility, will visit Boston immediately after the Easter Holidays. Three of these Religious Sisters will then take charge of a Roman Catholic Female Free School, which has hitherto been so much wanted in this city.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Robert Howard Lord, John E. Sexton, Edward T. Harrington, History of the Archdiocese of Boston in the Various Stages of its Development, 1804 to 1943, New York, 1944, I, xiii, 267, 296; II, 329-330.

¹²⁷ Emmitsburg Archives.

¹²⁸ The Catholic Intelligencer, March 16, 1832.

The Sisters first took up residence in a house leased for them by Bishop Fenwick on Hamilton Street off Fort Hill. Their principal duties at first were to conduct a free day school for poor girls and to give religious instructions. "Almost at once, however, a few orphan girls were placed in their care." This began when the Bishop, having discovered a penniless family consisting of a mother deserted by her husband, a boy and a girl, brought the girl to the Sisters. The Sisters were at first regarded with hostility by many Bostonians. In time, however, their works of charity performed without distinction of sect or creed won for them the respect and affection of the whole community.¹²⁹

After five years at Hamilton Place, the orphans had so increased in numbers that they were removed to a larger dwelling on Atkinson (now Congress) Street. A spacious house at the corner of High and Pearl Streets was purchased by the Bishop for eleven thousand dollars in November, 1841. This dwelling, known as Harris' Folly,¹³⁰ was the home of the Sisters and their charges for two years. In 1843, St. Vincent's was incorporated by an Act of the General Court. Two years later, when larger quarters were again needed, a new home was acquired on Purchase Street for eighteen thousand dollars. "By this time, although the Sisters continued their initial activities, the care of the orphan girls had become the most important part of their work." By 1850, the new quarters provided by Bishop Fenwick the year before he died were outgrown.

¹²⁹ Lord, et al., Archdiocese of Boston, II, 330.

¹³⁰ A letter (undated), in the Emmitsburg Archives, written by Sister M. Agnes Price, states that a man named Harris had hanged himself in the garret of this house.

It could accommodate only fifty orphans, while the Sisters had almost one hundred. Some thought was given to enlarging the Purchase Street property, but the commercial development of the city in that section caused the administrators to consider a new location more preferable. In 1855, a site on the corner of Camden Street and Shawmut Avenue was secured at a cost of twenty-one thousand dollars. The one hundred twenty thousand dollar orphan home erected on this site was pronounced one of the most beautiful institutions ever built in the State. It was opened in April 1858. At this time the Sisters gave up the day school entirely and devoted themselves to the orphans only.¹³¹

The question of the raising of funds brings to the fore some interesting items in the history of St. Vincent's of Boston. Already in 1833, a fair held in Concert Hall brought the asylum about two thousand dollars. Later fairs held in Horticultural Hall and Armory Hall yielded no less. The fifth fair, in 1850, held in Faneuil Hall, increased the asylum funds by three and one-half thousand dollars.¹³² Before the Grand Fair of 1855, the Directors of St. Vincent's advertised the fact that the new site at Camden Street and Shawmut Avenue had cost a considerable amount of money. Furthermore, it was necessary to begin the erection of the new asylum without delay. Wholehearted support was strongly urged.¹³³ The fair lasted one week and about six thousand

¹³¹ Lord, et al., Archdiocese of Boston, II, 330-331, 629-630. A portion of an article from a magazine, dated March 1, 1875, gives these facts about the new asylum: Land fronts 264 feet on Camden Street and 158 feet on Shawmut. The building, 164 by 60 feet, is brick with freestone trimmings. It is four stories high with an attractive front tower 20 feet square and 136 feet high.

¹³² Emmitsburg Archives.

¹³³ The Boston Pilot, October 27, 1855.

dollars were realized. The affair was so well attended that a large number of persons could not gain admittance.¹³⁴ From these facts, it is easy to understand this statement on a report sent from St. Vincent's to the motherhouse: "Fairs, it will be seen, have been the great reliance of our Orphan Asylum."

A visitor at St. Vincent's in Boston during this period would, in all probability, have had his attention called to the portraits of special benefactors whose noteworthy contributions the recipients sought to immortalize. Among these were John Mullanphy, of St. Louis, who left St. Vincent's one thousand dollars, and Andrew Carney who donated twelve thousand dollars toward the new asylum completed in 1858. M. Siccard, a Spanish consul, presented the institution, in 1859, with a valuable "Immaculate Conception" by Murillo. The painting was placed in the orphanage chapel. The likenesses of Bishop Fenwick and J. E. Lodge occupied prominent places.¹³⁵ His Eminence, William Cardinal O'Connell, in his reminiscences, alludes to St. Vincent's during the episcopate of Bishop Fitzpatrick. Writing of the splendid asylum completed in 1858, this observation is made:

It began under very favorable auspices, though at that time the number of Catholics was very small, as were also their material means. But the Bishop was very popular among the non-Catholic population of the city and he contrived to interest them in this worthy cause of caring for orphan girls, and among the benevolent patrons of the institution in the beginning were the parents of our late well-known Senator, Henry Cabot Lodge.¹³⁶

134 Ibid., December 1, 1855.

135 William Byrne, D. D., William A. Leahy, James H. O'Donnell, John E. Finen, J. J. McCoy, A. Dowling, Edmund Young, John S. Michand, History of the Catholic Church in the New England States, Boston, 1899, I, 182-183.

136 William Cardinal O'Connell, Recollections of Seventy Years, Boston, 1934, 282.

A final note of interest concerns a charity concert given by Miss Jenny Lind. For some reason, St. Vincent's was not included "among the benevolent societies that have participated in that good lady's charity." Indignant friends of the asylum, in protest, took up a collection and sent a check for five hundred thirty dollars to the asylum" to be used as in your judgment may best promote the interest of the little ones under your charge." The names of twelve donors are listed. The amounts ranged from ten to one hundred dollars. The name of Andrew Carney, who donated one hundred dollars, heads the list.¹³⁷

CHAPTER III

ADVANCES INTO THE OHIO VALLEY

Famous in the annals of the history of the Church in the Ohio Valley is the historic name of Bardstown, Kentucky, which J. Herman Schauinger describes as "a focal point of Catholicism in the old West."¹ The missions in the area were administered from Quebec until the See of Baltimore was established in 1789. The Diocese of Baltimore, as noted previously, extended as far west as the Mississippi River. Bardstown had the distinction of being one of the four Sees erected in 1808. To the newly created diocese there was sent Bishop Benedict Joseph Flaget who arrived in Bardstown in 1811. An associate, Reverend John Baptist David, joined Bishop Flaget in his "pilgrimage to the transmontane Kentucky Diocese."² The latter comprised the entire Northwest between the Great Lakes on the north and the thirty-fifth degree of latitude on the south, and from the Alleghenies in the east to the Mississippi in the west.³

The prelate and his missionaries recognized at once the need for a religious community of women to supplement their efforts in the diocese.

1 J. Herman Schauinger, Cathedrals in the Wilderness, Milwaukee, 1952, vii.

2 Anna Blanche McGill, The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky, New York, 1917, 13.

3 Schauinger, Cathedrals in the Wilderness, 61.

Bishop Flaget and Father David made requests at Emmitsburg, Maryland, for a group of Sisters of Charity. The community could spare no members for Kentucky at the time. Providence provided. McGill elucidates how the urgent need for assistance was supplied.

Near at hand was material, awaiting a shaping touch. Already in the hearts of a few Kentucky women were glowing embers of piety, needing but a breath to blow them into flame. That quickening was supplied by Father David's fervent words in response to which the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth were organized.⁴

The community of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky, began its existence in November, 1812, when Miss Teresa Carrico and Miss Elizabeth Wells expressed their desire to devote themselves to works of charity in the vicinity of Bardstown. The young women were allotted part of a log house located on St. Thomas farm near St. Thomas Seminary. In January, Miss Catherine Spalding joined them and Father David drew up for them a set of provisional rules. The same year was marked by the entrance of three new members, a retreat, and the election of the first superior, Mother Catherine Spalding. At the new log cabin built one and one-half miles from St. Thomas, the Sisters were busily employed at the spinning wheel and loom; they also visited the sick. An academy was opened here in August of 1814.⁵ From the beginning the humble dwelling of the Sisters was called "Nazareth," for Father David "would call

4 McGill, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, 16.

5 Ibid., 19-22. The Sisters adopted the rule of St. Vincent de Paul brought to them by Bishop Flaget from France. In 1815, they chose a distinctive garb--a black habit and a black cape and cap. Some years later, a white cap replaced the black. Ibid., 25-26.

their home Nazareth, a reminder to the members that they should strive to mirror in their lives the virtues of the Holy Family."⁶

As soon as the number of Sisters increased sufficiently, the community embarked wholeheartedly upon the execution of its secondary object, namely, "the welfare of the neighbor, the suffering poor, the sick, the insane, the orphans in Hospitals and Asylums; and the education of youth in Parochial Schools, Academies and institutions of Higher Education."⁷

Mother Catherine Spalding's term of office having terminated, she and several companions were sent to Louisville, Kentucky, in 1831, to open a day school. While the Sisters were engaged in teaching school in the basement of St. Louis Church, they received a small number of orphan girls in their own little dwelling and were caring for them as best they could. Thus almost simultaneously and without any solemnities, Mother Spalding began an orphanage as well as a day school. One day late in the autumn of 1832, Mother Catherine was informed that a non-Catholic family by the name of Jenkins living nearby were in destitute circumstances and needed someone's charitable assistance. Mother Catherine, accompanied by another Sister, hurried to the place where they found the lifeless form of the mother on a cot, an invalid father, a sixteen-year-old daughter ill with heart disease, a small girl, and an infant. An older brother was away in Indiana. The Sisters called in kind neighbors, who

⁶ Sister Columba Fox, The Life of the Right Reverend John Baptist David (1761-1841), Bishop of Bardstown and Founder of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, United States Catholic Historical Society, Monograph Series IX, New York, 1925, 67.

⁷ Constitutions of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, 18-19.

provided a suitable burial for the mother. The Sisters offered to take the elder girl and the two little ones home; however, the girl protested, having resolved to keep the family together. At the end of two weeks the girl, too, passed away. The father and brother were then most willing that the Sisters take the two small girls; these "formed the nucleus of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum."⁸ Webb corroborates this information and supplies the names of the first orphans--Eliza Sophia Jenkins, aged nine, and her sister, Mary Ann, eleven months.⁹

On another occasion, Mother Catherine learned that two small children, whose parents had died of yellow fever while en route from New Orleans, were left friendless at the Louisville wharf. These, likewise, found shelter in the home of the Sisters of Charity. To the bereft little group, there was shortly added another child of German immigrant parents who had resided at Portland on the Ohio River. As the cases of yellow fever increased, so did the number of orphans at the little convent. When the number reached seventeen, the serious problem of securing larger quarters arose.¹⁰

While the Sisters of Charity were employed in teaching in the academy and were accommodating as many orphans as their little convent would permit, the yellow fever epidemic of 1832-1833 continued unabated. Reverend Robert A.

8 Fox, Life of David, 131-132.

9 Benjamin J. Webb, The Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky, Louisville, 1884, 542.

10 Diomedea Pohlkamp, O. F. M., The Orphans on the Fairgrounds, A Centenary Historical Review of St. Joseph's Orphan Society, 1849-1949, Louisville, 1949, 15.

Abell, then the only priest in the city of Louisville, called a meeting of the men of the St. Louis parish on August 10, 1832, to discuss plans for building an orphan home.¹¹ On the same day, according to Webb, the women of the congregation held a meeting in the vestry of the church for a like purpose. They formed an organization with Mrs. John D. Colmesnil as president and it was decided that a fair should be held to raise funds. This was done in December of that year and the sum of \$1,150 was realized therefrom. A lot, on Fifth Street directly south of St. Louis Church, was purchased by the Sisters early in 1833 and an orphan asylum built on the site. To this new home, the Sisters brought their seventeen charges sometime in 1834. Proceeds from fairs, supplemented by small donations, provided the means for the erection of the new St. Vincent's.¹²

The number of parentless children increased so rapidly that at the end of two years the Sisters were obliged to seek more spacious quarters. On July 18, 1836, the Sisters of Charity bought the Thomas Kelly Tavern which was offered for sale at the time. This recently built hotel was located on the corner of Jefferson and Wenzel Streets. It was a large three-story structure situated on a four and one-half acre plot and was paid for, in part, by the proceeds from the sale of the property on Fifth Street. To insure a permanent revenue for the orphan home, one wing of the building was equipped for a hospital for pay patients and was known at the time as St. Vincent's Infirmary.¹³

11 Ibid.

12 Webb, Catholicity in Kentucky, 542-543.

13 Fox, Life of David, 133.

Additional information relative to St. Vincent's at Jefferson and Wenzel Streets is furnished in The Record,¹⁴ which states that it was chiefly through the efforts of Reverend Ignatius A. Reynolds, who had become pastor of St. Louis Church, in 1836, that the property on Fifth Street was purchased from the Sisters of Charity by the St. Louis parish. The Kelly Tavern had been built in 1833 on a lot with a fronting of ninety feet. Later the Sisters bought several vacant lots adjoining the first plot.¹⁵

Mother Catherine Spalding, the first Sister to be placed in charge of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum in Louisville, was elected as superior of the entire community in 1838. The welfare of the orphans she was forced to leave remained her abiding concern. From Nazareth, Mother Catherine wrote to Sister Louise Dorsey, one of her successors, in words that bespeak her heartfelt solicitude for them:

If your heart beats friendly towards my dear orphans, be assured it is a new claim you have on me, an additional tie fully as strong as the one that unites us in the sacred bonds of religion.

I enclose you here \$10.00 which I have had the good luck to obtain the other day from a stranger to apply to the benefit of the orphans. I shall continue as I have done to procure for them all that I can.¹⁶

14 The Record, A Catholic publication of Louisville, was edited for many years by the Very Reverend Michael Bouchet in behalf of the orphans of the diocese.

15 The Record, December 12, 1901. Copy in Louisville Archdiocesan Archives. The St. Vincent Orphan Asylum remained at Jefferson and Wenzel Streets until 1892, when it was removed to Preston Park on the Newbury Road. Pohlkamp, The Orphans on the Fairgrounds, 17.

16 Letter dated August 31, 1839. Cited in Fox, Life of David, 133-134.

Available information on St. Vincent's refers mainly to the means employed to secure funds to maintain the institution. Quite early in its history the orphanage was the recipient of money left by legacy. In 1840, Bishop Flaget was bequeathed two thousand dollars for the orphans by John Mullanphy of St. Louis. Picnics and fairs were perennial. The practice, here as elsewhere, obtained of giving sermons to encourage donations to orphanages. The following brief statement refers to one given on March 17, 1858: "The annual sermon on St. Patrick's was preached in the Cathedral of Louisville for the benefit of the Orphanage by Bishop Spalding. Collection \$317."¹⁷ The mother-house at Nazareth often sent clothing and food to help the struggling orphan home in Louisville.¹⁸ There is extant a copy of a journal, published during the benefit fair of 1845, in which appears the following novel advertisement announcing the raffle of

. . . several magnificent articles: one beautiful mosaic patch-work chair; several richly embroidered infant's mantles, and Misses dresses, . . . One or two of those fine paintings, in Mrs. Van Winkle's picture gallery, and some of those lofty pyramids on Mrs. Gody's table. . . . With what unwearied, what magnanimous perseverance do those delicate and graceful ladies, attend to their tables, from day to day--perhaps forgetful of self or the claims of a family; and all this, to feed the Orphan, to warm the hearts of the fatherless ones; and shall these noble efforts be slighted by him to whom, woman ever looks up for encouragement and assistance? Ah! surely no--it cannot, ¹⁹ it will not be; this night there will be an immense throng at the Fair.

17 Louisville Archdiocesan Archives.

18 McGill, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, 298.

19 The Orphan's Casket, A Journal Published during the Fair for the Benefit of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum, Louisville, October 8, 1845, 21. The slogan beneath the heading reads: "Mercy is twice blessed: it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

The institution met with a disaster on January 2, 1847. A windstorm tore away a large portion of the roof over the wing occupied by the orphans. The smaller children were asleep at the time and beds were covered with plaster; however, none of the children was harmed.²⁰

At the time that St. Vincent's celebrated its Golden Jubilee, attention was drawn to it in the columns of The Record: "In the East end of this now fast growing city is an unpretentious yet spacious--almost sombre building. The busy world little thinks it has stood there now for more than fifty years, ever sheltering the bereft little ones of Christ."²¹ Bishop McCloskey and the clergy of the diocese took a very active part in the celebration, and "an immense concourse of the Catholic laity" gathered in Central Park on that occasion and "gladdened the hearts of the little orphans and the good Sisters by the evident sympathy and joy that filled their hearts."²²

Reference can aptly be made at this time of a "school for orphans" conducted by the Sisters of Loretto. This community was founded in 1812 by the Reverend Charles Nerinckx, an exiled Belgian priest who shared the missionary labors of Father Stephen T. Badin in the Kentucky wilderness. On April 25, 1812, in the little log cabin of St. Charles, Hardin's Creek, Kentucky, Father Nerinckx officiated at the religious investiture of three young women imbued

20 Louisville Archdiocesan Archives.

21 The Record, June 18, 1884.

22 Ibid., June 21, 1884.

with the idea of planting Christian education on the frontier.²³ Orphans were among the first to reap the fruits of this benevolent zeal. In 1818, Father Nerinckx sent a group of six Sisters, with Sister Teresa Grundy as superior, to open a school for orphans on the Dent Farm, Pottinger's Creek, Nelson County, and called the foundation "Gethsemani" in honor of Our Lord's Agony. This school flourished until 1848 when the property was sold to a colony of Trappist monks, who retained the name and founded there the famous Trappist monastery.²⁴

St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum had not been in existence a score of years when two other similar institutions were established almost simultaneously. One of these was St. Joseph's in the city of Louisville; the other, some forty miles distant in the country near Bardstown at a place then known as St. Thomas.

St. Joseph's Orphan Home was founded when several zealous men of the two German parishes of St. Boniface and St. Mary's held a meeting on August 5, 1849, to consider ways and means of opening an orphan home. Their plans were heartily endorsed by the Reverend Otto Jair, O. F. M., of St. Boniface and the Reverend Karl Boeswald of St. Mary's. At a general meeting of St. Joseph's Orphan Society called soon after, fifty members enrolled. Father Boeswald was made president and Mr. Jacob Pfalzer, secretary. The initial fee was one dollar and monthly dues thereafter, twenty-five cents. Father Pohlkamp points out

²³ Elinor Tong Dehey, Religious Orders of Women in the United States, Cleveland, 1930, 101-102.

²⁴ Archives, Loretto Motherhouse, Loretto, Nerinx, Kentucky.

that, although wages were hard-earned in those years, people were wont to give generously out of their "moderate substance toward churches, schools and orphans."²⁵

In conformity with their intent to give the orphans a home as early as possible, a committee was appointed to investigate what sites were available. On December 7, 1849, the committee reported their findings; however, none of the offers was accepted. Instead, in March, 1850, a house and lot adjoining St. Mary's Church was purchased for \$3,250. The same month a group of men was appointed to put the house in readiness to receive orphans. The Board of Trustees reported in December, 1850, that Julius Becker, the first orphan had been admitted. Shortly after he was joined by four others: James Kean, Wendelin Thiergaertner, Jacob Schilling, and Wilhelm Schilling.²⁶

That the orphanage had become a reality is also attested by the following notation given in the Metropolitan Catholic Almanac of 1850:

St. Joseph's Male Orphan Asylum. Opened 1850. . . . St. Joseph's established by St. Joseph Orphan Society, composed of Catholic Germans who have purchased the "Old Seminary" joining the church of the Immaculate Conception, and are now fitting it up, for the immediate reception of orphan boys.²⁷

25 Pohikamp, The Orphans on the Fairgrounds, 17.

26 The Diamond Jubilee of St. Joseph's Orphan Society, Louisville, Kentucky, August, 1924, 13, 15. Webb states that Martin Berg had been employed to care for the orphans., 544.

27 The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory, for the Year of Our Lord 1851, Baltimore, 1850, 80. Pohikamp, 19, explains that the "Old Seminary" mentioned in the Almanac was the Jefferson Seminary located at Eighth and Grayson Streets. It was used for a high school for boys and consisted of one and one-half stories with two large classrooms. When it became too small for an orphanage, the property was sold to St. Mary's parish "for a liberal profit."

Old records show that financial vicissitudes beset the new institution from the outset. When the treasury was exhausted by the purchase of furnishings for the home, it seemed necessary to postpone the opening. Opportunely a gift of \$266.50 was made to the Society by Father Stephen Badin. As an expression of gratitude, Father Badin was made an "honorary member in perpetuum." When the installment on the Home was due, the Society held its first fair which netted \$1,293.95. The second fair, two years later, brought in \$1,880 and was "convincing proof that the citizens of Louisville appreciated the necessity and usefulness of the New Home and were willing to do their share for its maintenance."²⁸

The German population of Louisville grew rapidly in the eighties, resulting in an appreciable increase in the number of orphans. In March, 1854, the Society purchased one and one-third acres of land for thirteen hundred dollars with the intention of building a new asylum. The location of this lot is not indicated. The site was found afterwards to be undesirable and was sold.²⁹ The Guardian, of May 29, 1858, gives the following notice of a later transaction by which a satisfactory site was secured:

We are pleased to learn that the Trustees of the German Orphan Society of St. Joseph's have purchased for the use of the institution the house on Green Street recently owned by the late Col. Jason Rogers. . . . The house is large and conveniently arranged, having ample space for the accommodation of at least seventy-five children. Heretofore

28 Pohlkamp, The Orphans on the Fairgrounds, 19.

29 Ibid.

none but boys have been received into the Asylum, but we understand that hereafter girls will be taken also.³⁰

Pohlkamp furnishes further information. The colonial style home, purchased from Preston Rogers for ten thousand dollars, was located at what is now the corner of Jackson and Fehr Avenues near St. Boniface Church. The orphanage was exceedingly fortunate in its new habitation, because of the fact that for twenty-eight years, from 1858 to 1886, the Franciscan Fathers of St. Boniface parish provided all the religious services for the institution. Furthermore, no tuition was asked of the orphans until the year 1881 when the parish wished to pay off its own indebtedness. The Orphan Society then paid the required fees for the orphan children.³¹

Up to this time the orphans were cared for by laymen, but in 1865 it was decided that the administration of the home be given to a community of Sisters. The Society obtained a number of School Sisters of Notre Dame from Milwaukee. The Sisters made it "a model institution and gave to the orphans under their guidance love in abundance, physical care and an education equal to the best parental supervision."³²

In 1865 at a cost of fourteen thousand dollars, an addition was built to the Rogers structure and improvements made. The Home cared for over one hundred orphans by 1875, taxing the resources of the German parishes of

30 Louisville Archdiocesan Archives.

31 Pohlkamp, The Orphans on the Fairgrounds, 19.

32 Diamond Jubilee of St. Joseph's Orphan Society, 17. In December, 1897, the Sisters of Notre Dame relinquished charge over the asylum; it was then conducted by the Ursuline Sisters of Louisville.

Louisville. By that time a branch orphan society existed in each parish and views as to the needs of the orphanage were not always in harmony. Certain men advocated moving the institution to the country. However, plans to relieve the overcrowded conditions at St. Joseph's did not materialize until in 1883 when a majority of the members subscribed to the suggestion.³³ In the interim, Mr. George D. Deuser, Central President, and Mr. George S. Schuhmann, Central Secretary, went to Cincinnati for an inspection of the German Catholic Orphan Home. Both returned convinced that it would be to the physical and spiritual welfare of the children to establish a home in the country.³⁴

An advertisement for a suitable piece of property is found in the columns of The Record under the caption "Land Wanted":

The St. Joseph Orphan Society wants to purchase a tract of land not to exceed forty acres, in the immediate vicinity of the city of Louisville. The land must be high, and in a healthy neighborhood. Parties desiring to sell will state number of acres, and what improvements, if any, are on the land offered; . . .³⁵

The Society purchased a twenty-four acre tract of land lying between Brownsboro Road and Shelbyville Pike (now Frankfort Avenue) in July, 1883. It was then about a mile from the city limits. The site is of historic interest. The original owner was Joseph Taylor, a brother of President Zachary Taylor. After the death of Mr. Taylor in 1850, the land came into the possession of the Southwestern Agricultural and Mechanical Association. The latter held annual fall fairs which gained in scope and popularity. The first

33 Pohlkamp, The Orphans on the Fairgrounds, 21.

34 Diamond Jubilee of St. Joseph's Orphan Society, 19.

35 The Record, June 23, 1883.

Kentucky Fair that "made any pretense of being representative of the entire State was held in 1853 in the wooded plot of ground in Crescent Hills where the St. Joseph's Orphan Home now stands." The location was called "Fairgrounds" for a number of years and was named "Crescent Hills" only much later in the history of St. Joseph's. On March 27, 1871, James and Virginia Harrison acquired part of the old Fairgrounds and it was from the Harrisons that the Orphan Society bought the land.³⁶

The Minutes of the Society for July 23, 1883, state that the property was bought for \$12,750 with \$4,707.50 in cash and the balance in notes payable signed by Mr. John A. Benninger, Central President of the Orphan Society. The old property near St. Boniface Church was sold for twelve thousand dollars. The formal laying of the cornerstone occurred on May 3, 1884, when seven hundred members of the Society and many friends of the orphans joined in the impressive procession from Fifth Street out to Crescent Hills.³⁷

Devotion to the interests of the asylum on the part of the St. Joseph's Orphan Society is evident from a tribute paid to it at the time of the observance of the seventy-fifth anniversary, in August, 1924. The following excerpt is taken from the "Dedication":

The seventy-fifth anniversary of St. Joseph's Orphan Society of Louisville furnishes the reason for this book of memories of days gone by, of years of strenuous labor and unselfish sacrifice in the service of God and humanity on the part of men of German descent, of a lasting monument erected by them, many of whom have gone to their

36 Pohlkamp, The Orphans on the Fairgrounds, 21.

37 Ibid., 21-23. The new orphanage was dedicated on August 22,

eternal reward, of one of the finest institutions in this city, devoted to human welfare, and carried on splendidly by the successors of its founders.³⁸

An account in The Record calls attention to the continued financial support given to the institution by the Society. The article states that centennials in general are not rare events, but the centennial of a picnic is "something different." On July 27, 1949, the Society was to celebrate its one hundredth picnic and "as was the case with the other ninety-nine picnics, all the proceeds will be devoted to the care of the children whom the Society has under its charge at the Frankfort Avenue Home."³⁹

As stated above, a boys' home was founded at mid-century at St. Thomas near Bardstown. In the life story of Archbishop Spalding we read that:

Ever solicitous for the children of his flock, Bishop Spalding felt the urgent want of an orphan asylum for boys. The fact of there being already a hundred orphans in the asylum founded by Mother Catherine for girls, was of itself evidence that many orphans of the other sex were left unprovided for. He therefore took steps to establish an asylum at St. Thomas', which was opened in 1850 with ten orphans, the number steadily increasing until it reached one hundred and fifty.⁴⁰

Historical records indicate that the institution was a seminary and an orphanage at the same time. The Reverend William J. Howlett writes that about 1850 Father Daniel Kelly "assisted them [the seminarians] in their studies and in teaching a number of orphan boys who were just then gathered

38 Diamond Jubilee of St. Joseph's Orphan Society, 1.

39 The Record, July 23, 1949.

40 J. L. Spalding, The Life of the Most Rev. M. J. Spalding, D. D., Archbishop of Baltimore, New York, n.d., 146.

at St. Thomas'." Father Francis Chambige, a relative of Bishop Flaget, was appointed superior of St. Thomas Seminary in March, 1850. Howlett further states that the "first male orphans, officially cared for by the Diocese of Louisville, were housed under the roof of old St. Thomas Seminary. There were ten of them when Father Chambige took charge of the institution."⁴¹

Four Sisters of Charity of Nazareth were sent, in 1850, to attend to the domestic affairs of the Seminary, and, at the same time, they assumed the immediate care of the orphans. In a year or two the number of orphans had increased to thirty, and in time a separate home was provided for them.⁴² The orphans remained under the care of the Sisters until in 1857 when the Brothers of the Sacred Heart took charge of the orphanage and the Sisters devoted all their time to domestic duties in the Seminary.⁴³ The Private Archives at Nazareth provide two facts concerning the Sisters at St. Thomas. The Bishop of Bardstown paid forty dollars annually for clothing for each of the four Sisters engaged in work at the Seminary-Orphanage. Furthermore, although the Brothers were actually in charge of the orphans, the Sisters always supervised the smaller boys.⁴⁴

41 William J. Howlett, Historical Tribute to St. Thomas' Seminary at Poplar Neck near Bardstown, Kentucky, St. Louis, 1906, 106, 114-115.

42 The date of this change may be inferred from a notice in The Guardian of July 15, 1858: "Arrangements are in progress for the building of a separate house for the orphans, who will thus be entirely separated from the seminarians. It is hoped that the new building will be completed in the course of a year."

43 Howlett, Historical Tribute, 115.

44 Archives, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky.

The name of Brother David is famous in the annals of St. Thomas. Under his "energetic management," the asylum was made in large measure self-supporting. The orphans were removed to a new building near the Seminary and a division was made of the farm, one-half belonging thenceforth to the Seminary and one-half to the asylum. The orphans' farm was situated along the Bardstown Pike and included a saw and a grist mill which had lately been provided with new machinery which was "kept busy in its double capacity for the benefit of both the institution and the people residing in the neighborhood." Brother David added a new wing to the asylum, planted the yard with trees, set out an orchard, and cleared more land.⁴⁵

In spite of a promising beginning, the orphanage did not prosper for long. Father Chambige wrote the following to Bishop Spalding on March 30, 1869, of conditions at St. Thomas:

Our orphanage is in a very precarious state; in fact for these six months it has been supported on borrowed money. The number of orphans increases every day. We have now more than 140.⁴⁶

It is clear from a later letter of Father Chambige that during the summer of 1869 the orphans were removed to the St. Mary's College buildings. The college had been suppressed and Bishop McCloskey had ordered the transfer of the orphans to it.⁴⁷ In 1869, also, the seminary students were taken to Bardstown proper and the old buildings were unoccupied for some time after the departure of the students, except a small section used by the pastor of the

45 Webb, Catholicity in Kentucky, 547.

46 Louisville Archdiocesan Archives.

47 Ibid.

congregation and the workmen in charge of the farm. The Brothers of the Sacred Heart gave up the care of the orphans at St. Thomas in 1872 at which time the Sisters again took complete charge of them. The old Seminary was renovated to accommodate the Sisters and the orphans. This arrangement obtained until the spring of 1880 when the Seminary buildings were pronounced unsafe and the orphans were again returned to the asylum building.⁴⁸ Already in May, 1879, the public had been apprised of the state of the old Seminary buildings by this announcement:

The old buildings at St. Thomas Orphan Asylum, near Bardstown, have become so dilapidated that some of them are no longer considered safe, and the improvements which have been deemed necessary for the comfort of the orphans will be commenced forthwith.⁴⁹

The "improvements" mentioned in The Record refer, no doubt, to those made on the former asylum. In the issue of November 15, 1879, The Record stated that there were about one hundred orphans at St. Thomas and added the further comment that: "We are heartily glad that the little fellows at St. Thomas', near Bardstown, have gotten out of the old house into their comfortable quarters in the new building."⁵⁰

Dioceses within the confines of the United States increased more rapidly as the nineteenth century progressed. On May 21, 1821, Rome decreed

48 Howlett, Historical Tribute, 115, 156.

49 The Record, May 15, 1879.

50 Ibid., November 15, 1879. By an accident, the orphanage took fire, in May, 1889, and burned to the ground. At the time the College of St. Joseph, Bardstown, was vacant; the orphans were transferred to the College where they remained until 1906. The old buildings at St. Thomas are entirely gone.

the erection of the Cincinnati Diocese with the Right Reverend Edward D. Fenwick, O. P., as its first bishop. The See included the entire State of Ohio.⁵¹ Although the Bardstown Diocese is the older, Cincinnati prides itself on possessing the oldest orphanage west of the Alleghany Mountains. Four years after the formation of the diocese, Bishop Fenwick, cognizant of the need of the ministrations of a Sisterhood within his jurisdiction, made a request at Emmitsburg for a number of Sisters. However, it was not until the middle of October, 1829, that four Sisters departed Maryland for the "Queen City of the West." Those selected for the mission were Sisters Francis Jordan, Victoria Fitzgerald, Beatrice Tyler, and Albina Levy. The Sisters traveled by stage-coach to Pittsburgh and from there took a boat on the Ohio River for Cincinnati, where they arrived on October 27. Once in Cincinnati, they became the guests of the Reilly family until their own domicile was ready for occupancy. On November 3, 1829, this quartet of pioneers moved into the two-story frame dwelling belonging to Mr. M. P. Cassilly and located on Sycamore Street near Sixth, opposite the old cathedral. Eagerly the Sisters set out to fulfill the objects of their Institute which embraced "the Christian education of youth, and the care of the orphan, the sick, and the infirm." Opportunity did not tarry, for St. Peter's Orphan Asylum began very shortly when the Sisters took six little orphans into their small home. Cincinnati had been incorporated as

⁵¹ John H. Lamott, History of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 1821-1921, Cincinnati, 1921, 3, 43.

a city in 1819, but it had no public school until 1830. The Sisters, therefore, conducted a free school in connection with the asylum.⁵²

Four years later there were already thirty-two orphans under the Sisters' care. To give the children adequate living quarters, they were taken to a larger house on Sixth Street belonging to Bishop John Baptist Purcell.⁵³ Lamott hints that there was another reason for leaving the Cassilly property. The residence had been given to the Sisters rent free. The arrangement did not endure because Mrs. Cassilly, a bitter Protestant, complained of her husband's charity. The rapid increase in the number of both free school children and orphans necessitated another removal to a more commodious building. To meet this emergency, Bishop Purcell purchased the residence of Major Ruffner, in 1836, at Third and Plum Streets, for \$15,905. This building was known as St. Peter's Academy and Orphan Asylum.⁵⁴

To aid in the support of the institution, the St. Peter's Benevolent Society was founded in the Athenaeum in Cincinnati on Christmas Day, 1833. Throughout the history of St. Peter's, charity sermons and debates were given for the benefit of the asylum. Nearly five hundred dollars were collected for the orphans at the close of a laymens' retreat in March, 1840. Orphans' Fairs were held periodically. The Fair of 1846 brought in over sixteen hundred

52 Archives, Mount St. Joseph-on-the-Ohio, Cincinnati. Hereafter cited as St. Joseph Archives. An old admission register, 1829-1852, is retained at St. Joseph's Orphan Home, Cumminsville. The first name entered is that of Emily Bennett, Protestant, Age 9, November, 1829.

53 Ibid. Bishop of Cincinnati Diocese, 1833-1850; Archbishop, 1850-1883.

54 Lamott, Archdiocese of Cincinnati, 300.

dollars; that of 1852, about twenty-one hundred dollars. About 1850, St. Peter's was given a donation of two hundred dollars by Jenny Lind. The donation of a Mr. Philip Clarke is especially noteworthy. This friend of the orphans had always contributed generously toward orphan collections. He became an invalid and could no longer give monetary assistance. Good will is ever ingenious. Mr. Clarke made a beautiful model of a ship which "brought a splendid sum for the cause he had at heart." In 1873, one of the severe cholera years, a Mr. Moses White gave the Sisters five thousand dollars for the orphans.⁵⁵

Serious epidemics of cholera harassed the city in 1832, 1849, 1854, and 1873. In each visitation the number of orphans greatly increased. The epidemic of 1854 was particularly disastrous for St. Peter's, for thirty-two of the orphans died of its ravages.⁵⁶

The fact of the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg affiliating with France and the establishing of a separate motherhouse of the Sisters in New York was told briefly in the last chapter. The affiliation had its repercussions in the Cincinnati missions as well. Serious thought was not given to the matter in Ohio until Father Maller, who had become the superior at Emmitsburg in 1849, visited the Sisters in Cincinnati in the spring of 1850. Father Maller held conferences with the Sisters and assured them that union with the French community would bring no important changes. In March, 1851, however,

⁵⁵ St. Joseph Archives. By 1873, the orphanage was in Cumminsville, a suburb of Cincinnati.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

an official communication came from Mother Etienne at Emmitsburg. A new formula of vows for each Sister and a doll dressed as a cornette Sister accompanied the announcement that the community was affiliated with the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in France. Sister Margaret Cecilia George, one of the Sisters who had made vows with Mother Seton on July 19, 1813, was at the head of St. Peter's Academy and Orphan Asylum in Cincinnati at this time. Sister Margaret and her companions at St. Peter's demurred. In September, 1851, Sister Margaret went to Emmitsburg to attend a retreat of all the Sister-Servants. While in the motherhouse, Sister stated her views and those of the Sisters in Cincinnati before the Council, calling the attention of the members to the objections that Archbishop Carroll and Mother Seton had to union with France. Her protest was unheeded and on her return to Cincinnati the "irreconcilables began to arrange for their admission to other American communities on the expiration of their vows."⁵⁷

For weeks Bishop Purcell had been giving serious thought to the Sisters' affair. He consulted brother bishops and other ecclesiastics. After grave deliberation, the Archbishop came upon a solution. On February 25, 1852 he read Holy Mass in the chapel of St. Peter's Orphanage. At the close of the Holy Sacrifice he addressed the Sisters in the chapel in these definitive terms:

My dear children, my brother clergymen and myself, after invoking the Holy Spirit and after diligently studying the question concerning your future, have decided that it is God's will for you to remain as you are, Sisters of Charity, formed by Mother Seton and

approved by His Grace, the venerable Archbishop Carroll. I shall establish your Mother House in my episcopal city. You will be my children and I shall be your father.⁵⁸

St. Peter's Orphanage served girls only, and although there was St. Aloysius' German Orphan Asylum for boys, it was thought advisable to begin another institution to care for them. Special impetus was given to the thought after the Sisters of Charity had a Motherhouse in Cincinnati. For the purpose, eleven acres of land in Cumminsville were bought on October 20, 1852, for the sum of \$8,220. Mr. Jacob Hoffner, the owner, remitted one-half of the price when he learned that it was for an orphan home. Thus was founded St. Joseph's Diocesan Orphan Asylum, "a link with the far off past." A splendid building was constructed and, on June 1, 1854, the Sisters received orphan boys at their new home in Cumminsville. A year later the girls, on Third and Plum Street, were transferred to St. Joseph's at Cumminsville, and St. Peter's Asylum became St. John's Hospital in August, 1855.⁵⁹

Very meagre are the data available on the history of St. Joseph's. A few scattered items indicate that early in its existence, a benevolent society was formed to assist the institution in material needs. On July 4, 1854, the annual Fourth of July picnics began in Cumminsville for the benefit of St. Joseph's. A generous hearted citizen of Cumminsville adopted the custom of giving each child in the village a Christmas package containing fruit, cake,

58 Ibid. On March 25, 1852, six Sisters made their vows before Archbishop Purcell as their ecclesiastical superior.

59 Ibid.

candy, and a new penny. Many children at St. Joseph's were happily among the children thus remembered each Christmas.⁶⁰

The establishment of Cincinnati's second Catholic orphan asylum, possessing a distinct entity, dates back to the eighteen-thirties. As mentioned above, an epidemic of cholera in 1832 left a large number of children without parents and providers. The urgent need for some united and organized effort to give these children adequate protection, prompted Reverend John Martin Henni, at that time pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Cincinnati, to consider the problem seriously. He was prevented for a time owing to a trip he made to Europe to procure aid for the spiritual needs of the diocese. Father Henni returned in October, 1836, and immediately thereafter he held several meetings at which plans were discussed for organizing a society to care for homeless boys. The result was the formation of St. Aloysius Orphan Society. At the first public meeting of the Society, January 27, 1837, officers were chosen. Mr. J. B. Germann became its first president. Father Henni was selected as head of the Board of Directors, which was chosen at the meeting of February 12, and remained in that office until 1843 when he was appointed the first bishop of Milwaukee. The Society was fortunate in the select group of men, who with Father Henni, "guided its destinies during its early years. . . . that they built well is attested by the strength and vigor the society shows . . ." By March, 1837, it counted one hundred fifty-eight members.⁶¹

60 Records, St. Joseph's Orphan Home, Cincinnati.

61 St. Aloysius Bulletin, June, 1925, 5. Reverend Cornelius H. Jansen wrote the history of the St. Aloysius Orphan Society as a serial in the columns of this quarterly bulletin.

To assist the Society in raising funds, it decided to publish the Wahrheitsfreund. This first German Catholic periodical in the United States was edited by Father Henni. The paper made its first appearance on July 20, 1837, and was published by the Society until sometime in 1843 when its interest was sold to a man in Toledo.⁶²

Just at the time that the Society was formed, the need for relief work was extremely urgent. Before any buildings could be provided, it was necessary to care for many small boys; consequently, the first orphans entrusted to the Society were placed with private families who promised to rear and educate them as their own. To help to defray the expenses, the Society made a monthly payment to the foster parents. As numbers augmented, the Society saw the necessity of securing a home in which all the orphans could be given a common training. Sometime in 1839, Father Henni and a number of laymen were appointed a committee to look for a suitable building. On its suggestion, the Society, on May 18, 1839, agreed to buy a lot and a nine-room house situated on the northeast corner of Sixth and John Streets for a sum of \$3,150. The building was dedicated on the feast of St. Aloysius, June 21, and placed under his patronage. The management of the home was confided to Miss Angela Siemers, who with her sister Margaret, "formed the whole personnel of

The Society exists today in all its pristine vigor and determination to effect great good for the orphans. It now numbers four thousand members representing forty-four parishes in Cincinnati. The St. Aloysius Orphanage is maintained by the dues of the members, the help of a Women's Auxiliary, and a festival in June of each year. It is not a member of the Community Chest of Cincinnati. The Advocate, June 18, 1953.

⁶² The Advocate, Cincinnati, June 18, 1953.

the society's first home." This home was intended for boys only as girls could be committed to what was known as the "English" orphanage conducted by the Sisters of Charity. The first enrollment included six boys ranging in age from three to ten years and was the "mustard seed from which grew a mighty tree."⁶³

The number of orphan boys had increased to twenty-nine by the middle of 1842 and impelled Bishop Purcell to request the superiors at Emmitsburg to send Sisters to take charge of the German orphan asylum.⁶⁴ Mother Xavier, superior at the time, "hesitated to assume charge of boys in an institution of this kind, as trouble was brewing over this same question in New York. Mother Xavier accepted the invitation, however, and on August 23, 1842, missioned three Sisters to Cincinnati--Sister Seraphine McNulty, . . . Sister Germana Moore, and Sister Genevieve Dothage." The Sisters were recalled in 1846, when the division in the Emmitsburg community occurred.⁶⁵

Membership in the St. Aloysius Society grew phenomenally. By 1842 it boasted of about six hundred active members. In order that it might possess "greater strength and prestige," the members wished to be incorporated. The Society was accordingly constituted a body politic at the legislature of the State of Ohio on March 3, 1843. Two sections of the Act of Incorporation pertain to the subject of the supervision of orphans:

Section Fifth. That the trustees . . . shall have power to bind out all orphan children received into the said asylum and for such

63 Ibid., December, 1925, 6.

64 Ibid.

65 St. Joseph Archives.

period of time until the age majority, as the said trustees of the said township and trustees of said society shall deem to be proper, and the orphans thus bound out shall be subject to the laws of the state regarding apprentices.

Section Sixth. The funds and property of said society shall be appropriated to no uses and purposes whatever, other than the support and education of destitute male orphans.⁶⁶

Within one year the building on Sixth Street became entirely inadequate to provide for the number of orphans seeking admission. Therefore, at the meeting of April 23, 1843, the Society resolved to seek "new and roomier quarters" for their wards. Various sites were suggested, but the members could come to no agreement. The Sisters and orphans were greatly inconvenienced by the delay. Only through the efforts of a group of saner men were the rest prevailed upon to make a decision. At the meeting of April 28, 1844, the following resolution which settled the controversy was passed:

Be it resolved that all of us be satisfied with the site for which the majority has shown its preference, and that, furthermore, after the matter has been decided by the will of the majority, all of us again be united as we have always been, and that discord keep aloof and harmony may ever remain amongst us.⁶⁷

The site selected was on Fourth Street between John Street and Western Row (now Central Avenue). The lot, fifty feet wide and three hundred feet deep, and house were bought for \$10,800. In July, 1844, the adjoining lot, fifty feet in width, fronting Third Street, was purchased for \$2,250.⁶⁸

66 Act of Incorporation, cited in St. Aloysius Bulletin, December, 1925, 6. Later the Act was altered and word "male" omitted.

67 St. Aloysius Bulletin, March, 1926, 5.

68 Ibid.

The Sisters of Charity were recalled to Emmitsburg in June, 1846.

The officers of the Society then made efforts to secure Sisters of the Precious Blood to care for the orphans. A representative was sent to Father Salesius Brunner, the superior of the Sisters, with a request to supply Sisters for St. Aloysius Orphanage. Father Brunner was forced to refuse the request since the Sisters had already undertaken too much work for the number of Sisters in the community. The Society thereupon appointed a superintendent or "Waisenvater." Mr. Henry Schulhoff, with his wife, was to manage the orphan home for an annual salary of two hundred fifty dollars in addition to their board and rent. They took charge of the institution at the new location on June 27, 1846.⁶⁹

The epidemics that visited Cincinnati at mid-century caused the Society to consider a location outside the city where larger quarters could be provided and where more sunshine and fresh air could insure their well-being. After lengthy deliberations over proposed plots, the Society bought a sixty-two and a half acre piece of land on Dayton Road (now Reading Road), on September 15, 1849, for \$9,588.⁷⁰ Seven years were to pass by before a building was erected for the orphans. In the meantime, St. Aloysius encountered changes and hardships.

Until 1850 the Society accepted only boys. It then changed its policy and deemed it advisable to care for orphaned girls of German parentage. A home was rented on Abigail Street, between Spring and Pendleton Streets, on

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

July 8, 1850. Miss Mary Wiggerman⁷¹ was appointed directress of this home for girls. Later a piece of property, adjoining that already owned by the Society on Third Street, was purchased. On this site, was built a three-story structure joining the boys' building which faced Fourth Street. This was apparently done at the time the boys' building was remodeled following the fire of 1851, an account of which will be given below. According to Father Jansen, the girls were placed in the Third Street addition. In time, Miss Wiggerman received an assistant in Miss Lisette Garre, and when the former resigned in September, 1866, Miss Elsie Pape was made her successor.⁷²

The building used by the boys on Fourth Street had become too small and another structure was erected on the same lot. On October 15, 1851, a great calamity befell this new home. A fire of undetermined origin broke out in the early morning hours and three small boys perished in the flames. About a hundred boys were successfully led from the burning building. Many families volunteered to provide temporary shelter for one or more. A house at 355 Sixth Street was rented to care for those not placed in homes. Members of the Society and friends of the orphans were liberal in donating funds with which to rebuild the institution.⁷³

71 Sometimes given in the account as "Mrs."

72 St. Aloysius Bulletin, March, 1926, 5; June 1926, 3. This information by Father Jansen seems to imply that the girls remained here until the new asylum on Reading Road was completed. A statement in St. Joseph Archives reads that the girls were at the home on Abigail Street until 1861--the date when the new asylum was opened.

73 Ibid. The roommate of the three boys who lost their lives later in life became Brother Theodore Rush of the Marist Society, Dayton, Ohio. On the night of the fire, he occupied a room with three other boys. When

The plan to place the children in more healthful surroundings had not been abandoned. The tract of land on Reading Road had been improved gradually and ground was broken for the first building at the beginning of 1856. With a frontage of sixty feet and a depth of seventy, the three-story structure cost nine thousand dollars. Elaborate dedication services were held on October 26, 1856, and in November the boys were transferred from their home on Fourth Street. In April, 1860, all the property that the Society owned between Third and Fourth Street was sold to the Sisters of Mercy. With the twenty-nine thousand dollars realized from the sale, the building on Reading Road was enlarged. This addition, which cost \$17,500, was completed and solemnly blessed in October, 1861. The girls then occupied the northern half; the boys, the southern. In 1864 and 1868, the Society bought small plots of land totaling about thirteen acres from the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad Company. Plans developed to erect two buildings for school purposes; these were to be connected to the main building by covered hallways. The cornerstone was laid on October 17, 1869, and in October of the following year the two buildings were dedicated. The cost approached twenty thousand dollars. In 1875, a special building was provided for the heating plant and laundry at an equal expenditure.⁷⁴

The problem of obtaining supervisors for the orphanage was constantly recurring. Mr. Schulhoff, who had been superintendent of the home since

frightened by the blaze, they crawled under their beds and were overlooked by the firemen. Brother Rush, although overcome by smoke, was found and rescued.

74 St. Aloysius Bulletin, June, 1926, 3; June 1928, 15-16.

1846, tendered his resignation in November, 1852. Representatives of the Society were sent to Father E. Sorin, superior of the Congregation of the Holy Cross at Notre Dame. In response to the request for Brothers, a number were sent to St. Aloysius Asylum. They remained, however, only until January 3, 1854. The Marist Brothers from Dayton, Ohio, then took charge but relinquished it on November 10, 1855. After a brief term of service by Mr. Bernard Steins, Mr. Schulhoff again accepted the office. He again resigned when the new asylum on Reading Road was opened, and Miss Wiggerman was appointed directress of the entire institution.⁷⁵

Archbishop Purcell, upon several occasions, urged the employment of Sisters in the asylum. For some reason, the Society opposed such a plan. When members of religious communities were being forced to leave Germany because of the "Kulturkampf," the Archbishop reiterated his wish and suggested that it might be possible to staff St. Aloysius with Sisters "driven from Germany by religious strife."⁷⁶

It eventually happened that a number of Sisters of Notre Dame from Munster, Westphalia, Germany, came to the United States when the Prussian Government no longer wanted religious teachers in the schools. On Palm Sunday, 1874, the Sisters received the formal order of dismissal by the Government. Preparations were made to come to America and on July 4 of that year the first group of Sisters disembarked in New York. Three years later they assumed charge of two orphan homes, St. Aloysius in Cincinnati and St. Joseph's in Cold

75 Ibid., June, 1926, 3.

76 Ibid., June, 1928, 15.

Spring, Kentucky. These German daughters, so to speak, of Blessed Mother Julie Billiart, were founded by two deeply zealous nuns, Sister M. Aloysia and Sister M. Ignatia, who carried Blessed Julie's spirit into Germany and there started the German branch of the Sisters of Notre Dame.⁷⁷ The congregation devotes itself principally "to the instruction and education of youth and accordingly conducts boarding schools, orphanages, homes for abnormal and abandoned children . . ."⁷⁸

The following excerpt taken from the Annals at St. Aloysius tells of the apprehension that the Sisters experienced when they first arrived at the Cincinnati asylum: "Though the Sisters found a magnificent building, spacious grounds, large gardens, rich meadow lands and wooded tracts, they did not feel altogether welcome." The Sisters were aware that some members of the Board and lay instructors were unfavorably disposed toward the Sisters coming to the asylum. The orphans, fearing to be "hemmed in through greater vigilance," showed disrespect and insubordination. Gradually the difficulties were overcome, however, and the "spirit of the Orphan Home breathed peace and harmony."⁷⁹

Eight years before the Diocese of Pittsburgh was created, the Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg were already established in that city. In the

⁷⁷ Growth and Activity of the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame, Cleveland, 1938, 3-8, 19-20. (Mimeographed book)

⁷⁸ The Constitutions of the Congregation of the Sisters of Notre Dame.

⁷⁹ Annals, St. Aloysius Orphanage. The Sisters have served the institution faithfully since 1877. In 1952, they observed the seventy-fifth anniversary of their arrival at St. Aloysius.

summer of 1835, Father O'Reilly, pastor of St. Paul's Church, Pittsburgh, applied to Emmitsburg for Sisters to teach a day school. A small group of religious were sent almost at once and a home on Second Street, near Wood Street, was procured for them. By 1838, there were a number of orphans depending upon Catholic charity. Father O'Reilly then took measures toward opening an orphan asylum. His initial step was to organize the St. Paul Orphan Society of which he himself accepted the presidency. A charter was obtained from the State Legislature in April, 1840. The Society was thus authorized to receive, care for and dispose of "any orphan child or children, or such other children as may be deprived of one parent."⁸⁰

Sometime later Father O'Reilly purchased lots at the corner of Webster Avenue and Chatham Street. The asylum built on this site was placed in charge of the Sisters of Charity. About 1845, the Sisters withdrew from the diocese and St. Paul's Asylum passed into the hands of the Sisters of Mercy. After Pittsburgh was raised to the dignity of an Episcopal See, in 1843, Bishop Michael O'Connor, on his return from his consecration in Europe, brought with him a number of Sisters of Mercy, "who immediately gained the ascendancy." The prelate visited the motherhouse in Dublin, and in answer to his earnest petition, seven Sisters accompanied him to America. These Sisters, the first of their community to cross the Atlantic, sailed from Ireland in November and arrived in Pittsburgh on December 3, 1843. Their first home was on Penn Street near Sixth. In 1848, Bishop O'Connor gave up his own residence into which the

⁸⁰ Andrew Arnold Lambing, A History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Pittsburgh and Allegheny from Its Establishment to the Present Time, New York, 1880, 485-486, 503-504.

Sisters moved until the convent on Webster Avenue was finished in 1850. This building served as a convent, orphan home, and academy.⁸¹

St. Paul's, not equipped to provide proper training and activities for older boys, found difficulty in caring for them. The diocesan seminary in Birmingham, Ohio, had been closed in the summer of 1851. Bishop O'Connor, not intending to open the seminary again, donated the frame building and the ground upon which it stood to the Board of Managers of the St. Paul Orphan Society. A male orphan asylum was opened there in the latter part of 1851. Shortly after, a brick structure was built; a part of it was used for the boys and the remainder of it as a convent for the Sisters in charge of the boys. At the close of 1851, there were seventy girls at St. Paul's in Pittsburgh, and twenty-four boys at Birmingham.⁸²

The Catholic population of the diocese grew rapidly and before many years passed the orphanages were no longer sufficiently large to accommodate the number of orphaned children in the diocese. Plans were made to build a new institution which would be a monument to the Catholics in the diocese and a worthy enterprise for the managers. After lengthy debates on possible locations, a site on Tannehill Street was selected. Not far from the Cathedral and

⁸¹ Mother Catherine McAuley had established the Order of Mercy in Dublin, Ireland, on December 12, 1831, the day on which she made her profession. In the ten years that remained of her life, Mother McAuley's congregation over-spread Ireland. Even London, England, "suddenly relaxed its stern resistance" and permitted the Sisters of Mercy to open a convent. In 1843, two years following the death of the foundress, a foundation was made in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in response to an appeal made by the Most Reverend Michael O'Connor, Bishop of Pittsburgh.

⁸² Ibid., 505.

from Trinity Church, the lot about three hundred feet square, was purchased for \$9,636. An impressive ceremony accompanied the laying of the cornerstone on June 10, 1866. Building operations progressed slowly "owing to its vast proportions," but was ready for occupancy at the end of one and one-half years. In the middle of December, 1867, the Sisters and orphans from the Webster Street Asylum and from Birmingham took possession.⁸³

The new St. Paul's presented an imposing picture. The asylum stood ten to fifteen feet higher than the street on which it fronted. A massive stone wall supported the ground on the entire length. The building, two hundred feet by forty, was of brick trimmed with cut stone. It consisted of three stories, a basement, and an attic finished with a Mansard roof. This sizable building costing about one hundred sixty thousand dollars was not well planned. The corridors, nine feet wide, extended through the center of each floor. No room was more than fifteen feet wide and some of them were as long as seventy-five feet. Lambing describes the asylum as having been "hopelessly defective," and planned by those who were influenced by an "idea of grandeur and not a sense of practical utility."⁸⁴

St. Paul's was now immersed deeply in debt. It had always been maintained by voluntary contributions, parish collections, fairs, and small legacies. "To obviate the difficulties arising from so precarious a means of support," the Society founded by Father O'Reilly was revived in a slightly modified form under the title of "The Relief Association of St. Paul's Roman

83 Ibid., 506-507.

84 Ibid., 507.

Catholic Orphan Asylum," in May, 1878. The hope that a permanent income would be insured was realized only in part. Notwithstanding every effort to meet the liabilities, the institution was to be sold early in December, 1878, for amounts due certain depositors. But by a "generous and united effort of the clergy and people, such as is seldom witnessed, . . . \$14,000 was immediately raised, and the institution was redeemed and set afloat to meet whatever other storms may be in store for it."⁸⁵

In 1848, the School Sisters of Notre Dame came from Baltimore to open a school in Pittsburgh. A building intended for a school and convent was completed near St. Philomena's Church. The Sisters soon received a number of German orphan girls. When the small convent became taxed to capacity, measures were taken to provide more spacious quarters. About four acres of land were purchased on Troy Hill in 1850 and the building of an asylum commenced. The new home was not finished until in 1853. On May 1 of that year, a number of Sisters from St. Philomena's and twenty-four orphans came to Troy Hill. The attractive and substantial structure stood on a high elevation overlooking the Allegheny River. The day on which St. Joseph's German Orphan Asylum was dedicated was characterized by grand festivities for both children and the German people of Pittsburgh.⁸⁶

The Sisters and children were scarcely comfortably lodged in their new home when it was reduced to ashes "without it being in the power of anyone

85 Ibid., 510-511.

86 Ibid., 512.

to stay the progress of the flames." The summer of 1854 had been extremely dry; the wells at the orphanage no longer produced any water. No water was as yet sent up to Troy Hill from the city, and when the asylum caught fire on July 25, it was reduced to ashes within a short time. The loss beyond that covered by insurance amounted to several thousands of dollars. Nevertheless, a temporary home was provided and work on a new and larger building was begun on the same site. The three-story brick structure that arose was the most prominent on Troy Hill. About 1870 an addition was made necessary by the increased enrollment of orphan boys and girls. St. Joseph's became known in that vicinity for the splendid garden in which the older boys worked and took a just pride. Its produce was a source of considerable income for the asylum. For some years a German newspaper, Der Republikaner, was published for the benefit of St. Joseph's.⁸⁷

The Catholic Directory for 1876 lists a St. Michael's German Orphan Asylum in Pittsburgh, South Side, conducted by the Sisters of St. Francis.⁸⁸ It will be recalled that for a time the boys from St. Paul's Orphan Asylum were kept at the old seminary at Birmingham. When the new home on Tannehill Street in Pittsburgh was completed, the boys were withdrawn and the building remained vacant for sometime. The Sisters of St. Francis from Buffalo, New York, came to Pittsburgh in November, 1865. They opened St. Francis Hospital and bought the old seminary for their motherhouse in 1867. A few years later they built a new convent, which was occupied in 1874. A portion of it was set

87 Ibid., 513-514.

88 Catholic Directory, Almanac, and Ordo, 1876, New York, 1876, 265.

aside to house the orphan children of St. Michael's parish. The number of orphans that the Sisters could accommodate necessarily was small. Rarely were there more than fifteen children in this miniature orphan home.⁸⁹

In the eighteen-sixties, two orphan asylums were established south of the Ohio River in the city of Covington, Kentucky. The Diocese of Covington, the second in the Blue Grass State, came into existence on July 29, 1853. The Reverend George Aloysius Carrell, S. J., was appointed its first Bishop. Born in the William Penn mansion in Philadelphia, the Bishop-elect had studied at St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, entered the Society of Jesus at Florissant, Missouri, and later became rector of St. Louis University. As Bishop, he established a preparatory seminary five miles from Covington in 1867. The seminary was later purchased by the German Catholics for an orphan asylum.⁹⁰

Orphan asylums had been in existence in Cincinnati, directly across the river from Covington, for nearly forty years before Covington erected its own. During this time, the orphans of Covington were cared for either in the institutions in Cincinnati, or, after 1848, by the St. John's Orphan Society of Covington. The first meeting of this Society occurred on June 1, 1848. A Constitution was adopted and dues levied. Informal though the meeting was, when it adjourned, the Society had a capital of \$62.50. At the September meeting, affairs assumed a more definite form and the Society resolved to build its own orphan home. The Bishop of Cincinnati approved the purchase of

⁸⁹ Lambing, Catholic Church in Diocese of Pittsburgh and Allegheny, 482, 515.

⁹⁰ The Catholic Telegraph, Cincinnati, July 19, 1923.

a site on Madison Pike near Fifteenth Street. A soliciting committee was appointed to collect voluntary contributions so that the debt for the site and asylum might be liquidated promptly. The first annual report shows receipts amounting to \$1,084.64; disbursements, \$1,032.17.⁹¹

The eventual building of the asylum "fell prey to a divergence of ideas." Some members of the Society favored merging with St. Aloysius Asylum in Cincinnati as is shown by the minutes of July 8, 1849, when the suggestion was made to surrender the plot purchased to the St. Aloysius Orphanage for building a mutual home. Action was entirely suspended and interest in an asylum was supplanted by a feeling of inertia. A new plan developed, namely, to place orphans in worthy Catholic families, the Society paying for board and clothing. The first child thus placed was the daughter of Mr. M. Schotler. Considerable interest was aroused and the plan heralded as an ideal solution of the problem. The Society not only discarded the plan to build its own home, but arranged to sell the plot purchased earlier on Madison Street. New members joined the Society which was incorporated in March, 1850. Almost two decades of inactivity ensued, although during this time many orphans were provided for in Catholic homes by the members.⁹²

In 1868, the Society "apparently awoke from its lethargy to a period of renewed activity." This sudden change of heart was occasioned by the fact that Bishop Carrell's seminary on Lexington Pike, sometimes referred to as

⁹¹ Souvenir Seventy-fifth Anniversary, 1848-1923, of St. John's Orphan Society, Covington, Kentucky, 4.

⁹² Ibid., 5.

Horsebranch Road (now the Dixie Highway), was unoccupied. The seminary students had been removed to another institute and the Society saw an opportunity to purchase a home equipped and adapted to the needs of the orphans. The seminary building and land, sixty-five acres, was purchased on January 28, 1868, for seventeen thousand dollars. St. John's Orphan Asylum was dedicated with great solemnity by Bishop Augustus Toebbe⁹³ on the second Sunday after Easter in 1871. Nine orphans, over whom the Benedictine Sisters had assumed charge, were present on the opening day.⁹⁴ From the very first, Bishop Toebbe "took a personal and active interest in the welfare of the orphans, and these were gathered under one roof and placed in care of the Benedictine Sisters."⁹⁵ It was at the request of Bishop Toebbe and St. John's Society that Mother Alexia took charge of the asylum on April 30, 1871. The building was well-equipped, but as the number of parentless children increased steadily, the capacity of the building was soon overtaxed. An addition, including a beautiful new chapel, was erected in 1876. Previous to 1876, St. John's had been a girls' home exclusively. During this year, an agreement was made with the Catholic clergy of Covington to consider St. John's as a home for all orphans of the various parishes in Covington.⁹⁶

93 Second bishop of Covington, 1870-1884.

94 Souvenir Seventy-fifth Anniversary, 6-7.

95 The Catholic Telegraph, July 19, 1923.

96 Sister Mary Catherine Bramlage, O. S. B., "Origin, History, and Educational Activities of the Benedictine Sisters of Covington, Kentucky," Unpublished Thesis, Notre Dame University, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1938, 60.

A much more recently organized society than St. John's was that of St. Boniface at Cold Springs, Kentucky, immediately outside of Covington. Its original purpose was to found and maintain an orphan home to care for the orphaned children of the Catholics of Campbell County. The Society adopted its first constitution in August, 1866. By 1869, the Society had accumulated funds sufficient to purchase the Walsh farm on the Alexandria Pike at Cold Springs, consisting of one hundred twenty-five acres of land upon which there was an eight-room house. The transaction was completed by Bishop Toebe to whom, by mutual agreement, the funds of the Society had been transferred in 1869. Twenty-one acres of land that lay west of the Pike were later sold. The asylum, placed by Bishop Toebe under the patronage of St. Joseph, was opened on May 12, 1869, and placed in charge of Franciscan Brothers from Cincinnati.⁹⁷

The number seeking admittance grew so quickly that the building was soon found to be utterly inadequate. As a result, in 1871, a commodious structure was erected at a cost of fifteen thousand dollars. On June 21 of that year St. Joseph's new home was dedicated. A financial disaster is associated with the construction of this building. The general contractor was paid the contract price in full, but failed to pay the sub-contractors, who placed a claim for their work and materials. The Society was thus compelled to pay twice for the erection of the home. Although burdened with a debt of thirty thousand dollars, it again set itself to its task of caring for the orphans.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ St. Joseph Orphan Home Archives, Covington, Kentucky.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

The Franciscan Brothers relinquished their charge of the asylum on May 1, 1877, and were immediately replaced by the Sisters of Notre Dame.

These belonged to the community that arrived in the United States in 1874 and were welcomed in Cleveland, Ohio, by Bishop Richard Gilmour of that city. One of these Sisters was a sister of Bishop Toebbe; therefore, it was only natural that when the Bishop needed Sisters for institutions in his diocese, he would call on the Sisters of Notre Dame. St. Joseph's Orphanage at Cold Springs was one of these. About this time it was thought advisable to incorporate the orphanage. By an Act of the General Assembly, signed on February 4, 1878, the St. Joseph Orphan Asylum became a corporate entity.⁹⁹

On June 30, 1884, the asylum was totally destroyed by fire. Fortunately no injury resulted to the Sisters or children, but the financial loss was great since the institution carried little insurance. Ways and means were immediately devised to raise funds to build a new orphan's home. On September 1, 1884, the cornerstone of a new building was laid. No time was lost in constructing the building, for in December the home was ready for the reception of the orphans. On Pentecost Monday, May 25, 1885, the new asylum was dedicated by the Right Reverend Camillus Maes.¹⁰⁰

A number of other orphanages in somewhat isolated areas, belonging to those under discussion in this chapter, remain to be mentioned. The

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. Bishop Maes, third bishop of Covington, 1885-1915. St. Joseph Orphanage records show that the original eight-room residence was later remodeled to accommodate an eight-bed infirmary, a kindergarten, and a boys' recreation room. This building still exists today.

Catholic Directory lists an orphan asylum at Minster, Ohio, for the first time in 1858.¹⁰¹ This short-lived asylum was conducted by the Sisters of the Precious Blood, a community founded in Switzerland by Mother Maria Anna Brunner. The little community was brought to America, in 1844, under Bishop Purcell. Three Sisters arrived in Peru, Ohio, in July of that year. The "cradle of the community" was at New Riegel, Ohio, where the Sisters moved when the number increased to ten. In 1848, three Sisters were sent to Minster to teach in a girls' school. Over two hundred citizens of Minster died during the cholera epidemic of the following year; schools were closed and the Sisters withdrew temporarily. After the cholera subsided, Father Francis de Sales Brunner, spiritual director of the Sisters of the Precious Blood, bought land at Minster, where the Convent of the Visitation was completed in the fall of 1852. That same year Father Andrew Kunkler became pastor at Minster. Father Kunkler grieved "at the sight of so many children made orphans by the ravages of cholera, began to collect funds for the building of an orphanage and academy for girls, to be combined with the Sisters' convent." St. Mary's Institute, as it was called, saw completion within a very short time. As other orphan asylums were established not too far distant from Minster, the children from St. Mary's were gradually sent to orphan homes elsewhere and only the Academy remained.¹⁰²

101 Dunigan's American Catholic Almanac and List of the Clergy for the Year of Our Lord, 1858, New York, 1858, 103.

102 Not with Silver or Gold: A History of the Congregation of the Precious Blood, Salem Heights, Dayton, Ohio, 1834-1944, Dayton, 1945, vii-111, 110, 114-117, 131. Joseph Dwenger, later the second bishop of Fort Wayne diocese, was left an orphan at Minster during the epidemic of 1849.

The history of St. Vincent's Home for Girls, Wheeling, West Virginia, dates back to 1850. Wheeling Hospital was first opened under lay management in a small house near the present site of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad station. In 1853 when the Sisters of St. Joseph came to Wheeling from St. Louis, they were asked to take charge of this hospital, which was removed to the Metcalf Building on Center Street. The Bishop of Wheeling then purchased the Sweeney home in the northern part of the city and Wheeling Hospital opened its doors there in 1856. It was chartered by the State Assembly as "Wheeling Hospital and Orphan Asylum" in 1857. A report of the hospital for the years 1853 to 1856 states that the average number of orphans for those years had been six.¹⁰³

On April 24, 1865, the Government took full control of the institution. Five Sisters were hired as army nurses and paid by the Government. The entire hospital was converted into a military unit when two hundred wounded soldiers were brought there on July 26. The orphans were removed to a house on the eastern point of the island directly across the river from the hospital. Sisters Ignatius, Ursula, Agnes, and Evangelist were sent to care for the children. The home thus used temporarily had been purchased by Bishop Whelan. After the War the children were again cared for at Wheeling Hospital.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ A History of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Diocese of Wheeling, 1937, 24-26.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 28, 59. The orphans were kept at the Wheeling Hospital until in 1896 when a large residence was secured for them in Elm Grove. This institution became known as St. Vincent's Home for Girls.

Shortly after the establishment of the Diocese of Columbus, Ohio, in 1868, Bishop S. H. Rosecrans, the first bishop of the diocese, felt the necessity of a home for orphaned children who needed care and shelter. The founding of St. Vincent's Orphan Home, which occurred a few years later, is clearly told in a letter published in the Columbus Westbote by the Very Reverend J. B. Hemsteger, Vicar-General at the time. In part his message read as follows:

A Catholic Orphan Asylum has been a longfelt want in the diocese of Columbus. Circumstances favor the foundation of such an institution at present. The Superior-General of the Sisters of St. Francis visited this city some time ago with the object of finding a refuge for her Sisters persecuted and exiled from Germany by Bismarck. . . . Right Rev. Sylvester Rosecrans has received them into this diocese and commissioned them to found an orphan asylum in this city. . . . A suitable place for the institution has also been secured. Louis Zettler has sold to the Right Rev. Bishop his residence with surrounding grounds on East Main Street for the sum of \$25,000. Of this sum he has since donated \$10,000 for the benefit of the orphans. The residue of \$15,000 is payable after ten years, with interest at five per cent. It will be easy to comply with these conditions if all the parishes of the diocese help generously.¹⁰⁵

The community of Sisters mentioned in Father Hemsteger's letter are the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity whose motherhouse is located at Stella Niagara, New York. The necessary alterations were made on the home which was dedicated on February 2, 1875, and placed under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul. On the same day the Sisters took charge of the eight little orphan girls who had been admitted. Within a short time, the home had received fifty girls. Applications for boys were made, but they could not be accepted because of lack of accommodations and space. During the first

ear a picnic was held for the benefit of the home. The sum of one thousand dollars was realized, and immediately a new three-story building was erected which provided for the reception of boys. A new north main building was constructed in 1878, and a chapel in 1885.¹⁰⁶ Revenues for running expenses, improvements, and additions were derived principally from the annual Christmas collections throughout the diocese, annual picnics, and volunteer offerings of the friends of the institution.¹⁰⁷

An orphan asylum, attached to Emmanuel Church, in Dayton, Ohio, is listed in 1859.¹⁰⁸ The St. Joseph Orphan Society was organized in 1849 and a building was erected in 1875. However, the Sisters of the Precious Blood did not assume charge of the orphanage until in 1891.¹⁰⁹ Since this dissertation purports to give the history of only those orphanages conducted by Sisterhoods, a history of St. Joseph's Orphanage, Dayton, does not come within the scope of this writing.

106 Seventy-five Years of Service, 1875-1950, 6.

107 Alfred E. Lee, History of the City of Columbus, Capital of Ohio, Chicago, 1892, II, 672.

108 The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory, for the United States, 1859, Baltimore, 1859, 92.

109 St. Joseph Orphanage Centennial, 1849-1949, 4-5.

CHAPTER IV

LATER EXPANSION IN THE EASTERN STATES, 1850-1884

The reader will recall that Chapter II encompassed the history of the orphanages established in the eastern part of the United States before 1850. These institutions were confined to not more than a dozen cities and towns. Only six eastern states could boast of child-caring homes under Catholic auspices. In the eighteen-fifties, however, Connecticut, Vermont, Rhode Island, and New Jersey were added to the number. Twenty years later, Catholic charity had extended its ministrations to orphans in New Hampshire and Maine. Consequently, by the close of the period covered by this study, all the eastern states from Virginia to Maine had inaugurated the supervision of one or several orphan homes.

All the New England states were a part of the Diocese of Boston from 1808 until 1843 when the Hartford Diocese was created. At the Fifth Council of Baltimore, which convened in May, 1843, Bishop Benedict J. Fenwick requested the division of his extensive Diocese of Boston. The Council sent a petition to Rome and in September, 1843, Connecticut and Rhode Island were united to form the Diocese of Hartford.¹ The Right Reverend William Tyler was

¹ Thomas F. Cullen, The Catholic Church in Rhode Island, North Providence, Rhode Island, 1936, 96.

appointed first ordinary of the See; the newly consecrated Bishop chose Providence, the largest city in his diocese, as his Episcopal See.²

Bishop Tyler was succeeded by Bishop Bernard O'Reilly³ who embarked upon his duties with three specific purposes in mind: To increase the number of clergy in the diocese, to multiply Catholic schools, and to establish upon a solid foundation an institution which would administer Christian charity to the orphans under his care.⁴ The Sisters of Mercy were introduced into his diocese on March 12, 1851, after the Bishop had applied at the Motherhouse at Pittsburgh for Sisters to open schools in Providence. At that time Rhode Island was considered "the bitterest State in the Union, and the worst bitterness of the State was supposed to be concentrated in Providence." Sisters Camillus O'Neil, Josephine and Paula Lombard, and Joanna Fogarty traveled from Pittsburgh to Providence in secular garb, and they "did not assume the religious habit until they were safely housed in the poor cottage which formed their first convent."⁵

This initial home was located on High Street (now Weybosset). However, already in the summer of 1851, Bishop O'Reilly, cognizant of the utter necessity for a better dwelling, purchased a highly desirable piece of property

2 Byrne, et al., Church in New England, I, 351.

3 Consecrated second Bishop of Hartford on November 10, 1850.

4 Cullen, Church in Rhode Island, 115.

5 Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy: Containing Sketches of the Order in Newfoundland and the United States, III, New York, 1889, 385-389.

on the corner of Broad and Claverick Streets. The large stone house, with an excellent garden plot, had been owned by an old and respected resident of Providence, a certain Mr. Stead. A frame house on an adjoining lot, also the property of Mr. Stead, was bought at the same time for an orphan asylum, the first conducted by a Sisterhood in the Diocese of Hartford. The work of caring for the orphans was carried on in this diminutive institution until 1856, when the right wing of the convent of the Sisters of Mercy was given over to the orphans. Nine years later another wing was added and the two structures were connected by a long corridor which served as a playroom for the children.⁶

This orphan home for girls was chartered in 1855 under the title of Rhode Island Catholic Orphan Asylum. The necessity of supplementing funds received from orphans' fairs and occasional collections in the churches, prompted the Sisters to use a portion of the new building as a boarding school.⁷

During the early years of the episcopate of Bishop Francis P. MacFarland,⁸ the zealous prelate began the erection of a building on Prairie Avenue, which was to be the future home of the St. Aloysius Orphan Asylum. The cornerstone was laid on May 19, 1861, and when but half of the structure was completed, a number of the orphans from the Rhode Island Catholic Asylum

6 Cullen, Church in Rhode Island, 144-145, 371. Cullen implies that the Stead property was occupied by the Sisters shortly following its purchase; however, in the Leaves from the Annals of the Sisters of Mercy, p. 391, the statement is made that the Sisters continued to live in the "poor house" until 1857.

7 Byrne, et al., Church in New England, I, 460.

8 Third bishop of the Hartford Diocese, 1858-1874. Bishop O'Reilly perished at sea in January, 1856.

were transferred. With the opening of St. Aloysius on Prairie Avenue in the spring of 1862, boys were accepted for the first time. The orphan home prospered well. The See of Providence was created in 1872, and its first Bishop, the Most Reverend Thomas F. Hendricksen, was intensely interested in the upbuilding of this particular diocesan charity. During the years of his administration, extensive improvements and additions were made and more land acquired for the St. Aloysius Orphan Asylum.⁹

The first Catholic asylum established within the state of Connecticut was at New Haven located on the southern shores of the state on Long Island Sound. On May 12, 1852, four Sisters of Mercy from Providence, Rhode Island, arrived in New Haven. These Sisters, among whom Sister M. Camillus was the superior, were the first of any religious Sisterhood to settle in the "Elm City." The Reverend Edward J. O'Brien, pastor of St. Mary's Church, accompanied the Sisters to their new convent, a spacious three-story brick residence with brownstone trimmings and an imposing entrance. The dwelling was situated on George Street, off Broad Street, conveniently near to St. Mary's Church and school. It was to this temporary convent home that, on the very day of the Sisters' arrival, two little orphan girls were brought. The children were as welcome as the Sisters had been a few hours earlier. Thus was formed the first Catholic orphan home, St. Mary's, in Connecticut.¹⁰

After two years, the Sisters and children left the George Street home to occupy the new St. Mary's asylum on Church Street where again the

⁹ Cullen, Church in Rhode Island, 145.

¹⁰ Byrne, et al., Church in New England, 448.

convent and asylum were a single new brick structure. Here in the heart of the city, the orphan home existed as a private parochial institution until 1864. Located as it was in the industrial section of the city, the site became ill-adapted to the expansion necessary for St. Mary's. The Sisters were in need of a larger convent, and as the number of orphan girls constantly increased, a new home became imperative.¹¹

On April 6, 1864, a plot of ground and buildings fronting on Highland Street and bounded on the east and west by Whitney Avenue and Prospect Street respectively were purchased from the Honorable Thomas H. Bond by the Reverend E. J. O'Brien and Reverend Matthew Hart for nineteen thousand five hundred dollars. A cottage on the premises was enlarged for the use of the orphans. This home was known as "The St. Francis Orphan Asylum of New Haven" in honor of the Most Reverend Francis P. MacFarland, who authorized the purchase of the property and some years later approved the erection of the first brick structure on the grounds.¹²

For some reason, which cannot be ascertained from available records, the Sisters of Mercy relinquished supervision of the orphanage in 1864 at the time the institution was removed to Highland Street. For a period of eighteen years, the Sisters of Charity from Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson administered to the needs of the orphans at St. Francis. Only a few terse statements relative to this interim can be found in the community records. Sisters Ulrica, Zita, and Ann Alexis opened the new asylum in May, 1864. The following year two more

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., 448-449.

Sisters were added to the orphanage staff. In 1882, the Sisters of Charity withdrew from St. Francis and the Sisters of Mercy resumed charge.¹³

According to the authors of the History of the Catholic Church in New England, forty-four girls were transferred to the new home in June, 1864. One year later the act of incorporation was approved. The number of orphan girls increased continually, and at the same time, appeals were made to provide for boys as well as girls. At the corporation meeting in February, 1873, the members determined upon the erection of a large three-story brick building which would provide ample space for boys and girls. The foundation was laid in 1874, but the new home did not see completion until two years later. Its location on an elevated ledge of rock gave it a commanding view of the eastern part of New Haven. The asylum was fortunate in obtaining financial assistance from a variety of sources. An annual appropriation of two thousand dollars was made by the city of New Haven "in return for the good work done by the orphanage, which cares for a number of children committed to it by the city authorities." Children of all creeds were placed in St. Francis because the laws of Connecticut did not permit small children to be kept in almshouses. The Honorable James Edward English, one-time Governor of Connecticut, was among the institution's principal benefactors. Surplus monies from the St. Bernard and the St. Lawrence cemetery associations of New Haven were regularly contributed to St. Francis for its support.¹⁴

13 St. Vincent Archives.

14 Byrne, et al., Church in New England, II, 447-449.

The second city of Connecticut to establish a refuge for orphans was Hartford. Here in the capital city, St. James Orphan Asylum for boys, located at 93 Church Street, was founded in May, 1864, by the Very Reverend James Hughes, Vicar-General of the diocese. For about ten years, the home continued to have an enrollment of nearly one hundred boys. However, as boys were accepted at St. Francis Asylum in New Haven, the number was greatly diminished and remained low for years after. Connected with St. James was St. Catherine's Asylum for girls. This institution rarely had more than twenty-five charges. Both of the Hartford asylums were conducted by the Sisters of Mercy. Both, because of their small size, were analogous to the parish orphan homes which became quite numerous in the latter part of the nineteenth century.¹⁵

Vermont was the fourth New England state to establish a Catholic orphanage. The Diocese of Burlington, which comprised the entire state, was created on July 29, 1853. The new See was entrusted to the Most Reverend Louis De Goesbriand. Within six months after his consecration, the Bishop purchased property intended for conversion into a home for orphans of his diocese. The old building referred to as the "Pearl Street House" was remodeled for the purpose and the Sisters of Charity of Providence, whose Motherhouse was in Montreal, Canada, were requested to send Sisters to assume charge. The first two, Sisters Theresa and Catherine, arrived in Burlington in May, 1854.¹⁶ Both boys and girls were accepted and the number of orphans from all parts of the

15 Ibid., 451-452.

16 Ibid., 468-472. An illustration in this volume, p. 474, depicts a four-story brick building with a prominent central tower beneath which appeared the legend, "Providence Orphan Asylum, St. Joseph's, Burlington."

state were ever on the increase. In time, larger quarters became an urgent necessity and land was purchased upon which a new asylum was built. The Sisters and orphans transferred from the first modest home to a spacious and imposing building in December, 1883. The legal title, "St. Joseph's Providence Orphan Asylum and Hospital," was commonly simplified, the institution being known everywhere as St. Joseph's Orphanage. Revenues were obtained for many years solely from alms solicited by the Sisters throughout the whole diocese. Bishop De Goesbriand, the founder of St. Joseph's continued to be its staunch friend. The last years of his life were spent at the asylum among his beloved orphans.¹⁷

Simultaneous with the increase of orphan homes in New England in the eighteen-fifties, there appeared a number of institutions in New Jersey in the cities of Newark and Paterson. The first of these, St. Patrick's in Newark, had its commencement in 1851 when Father Louis Dominic Senez, pastor of St. Patrick's Church, gathered several homeless orphans and sheltered them in a house on Nesbitt Street directly to the rear of the church. Benevolently disposed women of the parish volunteered to care for the children. The year 1853 marked the formation of the Newark Diocese, the government of which was assigned to the Most Reverend James Roosevelt Bayley, a nephew of Mother Seton. Bishop Bayley became a convert to the Catholic Church, entered the priesthood, was consecrated first Bishop of Newark, and later became

¹⁷ Information obtained from Questionnaire. Bishop De Goesbriand died in 1899.

Archbishop of Baltimore.¹⁸ The same year St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum for boys was incorporated by the State of New Jersey.¹⁹

In October, 1853, the Reverend Bernard J. McQuaid, who succeeded Father Senez as rector of St. Patrick's Cathedral, made an appeal to the Sisters of Charity at Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson to take charge of the fifteen orphans then at St. Patrick's. At a Council meeting on October 13, Sisters Philippine, Benedicta, and Agnes were appointed for the Newark mission. The Mount St. Vincent Sisters remained at St. Patrick's until September, 1859, when Bishop Bayley's plan to organize a diocesan community saw its fulfillment and the New Jersey foundation opened a separate motherhouse.²⁰ Two of the "Mount" Sisters, Sisters Mary Xavier Mehegan and Mary Catherine Nevin, volunteered to form the nucleus of a new community of Sisters of Charity. Following the withdrawal of Sisters from Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson, Sister Mary Catherine was placed in charge of the orphanage.²¹

In 1860, the Sisters and orphans removed to the Fairchild Mansion, an imposing four-story brick structure built in 1790, located in the Vailsburg section in South Orange. Poverty marked the early history of St. Mary's²² at

18 White, Mother Seton, 2.

19 Newark Evening News, March 8, 1953.

20 St. Vincent Archives.

21 Sister Mary Agnes Sharkey, The New Jersey Sisters of Charity, III, New York, 1933, 186.

22 Apparently the name of the orphanage was changed to St. Mary's at the time of the transfer to South Orange. The title "St. Patrick's" no longer appears in the records after 1860.

the Mansion. Fortunately a forty-three acre farm, which the older boys helped to cultivate, surrounded the asylum providing some means of support. However, it was the personal interest and untiring labors of Father Sebastian Messmer that provided "the greatest supports and spiritual comforts of these days of hardship."²³ Father Messmer not only served in the capacity of chaplain, but helped in the management of the farm. Oftentimes attired in the clothes of a laborer he followed the plow down the furrows. An interesting narrative is chronicled about this priest "farmer." On one occasion when Father Messmer was engaged in farm work, a party of visitors approached to inquire where they might find "Dr. Messmer." The chaplain, pointing to the orphanage, replied that he was certain that if they would go there, they would find Father Messmer. As soon as the visitors had withdrawn far enough so that Father would not be discovered, he hurried to his room at the orphanage, exchanged laborer's togs for a cassock, and appeared in the parlor to meet the guests. The latter did not recognize Father Messmer, a fact which amused the chaplain greatly and led him to relate the incident with much gusto in years to come.²⁴

Noteworthy among the benefactors of the institution were Andrew Radel and the members of his family. A separate New Jersey Motherhouse, located at the corner of Bleecher and Washington Streets, was built in 1859. Mother Xavier attests to the fact that Mr. Radel often donated food for the children under her care. Later when the orphan asylum had been removed to South Orange,

23 Consecrated Bishop of Green Bay in 1892; Archbishop of Milwaukee 1903 to 1930.

24 Sharkey, New Jersey Sisters of Charity, 186-187.

Mr. Radel, then controller of the new trolley system operating between Newark and South Orange, supplied free passes for the Sisters and orphans.²⁵

In the years following, several brick buildings were added gradually at St. Mary's. The chapel, which was used as a parish church for years, was erected in 1870. Six years later, the girls' building known as St. Joseph's Industrial School²⁶ provided a place and equipment for instructing girls in sewing, cooking, shirtwaist making, and other skills to insure the self-support of the girls when they left the orphanage. A laundry was added in 1881.²⁷

A second home for orphans in Newark, St. Peter's Orphanage, was established in 1864 when the number of parentless children increased as a result of the Civil War. Twelve years prior, a small frame church was built at Belmont Avenue and Livingston Street for the German speaking Catholics of Newark. In 1855, the Reverend Gottfried Prieth, who had fled from Europe during the Revolutions of 1848, was appointed pastor. St. Peter's parish and church became a refuge for many Germans migrating to this area, and its location in an elevated section of the city led to the appellation "Deutsche Berg."

Through Father Prieth's efforts, a house, intended as a home for Sisters and orphan boys and girls, was purchased. The arrangement prevailing generally at the time was that each parish care, in some way, for its own orphans. St. Peter's having so few of its own at the time, accepted children from other

25 Ibid., 188.

26 The name remains on the building to this day. Records do not indicate when girls were first admitted.

27 Newark Evening News, March 8, 1953.

parishes of Newark.²⁸ It is not clear who cared for the orphans at this period of the history of St. Peter's.

A group of School Sisters of Notre Dame, from Baltimore, Maryland, arrived in 1864 to take charge of St. Peter's parochial school, as well as, the orphanage. Only two brief comments can be found regarding the Sisters' first years at St. Peter's. Sister Maria Severina acted as head of the school and orphanage, and no child was ever refused admittance. In an emergency, the Sisters sometimes made "beds" from corn husks and placed them on the floor.²⁹ The first home soon became overcrowded and several lots adjoining the initial dwelling were secured. Father Prieth erected a three-story brick building with a mansard roof. The cornerstone was laid on May 26, 1870, by Bishop Bayley, and the new St. Peter's Orphan Asylum was dedicated five months later. Two Orphan Aid Societies, the parishioners of St. Peter's Church, and many non-Catholic benefactors supported the institution financially.³⁰

St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum for girls in Paterson, New Jersey, was established in 1853 by the Reverend Dominic Senez, founder of St. Patrick's in Newark. The same year the Sisters of Charity from Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson assumed charge of the original asylum, an unpretentious dwelling on Oliver Street. The extant history of St. Joseph's consists in little more than a rehearsal of the series of changes in location. From 1855 to 1867, the Sisters

²⁸ Diamond Jubilee, St. Peter's Catholic Church, Newark, New Jersey 1856-1935, 23.

²⁹ Questionnaire.

³⁰ Diamond Jubilee, St. Peter's Catholic Church, 23.

and orphans lived in a large structure adjoining the public library. Here Sister Mary Catherine Nevin, also associated with St. Patrick's in Newark, was in charge. With the increase in the number of orphans during the Civil War, a more favorable site became highly desirable. The St. John's parish, which maintained the orphans at St. Joseph's from its funds, purchased the old Shepherd Farm near Lincoln Bridge situated above Passaic Falls. The old residence on a picturesque knoll was used for some time as an orphan asylum; in later years other frame structures were erected. Sister Francis Conlon was superior for many years at Shepherd Farm. It is noted that numerous hardships were borne by the Sisters while caring for the hundred or more children placed with them. Especially difficult was the carrying of water "pail by pail for every household purpose."³¹

St. Mary's and St. Michael's parishes in Jersey City, New Jersey, supported homes for their own orphans. St. Mary's founded in the early eighteen-sixties, was conducted by the Sisters of Charity from St. Vincent-on-Hudson in a small home near the parish church. In 1870 Monsignor Januarius de Concilio, rector of St. Michael's Church, established a parish school in the basement of the church. Six years later, through the generosity of Mr. Harold Henwood, a building on the corner of Pavonia Avenue and Erie Street was secured for the parish. In this residence, with Sister Mary Beatrice Hickey in charge, an orphanage was opened. A beautiful brownstone structure replaced the original building in 1880. In the construction of the new orphanage, Mr. Henwood was again the "munificent patron." He continued to support the home until the

31 Sharkey, New Jersey Sisters of Charity, 253-255.

time of his death, and in his will provided for the "beneficent work by legacies which enabled it to continue service to the orphaned poor of the parish."³²

In Chapter Two, the reader became acquainted with the history of the earlier orphanages in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and New York. Each of these cities witnessed an increment in the number of child-caring institutions erected under Catholic patronage in the generation which followed. Their history, likewise, comes within the scope of this study.

An account of St. Joseph's and St. John's asylums in Philadelphia has been given. Reference was also made to the short-lived St. Vincent's Male Orphan Asylum founded and conducted for a brief time by the Reverend Francis Guth. Subsequently two other institutions of the same cognomen arose in the "City of Brotherly Love." The first of these was founded about 1850 by a number of laymen. The only available account of this St. Vincent's Home seems to be the brief chronicle found in the Emmitsburg Archives. The Sisters of Charity took charge of the institution and its sixteen orphans on July 19, 1855. The Home was located on Stiles Street until a year later when a house on Frelander Street became the second temporary dwelling. In 1857, the Sisters and orphans moved to a spacious house on the northwest corner of Eighteenth and Wood Streets where "the institution became the center of untold

32 Ibid., 112-117. Sadlier's Catholic Directory, Almanac, and Ordo, 1883, 474, lists St. Mary's Catholic Orphan Asylum, New Brunswick, New Jersey. This orphan home was opened by Franciscan Sisters, who purchased an old mansion in New Brunswick for the purpose. The site is now St. Peter's Hospital, New Brunswick.

usefulness." Boys between the ages of four and eight, and girls between four and twelve, were given a home in St. Vincent's. After the age limits had been reached, the boys were transferred to St. John's and the girls to St. Joseph's.³³

The other St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum was located at Tacony, on the Delaware River, about six miles east of the city of Philadelphia. This institution is but one of a number established for German Catholic orphans in several large cities in the East. The great influx of German immigrants in the middle of the nineteenth century created a demand for additional orphan homes. The efforts of the Redemptorists in behalf of German Catholics were particularly noteworthy. In praise of them it is recorded that besides "church and school, they also erected their own orphanage and hospitals, together with a parish cemetery. Almost every orphan asylum for German speaking Catholics between 1840 - 1860 was the result of their zeal."³⁴

The House Chronicle of the Redemptorist Fathers at St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia has the following notation under date of July, 1855: "there was in our Church and in Holy Trinity Church the St. Vincent's Orphan Society established to erect an Orphan Asylum."³⁵ This information is supplemented by a report in the first Minute Book of the Society:

33 Emmitsburg Archives.

34 Roth, History of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum, Tacony, 16-17. Father Roth states that the Redemptorists built St. Joseph's Asylum in New York in 1851, the Catholic Asylum in Buffalo in 1852, St. Anthony's in Baltimore in 1852, and St. Joseph's in Rochester in 1861. Ibid., 17.

35 Ibid., 19, quoting House Chronicle of Redemptorist Fathers, St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia. Original in German.

On October 8, 1855, the first Board of Managers of the St. Vincent's Society was elected. On the following day it met in the home of Henry Daudt on 5th Street above Wood Street, with the intention of electing its first officers.³⁶

The founding of St. Vincent's at Tacony was associated with a real estate venture. Forty-nine acres of land at a total cost of nineteen thousand four hundred dollars were purchased. Twenty of these were to be laid out in building lots and sold at auction. For the purpose of reselling the land, the Tacony Cottage Association was formed in November, 1855. This Association, in fact merely a sub-committee of the Society's Board of Managers, succeeded in selling most of the lots to members of the two German parishes. The project was successful and made the building of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum a possibility. Ground for the asylum was broken at a solemn ceremony which took place on November 20, 1856.³⁷

The small south wing, "40 x 41 feet, three stories high besides a basement which served as a kitchen and refectory" was not completed until a year and a half later. Undoubtedly the panic of 1857 was a significant factor in the delay. The new orphanage began its mission of charity with eleven children and three Franciscan Sisters. The latter belonged to a German community founded four years previously in St. Alphonsus Parish by the Most Reverend John Neumann, fourth Bishop of Philadelphia. Upon the urgent request of the Reverend Peter Carbon, president of the asylum, Sisters Bernardine, Angela,

36 Ibid., citing Minute Book, St. Vincent's Society. Original in

37 Ibid., 20-23.

and Agnes were sent from the Motherhouse on February 28, 1859. These Sisters remained only nine months being recalled on December 6 of the same year.³⁸

On the same day that the Franciscan Sisters left St. Vincent's, two School Sisters of Notre Dame and a postulant arrived.³⁹ Only through many sacrifices and much patience did they succeed in converting the asylum into a healthful attractive home. Improvement began immediately after the first visit, in the spring of 1860, of the American Superior General of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Mother Caroline Friess, a woman famous among pioneer Sisters of America. Apparently Mother Caroline prevailed upon the Board of Managers to take a more active part in relieving the asylum.⁴⁰

During the first year, the number of orphans increased threefold.

This demanded the completion of the proposed building. The Managers undertook the task in the summer of 1860. The following citations contain a concise account of the expansion that was made:

38 Ibid., 25, 32-33. These Sisters are known today as the Glen Riddle Franciscans. The reason for the withdrawal of the Sisters may be found in the Annals of Glen Riddle, where the following statement is given: "On account of its close proximity to the Delaware River the house was at times flooded and poor sanitation rendered the place damp and unhealthful. The children became the prey of many infectious diseases from which the Sisters themselves were not immune."

39 Ibid., 35. Before the formation of the Tacony Cottage Association, the School Sisters of Notre Dame had opened a boarding school at St. Peter's Parish. According to the Community Chronicles of 1854, the Sisters had nine pupils and eight orphans. The St. Vincent's Orphan Society paid for the support of these orphans as is indicated in the records. To this day, a house on Fifth Street, near St. Peter's Church, is called "The Orphanage." After the opening of St. Vincent's at Tacony, these children were transferred to the new orphan home.

40 Ibid., 33-34.

The contemplated addition, will be in length 80 feet marking the entire building, when finished 120 feet long. The central part of the building for a length of 40 feet, will project at each side some 15 feet making the ground plan of the building to resemble a cross of 120 by 70 feet.

.....
 In the center will be a campanile or bell tower covered with a dome and cross, rising over the roof 30 feet and above the ground 93 feet.

The building will be of brick, with circular headed windows with brown stone sills. It is placed lengthwise to the river and turnpike, and will present a striking and handsome appearance when viewed from either side.⁴¹

Fully a decade elapsed before the building approximated completion. Recovery following the depression of 1857 and the harrowing years of the Civil War militated against progress in construction. The House Chronicle contains but a single passage relative to the Civil War: During the last year of the War, calico bought for the girls cost seventy-five cents per year. The Civil War proved the necessity of orphan homes. For the first time, the State of Pennsylvania undertook to care for its orphans on a larger scale. The State paid one hundred dollars annually per child for the sixteen war orphans that found their way into St. Vincent's.⁴²

The two chief means of support were the foundation of two newspapers and the orphan festivals. The first German Catholic Daily in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Volksblatt, appeared in January, 1872; its initial Sunday edition, the Nord-Amerika, was published in September, 1873. A two-fold purpose prompted the establishment of these publications: First, as a means of preserving the Faith of the thousands of new German Catholic immigrants, as well

41 Ibid., 25. Quoted from The Catholic Herald, July 21, 1860.

42 Ibid., 43.

as, acquainting them with affairs in their adopted country; secondly, the monetary gain was to assist in maintaining St. Vincent's. However, the depression of 1873, the large sums of money spent for printing equipment, and evidences of mismanagement prevented the accrual of any substantial benefits to the orphan home. Of prime importance financially were the annual festivals, first held in individual parishes and later a number of parishes combining efforts to promote their success. Held in large public parks, the festivals attracted thousands of patrons whose generosity aided in the support of St. Vincent's through trying years. The climax of the first period of St. Vincent's history may be said to have terminated when in October, 1883, the institution held a special celebration to commemorate the twenty-fifth year of its existence. Evidence of the "high esteem and the great love in which St. Vincent's was held" was manifested by thousands of persons who paid honor to the institution by their participation in the Silver Jubilee observance.⁴³

Two other asylums were established in Philadelphia during this period. A directory of various institutions in the city, lists a St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi Asylum for Italian orphan girls between the ages of three and fifteen. This asylum, incorporated in 1861, was located at 730 Montrose Street. Reverend Father Isolero⁴⁴ is designated as the founder, while the

43 Ibid., 47-55.

44 In Sharf's History of Philadelphia, 1483, the founder's name is given as Reverend A. G. Isolero.

Missionary Sisters of St. Francis were asked to take charge of the orphans.⁴⁵

Another source of information is a report of the Catholic Charities and Social Welfare Activities in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia for the year 1929. The report contains the following notation:

The Missionary Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, whose motherhouse is in Peekskill, New York, have been working for the benefit of the children of the Italian district of Philadelphia since the year 1874, when St. Mary Magdalen De Pazzi's School and Orphanage were opened at 730 Montrose Street.⁴⁶

The Catholic Home for Destitute Children, the last asylum founded in Philadelphia during the period of years included in this study was chartered in 1863. An old unpagged minute book gives the purpose of its establishment:

Whereas: By reason of the improvidence of some parents and the absence of many fathers in the army or their death, great numbers of Roman Catholic children are uncared for and when committed to the care of the existing Roman Catholic asylums there are no adequate means for their reception or custody.⁴⁷

45 A Directory of the Charitable, Social Improvement, Educational and Religious Associations and Churches of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, 1903, 81. Both Scharf, in the History of Philadelphia, 1483, and Sadlier's Catholic Directory, Almanac, and Ordo, 1875, 137, give South Seventh Street as the address.

46 Archdiocese of Philadelphia: Catholic Charities and Social Welfare Activities, 1929, 104. It will be noted that the date of founding does not correspond with the above references. A communication from Mount St. Francis, Peekskill, New York, dated December 15, 1953, states that St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi orphanage was opened in connection with the parochial school in the parish. It was in existence only a few years, after which time the Sisters were wholly occupied with the school.

47 Catholic Home Minutes, Manuscript, not paged. Chancery Office, Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

The Most Reverend James F. Wood,⁴⁸ together with a number of clergy-
men and laymen, formed a body politic with the intent to care for and educate
orphaned and destitute children under the age of fourteen. The newly organ-
ized society was approved April 11, 1863, and the members held their first of-
ficial meeting on June 23 in the Hall of the Particular Council of The Society
of St. Vincent de Paul. The Constitution having been approved and a Board of
Managers having been elected, a committee was appointed to secure a suitable
dwelling for a temporary home. On March 10, 1864, the committee reported the
existence of available property for a sum of five thousand two hundred fifty
dollars in West Philadelphia. Bishop Wood opened a subscription list with one
hundred dollars and funds were solicited in various parishes of the diocese.
The small nine-room house on a one-half acre site at Forty-fourth and Elm
Streets was purchased on March 24, 1864, the owners returning two hundred
fifty dollars as a donation to the Catholic Home.⁴⁹

The advertisement for a matron was answered by nine interested per-
sons. Bishop Wood selected a certain Mrs. Curtin to fill the position at a
salary of three hundred dollars a year. At the meeting of September 12, 1864,
the secretary informed the Board of Managers that preparations had been made
for the reception of twenty-five children; iron beds and husk mattresses had
been ordered and the matron had moved into the house. By November, the home
was already crowded and Bishop Wood suggested that some of the children be
placed with good Catholic families. The Minutes of the meeting of December 12,

48 Bishop of Philadelphia, 1860 to 1875; Archbishop, 1875 to 1883.

49 Catholic Home Minutes.

1864, indicate that a further increase occurred and a Miss Mary Forbes was employed as assistant matron at two dollars per week. The circumstance of Mrs. Curtin's death from fever on Easter Monday, April 17, 1865, led to the appointment of three Sisters of St. Joseph to take charge of the orphans in the Catholic Home. During the course of several weeks, nine of the children contracted fever and were taken to a hospital. The Managers, fearful of the house being infected, deemed it wise to remove the orphans from the Catholic Home until it had been thoroughly disinfected. Accordingly, the boys were placed in St. John's Asylum and the girls were hospitably received at the convent of the Sisters of St. Joseph on Summer Street. The orphans never returned to the original Catholic Home, for in the minutes of August 14, 1865, it is stated that the house was rented for a term of three years to a Mr. A. Holby.⁵⁰

The Sisters of St. Joseph had from the very foundation of their community been engaged in the care of orphans. An annalist of the Catholic Home points out that the very first reception of the daughters of St. Joseph was significant, for they received the religious garb "of all places else available in the Chapel of the Orphan Asylum of Le Puy" and that administering to orphans was the "initial step into the public life of Charity." Hence, the Sisters of St. Joseph readily accepted the invitation of Bishop Wood to assume charge of the new orphan home purchased on Race and Eighteenth Streets. The

⁵⁰ Ibid. No further minutes are recorded until April 24, 1877, at which meeting it was reported that Miss Ellen Ann Carroll had bequeathed five hundred dollars to the Home. On September 18, 1877, the secretary reported that eight hundred two children had been admitted since the foundation of the asylum. After the latter date, no minutes of the Society are recorded.

necessary alterations were made and the new Catholic Home was formally opened on May 31, 1865. In 1876 the building was enlarged and renovated, and the following year a Chapel was added. These accomplishments were achieved during the superiorships of Mother M. Seraphine, who was in charge from 1865 to 1872, and Mother M. Febronia, in office from 1872 to 1886.⁵¹

While any of the Civil War wards remained, a government allowance was made annually for each child, and the Governor of Pennsylvania visited the Home twice yearly. Even when the days of government assistance had passed, the Catholic Home continued to be a valued institution to the diocese and city. Providence provided and help came from another source. In 1884, Francis X. Drexel, banker philanthropist, remembered the Catholic Home in his will. The legacy was used to rebuild the Race Street asylum which by 1884 had become inadequate for the requirements.⁵²

Before 1850 Baltimore's sole permanent orphan asylum was that of St. Mary's entrusted to the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg. The next thirty years witnessed an extraordinary growth of new homes each of which present interestingly diverse histories.

The cornerstone of the first of these, St. Anthony's Orphan Asylum in Baltimore City, was laid by Archbishop Kenrick on October 24, 1853. For many years before this event, the Redemptorists in four German parishes in Baltimore had evinced a deep concern for the orphans of German parentage. As

⁵¹ The Story of Philadelphia's Catholic Home for Orphan Girls, 1863-1926, 9-11, 35. Brochure in the Catholic Home Archives.

⁵² Ibid., 11-13.

early as 1847, orphans had been received by the School Sisters of Notre Dame and cared for in their convent connected with St. James School. Prompted by the necessity of having a distinct dwelling for this charitable work, the Redemptorists began to collect funds.⁵³ Reverend Anthony Schmitt,⁵⁴ who gave of his energies unstintingly, canvassed the city himself accepting not only money but any gift that was offered. At one place he "received an umbrella for which he was grateful." The zealous priest later bought a large plot of ground on the east side of Central Avenue (now Eager Street) through Eden Street. The site was purchased from a Mr. Sterling for the sum of twelve thousand dollars. On a portion of this ground, St. Anthony's was built. The structure having a central section consisting of four stories and basement was flanked by two wings each of three stories. An outstanding feature of the new building was the central steeple with its six-foot glittering cross. The part of the grounds not used for the orphan asylum was leased to individual residents who paid ground rent thus affording the institution a source of income.⁵⁵

St. Anthony's was solemnly dedicated in May, 1854, and at the end of the month placed in charge of the Osterman family. The father and son, both carpenters by trade, completed the work on the asylum, while the mother and two daughters cared for the orphans who were brought from St. James School. Women of the parish organized the so-called "Patch Party" and met weekly at

53 Centenary, St. James' Church, Baltimore, 1834-1934, 21-23.

54 Also spelled "Schmid."

55 Archives, Motherhouse of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, Eastern Province, Baltimore.

the orphanage to sew for the institution. The same year an agreement made between the Directors of St. Anthony's Orphan Asylum and the School Sisters of Notre Dame of Baltimore placed the asylum in the hands of a Sisterhood. Four Sisters formed the initial group which was instructed to accept both boys and girls, to teach German as well as English, and, besides regular school subjects, to give instruction in domestic arts.⁵⁶

Numerous items of interest are interspersed among the historical data of the asylum. On one occasion, a benefactress who was commissioned to collect for furnishings for the home, went to a tavern where her efforts were repaid with insolence. One of the worst insulters took ill and died within two weeks. His wife followed in death shortly after, causing the two children, ages seven and three, to be taken to St. Anthony's. There is reference made to a child seriously ill with consumption who was afraid to die because she had heard that the way to heaven was a thorny road and she was afraid of thorns. For years a kind-hearted baker sent a dollar's worth of bread to the orphanage weekly. Wartime inflated prices brought the price of flour to over ten dollars a barrel and a yard of calico to as high as seventy-five cents per yard. The Sisters had not only to contend with the high cost of living, but with the warlike spirit among the orphans. The latter divided into two groups, the Unionists and the Secessionists, and there "was a spat at every recreation." The children, on their walks, would frequently pass the nearby camp where the

56 Ibid.

soldiers would ask for a song. A favorite melody among the troops was "Von Meiner Heimat Muss Ich Scheiden."⁵⁷

St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum and the Dolan Aid Asylum may be justly regarded as twin institutions. Both were connected with St. Patrick's Church; each claimed the same founder; both were in charge of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. The former was established by the Reverend James N. Dolan⁵⁸ of whom the following words are written in tribute:

The work, however, for which Father Dolan is best remembered is his solicitude for the orphans. Having lost his parents in his youth, he considered himself as one of them, and never lost an opportunity to attempt to compensate for their deprivation.⁵⁹

In 1847, Father Dolan secured a tract of land in Govanstown, Baltimore County (near the site of the present St. Mary's Church), and opened an institution known as the Orphan's Home of Baltimore. Perhaps at no time in the city's history was an institution of this nature more necessary. Church records show that in that year fever claimed so many lives that the number of burials far exceeded the number of baptisms. The year 1847 likewise marked the beginning of the great Irish immigration. Scores of those who reached Baltimore had contracted ship fever while on board and died shortly after their arrival. Within a year, Father Dolan "found himself the sole refuge of about forty orphans." Father turned to a friend, Hugh Jenkins, a Protestant,

57 Ibid.

58 Pastor of St. Patrick's Church, Baltimore, 1841-1870.

59 Souvenir Book, Sesquicentennial St. Patrick's Parish, Baltimore, Maryland, 1792-1942, 72.

who provided the eight thousand dollars with which to purchase the farm.⁶⁰ According to Scharf, the property was three miles from the city between the Falls and York Turnpike.⁶¹

While the Home was located in the country, it was successively in charge of the Brothers of St. Patrick, Reverend Patrick E. Moriarty, O. S. A., and Father Dolan himself assisted by lay volunteers. Twelve years later the institution was transferred to the city.⁶² Father Dolan now petitioned Mother Angela Gillespie, co-foundress with Reverend Edward Sorin of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in America, to send Sisters to St. Patrick's School and Orphan Asylum. Sister Alphonsus, as superior, and Sisters Celestine, Emanuel, and Dominica, comprised the first group to arrive in Baltimore from the northern Indiana Motherhouse. Records indicate that the Sisters taught in the parochial school for girls, had charge of the smaller orphan boys, and conducted a select school known as St. Patrick's Academy. For a period of five years, the Sisters lived on Gough Street. They then moved to a home on the corner of Bank and Register Streets where they lived until 1870. In that year, the Orphan's Home on Broadway, which the Brothers of the Holy Cross conducted for the older orphan boys since 1859, was renovated and repaired for the Academy and residence of the Sisters. The Sisters brought the orphans from the Bank Street home to the Broadway dwelling and remained there

60 Ibid., 72-73.

61 Scharf, History of Baltimore City, 598.

62 Souvenir Book, St. Patrick's Parish, 115.

until 1876 when St. Patrick's Orphanage was established at 1707 Gough Street where it still exists today.⁶³ At no time was there a large number of orphans at St. Patrick's; in confirmation, there is found the following passage:

"Always the Sisters of the Holy Cross thus have regarded St. Patrick's Orphanage the smallest, the most obscure, and possibly the poorest of the foundations in the Eastern Province." That so meagre a history of St. Patrick's is presented here, is explained by a further reference to the institution: "So hidden has been the work for souls accomplished there, that neither archives nor documents of any kind furnish the historian with any tangible data on which to weave a narrative."⁶⁴

Through his will, Father Dolan carried on the noble work he had so faithfully executed in life. The orphans were among the best remembered beneficiaries. One item of the will reads in part: "I give and bequeath one-third of my real estate, in trust to the trustees of the Orphan's Home in Baltimore City [St. Patrick's] ." The second orphanage, namely, the Dolan Aid Asylum, was made possible through the generosity of Father Dolan as is evident from another item in his will: "I give and bequeath my house and lot on Gough Street to the Young Catholic's Friend Society, in the city of Baltimore, in trust to be sold for the purpose of establishing a Children's Aid Society. I

63 Archives St. Patrick's Orphan Asylum.

64 Our Provinces, Centenary Chronicles of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, 1841-1941, Holy Cross, Indiana, 1941, 249-250.

also leave them one-third of all my property, real, personal, and mixed, for the support of the said Society."⁶⁵

The Young Catholic's Friend Society had been incorporated in 1848. To fulfill the provisions of Father Dolan's will, the Society appointed a Board of Managers which was commissioned to administer the bequeathed estate. The president of the Board was to make a report every six months to the Society relative to the number of children, their names, and amounts of money expended in maintaining the institution. The Society proceeded to prepare the home of the late Father Dolan on Gough Street for the reception of orphans.⁶⁶ In the summer of 1874, Archbishop Bayley requested Mother Angela to send Sisters to take charge of this asylum. The petition received a favorable response, for the new asylum opened on July 1, 1874, with Sister M. Lydia Clifford as Directress, and Sisters M. Clothilde Fitzgerald and Justina Langley to assist her. To aid in the support of the asylum, the Sisters collected what money and supplies they could; each week they made trips to the Broadway and Marsh markets where meat, fruit, and vegetables were given to them. Between forty and fifty children were accommodated at the Dolan Aid Asylum. Unlike St. Patrick's Orphanage, this asylum sheltered both small boys and girls.⁶⁷ In this way, sisters and brothers were "kept together, . . . seeing

⁶⁵ Souvenir Book, St. Patrick's Parish, 77. Will quoted in its entirety, 75-78.

⁶⁶ Constitutions, By-Laws and List of Members of the Young Catholics' Friend Society, 13-14. In time the Dolan home became inadequate and the Society purchased an adjoining building.

⁶⁷ Archives Dolan Aid Asylum. Mother M. Angela decided to name the new asylum "St. James Home" in memory of Father James Dolan, and thus the

each other day by day, attending school near each other, with never a chance of their drifting apart."⁶⁸

The actual founding of St. Frances Asylum in Baltimore, in 1866, was preceded by more than a half century of unique history. Continual "disturbances, uprisings, massacres, swift changes of government," that beset San Domingo in the latter part of the eighteenth and the first decade of the nineteenth century, sent many refugees from the island to Baltimore and other nearby cities. Among the exiles, there were a large number of Negroes; all were Catholics and spoke the French language. The French Revolution not only sent refugees from San Domingo to the States, but also brought from France a number of Sulpician priests who opened a seminary in 1791. About a quarter of a century later, a San Domingo refugee, M. James Marie Hector Nicholas Joubert de La Muraille, a Sulpician priest known simply as M. Joubert, founded a community of colored Sisters, the Oblate Sisters of Providence. The nucleus consisted of four young women, French in language, habits of life, and in sympathies; two of them were San Domingo exiles; one came from Santiago de Cuba, and one was born in Baltimore of French parents.⁶⁹

institution was known throughout the community for four years. The Archbishop of Baltimore, the Most Reverend James Gibbons, established a home for newsboys on Front Street at the time and gave it the title of "St. James Home." The trustees, "not wishing to dispute his right, but finding it a cause for many mistakes and delays," changed the name to "Dolan Aid Asylum," the title under which it was incorporated. Archives.

⁶⁸ The Baltimore Sun, November 10, 1912.

⁶⁹ Grace H. Sherwood, The Oblates' Hundred and One Years, New York, 1931, 4-6.

The infant community first lived in a rented house at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and St. Mary's Court. It was here that a novitiate was begun in June, 1828. One year later the Sisters left their first humble dwelling to occupy another on George Street. In this home, their first vows were taken and the special object of the Order, namely, the Christian education of colored children, set forth. A school was opened and the Oblates made it a practice from the beginning to care for and educate gratuitously some poor or neglected children. The "taking in of these children marks the beginning of the custom of caring for orphans, continued by the Oblates until very lately when the Archbishop of Baltimore transferred them to the care of the Franciscan Sisters (white) leaving the Oblates free for their teaching work." Within a year after the removal to George Street, the home became overcrowded because of the increase of boarders. The Sisters then bought an adjoining lot and the small house on it, brought alongside their brick house, provided additional space. The additional lot gave a frontage of forty-four feet on Richmond Street.⁷⁰

Almost a generation passed before the formal opening of an orphan asylum. The appalling increase in the number of orphans resulting from the Civil War prompted the Reverend Peter Miller, S. J.,⁷¹ to institute special collections for the care of colored orphans. In the summer of 1866, a part of

70 *Ibid.*, 16-21, 31-33, 45.

71 *Ibid.*, 131. Appointed pastor of St. Francis Xavier's Church, Baltimore, the first Catholic Church for colored people in the United States. Father was made director of the Oblates in November, 1860, and became a great friend of the Sisters and orphans.

the institution was renovated for separate living quarters for orphans and solemnly blessed in October of the same year. St. Frances of Rome having been chosen as the patroness of the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the orphan home was given the title "St. Frances Asylum." The home experienced many hardships especially during the financial depression of 1873 which is designated as the Oblates' "trying time." Only two rays of light shone upon the asylum during that year. Mr. Ford invited the St. Frances pupils and orphans to attend a matinee performance at Ford's Opera House during the Christmas vacation, and toward the close of the year, Archbishop Bayley visited the Sisters and, on leaving, "pressed into the Mother Superior's hand the sum of fifty dollars." An arrangement was made, in 1875, with the Sisters of Charity in New York, who conducted an infant asylum, whereby the colored children who had grown out of babyhood would be sent to St. Frances.⁷²

The last orphanage founded in Baltimore before 1884 was that of St. Elizabeth, which had an unusual beginning. The Morning Herald, a Baltimore paper, carried an account early in 1880 that "a private charitable orphan asylum" had been discovered in one of the most obscure sections of the city. The asylum had its origin in the home of Mrs. Mary E. Herbert, colored, at 40 Cohen Alley, between Howard and Eutaw Streets. Her husband deserted her, leaving her without means and with a sickly crippled child of eight to care for and support. Because of the dependent condition of the child, the mother was unable

72 Sherwood, Oblates' Hundred and One Years, 44, 138, 160-164. The arrangement with the Sisters of Charity obtained until 1926, when the Catholic Charities of New York made the regulation that the city must care for its own orphans. It was also in 1926 that all the orphans from St. Frances were transferred to St. Elizabeth's Home in Baltimore. Ibid., 163.

to leave her home to work in the city; this circumstance prompted her to open a day nursery to gain a livelihood.⁷³

Many children were brought to the two-story brick dwelling, but Mrs. Herbert was soon confronted with a difficult problem, for occasionally parents neglected to return for their children. At this time, the idea of opening an asylum for destitute colored children came into existence. The brick residence became known as St. Elizabeth's Home after her little crippled child, whose name was Elizabeth. This occurred in 1878 and for some months the work of Mrs. Herbert remained practically unknown except for the irate neighbors who complained of being disturbed by the cries of the infants. Curiosity, more than philanthropy, prompted neighbors to visit the house, but after the investigation, they became intensely interested. A number of women, under the leadership of Mrs. Austin Jenkins and Miss Josephine Etting, realized that the children needed the attention of more than one person and "banded themselves together to perpetuate Mary Herbert's undertaking."⁷⁴

The charitable work received the sanction and wholehearted cooperation of the Reverend J. R. Slattery, pastor of St. Francis Xavier Church, and of the Most Reverend James Gibbons, Archbishop of Baltimore. Thereupon the sponsors of the asylum called their first meeting for April 27, 1880, and formed a Board of Managers. A subscription list was opened for the benefit of the colored orphans and general problems discussed. The principal one was the crowded condition at the Cohen Alley house. Mrs. Austin Jenkins solved the

73 The Morning Herald, Baltimore, February 16, 1880.

74 Archives, St. Elizabeth Home, Baltimore.

difficulty by purchasing a building at 57 Paul Street and on July 27, 1880, the children were transferred to the new St. Elizabeth's Home.⁷⁵

About the same time Archbishop Gibbons made an appeal, through the Most Reverend Bishop Vaughan, requesting Franciscan Sisters of St. Mary's Abbey, Mill Hill, England, to take care of the orphanage. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, a community of Anglican nuns served the needy in the London slums. Under the direction of Father Herbert Vaughan, the entire community, not only entered the Catholic Church, but took vows under the rule of St. Francis. The Foundress, Mother Mary Francis, had but one desire, "to labor in the humblest, least known corner of the Lord's vineyard." Therefore as "a direct answer to her prayer came the interest of Father Vaughan in missions." Mother Mary Francis came to America where she met Cardinal Gibbons, "who at that time could find no community in America free to take on the work among the colored race." Without hesitation, Mother Mary Francis accepted the invitation and in December, 1881, having returned to England, bade farewell to four of her Sisters.⁷⁶

Mother Wilfred and Sisters Rose, Theresa, and Augustine arrived at the dimly lighted dock at Locust Point, Baltimore, where a Josephite priest and a Mr. John Murphy gave the Sisters a "truly Baltimorean reception"; in a short while they faced a "houseful of tumbling, crowing, laughing colored babies." The institution then consisted of eight rooms, a tiny Chapel, a

75 Ibid.

76 Golden Jubilee, St. Elizabeth's Home, Baltimore, Maryland. Pamphlet, 1931, not paged.

parlor, a basement kitchen, and upstairs bedrooms. Kindhearted benefactors at once came to the assistance of the Sisters with their thirty-five charges so that the annalist of that day could pen that there "was joy in those early days--in spite of the hardships." After school hours, the Sisters at St. Francis Xavier's School carried large laundry baskets to the markets and brought them back "laden almost beyond carrying by the generosity of the good Baltimoreans." Among the befrienders was Father Alfred Curtis, later Bishop of Wilmington; each week he left a basket of food at the Home. Another was an unknown woman, heavily veiled, who left the Sisters' Sunday dinner at the kitchen door every Saturday night.⁷⁷

The second asylum established in the Nation's Capital was that of St. Joseph's. In 1856, the Reverend Timothy O'Toole, then pastor of St. Patrick's Church, made an application to the Motherhouse of the Sisters of the Holy Cross for Sisters to open an orphan asylum for boys within the parish. A copy of the agreement signed by Mother Angela and Reverend Timothy O'Toole, found in the archives of the asylum, pertains mainly to the remuneration that the Sisters were to receive. The contract entered into on August 29, 1856, states in part that

the said Trustees agree to place St. Joseph's Male Orphan Asylum under the care and direction of said sisters (three in number) shall receive sixty dollars per annum each, payable quarterly in advance, also their traveling expenses to Washington, and forth [for the] first year the receipts from the school.⁷⁸

77 Ibid.

78 Archives, St. Joseph's Home and School, Washington, D. C., 1856-1938, 2-3.

Accordingly Sisters M. Euphrasia Mahony,⁷⁹ M. Aloysius Caren, and Francis de Paul Sullivan journeyed by stage to Washington from Notre Dame. At the time of their advent, the rented home at the southwest corner of Thirteenth and H Streets, N. W., was still in the process of preparation; hence, the Sisters were guests for a time at the Visitation Convent at Tenth and G Streets. St. Joseph's opened with eight boys. Within a short time, the building became too small and, in 1860, the asylum was transferred to the southwest corner of Tenth and F Streets, N. W.⁸⁰ That year the Reverend J. A. Walter was appointed to the rectorship of St. Patrick's Parish where he remained for thirty-four years. In 1866, Father Walter secured a permanent home for the orphans, the Van Ness property on H Street, N. W., between Ninth and Tenth, then popularly known as "Mausoleum Square." It was so named on account of the mausoleum erected by Major Van Ness as a tomb for his wife, Marcia, the daughter of the original proprietor, David Burns. The old mansion fell into a state of dilapidation, and when the family withdrew, the building was renovated and used for an Episcopal home for orphans, known as the Washington City Orphan Asylum.⁸¹

In the eighteen-seventies, funds were raised to erect a three-story addition to the original Van Ness Home, which provided large dormitories and

79 Also spelled "Mahoney."

80 A report in the files at St. Joseph's Home and School lists four locations: Southwest corner Thirteenth and H Streets, 1856-1859; G Street between Twelfth and Thirteenth Streets, 1850-1860; southwest corner Tenth and F Streets, 1860-1866; H Street between Ninth and Tenth, 1866-1927. In the latter year, the institution was moved to Bunker Hill Road, N. E.

81 Archives, St. Joseph's Home and School. From clippings in Scrap Book.

recreational facilities. Eight Sisters were employed at St. Joseph's by 1878 in the work which is characterized as "a venture of faith," for numerous trials and deprivations beset them. Support was variously furnished by subscriptions, donations, bequests, and the Day School tuition. The practice of going to the markets to collect food began in 1873 and continued for some twenty years. A graphic depiction of the oft repeated scene was given by Senator Vest in a speech proposing an amendment to appropriate a sum of money each year to St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum. Before the members of the Senate, he related that

I live in the vicinity of P street market and Iowa Circle, and in the spring and summer months, when Congress is in session, I have been in the habit of going to that market in the early hours of the morning.

Several years ago I noticed on one of these early mornings while I was dealing with my butcher, two nuns standing in the market with a couple of little boys holding baskets. They spoke to nobody: they occupied always the same place.⁸²

Senator Vest inquired about the nuns and was told that they were from St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum. On each market day two Sisters went to each market in the city "to give opportunity to the charitably disposed to make donations for the asylum; that they did not receive a dollar from the government,

..."⁸³ This otherwise serious story had its humorous aspect. Some kindly benefactors seeing the Sisters trek to and from the city with produce, decided to give a donkey and a wagon. The boys were "charmed." "With the promise that the best behaved among them would be rewarded with the inestimable privilege of accompanying the donkey on his daily visit to the market, perfect silence and

⁸² Congressional Record, May 15, 1900, 5978. Senator Vest's proposal was adopted and for a number of years St. Joseph's received two thousand dollars annually.

⁸³ Ibid.

decorum settled upon the orphanage."⁸⁴ As time went on the "braying propensity" of the animal increased, and neighbors complained of "its indulgence during the hours of the night." Much to the chagrin of the boys, the donkey was sold to a farmer.⁸⁵

The Annual Pound Party was inaugurated in 1833 by the Catholic Knights of America. Admission to the party was "paid" by presenting one pound of any useful commodity at the door. Records state that more often goods were given in barrels and boxes than in pounds.⁸⁶

New York City, from 1850 to 1884, witnessed an extraordinary growth in the number of asylums; however, there was a notable change in the type of institution. The large asylums with their enrollments of hundreds of orphans largely gave way, as will be seen, to smaller ones serving single parishes or specific nationalistic groups.

Patterned on the older type of orphan home was that of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum, known later as St. John's Home, located in Brooklyn. The historian of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum Society of Brooklyn states that in the early eighteen-forties orphan boys were housed in a home on Clinton Street under the management of a Mr. Michael Burke, a prominent member of the Society. Orphan girls occupied the portion of the large building facing Congress Street, and were cared for by the Sisters of Charity as already noted in Chapter Two. Sometime in 1857 there was a separation of boys and girls.

84 Our Provinces, Centenary Chronicles, 223.

85 Archives, St. Joseph's Home and School.

86 Ibid.

The boys were removed to a home on the corner of Bedford and Willoughby Avenues where Franciscan Brothers cared for them; the girls remained on Congress Street.⁸⁷

The male asylum built in 1857 on Willoughby and Bedford Avenues developed in time into St. John's Home. The Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum Society purchased twenty-four city lots upon which there was erected a five-story brick building, one hundred by fifty feet, to accommodate three hundred fifty boys. During their residence at this location, the boys were successively cared for by the Franciscan Brothers, laymen, and a matron, Mrs. Knee. Capable help, especially during the Civil War, was not available. Neither was the Society successful in its efforts to secure Sisters. After a disastrous fire on November 9, 1862, the land was sold at auction for \$16,455 and the directors sought a new location. Bishop John Loughlin then offered the recently vacated convent of the Sisters of Mercy on Jay and Chapel Streets. By adding an annex and using the school across the street for classrooms, sufficient facilities were provided in the emergency. The directors, still unable to obtain Sisters, were compelled to rely upon lay assistance. The numbers of orphans greatly increased and the temporary home became acutely overcrowded.⁸⁸

Late in 1863, several locations were considered for a new male asylum. Property bounded by St. Marks Avenue and Prospect Place on the north and

⁸⁷ Minutes of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum Society, 8-9.

⁸⁸ August Francis Kemme, "An Historical Sketch of St. John's Home, Brooklyn, New York, 1830-1947," Unpublished Thesis, Fordham University School of Social Service, New York, 1948, 23-27. Bishop John Loughlin was the first Bishop of Brooklyn, 1853-1891.

south, and by Troy and Albany on the east and west, was purchased early in 1864. Work on the building progressed slowly because of lack of funds and the necessity of grading the "hill." Money gradually trickled in from concerts, lectures, bazaars, parish contributions, and from the sale of the Willoughby Avenue land. The cornerstone was laid on November 6, 1865, in a ceremony featuring a parade, music and singing. Bishop Loughlin addressed the crowd numbering about twenty-five thousand. The building was constructed of broken blue sandstone with brown smooth trimmings in a French style of architecture, practically an exact replica of a Catholic Orphanage conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Le Puy, France. And "with the blessings of a new home, the boys received a still greater blessing; Sisters to mother and care for them."⁸⁹

In 1856, at the request of Bishop Loughlin, three Sisters of St. Joseph from the Philadelphia Congregation established their Sisterhood in the Brooklyn Diocese. Mother Baptista, one of the original trio, became the first superior of the new orphanage, in 1858, and remained in charge until her death on January 22, 1883. Four co-religious, Sisters Borgia, Philomena, Mary Francis, and Anthony prepared for the arrival of their first charges on December 20, 1868. Almost two hundred boys came from the Jay Street Asylum. The bishop had instructed the Sisters to go to the Nursery and bring all the Catholic boys. A third group arrived from the county poor house.⁹⁰

89 Ibid., 31, 34-39.

90 Ibid., 39-40. Many years later a man who belonged to the number that had moved from Jay Street, donated two hundred thousand dollars to the ~~same~~ in appreciation for having had an opportunity to live in the spacious new home in the country.

For some unaccountable reason, the new home was not blessed until June 24, 1877, on which date Bishop Loughlin dedicated it to St. John the Baptist. The appellation "Male Asylum" was no longer used and the institution thenceforth was known as "St. John's Home." A four-story annex, sixty by thirty-four feet, was built to the rear of the west wing of the main building in 1877. The structure retained an unfinished appearance as the front entrance was not completed until in 1879.⁹¹

On the night of December 18, 1884, St. John's suffered the greatest loss in its history. The annex and the interior of the west wing were destroyed by a conflagration in which Sister Mary Josephine, twenty-two children and one visitor lost their lives. A contagious eye infection, then prevalent among the small boys, required a quarantine. The top floor of the annex was set aside for the purpose and Sister Mary Josephine was placed in charge. Fire broke out on the first floor and immediately filled the stairway with smoke. Sister led the boys to the stairway, but the strange odor bewildered them so that they ran in all directions to seek protection under the beds. The fire spread so rapidly that Sister and children were trapped in the room. Sister saved one boy by carrying him to a window where a fireman on a ladder took him to safety. A few more were rescued by being led over a plank laid down from the roof of the west wing to the roof of the annex. Sister reached the planks but lost her balance and fell to the ground. A half hour later she died in a

⁹¹ Ibid., 41-42. The first floor of the annex served as a boiler room; the second was used for the laundry; the third and fourth floors were set aside for the infirmary.

hospital. A raging snow storm intensified the suffering. The boys, nearly seven hundred in number, had to be taken from the severely damaged Home. Some were given shelter by the Good Shepherd nuns; others stayed at St. Mary's Hospital. Rebuilding was accomplished as quickly as possible, but six months elapsed before all the orphans could return to St. John's.⁹²

The Sisters of Mercy made their initial entrance into New York in May, 1846, after Bishop Hughes had appealed to the Motherhouse in Ireland for Sisters to work in his diocese. The first charitable activity in which Mother Mary Agnes and the six Sisters, who formed the original group, engaged was the care of the sick. Eventually the Sisters conducted several asylums, notwithstanding the fact that the foundress, Mother Mary Catherine McAuley had not intended to found orphanages. Sister M. Augustine McKenna, one of the pioneers, saw the need for more child-caring institutions and "begged for and obtained from Father Starrs, the vicar general, permission to found a house for homeless children." A dwelling was rented on Second Street where the House of the Holy Childhood was formally opened on November 21, 1860. The expenses of the undertaking were borne by the Sodality of the Sacred Heart which raised funds to maintain twenty to thirty children. According to the historian of the Sisters of Mercy in New York, the Sisters employed a widow to care for the children, but the Sisters visited the home every day. This work

92 Ibid., 42-46.

was short-lived, as the House of the Holy Childhood closed when Sister M. Augustine went to nurse the wounded soldiers during the Civil War.⁹³

In August, 1855, Bishop Loughlin of Brooklyn knocked at the door of St. Catherine's Convent in New York to ask Mother Mary Agnes for Sisters for the Brooklyn diocese. Mother Mary Vincent Haire, the first Sister of Mercy professed in New York, and five other Sisters went to Brooklyn in September. The newly established Convent of Mercy was located on Jay and Chapel Streets near St. James Church. The Sisters taught in the parochial school, visited the sick poor, and gave religious instruction to the prisoners in the city jails. After seven years, the little Jay Street Convent proved inadequate for the Sisters and their expanding work. Through the assistance of the Bishop, the Sisters secured the present site at 273 Willoughby Avenue, and the new Convent of Mercy was dedicated on December 3, 1862. An industrial school was opened where vocational training was offered for poor girls.⁹⁴ "There seems to have been no thought in Reverend Mother Mary Vincent's mind of establishing an orphanage, yet the Sisters soon found themselves caring for orphans and neglected children." Some orphans were referred to the Sisters by priests in the diocese, some were found while on visitations to the sick, some were brought by charitable lay people, and others were merely left at their door. For many years the institution was unaided by city or state. Consonant with the spirit

⁹³ Sister Mary Madeleine Manning, "The Place of the Sisters of Mercy in Social Work in New York State." Unpublished Thesis, Fordham University, New York, 1943, 35-39, 122.

⁹⁴ Institutions under the care of the Brooklyn Sisters of Mercy, 4. (Pamphlet)

of poverty that characterized the patron of the Convent, St. Francis of Assisi, the Sisters were content to depend upon the charity of others and their own exertions. At times as many as one hundred fifty orphans found a home at St. Francis. In 1875 the first monetary assistance was offered to the institution by New York City.⁹⁵ Letchworth refers to the "straightened circumstances" in which the Sisters constantly found themselves during the first years. When the property was purchased, it was entirely undeveloped. The Sisters defrayed half of the cost of grading the grounds and erected a building at the cost of sixty thousand dollars. The Sisters moved in with a "handful of furniture," one sewing machine, and one hundred dollars in currency. The select school which was opened in January, 1863, succeeded well and with the proceeds, the Sisters realized a source of support for the orphans.⁹⁶

When the Civil War ended, the work so admirably commenced by Sister M. Augustine McKenna in New York was resumed at a new location. Nursing Sisters sometimes made promises to dying soldiers "to provide a home and education" for their daughters. There was, subsequent to the War, a dire need for more institutions for destitute and homeless girls. A valuable piece of property was obtained through the influence of the city aldermen in recognition of the services rendered by the Sisters during the Civil War. The answer of the Sisters of Mercy to the exigency of the time was the opening of St. Joseph's Industrial Home at East Eighty-first street and Madison Avenue on the feast of

95 Manning, Sisters of Mercy, 49.

96 Letchworth, Homes of Homeless Children, 96.

Our Lady of Mercy, 1869.⁹⁷ An appreciable increase was noted in the number of orphans applying for admission in Catholic institutions after the passage of the Children's Law, in 1875, which provided that

it shall not be lawful for any justice of the peace, police justice or any other magistrate to commit any child, over three and under sixteen years of age . . . to any county poor-houses of this State, . . . but such justice of the peace, police justice or other magistrate, . . . shall commit or send such child or children . . . to some orphan asylum or other charitable or reformatory institutions, as now provided for by law.⁹⁸

At this time St. Joseph's received sixty boys and one hundred forty girls from Randall's Island. Crowded conditions at St. Joseph's made it necessary to move the academy section of the institution to a new house opened during that year in Balmville, Newburg, New York. The numbers increased so rapidly at the Eighty-first Street asylum that, in 1878, the older orphan boys were sent from St. Joseph's to Balmville to occupy a part of the academy.⁹⁹

The Sisters of Mercy complied with the request of Reverend John Corry, pastor of St. John's Church, Greenbush, New York, to take up work in his parish. Property intended for a convent was purchased in the fall of 1861. Several Sisters arrived from New York in June, 1863, to prepare for the staff which reached Greenbush in September. The trip from Albany to Greenbush had to be made by carriage as no other traveling facilities were available at the

97 Manning, Sisters of Mercy, 40, 122.

98 Laws of the State of New York, 98th Session of the Legislature, Albany, 1875, 150.

99 Manning, Sisters of Mercy, 41. The Orphanage of Our Lady of Mercy for Boys, Balmville, is listed in Sadlier's Catholic Directory, Almanac, and Ordo, 1879, 123.

time. The earliest activities of the Sisters was teaching and visiting the sick. However, when the State Legislature granted three thousand dollars in 1870 for founding an industrial school for poor children, the Sisters consigned the third floor of their convent as a refuge for homeless and destitute children. These quarters soon became inadequate. In 1871, the Sisters bought the Garrison property and opened St. John's Home for orphans and destitute children.¹⁰⁰

The number of parish asylums grew rapidly during and after the Civil War. Crawford states that, on Long Island, a society was organized through the efforts of Cornelius Heeney, Reverend John Walsh, and a few other zealous men, for the purpose of assisting orphans and neglected children. Various small asylums were established and supported, the majority of them connected with individual parishes. The society sponsored two annual collections in the parish churches of Kings and Queens Counties to provide the necessary funds.¹⁰¹

The ministrations to the orphans in parish asylums on Long Island was begun by the Dominican Sisters in Holy Trinity Parish, in 1863, at the request of Reverend Michael May. The little group of Sisters responded most generously to the appeal by placing their first house, purchased in 1854, at the disposal of the orphans. The children were housed in the little cottage until 1869 when they were moved to more commodious quarters in a home at 153 Graham Avenue, then belonging to Holy Trinity Parish. Each member of the Orphan Home Society,

100 Ibid., 49-51.

101 Eugene J. Crawford, The Daughters of St. Dominic on Long Island: The Brooklyn Sisters of St. Dominic, New York, 1938, 234.

incorporated in December, 1861, contributed three dollars a year to the orphans' fund. For each child, the Society paid the Sisters five dollars and fifty cents a month for board, laundry, and shelter. Mother Seraphine, one of the pioneer Sisters at Holy Trinity, made the following observation in her Diary:

This is truly very little compensation for all our expenses, but I did not ask for more and wish also that in future no more should be demanded, because what we do for these poor orphans the Lord will recompense us in some other way tenfold.¹⁰²

Children were committed to the orphanage from various sources. Some were presented by the "quasi-official Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children." For these Court and Commissioners' Cases the Sisters were remunerated twenty-five cents a day per child. When the Children's Law, mentioned above, became operative on January 1, 1876, the children were removed from all poorhouses and almshouses. The transfer of the children from the Kings County almshouse in Flatbush had tragic consequences. Some of the children that entered Holy Trinity came with a contagious eye disease known variously as conjunctivitis, ophthalmia, or trachoma. A number of the Sisters contracted the disease and became partially blind, while Sister M. Severina Overlin, who had entered the Dominican community only in May, 1875, became totally blind within two years.¹⁰³

In time, the orphan asylum at 153 Graham Avenue became overcrowded. During Mother Emilia's regime, the Messig and Hoffman houses, around the corner

102 Ibid., 235-236. Quoted from Mother Seraphine's Diary.

103 Ibid., 236-237.

on Johnson Avenue, were acquired and remodeled. The orphans now had a dwelling separate from the convent of the Sisters. In a number of early Dominican convents, a portion of the building was set aside for the accommodation of from ten to twenty-five orphans. However, there were times when the numbers were much greater. Thus for some years, the Novitiate at Amityville provided for one hundred eighty orphans; St. Joseph's in Astoria, sixty-five; Our Lady of the Presentation in Jamaica, sixty; St. Michael's in East New York, thirty-five. As numbers increased, it became imperative to erect special asylums apart from the Sister's convents.¹⁰⁴

Another parish home for orphans was that of St. Stephen's in New York City. Sister M. Clotilda, as Sister Servant, and three other Sisters of Charity from Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson opened a house for them, September 24, 1867, on Second Avenue and Thirty-first Street.¹⁰⁵ Within a year it was necessary for the pastor, Reverend Edward McGlynn, to obtain larger quarters. A house at 143 East Twenty-eighth Street, opposite St. Stephen's Church, was rented and fifty children were brought from the Second Street home. In 1875, one hundred thirty-one were registered and the abode was filled far beyond capacity. Classrooms were used as sleeping rooms at night, entailing a great amount of extra labor.¹⁰⁶ To relieve the situation, two branches were founded.

A piece of property located at Fordham, near the present Botanical Gardens, having upon it a large mansion was used as an annex to St. Stephen's

104 Ibid., 238.

105 St. Vincent Archives.

106 Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 237-238.

Home, Sisters Simplicia, Gaudentia, and Agnes Louise brought the youngest children, especially those in ill health, to the mansion. The latter had no conveniences; the Sisters were obliged to carry the bathing water upstairs to the dormitories. A visitor at the annex remarked that he deemed Sister Agnes Louise worthy of canonization for her hard work and patient endurance of the many hardships. The place was open only from 1880 to 1883.¹⁰⁷ During the latter year, a branch was established on a country estate at New Dorp, Staten Island. An outbreak of ophthalmia in St. Stephen's resulted in the transfer of all infected children to New Dorp. Here the good air and outdoor play, together with the splendid care of the Sisters, resulted in the recovery of most of the children.¹⁰⁸

St. James' Home was founded in 1879 for orphan girls of the parish of St. James. Sister M. Eugenia and two assistants, Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, assumed charge of the three houses comprising the home. The two buildings on Oliver Street were used for the Sisters' convent, the infirmary, children's dormitory, and sewing room. The house facing James Street contained the school rooms and more dormitory space.¹⁰⁹

Mount St. Michael's Home, Green Ridge, Staten Island, was established by the Reverend Arthur J. Donnelly, pastor of St. Michael's Church, as an orphanage for the orphans of the parish. Separate houses for the boys and

107 St. Vincent Archives.

108 Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 239.

109 Report upon the Care of Dependent Children in the City of New York, and Elsewhere, The State Board of Charities, Thirty-Third Annual Report, January, 1890, 70.

girls, on an eighty-acre tract, were large enough to accommodate sixty children. The Sisters of the Order of the Presentation assumed charge, in 1884, the year of its opening.¹¹⁰

In New York, as elsewhere, orphan homes were sometimes founded for distinct national groups. St. Joseph's and St. Vincent de Paul's Orphan Asylums provided care for children of German and French descent respectively. The former was located in a section of New York known as Yorkville and resulted from the combined efforts of the Redemptorist Fathers and the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Its history dates back to the time when Father Nagel, C. SS. R., went regularly to Ward's Island, a port of reception for immigrants who were prevented from entering the country. He began his spiritual ministrations in 1848 when Bishop Hughes confided the island to the care of the Redemptorists. In the summer of 1849, when the cholera broke out, Father Nagel provided corporal assistance as well. To him was entrusted the guardianship of the children of many a dying immigrant. He begged exemplary Catholic families to give these orphans a home. When there were too few homes to provide for the growing numbers, Father sometimes brought them to the rectory. "One day," writes a chronicler, "he came down Third Street with a small child nestled in his arms, whilst a second clung tenaciously to his hand. No one could fail to visualize St. Vincent de Paul."¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 240-241.

¹¹¹ Centennial Celebration, 1844-1944, Most Holy Redeemer Church New York City, Not paged.

Soon so many children needed homes, that rooms were rented opposite the Redemptorist Church and a parish orphanage was opened. When this home proved inadequate, the children were housed in a building previously used as a rectory and owned by the Redemptorists in St. Alphonsus parish. Twenty-three children were at this place when a Mr. and Mrs. Serf, proprietors of a candle company, accepted charge. In order to maintain this home, the St. Anne's Orphan Society was organized. Another means of support was the free-will offerings of the members of the two parishes (St. Alphonsus and Holy Redeemer). Between 1855 and 1856, this home was abandoned and those orphans who found no home with Catholic families were reallocated and sent to Rochester. Twenty-four children made this journey.¹¹²

Father Helmprecht¹¹³ was appointed rector at Holy Redeemer parish in 1854. When he had accumulated ten thousand dollars, he purchased property in Yorkville between what is now Eighty-ninth Street and Avenue A in New York, and requested the School Sisters of Notre Dame to take charge of the new foundation. Yorkville at that time was a healthful rural district far from the crowded section of the metropolis. In time, however, "the sylvan serenity and beauty of this home in the woods was threatened by the inroads made by real estate agents and their building projects." The new orphan home, a five-story building with a capacity of two hundred, was ready for occupancy early in 1860 and dedicated on March 19 to St. Joseph.¹¹⁴ The first names on record in St.

112 Ibid.

113 Also spelled "Helmprecht."

114 Centennial Celebration, 1844-1944.

Joseph's are those of Peter and Margaret Trimpl, entered on February 24, 1860, with the notation that both parents were dead.¹¹⁵ From the beginning, St. Joseph's took strict cognizance of the fact that children must be prepared for life in the world. The Act of Incorporation states these objectives: ". . . to support, maintain, and educate in useful knowledge and employment, poor orphan, half-orphan, homeless and neglected children, especially those of German origin."¹¹⁶

Heavy debts burdened the new institution and between 1860 and 1862 impatient creditors were repeatedly at the doors. Partly through the sacrifices of the German people and partly through wise and profitable investments, the indebtedness was somewhat reduced. In 1883 an addition was deemed imperative to accommodate the increasing number of orphans. The following year, another piece of property was purchased on the northwest corner of Eighty-ninth Street which gave St. Joseph's complete control of an entire block. After 1880, the city sent many children to St. Joseph's. This fact, no doubt, impelled the State to give financial aid to the institution. In addition, there were per capita payments by the public authorities for the children committed by the Courts.¹¹⁷

The French asylum, that of St. Vincent de Paul, dates back to 1858 and the generosity of Mrs. Ramsay Crooks who was deeply interested in the welfare of French orphans. This benefactress, in cooperation with the St.

115 St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, 1850-1870, Admission Register.

116 New York State Laws of 1859, Chapter 378.

117 Centennial Celebration, 1844-1944.

Vincent de Paul Society, collected funds for their support.¹¹⁸ A small building was rented at 146 West Twenty-sixth Street to accommodate about sixty girls and thirty boys. The Marianite Sisters of the Holy Cross assumed charge of St. Vincent's on the day of its opening. The orphan home remained at the above named location until January, 1870. In the interim, the managers of the asylum purchased several valuable lots on Twenty-ninth Street near Seventh Avenue at a cost of thirty-eight thousand dollars. The first half of the new home, a structure sixty feet square, was begun in 1868. The building, French Gothic in style and built of pressed brick with Ohio free-stone trimming, was five stories above the basement, including two mansard stories. The cost of this "architectural ornament of that portion of the city" was seventy-four thousand dollars. In 1871, the city donated fifteen thousand dollars to St. Vincent's where all nationalities and creeds were eventually accepted.¹¹⁹

Jacoby lists various other sources of income. The Benevolent Society of St. Vincent de Paul's Parish contributed liberally and the special collections at Christmas and Easter were large. The institution participated in the funds distributed for charitable purposes by the city of New York. Fairs and legacies provided additional income.¹²⁰

Throughout the State of New York, new asylums sprung up. St. Patrick's at Newburgh, incorporated in 1868, registered only seven children

118 Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 214.

119 J. F. Richmond, New York and Its Institutions, 1609-1872, New York, 1872.

120 Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 216.

during the first year. This diminutive orphan home appears to have existed little more than a decade, but it was granted a considerable amount of State aid during that time.¹²¹ St. Mary's Home in Port Jervis, New York, opened in June, 1871. Sister Matilda, as Sister Servant, was sent from Mount St. Vincent-on-Hudson to assume charge. The Sisters there had responded to an urgent appeal on behalf of the poor orphan children of Orange County and its environs. Community records contain but a few isolated comments, among them that at St. Mary's the Sisters experienced a great deal of poverty, and that by the end of ten years nearly one hundred orphans were living there.¹²² In 1872, the parishioners of St. Mary's Church in Rondout secured a small dwelling to be used as an asylum for the orphans of the parish. This was made possible by State appropriations amounting to several hundred dollars made during the two preceding years. The orphan home was closed in 1882.¹²³

The St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum at Blauveltville (later known as Blauvelt), northwest of Sparkill in Rockland County, was founded as a result of overcrowded conditions at the Dominican Convent at 141 Second Street, New York.¹²⁴ In late summer of 1878, the Sisters purchased the Eustace Estate on

121 Ibid., 243. No mention is made as to whose care the home was assigned.

122 St. Vincent Archives.

123 Jacoby, Catholic Child Care, 243.

124 Ibid., 221-222. This Congregation of Sisters of St. Dominic came to New York from Ratisbon in 1853. The work of caring for orphans began very informally by taking in neglected children about the city into their convent. This procedure continued for years until the Community, in 1875, was incorporated as a charitable society whose object it was to care for and educate orphans and other children.

the Nyack-Blauvelt Road. The large three-story brick house and sixteen acres of land cost twelve thousand dollars. It was immediately renovated for the Sisters and children. On November 1, 1878, seven Sisters and nine children arrived from New York to take possession of the new St. Joseph's Asylum. The home could accommodate about forty children.¹²⁵

The next year a three-story frame building to house about sixty children was erected and painted white; thereafter, it was always referred to as the "White House." It had scarcely been completed when it was found too small to care for the ever increasing referrals. An already existing building in the yard was then converted into a dormitory for some sixty girls. The small odd-shaped windows reminded the children of pictures of Noah's Ark in their Bible histories. Until its demolition, it was generally known as "The Ark." The devoted service of the Sisters was put to a severe test during the three-year epidemic of ophthalmia from 1881 to 1883. The disease spread rapidly and about one-half of the two hundred children were affected. In an attempt to check the spread of the disease, strong tents were set up to house small groups according to the stage of infection. Doctor Edward Leroy Oatman, the physician attending the children at St. Joseph's, recommended the construction of separate cottages. Several were built, each of which accommodated about thirty-five children. Thus the conversion from the congregate type of asylum to the more modern cottage style made an early start in Blauvelt. The Community annals relate another evidence of modernity. Kerosene

¹²⁵ Sister Mary Patrick Fitzpatrick, "A Social History of St. Dominic's, Blauvelt, New York, 1878-1910." Unpublished Thesis, Fordham University, New York, 1949, 55-64.

lamps used in the cottages irritated the children's eyes. Sister devised an "indirect lighting" system by inverting an open umbrella and hanging it from the lamp.¹²⁶

The work of the Sisters was not limited to the care of girls; however, the need at the time of opening St. Joseph's seemed to be for girls' asylums. Through a singular occurrence, the asylum received its first boy. Mother Mary Ann had gone to court, in the fall of 1883, to receive some girls. Among the girls to be admitted were two whose little brother was deeply grieved because of the separation about to take place. Mother, seeing that the small lad was inconsolable, immediately requested permission to admit the boy with his siblings into her asylum. The request was granted and the little three-year old child was admitted. Two years passed before another boy sought admittance. On Sunday in 1884, Dr. Oatman was accompanied by a certain Judge Arthur Tompkins of Nyack on a visit to the asylum. The Judge afterwards wrote that "seated at the table were 350 girls and one boy who seemed to enjoy the situation."¹²⁷

In 1869, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart found their New York City residence inadequate for a convent. A suitable location was secured on the banks of the Hudson at Peekskill. The thirty-two acres of hilly country land had on it a splendid residence, several cottages, and an abundance of shrubbery and shade trees. An academy was opened in 1870. By 1879, a new convent building had been erected, and concurrently diocesan

126 Ibid., 66-67, 96.

127 Ibid., 117-118.

authorities approached the Sisters requesting that they accept children from the Department of Public Charities. The Sisters acquiesced and in June, 1879, the first orphan girl registered. A part of the newly-erected convent building was converted into dormitories and classrooms. Sister M. Teresa was the first Sister assigned to care for the twenty-five orphans who came during that year. "From then on," writes the historian of St. Joseph's Home, "the main work of the Sisters at the Peekskill residence was the care of dependent and neglected children." The academy was later removed to Highland Falls, New York.¹²⁸

In order not to separate the children of one family, it was later decided to receive boys also. Adequate facilities were lacking at St. Joseph's; therefore, a house in the village, known as "Brown's House," was rented while a structure for them was under construction. Sister M. Francis was placed in charge and resided with the boys until the new home was in readiness for their reception. On June 13, 1883, seventy boys and several Sisters vacated the temporary building to take up residence in their new home. Already the following year, it became too small and a wing was added. A wing to accommodate the increased number of girls was likewise erected to the Convent building in 1883.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Sister Martin Marie Dunne, "A History of St. Joseph's School, Peekskill, New York, 1879-1947: A Child-Caring Institution for Dependent and Neglected Children," Unpublished Thesis, Fordham University, New York, 1948, 13-14, 25.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 25-28.

June 19, 1884, marked the date for the coming of the Sisters of St. Dominic to Sparkill. That spring an estate consisting of forty-five acres had been acquired. The cottage on the premises became a new child-caring institution, St. Agnes' Home for boys. Twenty-five boys were received during the first months and plans were made immediately for the erection of a permanent building.¹³⁰

St. Agatha's Home for Children, Nanuet, New York, was a monument to the generosity of Mr. John Reid, a prominent resident of Brooklyn. In 1875, Mr. Reid had donated a two-story house, a barn, and about seventeen acres of land; this property "together with the zealous spirit of the Sisters of Charity constituted the first assets." The site was located some thirty miles north of the city of New York and was nestled among the rolling hills of Rockland County, with the Ramapo Mountains on the west and the Palisades of the Hudson on the east.¹³¹

Approximately ten years elapsed before any action was taken to carry out the plan of opening a home for orphans there. Mr. Reid had become deeply interested in the work of the Sisters of Charity from Mount St. Vincent at St. Joseph's Asylum in Brooklyn and was eagerly desirous that they undertake similar work at Nanuet.¹³² With the increased demand for Catholic child-caring

130 Sister M. Joseph Anna Beck, "A Study of St. Agnes School, Sparkill, New York, A Catholic Institution for Dependent Boys," Unpublished Thesis, Fordham University, New York, 1944, 15, 18-20. The patroness was St. Agnes of Montipulciano, a city in Italy. Ibid., 18.

131 St. Vincent Archives.

132 Sister Bernadette Marie Hagan, "The History and Development of the Saint Agatha Home for Dependent Children, Nanuet, New York, 1884-1948,"

homes, which resulted from the religious clause inserted in the New York Child Welfare Laws of 1884, the Sisters readily took up the work of caring for orphans in the home donated by Mr. Reid. The Laws of that year reiterated the injunction of the Laws of 1875 that children were not to be sent to county poorhouses. In addition, the 1884 Laws provided that

When any such child shall be so provided for or placed in any orphan asylum or such other institution, such child shall, when practicable, be so provided for or placed in such asylum or such other institutions as shall then be controlled by persons of the same religious faith as the parents of such child.¹³³

The asylum opened on February 5, 1884, with Sister Ulrica, as first superior, and Sisters Joseph Maria, Justine, and Albertine, as assistants. The first group of five children was sent to St. Agatha's through the Gerry Society, a charitable organization in New York City. The following objects of its establishment are found in the certificate of incorporation: "the care, maintenance and education of orphan and other children, the instruction of such children in some useful trade, or business, and the training and employment of such children and others in some useful branches of manufacture."¹³⁴

Unpublished Thesis, Fordham University, New York, 1949, 2. Reverend Thomas Reid, the son of John Reid, chose the name of the Home for several significant reasons: St. Agatha was his mother's patroness; he had been called "by grace from the life of a secular priest to that of the Society of Jesus on her feast, and it was in St. Agatha College in Rome that he passed his seminary life, and his first Mass was celebrated on February 5, the feast of St. Agatha, in a little room on the very spot where his mother had died ten years previous. Ibid., 14.

¹³³ Laws of the State of New York, passed at the 107th Session of the Legislature, Albany, 1884, Chapter 438, 511-512.

¹³⁴ Hagan, Saint Agatha Home, 2, 14. Nanuet is sometimes called the "Denver of the East."

The last New York institution to be noted in this chapter is that of St. Mary's Home in Binghamton, a city in the southern part of the State near the Pennsylvania line. The historian of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Troy Province wrote that

The beautiful city of Binghamton had just surmounted the difficulties of childhood--it was only eleven years old--when the Sisters of Saint Joseph inaugurated there a work to them particularly dear, the care of orphans. The idea of establishing an orphanage in Binghamton originated in the mind of the Reverend James F. Hourigan, that intrepid, pioneering priest, who came to the village of Binghamton in 1847 to minister to the Catholic people.¹³⁵

In 1862, Father Hourigan succeeded in obtaining a number of Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet to teach in his parish school. Lack of sufficient means prevented him from putting into execution his design for an orphanage. An incident in the spring of 1878 prompted immediate action. One day Father Hourigan met a little boy in tears on the street. The kind priest presented the lad with a dime and the suggestion that he return to his home. The boy's answer that he had no home caused Father Hourigan to bring the boy to the Sisters' convent. A few days later he secured a little frame dwelling on the southeast corner of Leroy and Oak Streets which became the nucleus of St. Mary's Home. Sister Stanislaus Saul was given charge of the institution. Eight or ten Catholic children from the Susquehanna Valley Home were transferred at once to St. Mary's.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ History of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet in the Troy Province with an Introduction by the Right Reverend Thomas P. Phelan, Maroneck, New York, 1936, 139-140.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 139-140.

When the number of orphans increased to twenty-two, Father Hourigan purchased a large substantial building on Chestnut Street, together with the park of eight acres, upon which it stood, for twenty-three thousand dollars. The structure was originally erected in 1854 by the Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and served as a school under the name of the Susquehanna Seminary until 1858, when the school was closed for lack of funds. The building remained unoccupied until 1867 when the State repaired it with the purpose of establishing a school for the blind; however, it was never used for this purpose. During the following ten years, it became successively the Place College, the Susquehanna Valley Home, and Smith College until, in 1881, it passed into the hands of the trustees of St. Patrick's Parish. Many repairs entailing considerable expense were made by Father Hourigan, yet the home lacked any conveniences. It had "no running water, no plumbing fixtures, no gas. Coal stoves in the various rooms supplied heat; lamps and candles, light. Seventy children moved into their new abode with Sister Stanislaus. The latter together with her successor, Sister Mary Joseph Kennedy, directed the affairs of the St. Mary's Home for ten years.¹³⁷

Within the period of time covered by this chapter, two additional asylums were opened in Pennsylvania. One was in Reading, the other in Scranton. Mrs. Catherine Madary, a resident of Reading, died on May 24, 1871, leaving all her property to the Most Reverend James F. Wood, in trust for the superiors of the Sisters of Charity, Emmitsburg, Maryland, for the purpose of

137 Ibid., 140-141.

founding an orphan asylum for girls. Mrs. Madary had lost her only child, a girl of twelve years. In an attempt to adopt a child, several contacts were made with the almshouse in Reading. Adverse situations there made Mrs. Madary deplore the absence of a Catholic home for orphans in the city. It was this state of affairs that led Mrs. Madary to will her property as indicated above.¹³⁸

Extant records show that Mrs. Madary had made repeated proposals to the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg that her property be accepted by them and made into an asylum after her demise. A letter dated September 29, 1871, from Sister Gonzaga, St. Joseph's Asylum, Philadelphia, to the superiors at Emmitsburg states that Mrs. Madary had been in Philadelphia to inspect their orphanage already "five years ago." Sister Gonzaga had gone to Reading to ascertain whether or not opening an asylum in that city would be advisable, and to see the property. Sister wrote that there were two houses, one of brick, having together six or seven rooms, and a fine orchard. The people of Reading were eager to have the Sisters open an institution for orphans.¹³⁹ In spite of Mrs. Madary's reiterated requests that the Sisters of Charity accept the property before her death, all seemed apprehensive and nothing was done. The will, leaving all the property to the Sisters, stipulated that in the event that an asylum was not opened within a year, the home would go to relatives. Thus a decision had to be made by May, 1872.¹⁴⁰

138 Emmitsburg Archives.

139 Ibid. Original in files.

140 Ibid.

On September 18, 1871, Bishop Wood addressed the Reverend Francis Burlando at Emmitsburg in a letter urging the latter to induce the Sisters to accept the Madary offer: "I would recommend by all means that the good Sisters would send some of their number to see the property bequeathed by Mrs. Medary." The Bishop added further that he would "interpose no obstacle, and of course extend to the community, that protection which it will always merit."¹⁴¹

The following year, on April 15, 1872, three Sisters from Emmitsburg, Sisters Oswald Spalding, Angelino Corrigan, and Frances Clary, arrived in Reading to take possession of the Madary property on the corner of Franklin and Maple Streets. The site commanded an excellent view of the surrounding country. On April 27, the first two orphans, transferred from the Berks County almshouse, were received into St. Catherine's Asylum, so named "to constantly remind the orphans of the name of Mrs. Madary to whom under God they owe so much." The small houses could accommodate only twenty and soon became inadequate for the increasing number of applicants. The cornerstone of a large building was laid on September 8, 1873. The cost was largely defrayed by donations of charitable citizens in Reading and vicinity and the proceeds of several fairs. Sisters and orphans happily made their home in the new St. Catherine's in June, 1874.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Ibid. Original in files. It will be noted that the surname is spelled "Madary" and "Medary"; however, the copy of the will in the Archives is signed "Catharine Madary."

¹⁴² Ibid.

The founding of St. Patrick's Orphanage in Scranton, Pennsylvania, was uniquely connected with the proclamation of the Jubilee Year of 1875. Bishop William O'Hara¹⁴³ announced the proclamation to the different parishes in his diocese in May of the same year. In his pastoral letter, the Bishop pointed out that one of the conditions laid down by the Holy Father for gaining the benefits of the Jubilee Indulgence was almsgiving. Bishop O'Hara then "ordered contribution boxes to be placed in all the churches and urged the faithful to give according to their means as he intended the collection to be used toward the erection of a home for the orphans of the diocese." The appeal met with a generous response. A board of directors was organized and an application for a charter for the new institution was made on October 4, 1875. Three weeks later the charter was granted.¹⁴⁴ The orphan home was built in West Scranton at Jackson Street and Lincoln Avenue, and placed in charge of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Sister M. Anastasia was appointed the first superior.¹⁴⁵

In 1870, the Sisters of St. Francis, whose motherhouse is at Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania, came to the city of Wilmington, Delaware. After eleven years of hardship there, St. James Protectory, an orphanage for the boys of

143 First Bishop of Scranton, 1868 to 1899.

144 The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, New York, 1921, 151. (By a Sister of the Scranton Community.)

145 Questionnaire.

the Wilmington Diocese, was opened. Sisters Mary Rosalia, Mary Leonard, and Mary Assumpta admitted the first group of boys in September, 1879.¹⁴⁶

The reader will recall that in Chapter II, there was given a history of the sole orphan asylum in the State of Massachusetts, that of St. Vincent's in Boston conducted by the Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg. Between 1865 and 1880, orphanages were founded in Lowell, Lawrence, and Holyoke. An Article of Agreement, dated October 12, 1865, made between the Reverend Peter Crudden and Sister Olympia of the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg reads in part:

Witnesseth that the said Rev. Peter Crudden agrees to convey and donate to the said Sisters of Charity a lot of land with a dwelling house thereon situated at the corner of Appleton and Elliott Streets in the City of Lowell, Mass.¹⁴⁷

Father Crudden, the pastor of St. Peter's Church, Lowell, requested the superiors at Emmitsburg for Sisters to instruct the children of the parish, to conduct a night school for factory girls, and to visit the sick. The Mother and Council agreed to contribute the services of the community to the proposed good works. On November 1, 1865, Father Crudden wrote that the caretaker has left the house and asked the Sisters to come to Lowell soon so that the house would not remain vacant. Thereupon Sisters Mary Ellen Riordan, Terebius Donahue, Magdalen Doyle, Felixine Malone left "the Valley" on November 20, 1865, and arrived in Lowell three days later. There was no furniture

¹⁴⁶ Letter from the office of the Superior General, Convent of Our Lady of Angels, Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania, April 15, 1953. (In September, 1888, the asylum was removed to Reaybold, Delaware.)

¹⁴⁷ Emmitsburg Archives.

in the house. Business men and neighbors lent or gave necessary household articles and made donations of food.¹⁴⁸

In 1870, the Sisters opened St. Peter's Orphan Asylum. Four years later Sister Mary Cain chronicled that, "We have at present (1874) forty-three of the nicest children, that could be found in any of our Establishments, who appreciate their home, and the care taken of them." Sister added further that owing "to the smallness of our house, we have had to refuse numbers, but we are now enlarging it, and when completed will accommodate over a hundred, and enable us to continue our other good works also."¹⁴⁹

It appears from the records that the house could be occupied by the sisters so long as it was used for the purpose for which it was intended. In default of the agreement, it was to revert to the Archbishop of Boston. No difficulties arose until after the death of Father Crudden in 1882. Financially, the institution was maintained by fairs and entertainments in which all the parishes participated supplying the necessary funds. Records indicate that the successor, a Father Ronan, wished to discontinue the asylum. Consequently, he opposed the efforts of the people to support the institution. When the citizens of Lowell continued to support the orphan home, the pastor reported that the asylum was a "source of dissension and discord." The trying

148 Ibid. Sister Mary Cain, the fourth Sister to go to Lowell, arrived there a few weeks later. Sister Mary Cain's report of the opening, a manuscript copy, is found in the files.

149 Ibid.

circumstances under which the Sisters labored caused the Archbishop of Boston to consent to the withdrawal of the Sisters of Charity from Lowell.¹⁵⁰

During the difficult year of 1856, the Reverend James H. D. Taafe, O. P., organized the Catholic Friends' Society in the city of Lawrence, Massachusetts, to help him provide for the poor and destitute. Ten years later he began the construction of a combined orphanage, hospital, and home for the aged at the rear of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. That same year the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, known as the "Grey Nuns," entered the Diocese of Boston. On February 9, 1868, only a few days before the death of the founder, the Protectory of Mary Immaculate, located at 189 Maple Street, was dedicated. The institution was well supported, for the Catholic Friends' Society, numbering about one thousand members, rendered "valiant service in supporting the new institution by annual dues, subscriptions, and entertainments." At times as many as one hundred children were given refuge in the home where a number of nationalities and creeds were represented.¹⁵¹

The Grey Nuns were in charge of another asylum in Massachusetts. At Salem, Thomas Looby, a wealthy and zealous Catholic, purchased a ten thousand dollar house, in 1866, at Bridge and Washington Streets, for the purpose of establishing an orphan asylum. With the hearty support of the pastors in

150 Ibid. When the Sisters of Charity retired from Lowell, the orphan home was burdened with a debt of thirteen thousand dollars incurred when the new addition was built. The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky, replaced the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg in 1887. An intensive campaign for funds cleared the institution of debt within a year. Lord, et al., Archdiocese of Boston, II, 369.

151 Lord, et al., Archdiocese of Boston, II, 19, 369.

the two Catholic churches in the city, Looby Asylum was opened the following November. In 1871, it was incorporated under the name of City Orphan Asylum. Besides orphans, the asylum offered a home to the aged, as well as to unemployed and sick servant girls. Four years later the institution was transferred to a more spacious structure which the Sisters had built on Lafayette Street.¹⁵²

The Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts, was set off from Boston in 1870. The oldest religious community in the diocese were the Sisters of Mercy who came in 1864. They first opened a hospital near St. Anne's Church in Worcester. In 1874, a new parish church, that of St. Paul's, was completed. The same year, Father John Power, the pastor, secured some property and dwelling houses near the church. To this convent, Father Power invited the Sisters of St. Anne's. Here a small orphanage opened on January 16, 1875. The frame dwellings were destroyed by fire on an extremely cold night, January 23, 1882. No lives were lost immediately; however, one sick child who was rescued by Father Power died later from the effects of the smoke. The catastrophe proved the great devotion that the people of Worcester held for the cause of the orphan children, for all were eager to care for the latter and to supply necessities. Father Power rebuilt the home erecting a splendid brick building and later giving the deed of the orphanage to the Sisters as future proprietors.¹⁵³

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 370. The City Orphan Asylum was destroyed during the great fire in Salem on June 25, 1914.

¹⁵³ Questionnaire. The home is known as St. Gabriel's Orphanage today; records are not clear as to when this title was assumed.

The establishment of the Sisters of Charity of Providence in Holyoke dates back to the year 1873 and was effected through the instrumentality of Reverend Patrick J. Harkins, pastor of St. Jerome Church. In the spring of that year, two Sisters, whose motherhouse was in Kingston, Ontario, made a house-to-house canvass in Holyoke to collect funds for their institute. In the course of their visit, they learned of Father Harkin's desire to secure religious to look after the spiritual and corporal needs of the poor of his parish. The superiors in Canada responded favorably to the appeal, and on November 7, 1873, four Sisters arrived in Holyoke and took up residence in a double-tenement house located on Dwight Street. The Sisters designated the orphanage that they opened "House of Providence" as "proof of their dependence on Divine Providence, and immediately set about to prepare accommodations for their prospective proteges." The first orphan arrived on November 15. Appeals for the reception of the sick and aged came and soon the refuge became a "veritable beehive." Expansion became imperative. A small twelve-bed hospital was therefore opened in South Hadley Falls in 1876, but the locality being inconvenient, it was closed after two years and converted into an orphanage. The patients in residence were transferred to the House of Providence.¹⁵⁴

While the work in the hospital progressed, the orphans were not neglected, for in 1880, a home was erected at Ingleside, outside of Holyoke.

¹⁵⁴ Founding and Development of the Works of Charity, Sisters of Providence of Holyoke, 1873-1948, 2-3. (Pamphlet) Both boys and girls were accepted until 1892 when the boys were taken to their own home called "Brightside."

There Mount St. Vincent was opened on February 22, and the orphans were brought to this new asylum.¹⁵⁵

The initial orphan asylum under Catholic auspices in the State of New Hampshire was founded in Manchester in 1870. Already in 1858, the Sisters of Mercy invited by the Reverend William McDonald, one of the pioneers, of the Catholic Church in New Hampshire and the first pastor in Manchester, became the first social workers in the state. Mother Francis Xavier Ward was chosen to head the band of five Sisters who commenced the care of orphaned children in Manchester. A cottage on the convent grounds at the corner of Beech and Laurel Streets was fitted up and on May 1, 1870, St. Mary's Asylum for girls opened its doors with Sister Mary Ligouri as superior. Sister Ligouri gave forty years of devoted service to the orphans in Manchester.¹⁵⁶

In less than two years the original cottage was no longer adequate for the number who sought shelter there. Father McDonald then purchased the Harris Estate, an imposing old mansion with extensive grounds in the heart of the city. With the cooperation of Mr. John O'Reilly, a loyal friend of the parish, Father McDonald was enabled to secure the fifty thousand dollars asked for the estate. The large well-built house was prepared for the orphan girls, and in the spring of 1874, it was opened under the name of St. Patrick's Orphanage for Girls. In the course of time extensive alterations were made on the facade and additions provided facilities for increasing numbers of

155 Ibid., 3.

156 History of Saint Patrick Orphanage, 1870-1941, Manchester, New Hampshire. Unpaged Manuscript.

orphans. Through all these changes "one landmark remains unchanged--the lions, relics of the original owners of the property, after nearly seventy years of sentinel duty still present their grim visages to those who mount the steps leading to the front entrance,"¹⁵⁷

In the State of Maine, Portland and Lewiston opened orphan homes before 1884. The Most Reverend David W. Bacon, first Bishop of Portland, saw the need in the early seventies for an orphan home in his diocese. St. Elizabeth's Roman Catholic Asylum for girls was established in Portland in 1873 in the building which served as the motherhouse of the Sisters of Mercy at 100 Free Street. Two years later the children and Sisters in charge of them were sent to North Whitefield, Maine.¹⁵⁸

Sadlier's Catholic Directory for 1880 states that an asylum in Lewiston, Maine, under the title "Our Lady of Lourdes" was "just opened" by the Grey Nuns.¹⁵⁹

The home was intended at the time for Canadian children principally. In the early years only about sixteen children were cared for there. These were supported mainly by private charity and board rates paid by relatives of the orphans.¹⁶⁰

157 Ibid. The States of Maine and New Hampshire had been erected into a diocese in 1853, with Portland designated as the episcopal city. At the time adverse prejudice against the Catholic Church was rife in that area. Mob violence prevailed and a number of churches were destroyed, among them the church in Manchester on July 3, 1854. Byrne, et al., Catholic Church in New England, I, 498. In 1884, Pope Leo XIII created the new See of Manchester, New Hampshire, comprising the entire state. Byrne, 604.

158 Questionnaire.

159 Sadlier's Catholic Directory, Almanac, and Ordo, 1880, 362.

160 Questionnaire.

CHAPTER V

GROWTH IN THE SOUTHLAND

The Ursuline Nuns and the Sisters of Charity, whose achievements in New Orleans were recounted in the first chapter of this study, were but the precursors of several other communities of religious that laid foundations in the South. The subject matter of this chapter will be a completion of the history of the work of the Ursulines and the Sisters of Charity in New Orleans and the expansion of orphan care in New Orleans and other southern cities by these and other Sisterhoods. It seems feasible to complete the treatment of the history of the growth of orphan asylums in the city of New Orleans before discussing that of the several scattered homes founded throughout the South. The area represented by the latter forms somewhat of a triangular region extending from Charleston, South Carolina, in the southeast, with the apex at Memphis and Nashville in Tennessee, to San Antonio, Texas.

The reader will recall the regrettable order of the City Council of New Orleans which forced the Ursuline community to relinquish charge of the orphans under its care. Between this occurrence, in 1824, and 1839, the Sisters were apparently without orphans in their convent. On July 12, 1839, Mother Ste. Seraphine, who was then the superior, asked the consent of the community council to admit a class of orphans for board and instruction. The Council consented and it was agreed that orphans who could pay for their

lodging and education, as well as those who had no means, should be received. The number was not to exceed twenty-five girls for the first year.¹ At times during the following years, the number often reached forty or more. The Register of Admission lists thirty-eight orphans in 1848, six of whom contributed five dollars a month for their maintenance.²

For almost a century, from 1727 to 1824, the Ursulines had been the recipients of sums of money to help defray the expenses of the orphanage. The excellence of their labor was recognized in turn by the French Government and by the Spanish monarch and by the officials of the city of New Orleans. From 1839, when the Sisters resumed the admission of orphan girls, until the end of the period covered by this study, the Sisters were given no aid by the city.³ Although the management of orphan asylums was not incumbent upon the Ursulines in virtue of a specific point in their rule, nevertheless, for almost two centuries the Sisters of St. Ursula in New Orleans tendered motherly care to hundreds of orphan girls. To them must be given the credit of having begun amid great hardship a noble work which was destined to spread over the vast expanse of these United States.

The New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum, which was founded at the corner of Clio and Prytania Streets in 1839, had operated successfully for a decade

1 Ursuline Convent Archives, New Orleans. Deliberations of the Council.

2 Register of Admission, Ursuline Convent Archives.

3 Ursuline Convent Archives. Deliberations of the Council. The following notation appears under date of July 17, 1887: "Since January 2, 1825 the city had ceased to give to the community any compensation for the orphans."

when there was born of it two other institutions designed to serve orphans' needs. The first of these was the St. Elizabeth House of Industry. Sister Francis Regis, for many years the superior at the New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum, recognized the need of providing the older girls with some industrial training which would prepare them with a means to gain a livelihood when they left the institution. Its commendable object was to train girls between the ages of fourteen and eighteen years in all types of domestic work, but principally sewing, millinery, embroidery, flower-making, and laundering. The community chronicler made the following note concerning the proposal: "So well were the exertions of Sister Regis and her companions appreciated and seconded by the generous Louisianians that in a short time a house was erected for the Industrial School, capable of accommodating three hundred orphans."⁴

The worthy project received support from several sources. A benefactor of the Sisters, Mr. Philip Rochford,⁵ purchased a lot at Magazine and Josephine Streets for the purpose. Mr. Rochford later superintended the work and solicited the financial help of many wealthy planters of his acquaintance, so that several thousand dollars were subscribed towards the erection of the building.⁶ According to Baudier, an appropriation of six thousand dollars was made by the State of Louisiana in 1852. Owing to the dreadful epidemic of 1853, construction could not be commenced as intended. In 1854, Mr. Judah Teuro and Doctor W. N. Mercer made sizeable donations. The institution was

4 Marillac Seminary Archives, St. Louis, Missouri

5 A business man of New Orleans. Sometimes spelled "Rotchford."

6 Marillac Seminary Archives.

named St. Elizabeth's to honor Miss Elizabeth Mercer, a daughter of the latter contributor.⁷ A three-story brick structure was erected in 1855. After its completion, the older orphan girls were received there from the New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum. Eventually the house on Magazine and Josephine Streets was undesirable because of dampness. Therefore, in 1870, the girls were taken to a new location at the corner of Napoleon and Prytania Streets where they occupied a building previously used as a school. In 1872, St. Elizabeth's House of Industry was entirely separated from the parent institution and obtained its own charter.⁸

Whereas St. Elizabeth's was designed to meet the needs of the older girls, the second adjunct of the New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum was intended as a home for the younger children. The erection of the St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum was likewise conceived by Sister Regis who is described as having been "extremely practical and far ahead of her time." Her plan for a separate home for children under four years of age was proposed at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum on March 29, 1858. The plan was "unanimously approved." A small frame house on the corner of Race and Magazine Streets was purchased by Mr. Rochford, and in November, 1858, a

7 Statements as to the amounts contributed do not agree. Baudier states that Touro gave five thousand dollars and Doctor Mercer gave "a like amount." Community records credit Doctor Mercer with two thousand dollars and "a certain Jew" (unnamed) with four thousand.

8 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 396. The New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum later ceased to be used as an orphanage. The structure is still standing and is known as "The Louise" (in honor of Louise Marillac) and serves as a day nursery and a working girls' home.

number of infants and several Sisters were transferred from the Female Orphan Asylum to St. Vincent's Infant Asylum.⁹

The original building soon became overcrowded making a larger home imperative. The cornerstone of a new brick building was laid on the same grounds on December 25, 1864. The Most Reverend Jean Marie Odin, Archbishop of the New Orleans Diocese, presided over the ceremony which a newspaper of that date predicted would be "especially interesting from the sacred and generous purpose to which the new building is to be applied."¹⁰ A large wing was added to the main structure in 1869.¹¹ One of St. Vincent's most loyal benefactors was Margaret Haughery, whose beneficence was noted in a previous chapter. It was written of Mrs. Haughery that her "love for the orphans has built her a monument in the hearts of the people more beautiful than the gray statue which has been erected in her honor."¹²

Another orphan home conducted by the Sisters of Charity was in Carrollton, then an independent village, but now incorporated in the city of New Orleans. In 1847, the Reverend Augustin de Angelis, pastor of the Destrehan church for many years, bequeathed to the Sisters of Charity and the orphans six lots upon which stood a small frame house. Later when the living quarters

9 St. Vincent's Infant Asylum Archives, New Orleans

10 The Daily Picayune, New Orleans, December 25, 1864.

11 St. Vincent's Infant Asylum Archives.

12 The New Orleans Item, December 13, 1908. Article written on the occasion of the celebration of the golden anniversary of St. Vincent's.

were enlarged, the Carrollton house was called St. Mary's.¹³ The New Orleans Times-Picayune, June 5, 1938, states that from a "small structure which in 1847 was the first orphan asylum in Carrollton, . . . St. Mary's became the sanctuary of thousands of child refugees, many of them left parentless by the yellow fever epidemics of 1852-53 and 1878 when New Orleans was known as 'the graveyard of the nation.'¹⁴

In 1849 when the New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum was overcrowded, forty of the smaller children were accommodated at St. Mary's. The following year, the Louisiana Legislature appropriated three thousand dollars, which amount was used to enlarge the Carrollton home. Because of the heavy expenses incurred at St. Mary's the orphans were removed for a time and the house was rented. During the epidemic of yellow fever in 1853, the number of orphans increased so rapidly that St. Mary's was reopened and the State Legislature appropriated more funds.¹⁵ The institution was operated by the Sisters of Charity until 1869. As a result of the poverty that followed the Civil War, St. Mary's could no longer be maintained and the children were taken to other institutions in New Orleans. The structure eventually became a Negro tenement.¹⁶

13 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 396-397.

14 The Times-Picayune, June 5, 1938. This article was written at the time that the old building was demolished.

15 Ibid.

16 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 397.

The third community of religious to assume charge of an orphanage in New Orleans was that of the Marianite Sisters of the Holy Cross.¹⁷ The Very Reverend Basil Anthony Mary Moreau founded the congregation at Le Mans, France, in 1841, and placed it under the patronage of Our Lady of Seven Dolors. Within a few years after their founding, Father Moreau was requested by Bishop Antoine Blanc, of New Orleans, to send a band of Sisters to take charge of St. Mary's Orphan Asylum for boys.¹⁸ Thus the Marianites were privileged to carry into execution in a mission country the purpose for which their institute was founded, namely, the instruction and education of youth, particularly poor and abandoned children. The first small group of four Sisters arrived in New Orleans on April 27, 1848.¹⁹

The orphanage which the Sisters were asked to operate had its beginning some years earlier. Its brief but precarious history prior to the coming of the Marianites is of interest. St. Mary's Orphanage began in 1835 on Bayou St. John where Father Adam Kindelon, the first pastor of St. Patrick's Church, New Orleans, had gathered a large number of boys. Father Kindelon had inherited some property which "enabled him to gratify his benevolent desire," the establishment of a boys' orphan home. Father made provision for the maintenance of the home by raising live stock and garden products.²⁰ A Catholic

17 The Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel came to New Orleans in 1833, but did not conduct an orphanage until much later.

18 Marianite Centennial in Louisiana, 1848-1948. This orphanage was not the short-lived St. Mary's Asylum in Carrollton.

19 Ibid., 31.

20 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 398.

association was organized to insure the permanent care of the male orphans in the city of New Orleans; the society was incorporated by an Act of the Legislature and approved on March 12, 1836, under the title of the "New Orleans Catholic Association for the relief of Male Orphans."²¹

The promising institution very soon met with disaster. Caught in the fury of a destructive storm, which gained in velocity as it advanced inland from the Gulf, the home was inundated. In his supreme effort to save the boys and the live stock, Father Kindelon became exhausted; then attacked with typhoid, he died a few days later.²² The orphanage was managed for a time by a staff of tutors and a secular board. When the latter proved inefficient, they were replaced by Brothers of the Holy Cross who shared the care of St. Mary's in connection with the Marianite Sisters of the Holy Cross until April 30, 1871.²³

It was apparently during the time that the orphan boys were under secular supervision that the Catholic Association made an attempt to secure a community of Sisters for St. Mary's. Records show that at a meeting of the Association on March 1, 1838, it was resolved "that the President be requested to write to the proper place in order to have a certain number of Sisters of Charity to preside over the Asylum." At the next meeting held on April 5, 1838, the President reported that he had written to Emmitsburg but had not been

21 Catholic Charities, New Orleans, Office files.

22 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 398.

23 Marianite Centennial, 32-34.

successful in obtaining Sisters "by reason of so many similar calls being lately made on the Mother House."²⁴

It is difficult to ascertain from the available records the exact year in which the Brothers of the Holy Cross arrived to assume charge of the boys at St. Mary's. The Marianite Centennial states that Archbishop Anthony Blanc, of New Orleans, had requested the Sisters of the Holy Cross to help the Brothers conduct the orphanage. When the Sisters arrived the asylum was already established and located in the Third District of New Orleans on Mazant Street between Casocalvo and Moreau Streets (now Royal and Chartres) in an impoverished section of the city.²⁵

Conditions at the time at St. Mary's were deplorable. Lamenting the plight of the orphans, the historian writes of them:

As poor little victims of mismanagement, they were without bedsteads or mattresses, and were obliged to sleep on the bare floor. . . . The "clothes room" consisted of two benches on which were placed the entire wardrobe of the children. The Sisters' poverty was such that were it not for the charity of the Ursuline nuns, who for six months sent them their meals daily, they probably would have died of want.²⁶

The names of only three of the Sisters who were among the first group to enter New Orleans are recorded. Sisters Mary of the Five Wounds, Mary of the Nativity, and Mary of Calvary began their heroic work for the orphans in St. Mary's in 1848. The institution had been designated as an asylum for boys; however, it appears that very shortly after their arrival, the Sisters

²⁴ New Orleans Catholic Association for the Relief of Male Orphans, Minute Book, No. 1, 1835-1849.

²⁵ Marianite Centennial, 31.

²⁶ Ibid., 32.

recognized the need for establishing a home for girls as well. This is inferred from a letter dated November 27, 1851, from Father Basil Moreau at Le Mans, France, to Sister Mary of the Five Wounds, which states in part that, "Most heartily, my dear daughter, do I approve of your enterprise for an Industrial School for orphan girls, and I am sure that our Most Holy Father, the Pope, will also approve of it with pleasure."²⁷

Sister Mary of the Five Wounds then appealed to Father Sorin at the Motherhouse in Indiana for Sisters to care for the girls. Sisters Mary of St. Alphonsus and Mary of the Desert arrived in New Orleans on May 3, 1852. The girls' orphanage, known as the Immaculate Conception Industrial School, had opened in July, 1851, in a small house placed at the disposal of the Marianites by the Ursuline Sisters. For five years the cottage on the premises of the Ursuline convent served as an industrial school for orphan girls. Loyal friends of the Sisters assisted in the work of caring for the orphans. A Madame Jourdan contributed money, clothing, and provisions in memory of her daughter Athanaise; the charitable endeavors were likewise shared by Madame Alonzo le Baron and Bridget Dorsey Kelly. The latter, "no longer content with giving her money, completed the sacrifice by devoting her own life to the cause." As Sister Mary de Chantal, she begged for the orphans for a period of thirty years.²⁸

27 Letter quoted in Marianite Centennial, 134.

28 Marianite Centennial, 44, 135. Sister Mary de Chantal was one of the first novices to receive the habit in New Orleans. Until 1855 the candidates made their postulate and novitiate in Indiana.

The number of girls taught sewing and other useful domestic arts at the Industrial School increased rapidly. Two plots of land were purchased in 1855; one was located on North Rampart and Elmira (now Gallier) Streets, the other was a part of the old Batheling Macarty plantation. Through the untiring efforts of Sister Mary of the Five Wounds, the superior, and the assistance of such staunch friends as Mr. Octave de Armas and Dr. Mercer, the erection of a building at the corner of Rampart and Elmira Streets became a reality in 1855. The following year, the orphan girls were transferred from the Ursuline house to their new asylum.²⁹

The history of St. Mary's Orphan Boys' Asylum and the Immaculate Conception Industrial School for orphan girls is meagre after the two were established at the new location. The community historian tells of the dire need of the Sisters and orphans during the tragic days of the Civil War. Sister Mary of St. Alphonsus appealed to General Benjamin F. Butler, the Union commanding officer, for food. General Butler responded by sending full army rations for the Sisters and half rations for the orphans. Terror struck the hearts of the Sisters and children when alarms were sounded throughout the city and the roar of the cannons was audible at the approach of Admiral Farragut's fleet.³⁰

In 1871, the Brothers of the Holy Cross left the care of St. Mary's Asylum entirely to the Marianite Sisters. An extract from the Minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting states:

29 Ibid., 44, 136-137.

30 Ibid., 137.

On motion of A. Robert, Esquire, amended on motion of Honorable T. W. Collins, and duly seconded, it was resolved: That the proposition of the Soeurs Marianites de Ste. Croix this day presented and read, be accepted; and that the said Sisters take charge of the Asylum provisionally on and from the first of May, 1871, and that the Committee already appointed by the Board shall manage the details of a contract with the said Sisters.³¹

Another community of religious to take up work with the orphans in New Orleans was that of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. In point of time, these religious were the second to undertake the education of young girls in the Crescent City. The first small group came to America in 1833 and became "noted pioneers among the leaders of educational work in the South and of Louisiana in particular." The order was but eight years old when it was happy to find a refuge in the United States.³²

The new community saw its beginnings in Tours, France. Miss Pauline Marie Teresa Bazire became associated with a number of women of high rank who cooperated with her in performing works of charity. The Reverend Boutelou, at the time rector of a parish in Tours, saw in the group the "embryo of great future usefulness" and becoming its spiritual guide, he formed a new Sisterhood. This took place in 1825 and within eighteen months the community counted fifty members. Pauline Bazire, Mother St. Paul in religion, lay dying in December, 1828, and in prophetic words addressed to the Mistress of Novices expressed her belief that the Sisters would not remain in France, but would cross the ocean

31 Archives, Marianite Sisters of the Holy Cross, Provincial House, New Orleans.

32 Mount Carmel Orphan Asylum Golden Jubilee, 14, (Pamphlet.)

in order to establish the order in a foreign land. When the Revolution of 1830 burst upon France, the Sisters were forced to separate. Meanwhile, Father Boutelou had gone as a missionary to Louisiana and was assigned to the Assumption Parish in Plattenville near New Orleans. The pressing need for more Sisters in Louisiana prompted Father Boutelou to suggest to the Most Reverend Leo de Neckere³³ that the Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel be invited to come. The Bishop was most willing to support the French missionary in his endeavors to relieve the dearth of religious women in New Orleans and its environs. Communications between Father Boutelou and Sister Theresa in France began without delay. The appeal was heeded, for on September 8, 1833, a group of Sisters left Le Havre and arrived in New Orleans fifty-two days later. After a brief period of acclimitization in Plattenville, a motherhouse was built in New Orleans and schools were opened.³⁴

It was not until the year 1869 that the Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel were requested to assume full charge of an orphan asylum. Two well-known and benevolent women of New Orleans, Mrs. C. Barjac and Mrs. J. Reves, had opened a small dwelling to receive and care for children who had lost their fathers in the Civil War. The number of fatherless children increased rapidly and the women recognized their inability to continue the work unaided. The request made to the Sisters was answered by their accepting complete responsibility of the orphans on March 19, 1869. The property, located at 729 Piety Street between Royal and Dauphine Streets, formerly belonged to a Mr. L. Le

15-16. ³⁴ Mount Carmel Orphan Asylum Golden Jubilee, New Orleans, 1933,

Beau. The Sisters inherited not only the orphans, but the home heavily encumbered with debt and in need of repairs.³⁵

An old manuscript in the files of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel³⁶ lists the Sisters who assumed charge of the orphanage on July 2, 1869: Mother Justine Bouchet, a native of France, was made superior; Sisters Marie de la Conception Viel and Cecile Pothier were also from France; Sister Dorothee Lestrade came from Martinique; and Sisters Nativité Judice, De Carmel Aucoin, and Stanislaus Bayerstorffer were natives of Louisiana.³⁷ At Mount Carmel only girls between the ages of five and twelve were accepted. Parents or guardians were asked not to withdraw the girls from the institution until they were eighteen years of age. If they wished to reclaim custody before that age, they were to be "held liable for the sum of \$10.00 per month for all the time the said orphan may have lived in the asylum."³⁸ The original building became far too small for the ever greater number of children that came to Mount Carmel. In 1873, a large frame structure was erected on the same grounds at a cost of twenty-two thousand dollars. Later,

35 Ibid., 10. Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 423, states that the Sisters of Mount Carmel had a "capacity number" of orphans brought to them by the widows of Confederate soldiers at their boarding school adjoining St. Augustine's Church.

36 The present Motherhouse is located on Robert E. Lee Boulevard.

37 Mount Carmel Archives. Sister Justine remained at the orphanage as superior for thirty years. It is worthy of note that Sister De Carmel Aucoin was still living when the orphanage closed in 1919 and was then ninety-seven years of age.

38 Mount Carmel Archives. Regulations of the Institution and Death Record. (Large register not paged.)

in 1881, the surroundings were greatly improved and a charitable Catholic society known as the St. Louis Society was organized to guarantee ample funds for the maintenance of the orphanage.³⁹

A large volume bearing the title Regulations of the Institution and Death Record contains, besides quite ordinary points of rule, a number of items that, judged by present day standards, could be classified as decidedly unique and novel. It was expressly specified that all clothing must be extremely plain. White dresses were not permitted. The sole piece of jewelry allowed to be worn were earrings, "as the wearing of these is sometimes beneficial to the eyes." All the children who could not comb their own hair had to have it cut. The ordinary rule was to have "short hair until the age of twelve." All were to take part in the "cooking, washing, ironing, and general work of the house." To be exempted, the girls were required to "have a certificate from the doctor." Only black ribbons were to be worn during the week; on Sunday, pink or navy blue could be worn.⁴⁰

Another tome showing the marks of age that may be seen at the Mount Carmel motherhouse is that containing the names of the orphans and following each name a pious practice selected by each. For every month from September, 1871, to February, 1889, the complete list of names and practices are written in a painstaking beautiful script. The purpose in view in performing the acts of virtue was the relief of the souls in Purgatory as is indicated by the

39 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 423.

40 Mount Carmel Archives, Regulations of the Institution and Death Record.

heading: Pieuses pratiques établies à l'Orphelinat, pour le Soulagement des
ames du Purgatoire: A renouveler chaque mois Selon le devotion de chaque
enfant. Paters and Aves, as well as other common prayers occur with great fre-
 quency; among those more rarely selected by the orphans are the following:
Pater et ave les bras en croix, Garder le silence pendant la couture, être
Obéissante, Pratiques le patience, savior ses leçons, respect envers les
soeurs. Although the practice was not made compulsory, very few blanks are
 found following the names. From this register, the number of orphans at Mount
 Carmel can be ascertained. Forty-seven names were listed in 1871 and the num-
 ber remained quite consistently in the forties throughout the period.⁴¹

The high mortality that followed in the wake of the severe epidemic
 of yellow fever in 1853 so greatly augmented the number of orphans that the
 existing asylums were taxed beyond their capacity. In an effort to provide for
 a portion of the city's parentless children, the parishioners of St. Mary's
 Assumption church laid plans to establish an orphanage of their own. This gave
 birth to what was called the St. Joseph German Orphan Asylum. The cornerstone
 of a three story brick structure on the corner of Josephine and Laurel Streets
 was laid in July, 1854. The new orphan home, opened on December 28 of that
 year, was placed in charge of several generous hearted women. Before the lapse
 of one year the multiple duties connected with caring for the orphans made in-
 dispensable a larger staff of workers. Father Thaddeus Anwander, the Redemp-
 terist rector at St. Mary's, realized the need for obtaining Sisters and, ac-
 cordingly, requested the Mother General of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, in

Milwaukee, to supply a number of religious for St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum. Happily, Mother Caroline Pries, then in office, agreed to send a group of her Sisters to New Orleans. Father Anwander purchased a two-story house on Josephine and Constance Streets to serve as a home for the Sisters. The first group arrived on December 6, 1856. Besides conducting the home for the orphan boys and girls of the parish, the Sisters taught in St. Mary's Assumption School.⁴²

The Redemptorist priests at St. Mary's Parish observed with gratification the results of a decade of zealous toil on the part of the Sisters of Notre Dame and began to look about for a second community to work under the shadow of St. Mary's. In that section of New Orleans, there lived mainly German and French. Each national group wished to have its own school and orphanage. To this circumstance may be attributed the coming of the Order of Mercy to New Orleans. The School Sisters of Notre Dame continued to work among the German inhabitants; the Sisters of Mercy began their charitable labors among the French.⁴³

The Redemptorists had sent applications for Sisters to the several Mercy convents scattered throughout the United States. These requests were begun in 1867, but they were not accorded an attentive ear until in 1869. The first group of Sisters of Mercy arrived in New Orleans on Easter Sunday, March 27. They received a hearty welcome from the Redemptorists and the following September found them teaching in St. Alphonsus School, which at that time was

42 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 376, 399.

43 Convent of Mercy Annals, New Orleans.

commonly designated as the French school.⁴⁴ The Order of Mercy has among its objects the "care of girls, of women, of the aged, and of orphans."⁴⁵ Orphan girls frequently found shelter in the little convent of the Sisters of Mercy on St. Andrew Street. Mother Austin, superior of the community, desirous of making a home for a greater number than could be accommodated at the convent, proposed the building of an asylum. To this Archbishop Perche readily gave his approval.⁴⁶ The site selected was on a piece of property on Washington Street belonging to the Redemptorist Fathers. The cornerstone was laid on September 19, 1875, by the Reverend Gilbert Raymond, Vicar General of the diocese.⁴⁷

The St. Alphonsus Orphan Asylum was dedicated on September 10, 1876, by the Reverend F. Girardey, C. SS. R., and the home formally opened to fifty children who entered the asylum on that day. Nearly all of them had been cared for previously by the Sisters in their convent at their own expense.⁴⁸ On Sunday, November 25, the first Mass was read in the Chapel of the new asylum by Father Alexander, C. SS. R. The Sisters and orphans had been attending Mass in St. Francis de Sales church located close by the orphanage. However, the pastor later objected to the arrangement and by "summarily turning the orphans and Sisters out of his pews," compelled the Redemptorist Fathers to read Mass in the asylum chapel. This left no priest available to say Mass at St.

44 Ibid.

45 Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy.

46 Archbishop of New Orleans, 1870-1883.

47 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 458.

48 St. Alphonsus Parish Annals.

Vincent's Infant Asylum, at the corner of Race and Magazine Streets, which the annalist notes, was a "hard blow" to the Sisters of Charity. For ten years the Redemptorists had read daily Mass at the Infant Asylum where the Sisters had been very kind to the Fathers and the altar boys.⁴⁹

The securing of sufficient funds was not an easy matter and "many were the expedients to which the Sisters had to resort in order to make the little ones comfortable." Aid was solicited throughout the city by the Sisters and programs were given by the orphans for the benefit of the asylum. On the sixth of January, 1877, by one such entertainment, the substantial sum of one thousand three hundred dollars was realized. It was only by dint of hard labor the home was maintained in its beginning years.⁵⁰

All the orphan homes in New Orleans whose histories have been thus far related were conducted by Sisterhoods of the white race for children of the same lineage. Neither did any of the several communities take root on American soil, for each of them had European origins, some foreign affiliation or heritage, however remote. Instances to the contrary are found in the two religious congregations of colored women, the Oblates of Providence, founded in Baltimore, and the Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans. The former conducted the short-lived Providence Asylum, the latter the present existing St. John Berchman's Orphanage.

49 Ibid.

50 Convent of Mercy Annals. The orphan asylum continued until June, 1926, when, by order of ecclesiastical authorities, the orphans were transferred to other institutions. The Annals state briefly that on January 18, 1927, St. Alphonsus Asylum sold for fifty thousand dollars.

The Oblates of Providence had completed nearly forty years of zealous labor in Baltimore when they were entreated by Archbishop Jean Marie Odin, of New Orleans, to establish a house in his episcopal city. The superiors in Baltimore were willing to supply Sisters but lacked the means necessary for the transfer to New Orleans. The Archbishop held a bazaar to raise funds and on December 24, 1866, the prelate sent a message to Baltimore expressing gratification at the Sisters' coming and added, "I send you two hundred dollars to pay their traveling expenses to New Orleans."⁵¹

Sister Victoria Messonie was sent as superior; Sisters Gertrude Smallwood and Bernard Atkins accompanied her. Arrangements were made to sail on January 17, 1867, but the steamer Liberty did not depart until February 9. After stopping at Havana and Key West on the voyage, the ship arrived safely in New Orleans on February 22. The Sisters were received kindly by Archbishop Odin who sent them to live with the Sisters of the Holy Family for a time.⁵² Little information is available concerning the history of the Sisters while in New Orleans. A newspaper article gives the following brief notation:

The preparations necessary for the installation of the Providence Asylum, situated on the corner of Hospital and Tonti, being nearly finished, the Sisters of Providence will take up residence there on the days which follow Christmas, and will be ready to receive orphans after the first of January.⁵³

51 Sherwood, Oblates' Hundred and One Years, 139-142.

52 Ibid., 142-143.

53 The New Orleans Tribune, December 18, 1869.

According to Sherwood, the Asylum closed in 1872 for lack of resources and in July, 1873, the last Sisters returned from New Orleans to the Motherhouse in Baltimore.⁵⁴ The institution then came into the hands of the Sisters of the Holy Family who had already worked in New Orleans for a generation.

The Sisters of the Holy Family, dedicated to the care of old indigent colored women, the instruction of slaves, and the teaching of catechism to colored children, was founded on November 21, 1842. The Foundress was Miss Harriet Delisle, born in Louisiana of Haitian parents. In her charitable work, Miss Delisle was generously assisted by Miss Juliette Gaudin, a native of Cuba, and Miss Marie Aliquot, a young French woman. A Father Rousselon, vicar General of the Diocese of New Orleans at that time, and Bishop Blanc encouraged and approved the new foundation which was effected in a humble obscure dwelling on St. Bernard Street. Very shortly after, the juvenescent community secured a larger home on Bayou Road.⁵⁵

Father Rousselon, realizing the need for a formal religious training for the members, secured the cooperation of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, located in the town of Convent in the civil parish of St. James. Miss Delisle passed several months at Convent learning the principles of religious life and preparing herself for the direction of the order that she had founded. After

54 Sherwood, Oblates' Hundred and One Years, 159-160.

55 The Sisters of the Holy Family of New Orleans, Louisiana, Hundredth Anniversary, 3-5. (Pamphlet.)

returning to New Orleans, she had her profession of vows and, as Mother Harriet, governed the community until her death in 1862. The foundress did not live to witness the establishment by the community of an orphanage for colored girls. In 1876, the Sisters took charge of the asylum mentioned above, located on Hospital and Tonti Streets. The orphanage continued to be operated at the same location for some time, but each succeeding year, the home became more crowded as is evident from the newspaper comments at the time the first building was replaced by a new structure at a better location.⁵⁶

Yet another religious community was engaged to a limited extent in the care of orphans in the Diocese of New Orleans. A band of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, under Madame Philippine Duchesne, came to St. Louis, Missouri, from France in 1818. Toward the end of 1821, four Sisters, with Madame Ande as superior, proceeded southward to Grand Couteau (Opelousas) in Louisiana where they founded an academy, a free school, and an orphan asylum. A generous convert, Mrs. Mary Smith, to fulfill the wish of her deceased husband, donated four hundred arpents of land for the purpose of erecting thereon an asylum. Both clergy and laity of the district freely contributed funds towards the construction of a fine brick building.⁵⁷

56 Ibid., 5-6. The New Orleans City Daily Item, June 15, 1891, gives an account of a meeting held on June 14 at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of the Holy Family on Orleans Street to consider the erection of a two-story building on Orleans and Bourbon Streets for the accommodation of the colored orphan girls "now occupying the building on Hospital Street which is sadly inadequate. Sixty girls are now cared for there." The Daily Item for December 14, 1891, states that the cornerstone of a new orphan asylum was laid at the corner of Orleans and Bourbon Streets "last evening."

57 J. A. Burns, The Catholic School System in the United States; Its Principles, Origin, and Establishment, New York, 1908, 306.

Baudier states that Bishop Joseph Rosati requested the Religious of the Sacred Heart at St. Michael's to take charge of a school at Plattenville, Louisiana. After some hesitation, the Madames took charge of the convent and school in 1828. Besides the boarders, the Madames took a number of orphans. The school became so heavy a burden that they were obliged to discontinue it in 1832. However, St. Michael's⁵⁸ remained in existence for some years at least, for in August, 1862, the Sisters at the institution received eight Sisters of Charity, fourteen orphans, and six Negro servants who had fled from Donaldsonville when the town was bombarded by Federal gunboats.⁵⁹

At approximately the same time that the Sisters of Charity were opening the New Orleans Female Orphan Asylum, a request was sent by Bishop Michael Portier, of Mobile, Alabama, to Emmitsburg for Sisters to conduct an asylum in Mobile.⁶⁰ The city had a severe epidemic of yellow fever in 1837. Added to that was the loss of crops due to a prolonged drought and a damaging fire which swept away all the lower part of the city. The high mortality which resulted, particularly from the fever, left so many orphans that the charity of Bishop Portier and the Catholic women of the Cathedral parish was aroused to action.⁶¹ A meeting was held in the sacristy of the Cathedral for

58 The United States Catholic Almanac lists St. Michael's Orphan Asylum for the first time in 1837, 160, and indicates that it was located in Acadia County. In the issue for 1844-45, the Almanac states that St. Michael's is sixty miles above New Orleans, 113.

59 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 312, 431.

60 First Bishop of Mobile, 1826, to 1859. The Vicariate-Apostolic of Alabama was created in 1825; the Diocese of Mobile was formed in 1829.

61 History of St. Mary's Home, Mobile, Alabama, 1952. (Leaflet)

the purpose of forming a charitable society and concomitantly, St. Mary's Orphan Asylum was founded. The account as given in the Constitution of the Society reads as follows:

On Monday, the 4th of January, 1838, at 10 o'clock, A. M., in compliance with a previous call, a large number of the ladies of the Catholic Congregation of Mobile disposed to form themselves into a Charitable Association, after having assisted at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, offered up by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Portier, Bishop of the Diocese, specially for their intended Society, assembled in the vestry-room of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, . . .⁶²

In the Preamble of the Constitution of the Society special mention is made of the plight of the orphans as one of the objects for forming a charitable association: "Having witnessed with pain the many afflicting scenes of distress which have from time to time existed in our city," it was resolved to found a society which would have for one of its purposes the "support and education of destitute orphans and children abandoned or neglected by their parents, or whose parents are unable to support and educate them."⁶³

Mrs. Z. Guesnard was the first president of the society, who with the Board of Managers, made arrangements for a temporary home for the orphans of Mobile. The first supervisor of the home was a Miss Burns, who opened the asylum on December 20, 1838, with three children. As time went on, other children were received; both boys and girls were taken, but later the boys were transferred to the Boys' Industrial Home on Lafayette Street. The site of St. Mary's Asylum, as the home was named, was land contained in a grant from the

⁶² Constitution of the Catholic Female Charitable Society of Mobile, Revised and Adopted March 2, 1841, 3. This organization possesses the oldest charter granted by the State of Alabama.

⁶³ Ibid.

King of Spain when Mobile was a possession of that country, and was located opposite the Cathedral between Claiborne and Franklin Streets. The first home was a three-story structure toward which the citizens of Mobile contributed generously for its maintenance.⁶⁴

In 1841, application was made to Emmitsburg for Sisters, for "in a short while the keen vision of Bishop Portier saw that only an institution conducted by Religious could fulfill the needs of the time."⁶⁵ In response to the Bishop's request, Sisters Martina, Euthelia, Acquila, and Matilda arrived in Mobile on December 16, 1841, and immediately assumed charge of St. Mary's Asylum.⁶⁶

From 1839, when the first Orphan Fair which netted over two thousand dollars was held, until 1881, annual Fairs were the main source of income for St. Mary's. In the latter year, the Catholic men of Mobile formed a society, the members of which pledged themselves to contribute regularly to the support of the orphanage.⁶⁷

The second orphan home opened by the Sisters of Charity in the deep South outside the city of New Orleans was at Donaldsonville, Louisiana. The

64 Marillac Seminary Archives, St. Louis, Missouri.

65 Excerpt from Sermon delivered by the Very Reverend J. J. Cronin, C. M., on the occasion of the Centennial Anniversary of St. Mary's Asylum, January 25, 1938.

66 One Hundredth Anniversary of St. Mary's Asylum, January 25-26, 1938. (Pamphlet.)

67 St. Mary's Asylum files.

Lazarist Fathers having been established in the town for some years, invited the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg, in 1842, to open an orphanage and a hospital. The first Sisters arrived in January, 1843.⁶⁸ To this initial group belonged Sisters Loretto O'Reilly, Adelaide Balfe, Gonzaga Grace, Paschal McMillan, Theonilla Conley, and Isadore Fischer. From 1845 to 1850, the Emmitsburg Sisters had a novitiate at Donaldsonville. The exact time when orphans were first accepted at St. Vincent's is not clear; however, in 1850, the novitiate was discontinued and the quarters used by the orphans. In 1863, boarders were admitted to help in the support of the orphanage.⁶⁹

One of the Sisters of Charity who was an eye-witness of harrowing experiences at Natchez during the Civil War, and which account will be retold later, records that the town of Donaldsonville, Louisiana, suffered greatly at the time of its bombardment and that much damage was done to the home of the Sisters, but that God had protected the Sisters and orphans. Sister M. Clara, superior at the time, wrote to the army headquarters in New Orleans informing the officers that serious damage had been done by the shelling to the mission in Donaldsonville. General Butler, in his reply of regret, stated that it was necessary to destroy the town as the inhabitants harbored a large number of guerillas, but he requested that Sister send him the amount of the damages

68 Baudier, Church in Louisiana, 352.

69 Emmitsburg Archives.

which he intended to pay, besides sending clothing and provisions for the children.⁷⁰

Another orphanage conducted by the Sisters of Charity in the South was at Natchez, Mississippi. The Diocese of Natchez was created in 1837, and it was assigned the Most Reverend John Joseph Chanche. Bishop Chanche decided very soon after his arrival in Natchez that some provision should be made in his new and thinly settled district for children "deprived by death or misfortune of the care of their natural protectors."⁷¹ To meet this need, the Bishop arranged with the Sisters of Emmitsburg to undertake the construction of an orphanage in Natchez.

Three Sisters came from Emmitsburg to Natchez in January, 1847. Sister Scholastica, one of the original band, relates that, "Sister Martha, Sister Philomena and myself arrived in Natchez at 11 o'clock on the evening of January 28, 1847. . . . We were taken to the Bishop's residence where we were introduced to the two Miss Marcilly and another lady."⁷² Two days later the Sisters took possession of the Old Mechanic's Hall located on Main Street opposite the present Memorial Park. Their work of charity for the orphans began in a

70 Marillac Seminary Archives. As mentioned above, it was from Donaldsonville that a number of Sisters and orphans fled to St. Michael's in charge of the Religious of the Sacred Heart during the bombardment of Donaldsonville.

71 Marillac Seminary Archives. From an Article by Reverend Geoffrey O'Connell in Catholic Action of the South. The newspaper clipping contains no date.

72 Marillac Seminary Archives.

most unostentatious way, for on that very day, the Sisters received two girls, Margaret and May Ann Power of Natchez; the following day a three-year old girl came from Grand Gulf.⁷³

It was some time before the Sisters and orphans became established in a permanent abode. From the Old Mechanic's Hall, they moved to a house on Rankin Street back of the Cathedral. Later they occupied a residence in which Bishop Chanche had lived for five years. Notice of this transfer was given in the Natchez semiweekly Courier of March 12, 1847: "The Sisters of Charity have opened an Orphan Asylum and School for Girls at the corner of Union and Orleans Streets." In April, 1848, Bishop Chanche purchased a readily adaptable house at the corner of Jefferson and Rankin Streets from J. C. Ferriday at a cost of about five and one-half thousand dollars. The Mississippi Free Trader of Natchez in its issue of April 20, 1848, states, "Aided by subscriptions of the citizens of Natchez, together with the proceeds of a fair held in this city last fall, the Sisters were enabled to pay all the purchase money except \$3227." The payment of this balance was made possible through the assistance of Colonel Rice C. Ballard who endorsed three notes amounting to the debt payable in one, two, and three years.⁷⁴

The dwelling soon became inadequate and plans were laid for a brick addition which was completed in 1859. Fortunately for St. Mary's Orphan Home, from time to time substantial donations made it possible to undertake new projects. Francis Surget, Sr., a convert, bequeathed five thousand dollars, while

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

Nevitt Roach and Francis Surget, Jr., each subscribed one thousand dollars. In 1862, when the orphanage was receiving children made orphans by the Civil War, John Curran, of Jackson, Mississippi, left a legacy of three thousand dollars to the orphans at St. Mary's.⁷⁵

The number of orphans ever increased steadily. Records show that by January 30, 1854, sixty children had been admitted. During the Civil War, the number was considerably augmented. Neither were the demands on the orphanage lessened in the difficult years following the war. In the years from 1867 to 1879, the number ranged from sixty-nine to one hundred twenty-seven, making necessary the construction, in 1872, of another building having a dormitory, a number of classrooms, and a laundry. It was at this time also that the Most Reverend William Elder⁷⁶ was compelled to make repeated pleas for funds for St. Mary's Asylum which was sharing the hardships of the War which "had broken the fortunes of the South."⁷⁷

A member of the Sisters of Charity who was missioned at St. Mary's during the Civil War wrote a graphic account of the harrowing experience undergone when Natchez was under fire. It was without doubt the grimest in the history of St. Mary's: In April, 1862, a fleet under Admiral Farragut and land forces under General Butler took possession of New Orleans. The gunboats began moving up the Mississippi River and about the middle of August they

75 Ibid.

76 Consecrated May, 1859. Bishop of Natchez until 1880 when he was made Archbishop of Cincinnati.

77 Marillac Seminary Archives.

reached the city of Natchez. Sister relates that Bishop Elder hastened to the Asylum where he proposed plans for safety. Five miles out in the country there was an abandoned plantation house; the owner had offered it as a place of refuge for the Sisters and orphans. Unique preparations were made, for the chronicle states that that night "Sister Rosana and myself went to the children's clothes room after they had gone to bed and made up a package for each child in the house one hundred thirty-five in number."⁷⁸

The next morning it was learned that the boats had moved to Vicksburg. Unhappily, the respite was short-lived. On the afternoon of August 25, the bombardment of Natchez began. The frightened Sisters and children went to the Chapel where the Bishop gave general absolution. Many distracted people from the city had fled from their homes to the orphanage for protection. The children were gathered into the hall where each one was given a bundle prepared some nights previous. Sister M. Thomas, the superior, had provided a horse and cart to take Sister Rosana Morgan and twenty small children who could not walk the five miles to safety in the woods where "we found our entrance into the old ghostly looking house which was inhabited by rats without number." The bundles of clothes served as pillows for the children. Provisions were brought on wagons by colored men. Breakfast the next morning consisted of black coffee and corn bread, but by evening they had had milk. Two of the Sisters walked back to town that day to see Sister Thomas and the other Sisters who had remained on the orphanage premises. Sister Thomas wanted the refugees in the woods to have milk. As a result a "novel procession" wended

its way into the country that afternoon--the two Sisters, Rover the dog, and Bossie the cow.⁷⁹

Several weeks were spent in the country and many of the children became ill. Sister Thomas then asked permission of General Davidson, then in command of the Federal troupes, to return to Natchez. The General readily gave his consent and in two days sent six army wagons to get the orphans and Sisters. For some time St. Mary's received army rations. Requests were to be made whenever provisions were low. This sometimes necessitated a trip to New Orleans. On one occasion, the Sisters presented themselves to General Banks in New Orleans; not only did the General increase the list of provisions, but he gave one thousand dollars for the benefit of the orphans at St. Mary's.⁸⁰

A second severe trial harassed Natchez and its vicinity when small pox and black measles broke out among the soldiers. The Sisters cared for sick soldiers as well as the numbers of children who contracted the diseases. For thirteen months the epidemics raged in the orphanage and during that time nineteen of the orphans died.⁸¹

The first Catholic home for orphans in the southeastern part of the United States was in Charleston, South Carolina. The Diocese of Charleston founded in 1820 comprised the states of North and South Carolina and Georgia. During the early years of the episcopacy of the first Bishop of Charleston, the Most Reverend John England, periodical visitations of yellow fever "devastated

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

the homes of many of the immigrants leaving a large number of helpless orphans." "The large heart," writes the Reverend Jeremiah Joseph O'Connell, "of the Bishop yearned with pity and he provided for the unfortunate innocents, by the establishment of the order of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy."⁸²

In 1829, Bishop England induced a number of pious women to come from Ireland. Aided by the material assistance of Miss Julia Datty, a charitably inclined native of San Domingo, the prelate formed them into an independent community giving them the rule of the Presentation Order. The first Americans to join the Sisters from Ireland were Misses Mary and Honora O'Gorman and Miss Teresa Barry of Baltimore. Temporary vows were pronounced for the first time on December 8, 1830.⁸³ That the new congregation was definitely one of charity is exemplified by that portion of the rule which pertains to the specific work to which the Sisters were to devote themselves. In general, it was stipulated that, "Servants, orphans and the destitute are to be looked upon as their peculiar charge and they are to honor Christ in these, His poor members, with special affection."⁸⁴ More particularly, it was the duty of the Guardian of the Orphans

to inform herself particularly of their health; to see that they are kept clean in person and apparel; that they have sufficient wholesome

⁸² Jeremiah Joseph O'Connell, O. S. B., Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia: Leaves of Its History, 1820-1878, New York, 1879, 37-38. Father O'Connell states in his Introduction that many of the diocesan records perished in a conflagration in Charleston and during the Civil War.

⁸³ Ibid., 64.

⁸⁴ Constitutions and Rules of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in the Diocese of Charleston, S. C., 6.

food; that they are protected against the weather by suitable clothing in the day, and covering at night.

To see and converse with them frequently, in a word, to have a mother's patience, tenderness and care for these poor children.⁸⁵

The orphans were first sheltered in a small house on Bauvain Street. Frequent visitations of cholera and yellow fever rapidly increased the number of the orphaned. Hence, a new and spacious convent was built on Queen Street in 1839. Only girls were admitted until 1858 when at the request of Bishop Patrick N. Lynch⁸⁶ a separate house was opened for boys.⁸⁷

During the shelling of Charleston in the Civil War, the inhabitants of the city suffered greatly. The convent and asylum located in the southern part of Charleston were dangerously exposed. The Sisters decided to move to a shelter in Sumter. Shells flew over the asylum while the Sisters made hasty preparations to leave. When all was in readiness, the orphans and Sisters assembled in the chapel for a brief visit; then each child with a bundle of clothing passed through the gates of the orphanage, "forming a very lonesome procession." The trip was made in an old farm wagon. Bishop Lynch deeply concerned for the welfare of the orphans, arranged a comfortable home in Sumter. When General Sherman's army arrived there soon after the capture of Columbia, South Carolina, February 17, 1865, the Sisters again feared for the safety of their charges. Sisters Mary Joseph Kent and Mary Regis Larkin went in person

85 Ibid., 20.

86 Third Bishop of Charleston, 1858-1882.

87 Questionnaire. The official title of the community is the "Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy." In early days the institution was known as the "Sisters' Orphanage" or "The Asylum." At present it is called the City Orphan Home.

to implore protection from the commander. They were given the assurance that no harm would come to the Sisters or orphans. The exiles remained in Sumter until guns were again silenced, when they returned to Charleston "to find their former home terribly shattered by the siege."⁸⁸

Some years after the founding of the asylum in Charleston, efforts directed toward the same goal were begun in the neighboring State of Georgia. In 1842, the Very Reverend J. F. O'Neill, a pastor in Savannah,⁸⁹ saw the need of a community of Sisters in the city. Father O'Neill applied to the city for a site for a convent and school, and obtained three lots on Liberty and Abercorn Streets then located in the outskirts of the city. In order to secure funds for building, the zealous pastor selected a committee of devoted Catholic women and induced them to raise money through fairs and bazaars. Wonderful success attended their industry and cooperation, so that by May, 1845, a building had been constructed.⁹⁰

The same year Father O'Neill went to Charleston where he obtained six Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy whose community had been founded by Bishop England sixteen years earlier.⁹¹ The Sisters were duly installed by

⁸⁸ Ellen Ryan Jolly, Nuns of the Battlefield, Providence, Rhode Island, Fourth Edition, 1930, 289-292.

⁸⁹ At this time the State of Georgia was still a part of the Diocese of Charleston. The Savannah-Atlanta Diocese was not created until 1850.

⁹⁰ "Centennial Year of the Sisters of Mercy in Georgia," St. Anthony's Catholic News, March, 1945.

⁹¹ Then distinct from the Sisters of Mercy founded by Mother McAuley. The Sisters in Savannah were amalgamated to form the Religious Sisters of Mercy of the Union in the United States of America in 1929.

Father O'Neill in their convent on Liberty Street on June 13, 1845. The cornerstone indicates that the first building erected was to serve as a home for orphans. In connection with the orphanage, the Sisters likewise conducted a boarding school, a pay school, and a free school for the children of St. Patrick's parish. Out of this institution grew St. Vincent's Academy.⁹²

Twelve parentless girls were placed in St. Vincent's Academy in 1845. For thirty years orphans were cared for here. With the exception of the money acquired through an occasional small legacy, the Sisters received no funds for the maintenance of the orphans. There were times, especially during the severe epidemics of 1854 and 1858, and during the Civil War, when the Sisters deprived themselves of food so as to have sufficient food for the children. In the early seventies, because of the increase in the number of orphans, a new arrangement had to be made. An old house at White Bluff, nine miles from Savannah, was acquired. To this home, Sister M. Patrick and a sufficient number of Sisters to care for the orphans were sent. "Although Sister M. Elizabeth Dowlan, one of the living members of this White Bluff Community, still considers her days there among the happiest of her religious life, yet the house, because of its remoteness from Savannah and because of its age, was not a suitable one for the orphans."⁹³

Conditions at White Bluff made the Catholics of Savannah cognizant of their obligation to provide financial aid for the orphans while the Sisters of

⁹² "Centennial Year of the Sisters of Mercy in Georgia," St. Anthony's Catholic News, March, 1945.

⁹³ Manuscript, St. Mary's Home for Girls, Savannah.

Mercy assumed the duty of caring for them. As a result, a benevolent society was formed. Through the generosity of a Captain Henry Blun, the site on which St. Thomas' Vocational Home now stands was secured and the newly formed society erected St. Mary's Home for Girls in 1882. The property comprised an entire block on Habersham Street valued at fifteen thousand dollars.⁹⁴

In 1853, the Reverend John Barry was appointed Vicar General of the Diocese of Savannah. Father Barry had been caring for numerous orphans in Augusta after the several visitations of cholera in Georgia. Unable to carry on the work as formerly, and finding it too great a task for matrons, Father Barry applied for the Sisters of Mercy from Charleston to assume charge of the orphans in Augusta. The convent of the Sisters, in which the orphans were kept was located in the southwest limits of the city on the same block as Holy Trinity Church. Because of the small quarters available at the convent, only a comparatively small number of orphans were provided for at Our Lady of Mercy Convent on Liberty Street in Augusta.⁹⁵

Sometime in 1866, the Most Reverend Augustan Verot, Bishop of Savannah and Vicar Apostolic of Florida, established the Sisters of St. Joseph in St. Augustine, Florida. The following year the Bishop requested the Sisters to take possession of the previously established Barry Male Orphan Asylum in

94 Ibid.

95 O'Connell, Recollections of Seventy Years, 533, 556.

Savannah. Accordingly in April, 1867, Sisters Mary Julia, Mary Joseph, and Mary Josephine were transferred from St. Augustine to the Georgia asylum.⁹⁶

The growth of the Barry Asylum required additional living quarters. The Most Reverend William H. Gross,⁹⁷ Bishop of the Savannah Diocese, consulted Father James M. O'Brien, pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Washington, Georgia, as to the desirability of establishing the orphan home in a rural section near Washington. Father O'Brien "entered whole-heartedly into the project," and subsequently purchased the home of Colonel Nicholas Wiley, together with fifty acres of land adjoining it. To the rear of the home proper consisting of a two-story, eight-room house there were two smaller houses and a log cabin. Father O'Brien had the latter three buildings moved to form one structure. In this were placed the classrooms and dormitories for the boys. The two-story home provided the dining rooms and kitchen. When the improvements were completed, Father O'Brien notified the Sisters of St. Joseph in Savannah, who were to have charge, that the new orphan home was ready for occupancy.⁹⁸

Upon receipt of this message, Sisters Mary Clemence, Mary St. John, Mary Aloysius, and Mary Scholastica came to Washington on the night of January 26, 1876. A letter advising the ladies of St. Patrick's Parish of the time of arrival had been misdirected and consequently no one met the Sisters. However, they were not "deterred by this seemingly cold reception" and made their way to

⁹⁶ Dedication of Saint Joseph's Home, May 30, 1932, and Brief Sketch of St. Joseph's Male Orphanage, Washington, Wilkes County, Georgia, n. d., 14-15.

⁹⁷ Bishop of Savannah from 1873 to 1885.

⁹⁸ Dedication of St. Joseph's Home, 15-16.

the home which they found devoid of all furnishings. The news of the Sisters' coming spread quickly and the parishioners of St. Patrick's "did everything possible to make the Sisters comfortable and to facilitate the preparatory work for the reception of the little lads." Two weeks later furniture was shipped from Savannah, and shortly after fifty boys and seventeen Sisters arrived in Washington to take possession of St. Joseph's Orphanage. Hardships attended the beginning days. The Sisters worked energetically and Father O'Brien begged among the people of the South and even north of the Mason and Dixon Line. Everywhere his appeals were generously answered. For some time the Sisters and orphan boys had to walk a mile or more on each Sunday and Holy Day to St. Patrick's Church for divine services. In 1880, the old buildings which had been reconstructed into living quarters were torn down and replaced by "more convenient and more modern structures, containing class rooms, chapel, dormitories and bath rooms." Additions were also made to the old Colonel Wiley home thus expanding St. Joseph's considerably.⁹⁹

In Chapter III the reader was introduced to the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky, and their initiation into orphan care in the vicinity of Bardstown and Louisville. In August, 1842, the Sisters from Nazareth extended their activities into the adjacent State of Tennessee to set up a foundation in Nashville. The Diocese of Nashville was then five years old, having been erected in July, 1837, with the Most Reverend Richard Pius Miles, O. P., consecrated as its first Bishop in September, 1838.¹⁰⁰ Bishop Miles' diocese was

⁹⁹ Ibid., 16-18.

¹⁰⁰ The Official Catholic Directory, 1952, 464.

described in a Memphis journal as "a spiritual desert--a hundred Catholic families scattered over a large state, without church or priest." Tennessee had been a part of the extensive Diocese of Bardstown and hard-pressed clergy could visit it only occasionally.¹⁰¹

In Nashville the Sisters opened St. Mary's Academy, a boarding and day school. So many children enrolled in the capacious building at the top of Campbell's Hill that more Sisters were needed. A second institution, St. John's Hospital, was started and staffed by the Sisters from Nazareth and it was here that "Catholic orphan girls were received and taught secular studies as well as how to help the Sisters care for the sick."¹⁰²

Circumstances developed shortly from which eventuated an unexpected outcome. Although in most respects well satisfied with the work of the Kentucky missionaries, the Bishop eventually found himself "at variance with the authorities at Nazareth" on several points, principally the unwillingness of the Sisters to sing in the Cathedral choir and frequent changes that were made in the staff of teachers in the schools. In 1851, Bishop Miles made known to the Nazareth Sisters his intentions to form a diocesan community of Sisters.¹⁰³ A rift occurred in the community at Nashville when a number of the Sisters agreed to become the nucleus of a new foundation under diocesan jurisdiction.

¹⁰¹ The Centenary of St. Peter's Parish, Memphis, Tennessee, 1841-1941. (Unpaged)

¹⁰² Sister Julia Gilmore, S. C. L., Come North! The Life-Story of Mother Xavier Ross, Foundress of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, New York, 1951, 33-35.

¹⁰³ History of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas, Kansas City, Mo., 1898, 22-23.

When it became certain that some of the Nashville Sisters were inclined to acquiesce in the wishes of Bishop Miles to become a diocesan community under his authority, Mother Catherine Spalding at the Nazareth Motherhouse, although attempting to "dissuade the Sisters from any precipitancy," nevertheless, gave each member complete freedom to decide for herself in the matter. Sister Julia Gilmore gives the decision made in one terse statement: "Mindful of Mother Catherine's counsels and after prayerful deliberation, six decided to assume the responsibility of the new undertaking."¹⁰⁴

Mother Xavier Ross¹⁰⁵ was chosen by the little community to take charge. Three of the six Sisters were teachers and, it being vacation time, they assisted at the hospital. What was then St. John's Hospital had been the old Holy Rosary Cathedral, facing north on Gay Street. In remodeling the structure, the entrance was made on the east on North High Street. As mentioned above, it was in this "reconstructed proto-cathedral, known as St. John's Hospital, that the Sisters began their work of caring for orphans, who numbered as many as fifteen at a time." Either a frame cottage had been built on the hospital grounds when the cathedral was converted into a hospital, or

104 Ibid., 43-44. The Sisters who made the decision were: Sisters Xavier Ross, Joanna Bruner, Mary Vincent Kearney, Ellen Davis, Jane Frances Jones, and Baptista Carney. The last named was the only one to return to Nazareth later, January, 1853. Two more Sisters, Sisters Pauline Gibson and Dorothy Villeneuve, left the Nazareth community to join the Nashville foundation. Gilmore, 44-47.

105 Mother Xavier (Ann Ross) was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, November 17, 1813. Against the wishes of her Protestant parents, she became a member of the Catholic Church and entered the religious life at Nazareth on August 18, 1832. At the time in 1850, that the momentous question in Nashville perplexed the little group of Sisters at the Academy and the Hospital, Mother Xavier was stationed at the orphan home in Louisville. Gilmore, 1, 8, 16, 44.

the original frame church was made into a dwelling house. At any rate, there was such a cottage on the grounds, for one day, while Mother Xavier was watching at the bedside of a patient and looking across the yard at the little frame building, she conceived the plan of making the cottage an orphanage. The plan materialized, for the following day, the house was cleaned and adorned with several pieces of furniture from the hospital. That night two of the Sisters and the orphans moved into their new home.¹⁰⁶

The number of admissions increased so rapidly that the home was soon too small. In 1852 during the smallpox epidemic, the Sisters "searched out the homes ravaged by the disease, cared for the sick and the dying, and generously brought to their orphanage the children left parentless by the pestilence."¹⁰⁷ The number of orphans increased rapidly and it became imperative to procure more adequate quarters. Subsequently a large building opposite the Cathedral was purchased. This transaction was effected by the Reverend Ivo Schacht, a Belgian priest whom Bishop Miles had appointed as ecclesiastical superior of the Sisters of Charity soon after their separation from Nazareth. The main building was used as a boarding school and an adjoining long two-story wing afforded a home for the orphans and three Sisters who were assigned to take charge of them.¹⁰⁸ This institution became known as St. Vincent's Home and became the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity also. The Catholic Almanac for 1852-1853, gives the following information concerning St. Vincent's:

106 Gilmore, Come North!, 48-50.

107 Ibid., 63.

108 History of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, 25-26, 28.

This is the Mother-house of the Sisters of Charity in this Diocese, opened on the Feast of St. Vincent of Paul, 1851. The Sisters have lately purchased an excellent house near the church. There are in this establishment four Sisters and three postulants, this being intended as the Novitiate.¹⁰⁹

Sister Julia Gilmore points out that, although Mother Xavier taught the academy students and managed the houses, her "greatest interest was with the orphans."¹¹⁰ Of grave concern to Mother Xavier was the fact that the resources of the orphan home and academy were extremely meagre in those early days. It was necessary to supplement the proceeds from the school since these were insufficient to obtain even the necessities of life. However, the benevolence of friends was not wanting. Among the benefactors were the butchers of the city of Nashville, for

they furnished gratis all the meat for the orphans. This was a great help. Six mornings in the week two little creatures sallied forth with their basket between them, wending their way to the market-house. They made their round of the stalls without a word. As soon as the meat-vender saw them, he understood their errand and put his portion into their basket.¹¹¹

In the fall of 1853, the women of the Nashville congregation proposed an orphans' fair, which Catholics and non-Catholics alike liberally patronized. The proceeds far exceeded expectations and "dispelled the gloom which the approaching winter had cast over the Sisters." A short time after, a number of

¹⁰⁹ Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory of 1852-1853, 134.

¹¹⁰ Gilmore, Come North!, 59.

¹¹¹ History of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, 27.

men, prompted by a Mr. Joseph Hamilton, presented a quantity of blue merino material from which uniforms were made for the orphans.¹¹²

St. Vincent's provided a home for girls only and demands grew for a similar structure for orphan boys. Furthermore, Mother Xavier, in her great-heartedness, longed to give the boys a home. Again it was Father Schacht who assisted the Sisters in expanding their charities. In 1855, he purchased a farm of one hundred forty acres, three and one-half miles from Nashville on what was called the White's Creek Turnpike. A large log cabin was built and the boys who came were soon engaged in regular class work, clearing the land, and planting a garden.¹¹³ Father Schacht was not satisfied with the log cabin accommodations and, in the course of a few months, a two-story brick house was erected for the use of the Sisters and smaller boys, while the older boys remained in the cabin with the hired men who supervised the farm. In 1856, the construction of a new Motherhouse and academy was begun on the farm property.¹¹⁴

About this time a misunderstanding arose between Bishop Miles and Father Schacht. The Bishop had apparently delegated a great deal of authority to Father Schacht, who seems to have assumed more dominion than the Ordinary had intended. The Sisters had not been domiciled for long in their new convent

112 Ibid.

113 The author of the History of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, 28, implies that a log cabin was on the premises when the farm was purchased: "The only building on it was a huge log-cabin. This was the Sisters' first dwelling-place in the country--verifying the words of St. Vincent: 'No other cell than a poor cabin.'"

114 Gilmore, Come North!, 60-61, 70.

when the course of events took an unanticipated turn. On Christmas Day, whether in 1856 or 1857 is not certain from the records, Father Schacht read his second Mass at the Motherhouse; later in the day he took part in the orphans' glee as they opened their packages. Withal there was a note of apprehension in the atmosphere. Differences were not mended, and the following July or August Father Schacht left the diocese of Nashville.¹¹⁵

The Sisters were left in a situation utterly insecure. The building program undertaken by Father Schacht had made debts mount beyond any hope of the Sisters being able to liquidate them. Construction had been paid for by deposits made by the parishioners of the Nashville church, and creditors now clamored for payment. Bishop Miles declined the responsibility of paying the liabilities incurred by Father Schacht. The Sisters, faced with what was to them an insurmountable problem, saw only one solution: to sell all that they possessed in Nashville and thus pay the debts. The disposal of the buildings and the furnishings, item by item, is related in pathetic detail in the histories of the Community, but its recital is beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to say that when all obligations had been met, nine dollars remained. While this scene was being enacted in Nashville, Mother Xavier was seeking adoption elsewhere of her little Community.¹¹⁶ The story of its acceptance will be told in a later chapter.

Another problem that confronted the Sisters, and perhaps a more painful one, was that which concerned the orphans. Wherever possible, half orphans

115 Ibid., 70.

116 Ibid.

were returned to the parent or guardians; some orphans were placed with families who were willing to give them a home. Explanatory letters were written to parents, guardians, and probable foster parents; in the end all the children were placed except four girls who were "old enough to choose for themselves," and who preferred to accompany the Sisters to any new home. Thus by the close of 1858, the St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum for girls and the St. Joseph's for boys in Nashville conducted by the Sisters of Charity were no more.¹¹⁷ The Sisters and their four remaining orphan girls formed the root of a subsequent convent and orphanage on the Kansas frontier.

Nashville was not to be deprived for long of an orphan asylum. In 1950, someone wrote of St. Mary's Orphanage that it was "born of war, nurtured on labor and patience, and grown to maturity through the unceasing devotion of a tiny group of women whose work was never done." The War between the States had created a need for the reestablishing of such an institution. The Dominican Sisters at the convent in Somerset, Ohio, answered the call for Sisters to come to Nashville. On May 17, 1864, Sisters Benvin, Josepha, and Gertrude came to take charge of the newly founded asylum.¹¹⁸

In November, 1863, while the Confederate and Federal troops were battling not far from Nashville, the Very Reverend J. A. Kelly, a Dominican priest who was the acting administrator of the diocese, initiated proceedings towards its establishment. A special meeting for the men of St. Mary's Church

117 Ibid., 79.

118 Josephine Murphey, "Their Work Is Never Done," The Nashville Tennessean Magazine, July 9, 1950, 6.

was announced. The response was gratifying, for the Catholics of the city had been keenly conscious of the need of a home for the large number of children orphaned by the war. The men organized themselves into what was called St. Mary's Orphan Association, opened a subscription list to raise funds, and elected Mr. Philip Olwill as first president. The project was furthered by an "interested Nashvillian" donating a lot in North Nashville. The Association then purchased an adjoining lot. It soon became apparent that erecting a new building was unwise. Building materials were very costly and the property of the Association was surrounded by the camping grounds of the Federal army of occupation, "no pleasant neighbors for the orphans or the Sisters in charge."¹¹⁹

Father Kelly and the Association effected a solution by purchasing a house situated on eight acres of ground in what was then known as Kirkman's addition to South Nashville. The historian of St. Mary's early history states that

The association's depleted treasury was augmented by an Orphan's Fair which netted \$8,154.75 and made possible the purchase, for \$10,000, of the new building. Father Kelly appealed to the convent at Somerset for two or three Sisters to take charge of the new orphanage and, two days after their arrival, Andrew Johnson, then military governor of Tennessee, provided the Sisters with their first orphan.¹²⁰

The date of the Sisters' coming, as indicated above, was May 17, 1864. By July, fourteen parentless children had found a home at St. Mary's where the Sisters attended to their physical, spiritual, and educational needs.

119 Ibid., 8.

120 Ibid.

Death soon entered the little community to take away Sister Gertrude who became ill shortly after she arrived in Nashville. Her two companions were now left to "spread themselves thin enough" to do all the work. The number of children increased weekly, but it was not until in November that Sisters Mary Dolores and Ursula, this time from St. Catherine's, Kentucky, came to assist at St. Mary's.¹²¹

Financially the orphanage was well off, for generous assistance had not been wanting. The students at St. Cecilia's Academy had given a series of benefit plays; the St. Mary's Orphan Association had sponsored a picnic; even the Army of Occupation "did its part when General Thomas F. Meagher gave a series of poetic readings in the Hall of Representatives in the State Capitol to swell the orphanage fund." At the end of the year, the institution happily had a balance of nearly seven hundred dollars in its treasury.¹²²

Money in the treasury was cold comfort, however, when the Sisters and orphans found themselves situated "squarely between Confederate and Federal lines on the eve of the Battle of Nashville." November 30 was a harrowing day as the Sisters watched the Federal Army plant its guns between the orphanage and Nashville. Toward evening a Federal officer galloped to the orphanage gates to inform the Sisters that they and the children had to leave at once. The officer could suggest no place of safety, but promised to apprise Father Kelly of the plight of St. Mary's. Darkness fell with no word from Father Kelly, and the "four beleaguered Sisters prepared for flight but as the hours

121 Ibid., 8-9.

122 Ibid., 9.

wore on with no sign of relief they put their charges to sleep and kept the vigil alone." At midnight they were startled by the sound of an ambulance and an army wagon approaching. Father Kelly and Father Tracy, Chaplain of the United States Fourth Cavalry, had secured transportation for the Sisters and orphans. They were rushed into the ambulance, while some household goods was thrust into the wagon. It was four o'clock in the morning when they halted at the Cathedral, where the Sisters and orphans were housed in the basement for four interminable weeks. At length the Federal commander provided a house for them on Franklin Pike, "with a leaking roof, broken windows and an accumulation of dirt resulting from its occupation as military headquarters for some weeks."¹²³

The original orphan home in Kirkman's Addition was leveled by the battle. Undaunted, Father Kelly and the orphan association began bravely to raise funds to rebuild it. Another Orphan' Fair, an Orphans' Ball and private subscriptions "brought in enough money to add a second story to the new building constructed by the Federal government, and the completed structure, a fine brick building approximately 75 x 90 feet, was occupied by the Sisters and orphans on September 1, 1865." The asylum entered once more upon a peaceful normal existence. Its financial needs were supplied mainly by two annual social events. An Orphans' Fair, which was held in the Olympic Theatre, lasted for a week each year, "featuring raffles and dancing, the sale of fancy work and refreshments. The Orphans' Picnic was usually "highlighted with food and

123 Ibid.

oratory." No less a personage than the Reverend A. J. Ryan, the poet-priest, graced the platform at the picnic held on July 4, 1866.¹²⁴

One other city of Tennessee had a flourishing Catholic orphan home before 1885. This was the city of Memphis, a growing urban center in the extreme southwestern corner of the Nashville Diocese. By 1840, five zealous missionaries were administering to the spiritual needs of the Catholics in the diocese whose boundaries were coterminous with those of the State of Tennessee. A certain Father McAleer, one of the five missionaries, was appointed first resident pastor of St. Peter's, the first parish in Memphis.¹²⁵ There was as yet no church. The Commercial Appeal of Memphis, January 1, 1940, contains this statement concerning the beginnings of Catholic worship in Memphis: "The cradle of Catholicism in Memphis was the old Eugene Magevny Home on Adams, which still stands in the quiet shadows of St. Peter's Church. Here the first mass in Memphis was said in 1839 and here the city's Catholics continued to worship until they built their first church."¹²⁶ Within a few years, a church was erected and all the church property transferred to the Dominican Fathers on January 15, 1847.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Ibid. The orphanage built in 1865 was occupied until 1903 when a new building was constructed on White Bridge Road, where St. Mary's still stands.

¹²⁵ Centenary of St. Peter's Parish, Memphis, Tennessee, 1841-1941.
(Unpaged)

¹²⁶ The Commercial Appeal, Centennial Edition, Section C, Memphis, Tennessee, January 1, 1940, 20.

¹²⁷ Centenary of St. Peter's Parish.

Bishop Miles of Nashville secured Dominican Sisters for a contemplated school and orphanage in Memphis. Three members were sent from St. Catherine's Convent, Springfield, Kentucky: Sisters Lucy Harper, Ann Simpson, and Vincentia Fitzpatrick. Three others came from St. Mary's, Somerset, Ohio: Sisters Emily Thorpe, Magdalen Clark, and Catharine McCormack. Father Francis Cubero escorted the six Sisters from Louisville to Memphis, via steamboats on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. On the morning of January 1, 1851, between one and two o'clock, the group arrived in Memphis. The Sisters were taken to St. Peter's Rectory where they were welcomed by Father Thomas Grace. The latter, having no sleeping accommodations to offer them, entertained them in the parlor the remainder of the night. After Mass and breakfast, the Sisters received at the home of a Mrs. McKeon, whose hospitality they shared for two weeks.¹²⁸

In the interim, the "Coe Place," the former home of the Honorable L. H. Coe, was being prepared for the Sisters' home and an academy. Father Grace had bought the attractive frame structure two stories high with eight rooms and a garret. The latter was converted into a chapel. The house stood outside the city limits, and was "pleasantly situated back from the highway in a large yard of primeval forest trees." Here classes began in February, 1852, in what was the first Catholic school in Memphis, St. Agnes' Academy.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Victor F. O'Daniel, O. P., The Father of the Church in Tennessee, or The Life, Times, and Character of the Right Reverend Richard Pius Miles, O. P., The First Bishop of Nashville, New York, 1926, 446.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

An old manuscript, carrying the superscription "St. Agnes and St. Peter's Orphanage, 1852-1885," in the Archives of St. Peter's Orphanage gives the following information relative to the care of the first orphans:

About a year after the foundation of St. Agnes on Vance Avenue The Rev. Thomas Langton Grace, O. P., pastor of St. Peter's Church on Adams Street . . . desired the Sisters of St. Agnes to minister to the needs of many orphans scattered throughout Memphis. These were promptly received, fed, clothed, and sheltered in a building constructed on the grounds of the Academy. In this charitable work, the wealthy boarding students nobly aided the Sisters and by their donations to the orphans made it possible for the Sisters to meet expenses.¹³⁰

By 1855, the number of orphans had increased so rapidly that Father Grace deemed it wise to remove them to a place he had secured in the country, known as "Gracewood Farm."¹³¹ Several of the Dominican Sisters from St. Agnes were assigned to care for the orphans in their new home on Raleigh Road. The orphanage, now located between Raleigh and Memphis, technically belonged to Raleigh, Tennessee, Shelby County. At one time it was believed that Raleigh, then the County Seat, would develop into a large city. However, it was Memphis that grew more quickly in population and it, in turn, became the County Seat. Shortly after this, the orphanage saw another change of location.¹³²

The Sisters who accompanied the orphans to Gracewood Farm departed from St. Agnes with feelings of trepidation, which as time told were not unwarranted. The chronicler of the events of those years relates that the prejudice against Catholicism was still very real in that section. As "a matter of

130 St. Peter's Orphanage Archives.

131 O'Daniel, Father of the Church in Tennessee, 447.

132 St. Peter's Orphanage Archives.

prudence," it seemed advisable, when necessity demanded a trip to the city, that the Sisters don a secular garb. Owing to the scarcity of priests, Mass could not be said often in the Gracewood Chapel; neither could the Blessed Sacrament be reserved there. Sunday Mass was ordinarily attended in the city and the Sisters took turns in staying at home with the orphans. The roads were practically impassable during some months of the year. The Civil War period, a part of which was spent on the Farm, proved to be an added source of anxiety because of the "possibility of being stopped and searched" while en route to the city.¹³³

According to the records at the Orphanage, the orphans were taken from Gracewood Farm to a new habitat, the "old Shank home," in the "heart of the little city" on Second and Poplar Streets.¹³⁴ The date of the change is not indicated. It is evident that the orphans remained here for only a very short time. In 1864, the Orphanage was moved to its fourth location. A house was built on the site adjoining the old Catholic cemetery near the city hospital on Henry Avenue.¹³⁵

In the cherished traditions of St. Peter's Orphanage, no name has been entwined with more endearment into the warp and woof of its history than that of the Reverend Joseph Augustine Kelly whose name has justly gone down into history as "The Father of the Orphans in Tennessee."¹³⁶ In 1863, Father

133 Ibid.

134 The First Presbyterian Church stands on the site at present.

135 St. Peter's Orphanage Archives.

136 Sometimes printed as "Kelley."

Kelly was appointed pastor of St. Peter's Church in Memphis. One of his first concerns was that of the orphans whose safety was endangered by the Civil War. His appointment as administrator-apostolic of the Diocese of Nashville obliged him to take up residence in the episcopal city. In 1872, Father Kelly returned to Memphis where he remained until 1885.¹³⁷

During the fifteen years that St. Peter's Orphanage was located on Henry Avenue, Memphis experienced one of its most severe calamities--the yellow fever epidemic of 1878. A Memphis newspaper states that it is estimated that between fifteen and twenty thousand white persons fled the city by August of that year. On August 22, the Board of Health passed a resolution urging all who could to leave the city, as it was thought that the only hope of staying the epidemic was by depopulation. More than five thousand deaths resulted from the fever.¹³⁸ Young records that during the first week after the fever started there were about ten deaths daily; the second week registered fifty a day; and by September the average reached as high as two hundred in a single day.¹³⁹

The following notation is made in the asylum annals: "The Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1878 and 1879 almost cut the city's population in two, and so many children were left orphans by this awful scourge." Hundreds of orphans were brought to St. Peter's and many of them contracted the fever. The Sisters

137 Victor F. O'Daniel, O. P., The Dominican Province of St. Joseph: Historico-Biographical Studies, New York, 1942, 355-356.

138 The Commercial Appeal, Centennial Edition, Section C, January 1, 1940.

139 J. P. Young, Standard History of Memphis, Tennessee, Knoxville, 1912, 174.

were obliged to send the sick to the city hospital to protect the others.

Several times a day the Sisters visited their sick orphans a number of whom died.¹⁴⁰ It was at this critical time that the solicitude of Father Kelly was again manifested, for "his first care was to get his beloved orphans out of danger by sending them to Nashville."¹⁴¹ Nashville was fortunately one of the larger cities that escaped the ravages of the fever. It earned for itself the lasting gratitude of many of those who had taken flight, for it "generously received all Memphis refugees and harbored the orphans sent from the latter town."¹⁴²

When the orphans returned to Memphis, Father Kelly was intent on locating them outside the city where they could have an abundance of fresh air, sunshine, and playground space. In 1879, a twenty-seven acre site, on which stood a roomy cottage, was purchased on Poplar Pike for five thousand dollars and to it the Sisters and orphans were removed.¹⁴³

A change of Sisterhoods occurred at St. Peter's after the transfer to the Poplar Pike location. The Dominican Sisters were compelled to relinquish "this work of charity exclusively theirs for a period of thirty-three

140 St. Peter's Orphanage Archives.

141 O'Daniel, The Dominican Province, 357.

142 D. A. Quinn, Heroes and Heroines of Memphis, or Reminiscences of the Yellow Fever Epidemic that Afflicted the City of Memphis During the Autumn Months of 1873, 1878, and 1879, to which is added a Graphic Description of Missionary Life in Eastern Arkansas, Providence, R. I., 1887, 221.

143 St. Peter's Orphanage Archives.

years of hardship" because of the scarcity of members. When the Sisters made known their inability to continue the work at St. Peter's, Bishop Joseph Rade-macher appealed to the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Kentucky, to supply a staff of Sisters.¹⁴⁴ Five Sisters, with Sister Pelagia as superior, assumed charge of St. Peter's on March 19, 1835. The two "unpretentious frame build-ings, besides being quite a long distance apart, were in a wretched condition." The people of Memphis were so preoccupied with reestablishing their homes and adjusting their businesses following the scourge of yellow fever, that the little orphanage at the edge of the city was almost forgotten. Sister Pelagia rejuvenated interest by inviting twelve prominent Memphis citizens to a meet-ing at which the needs of the home were to be considered. Better times had now dawned for St. Peter's.¹⁴⁵

Catholic history in Texas was more than three hundred fifty years old when the first two orphan asylums were established. In this land of the saintly pioneer missionary, Fray Antonio Margil de Jesus, the first parish church was that of San Fernando in San Antonio founded in 1738. More than a hundred years passed before any religious community of Sisters began its work. In 1866, yellow fever raged along the coast of Texas. The Most Reverend Claude M. Dubuis, consecrated Bishop of Galveston in 1862, saw the need of a Catholic hospital to care for the plague stricken. He sought in vain for Sisters in this country. None were to be found in the convents of France, but the Bishop

¹⁴⁴ Made Bishop of Nashville, 1883; transferred to Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1893.

¹⁴⁵ St. Peter's Orphanage Archives.

found three young women who were willing to devote their lives to missionary work in America. At his request, Mother M. Angelique, Superioress of the Order of the Incarnate Word, in Lyons, France, admitted the three volunteers to her convent to train them in the practices of religious life. After a short postulate, they received the habit now worn by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, and a rule modified to permit them to engage in labors of the active life. Two days after the investiture, they left for Galveston where they opened a hospital late in 1866. Two later groups of four and six members each followed the pioneers to Galveston. Very soon the Sisters were engaged in the "three works of mercy for which the Congregation was founded; namely, the care of the sick, the orphans, and the education of youth."¹⁴⁶

The first mention of St. Mary's Orphanage in Galveston was in 1867, although the date of the foundation is generally given as 1874. The reason for this probably lies in the fact that it was in the latter year that the orphans were transferred from the grounds of St. Mary's Infirmary where it first existed to another location some distance from it. After the yellow fever epidemic in Galveston in 1867, very few patients applied to the hospital for aid. The Sisters were left free to devote themselves to a new work which they felt would be beneficial to a large number of orphans who had been left parentless by the scourge. Therefore, a small wooden structure was erected on

¹⁴⁶ Archdiocese of San Antonio, Diamond Jubilee, 1874-1949, 14, 120.

the grounds of the Infirmary; Mother Mary Joseph Roussin was selected as the first superior.¹⁴⁷

In January, 1874, however, the number of children having increased to more than one hundred, it became necessary to procure better accommodations for them. Bishop Dubuis purchased as a location for a new orphanage, a plot of ground known as "Green Place," three miles from the city. A residence already on the grounds provided ample space for the boys, and a two-story building was immediately begun for the accommodation of the girls. The following year, on September 15, a violent storm swept over Galveston, and during the three days the Sisters and children were in great distress. The boys' building was completely demolished by wind and water. The remaining building became a home of all. It was impossible because of lack of funds to erect another home for the boys until 1879 when the Galveston Orphan Association was organized and furnished help by providing a home for boys.¹⁴⁸

In 1869, the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word opened a hospital in San Antonio, the second in the State of Texas. At the Santa Rosa Infirmary opened in October of that year, orphans were cared for until a separate home became imperative. St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum was completed in 1874 "to relieve the deplorable conditions, poverty, malaria, fever, etc. after the

¹⁴⁷ History of St. Mary's Orphanage, Galveston, Texas. (Typewritten sheets)

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

Civil War." Extant records are few. Both boys and girls were accepted at St. Joseph's and support was secured mainly through the donations of interested patrons.¹⁴⁹

CHAPTER VI

FROM LAKE ONTARIO TO LAKE SUPERIOR

Quite a singular fact obtains in regard to the orphan asylums founded in the area under discussion in this chapter. Almost simultaneously institutions appeared in ten or more larger cities and rural towns. Thus from Rochester, New York, a short distance off the south shore of Lake Ontario to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on the west shore of Lake Michigan, various religious congregations opened orphan homes in the decade between 1844 and 1854.

The village of Rochester was not yet in existence when De Witt Clinton explored the location of the proposed Erie Canal. Two small houses built in 1812 on what was regarded as a select spot marked the beginnings of Rochester. By 1817, the settlement was incorporated as a village. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, which provided a cheap and easy means of travel across the State of New York, resulted in a great influx of Irish and German immigrants into Rochester. In 1834, the village was accorded the more dignified title of city. Each nationality built its own church. St. Patrick's, erected in 1823, was the first Catholic church in Rochester; St. Joseph's, known as the German church, was built at a somewhat later date.¹

¹ William F. Peck, Semi-Centennial History of the City of Rochester Syracuse, 1884, 98-116, 277.

In 1832 and 1834, during the severe cholera epidemic, orphaned children were sent to the Rochester almshouse. This appalling condition led the men of St. Patrick's parish to organize an Orphan Society in 1836. In July of that year, G. A. Madden, a trustee, purchased a vacant lot of ground at the rear of the church for the purpose of erecting an orphan home. The financial depression of 1837 came and prevented further action for some time. Money accumulated from several Christmas collections enabled the Society to build an asylum which was opened in July, 1842. The home which could accommodate only twenty-four children was placed in charge of Miss Mary Kelly. In 1844, the Board of Managers applied to Emmitsburg, Maryland, for Sisters; however, none could be sent until May, 1845. In the meantime, the Society was incorporated. The by-laws provided that no child under three years of age nor over eight should be admitted.²

Records show that on April 10, 1845, Sisters Martha Daddisman, Patricia Butler, Sylveria O'Neill, and Andrea³ arrived in Rochester to take charge of St. Patrick's Asylum and School. The Archives contain a written account by Sister Sylveria which indicates that the home they found was extremely poor. To their consternation, the Sisters learned that the children's beds had been borrowed and had to be returned to their owners in the fall. Thereupon Sister Martha solicited donations among the Catholics of Rochester so that beds could be purchased. The twenty-six orphans had ample playground space in the

² Elizabeth Mary Cocks, "A History of Catholic Institutional Child Care in Rochester, 1842 to 1946." Unpublished Thesis, Fordham University, New York, 1947, 13-14.

³ The surname is not given.

spacious yard, but the house was far too small. The Sisters requested the managers to provide another building for their charges. A favorable response was given, for the people of Rochester welcomed the Sisters in their midst and were eager to assist them.⁴ Some months after the Sisters arrived, a Rochester newspaper extolled their work in the school and orphanage, concluding with the commendatory comment that: "They are the guardians and protectors of the orphans. The proceeds of their daily toil and teachings are devoted to the orphan's support."⁵

After 1850, a regular income was granted by the State for the support of the Sisters who taught in the asylum. Dues contributed by the members of the Orphan Society provided a small amount. The main source of funds was the Orphans' Fair held annually on St. Patrick's Day to which was given wholehearted cooperation. No other festivities on that day were permitted to interfere as the following observation indicates:

This was so well understood that, when the Sisters of St. Mary's Hospital received \$16.55 from different societies on that day in 1858, they gave thanks for the charitable feeling manifested toward their institution, but as they are aware that collections on that

4 Emmitsburg Archives. It is difficult to ascertain the location of St. Patrick's during its history. Cocks, 16, gives no street locations, but states that between 1847 and 1849, additions were made equal in extent to the original building and an additional story was added to the structure. A new wing was added toward the close of the Civil War. Letchworth states that the asylum stood at the corner of Frank and Vought Streets, and that a building erected in 1842 was used for the orphans' asylum. A three-story plain brick wing was added in 1864. 421

5 The Rochester Democrat, December 4, 1845.

day are always appropriated to the Orphan Asylum, they think themselves in duty bound to hand over this sum received to said institution.⁶

In 1870, the Most Reverend Bernard McQuaid⁷ established the Sisters of St. Joseph as a diocesan Sisterhood and placed them in charge of St. Patrick's. The Sisters of Charity left the asylum in excellent condition. Improvements amounting to about twenty thousand dollars had been made on the property and a balance of fifteen hundred dollars was left to their successors. On November 11, 1870, the Sisters of Charity relinquished charge of St. Patrick's after a quarter of a century of faithful service.⁸

St. Patrick's provided for orphan girls only. Although the need for caring for orphan boys as well was urgent, the Society felt that it could not maintain two units. A limited number of boys could be accommodated at St. Joseph's Home in Buffalo. As a result of the Civil War, the number increased so greatly that some had to be placed under public auspices.⁹ Letchworth

6 Cocks, Child Care in Rochester, 15-16.

7 Consecrated first Bishop of Rochester, July, 1868.

8 Emmitsburg Archives. According to the records in the Archives the reason for withdrawing the Sisters of Charity from St. Patrick's concerns a sister institution--a hospital in Rochester conducted by the same Sisterhood. In 1870, Superiors at Emmitsburg deemed it necessary to recall the Superior from the hospital. The Bishop and citizens of Rochester arose in protest and made strong efforts to obtain a revocation of the order. When the Superiors at Emmitsburg found it impossible to acquiesce in their wishes, the Bishop requested the removal of the Sisters from the asylum. Cocks, 16, states that the Bishop, in order to establish a more uniform system of education in the diocese, wished a diocesan Sisterhood and secured the Sisters of St. Joseph.

9 Cocks, Child Care in Rochester, 21-22.

states that when the orphaned boys roamed the streets in increasing numbers and were, in consequence, committed to houses of correction, a few citizens associated themselves into a corporation having for its purpose the care of this class of children. Along with these men, Bishop Timon, the Reverend James Early, and Sister Stanislaus, a Sister of St. Joseph, became prominent promoters of a project to establish another Catholic orphan asylum in Rochester. Money was raised through subscriptions so that it was possible to purchase a house for sale at 3 South Street facing Washington Square. On November 1, 1864 St. Mary's Orphan Asylum for boys was opened by the Sisters of St. Joseph with Sister Stanislaus as superior. Two boys applied for admittance on the first day and by the end of a week fifteen had been accepted at St. Mary's.¹⁰

By the close of two years, larger quarters became necessary and the Halstead property, in the western part of the city on the corner of Genesee and Main Streets, was purchased in April, 1866. The large stone house, which required few alterations for its new purpose, stood on a four and one-half acre garden and orchard plot. Early in the eighteen seventies, Bishop McQuaid erected a plain three-story but substantial and spacious building on adjoining ground.¹¹

The founding of St. Joseph's German Catholic Orphan Asylum, the third orphan home in Rochester, was the result of an attempt on the part of Bishop Timon, in 1862, to erect a general asylum for Rochester and the vicinity. However, the German population of Rochester "still having a strong feeling of

10 Letchworth, Homes of Homeless Children, 419.

11 Cocks, Child Care in Rochester, 23-24.

national independence, preferred an orphan asylum of their own for the German orphans and did not enter into the project of the Bishop." In fact, in 1861, a group of German laymen had organized a society for the purpose of erecting an orphan home. The St. Joseph's Orphan Society of Rochester and Monroe County was incorporated in April, 1863, and the same month the Redemptorist pastor of St. Joseph's parish purchased two lots on Andrews Street for a convent and a home for the orphans of the parish. In the spring of 1864, two farms totaling seventy-four acres and located outside the city limits were bought. One of these was laid out in building lots and sold for the benefit of the orphanage. Ground was broken on June 25, 1866, and a small frame building erected on the second plot of land. On January 12, 1867, the School Sisters of Notre Dame opened St. Joseph's German Orphan Asylum when they admitted five orphan girls. Boys, girls, and even infants were accepted, for "a definite attempt was made to keep family loyalties strong." Although originally founded for German Catholic orphans, all nationalities were welcomed. Cocks states that the home became too small and was replaced by a brick structure.¹² In 1882, the building was enlarged by the addition of east and west wings and opened on Thanksgiving Day of that year. An Orphans' Fair held in observance of the opening brought in a considerable amount of money for furnishing the addition.¹³

The Dioceses of Buffalo and Albany were separated from the extensive Diocese of New York in 1847. The first Bishop of Buffalo, the Most Reverend John Timon, C. M., was consecrated in October of the same year. Immediately

¹² No date is given for the completion of this building.

¹³ Cocks, Child Care in Rochester, 28-29.

the following spring, Bishop Timon visited Baltimore and other large eastern cities seeking priests and Sisters for his diocese comprising a large area in northwestern New York. A hospital and an orphan asylum were in the designs of Bishop Timon, whose request for a group of Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg was met with a ready response.¹⁴ A manuscript copy of the early history of the mission in Buffalo, written by Sister Anacaria, is preserved in the Emmitsburg Archives. Six Sisters arrived in Buffalo on June 3, 1848; of these, Sisters Anne de Sales, Anacaria, and Mary Clare were assigned to the school and asylum. Their first introduction to Buffalo was a ride by hack to the episcopal residence, a small two-story house. Their first meal was in Bishop Timon's dining room in the basement of his home. Later the prelate accompanied the Sisters to the asylum, where, the chronicler wrote, "we found a small brick cottage, one story and basement in which there was a kitchen and dining room. On the principal floor a good sized room and three small bedrooms opening into it, this was our home!" The Bishop informed the Sisters that he would read Mass the next morning at six o'clock in the church one block away from the convent. This presented a dilemma. How were the Sisters to know the hour, since the "house did not own a clock--no Sister had a watch, so the pastor lent his watch."¹⁵

According to Sister Anacaria's account, no orphans came for a time for which reason the Bishop sent the three Sisters to teach in St. Patrick's

¹⁴ Thomas Donohue, D. D., History of the Diocese of Buffalo, Buffalo, New York, 1929, 70, 378.

¹⁵ Emmitsburg Archives. Manuscript account by Sister Anacaria.

school. When three orphans were brought to them, they occupied the large living room in the Sisters' house. In 1849 when the cholera broke out, the little home became overcrowded, and the Bishop "set about getting a new home. As our little cottage stood back from the street, the new house, two story and basement, was built from the sidewalk to join our house." By Christmas of that year, the first floor was ready for occupants. To provide a source of income, one room in the new asylum was set aside for a select school which was in operation from 1852 to 1862 when the space was needed for the orphans.¹⁶

In spite of the select school, the income was inadequate and the Sisters were obliged to borrow a horse and wagon to go through the countryside to beg for provisions. In time the home became far too crowded and Bishop Stephen Ryan, who succeeded to the Episcopal See of Buffalo upon the demise of Bishop Timon in 1867, immediately commenced the collection of funds to repair the orphanage. The people responded generously, but it was apparent that the old building was becoming unfit for use. Bishop Ryan then purchased the Squire Estate at Main and Riley Streets and an addition was planned to care for the increased enrollment. The cornerstone of the new St. Vincent's Female Orphan Asylum was laid in July, 1885.¹⁷

16 Ibid. The asylum was incorporated in February, 1849, under the title of "St. Vincent's Female Orphan Asylum." Both Letchworth and Donohue state that the original St. Patrick's church was used for a time as an asylum. Letchworth, 153, states that the old church was given for the Sisters' use in 1855. Donohue, 379, that in 1855 the old St. Patrick's church was remodeled into an orphan asylum under the Sisters of Charity. 379.

17 Ibid.

A second asylum, St. Joseph's for boys, was established in Buffalo in 1849, the year of the cholera. The next year it was removed to Lancaster where it remained until 1854, when it was again transferred to Buffalo.¹⁸

One of the early locations in Buffalo was on Best Street. In 1856, the children were taken to Limestone Hill outside the city limits. A tract of one hundred five acres had been purchased for a cemetery and a part of the land was set apart for an asylum. Here on an elevated site the orphanage commanded a good view of Lake Erie and the city of Buffalo. For a short time, the orphans were cared for by five Sisters of the Holy Cross from South Bend, Indiana. Letchworth explained that this arrangement was shortlived, for the Sisters "were not, . . . fully sustained in their good work." In 1872, another transfer occurred when the orphanage was removed to West Seneca.¹⁹

While the orphanage was located on Limestone Hill, Bishop Timon placed a newly-ordained priest, a Father Hines, in charge of St. Joseph's. In the same year, 1857, three Sisters of St. Joseph, Sisters Veronica, Anastasia, and Petronella, came to care for the sixty some boys then in the home. On the day that the Sisters arrived the larder held but one item of food--corn meal. Sister Petronella lost her way while attempting to purchase food in Buffalo. As she was searching for the right path home, Sister was met by Bishop Timon who alighted from his buggy which he gave to Sister and the orphan boy that was

¹⁸ H. Perry Smith, History of the City of Buffalo and Erie County, Syracuse, New York, 1884, 510.

¹⁹ Letchworth, Homes of Homeless Children, 148-149.

with her. Then the Bishop relieved Sister of her basket and brought it well filled to the asylum a short time later.²⁰

The home was very small and, because of the crowded conditions, the smaller boys slept in a low attic over Father Hines's room. The ceiling in Father's room was so low that, when the boys were disorderly above, Father could restore order promptly by rapping on the ceiling.²¹ Obviously, a new asylum was necessary. The rather unusual methods of accumulating funds and materials make an interesting account.

One day Father Hines noticed a man from Buffalo taking away clay from the orphans' farm for making flower pots. It occurred to Father that he might make bricks from the clay for constructing a new orphan home. Father hired two men who were brick makers and with a crude apparatus, made, what Letchworth avers were, not good bricks, but a very good asylum. Stone was quarried nearby and a building three stories high, forty by fifty feet, was erected and ready for use by November, 1857. A similar process was repeated two years later when the main portion of the asylum, sixty by seventy feet, arose on the premises. A second "industry" was introduced at the asylum, since other valuable raw materials were conveniently near at hand. The farm had a good supply of hemlock bark and the herd of cattle furnished calf skins. This prompted Father Hines to set up a shoemaking business at the asylum. It was customary to take up collections for the orphans at all funerals held in the city's Catholic churches. Father Hines officiated at many funerals in Buffalo, thus assisting St. Joseph's

20 Ibid., 149.

21 Ibid.

financially in yet another way. Lastly, Father Hines periodically made personal visits to the parishes in the diocese to solicit funds. In 1859, for instance, each pastor in the diocese gave Father Hines one Sunday's collection for his orphans at St. Joseph's.²²

The German Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum in Buffalo was established in 1852 and on December 8 of that year it was placed under the care of the Sisters of Notre Dame. This institution was another one of the many to grow out of the conditions which followed in the wake of the cholera of 1849. A large number of parentless children were thrown upon the charity of the members of St. Mary's parish for support. In time a permanent arrangement became necessary. The earliest location of this orphanage seems to have been at 221 Batavia Street. During 1875, a large brick building was erected at 530 Best Street on land adjoining the city park and containing seventeen acres. Letchworth describes the building as "a quadrangular structure, with a front tower and rear projection." The entire plan contemplated "the addition of parallel wings at each end of the main section, with gables facing outward." The portion completed in 1875 accommodated about one hundred children; both boys and girls were accepted at the German asylum. At the time of the transfer, the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, whose Motherhouse is in Williamsville, New York, replaced the Sisters of Notre Dame.²³

Three other cities in northwestern New York claimed an asylum before 1885. The first of these, Canandaigua, located a short distance to the south

22 Ibid., 149-150.

23 Ibid., 134-135.

and east of Rochester, saw the founding of St. Mary's Orphan Asylum in 1854 under the care of the Sisters of St. Joseph. At the beginning the Sisters and orphans occupied a plain two-story frame dwelling on Saltonstall Street. About the year 1874, the asylum was removed to the spacious mansion and grounds of General John A. Granger. Apparently the number of orphans at St. Mary's always remained very small for which reason voluntary contributions were sufficient to maintain the home. Only seventeen orphans are listed for 1875. An Orphans' Sunday was observed at the orphanage once a month when any of those who had been at the institution returned as guests.²⁴

Dunkirk, on Lake Erie to the southwest of Buffalo, also had its St. Mary's Asylum conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph. It was founded in 1857 in a two and one-half story frame building on Buffalo Street. The Sisters depended principally upon three sources of income: donations, a small allowance made by the Board of Education for the instruction given to the orphans, and income derived from the sale of needlework made by the Sisters and older orphan girls. About 1875, a sixty-acre tract situated about a mile south of the original asylum was purchased. The country site was chosen for the garden and orchard products which it promised to yield for the use of the orphanage. Most of the cost of the land was met by funds saved by the Sisters in anticipation of a new asylum. This became a reality with the erection of an attractive brick building which became the new St. Mary's.²⁵

24 Ibid., 163.

25 Ibid., 170.

The first religious to come to the city of Syracuse, New York, were Sisters Aloysia Lilly, Maxima Cunniff, and Felicite'²⁶ from Emmitsburg in 1852 for the purpose of opening a girls' school. The Sisters' initial convent, a frame house near St. Mary's Church, was located on the north side of Madison Street. The pastor of St. Mary's Church at the time sent money to the Sisters for traveling expenses and a Mrs. Cornelius Lynch arranged for the Sisters to stay at the hospital until the women of the parish furnished the small house. Classes were held in the Sisters' house and in the basement of the church.²⁷

An orphan asylum was opened a few years later when St. Vincent's Asylum and School of Syracuse was incorporated on June 12, 1860. For the purpose, the pastor had purchased a good frame house on the south side of Madison Street between Warren and Montgomery Streets. The first orphans were two children of a widow who brought them from the city asylum to the Sisters at St. Vincent's. The number grew constantly, but the Sisters did their best to provide for them. Mattresses were homemade; those for the older girls were made from corn husks, while straw was used for the smaller ones. Besides regular school subjects, sewing and domestic arts were taught. The girls knit their own stockings and the more ambitious of them made extra pairs which were sold for the extravagant sum of ten cents a pair.²⁸

26 Surname is not recorded.

27 Emmitsburg Archives. From the manuscript copy of the history of St. Vincent's by Sister Tatiana White who replaced Sister Aloysius Lilly.

28 Ibid.

In 1364, the State of New York, to encourage the work of the Sisters, offered an appropriation on condition that the Sisters would collect an equal amount. Cognizant of the urgent need for a new asylum the Sisters at the cost of many hours of labor in addition to teaching collected or earned money in various ways. They felt well repaid when the State sent them an amount slightly in excess of two thousand dollars. Again Providence had provided for an emergency which the Sisters could not foresee. The original frame structure burned to the ground in 1866 and the Sisters obtained permission to build a brick building suitable for an asylum and a school. Insurance money on the building that burned, the appropriation from the State, funds realized from fairs, collections, and a few bequests made possible the erection of a building which was "an ornament to the neighborhood and to the city." The three stories were so divided that one half was used for a day school and the other half for the girls' orphan asylum. Within the next score of years, two additions were made to St. Vincent's. This expansion included a beautiful Chapel fronting on Madison Street.²⁹

On the tiny bit of Pennsylvania shoreline touching Lake Erie, stands the city of Erie, where St. Joseph's Asylum was established in the early eighteen-seventies. The pastoral of the Most Reverend John Mark Gannon³⁰ on the occasion of the golden jubilee of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, Erie, Pennsylvania, contains the following introduction:

29 Ibid.

30 St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, Erie, Pennsylvania, Golden Jubilee, 1922, 3.

The Catholics of the Diocese of Erie are about to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of a charity most dear to their hearts. Just fifty years ago, in the year 1872, Right Reverend Bishop Mullen laid the foundation of St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, an institution proposed for the protection and care of poor and neglected orphan children.³¹

St. Joseph's was the pioneer charitable institution of northwestern Pennsylvania. It had its humble inception in Meadville, Crawford County, in 1861, when the Sisters of St. Joseph took up their noble mission in the Diocese of Erie. Mother Agnes, foundress of the diocesan community, built out of her own patrimony a combined hospital and orphanage to serve the sick and homeless children of the diocese. With the increase in population in Erie, the demands on the hospital and orphanage multiplied until it became necessary to provide a separate home for the orphans. At that time the Most Reverend Josue M. Young³² resolved to transfer the institution to the seat of his Episcopal See. A desirable piece of property was found in the old Lowry estate on East Second Street between French and Holland Streets. This the Bishop purchased for the sum of eight thousand dollars and, in 1866, the institution known as St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum was opened with twelve orphans. Within a few years, due to the increase in the number of orphans, the diocese was forced again to seek larger quarters.³³

The task fell to the Most Reverend Tobias Mullen who became head of the diocese in 1868. He selected a site on East Third Street between Holland

31 Bishop of the Diocese of Erie 1854-1866.

32 Made Bishop of the Diocese of Erie in 1920.

33 St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, Golden Jubilee, 7.

and German Streets close to the Pro-Cathedral in the heart of a large Catholic community. The property was purchased in 1871 at a cost of about six and one-half thousand dollars. The erection of a building was begun immediately and completed the next year at a cost of fifty thousand dollars. Because of the lack of accommodations in the Lowry homestead, the children were transferred to the new home before the building was finished. It was not until seven weeks after occupancy that the glaziers completed putting in windows, and the outside doors were hung. This "precipitous move" was made possible by the "mildness of the August temperature and the respect that even midnight marauders cherished for helpless children . . ."34

With the exception of a single appropriation of two thousand dollars granted by the State Legislature, while the building was in the course of construction, the asylum received no assistance from city or state. Classified as a sectarian institution, it was in consequence considered not entitled to any part of the public money; notwithstanding the fact "that no discrimination has ever been exercised in the matter of race, color, or creed." Sacrifices on the part of the Catholics of the diocese and the practice of a most rigid economy on the part of the Sisters at the asylum was necessary to remove the debt on the building. The Sisters traveled throughout the diocese soliciting money from the members of the parishes. This campaign, together with the Easter collections, and a series of picnics, fairs, and concerts, liquidated all claims

34 Ibid. The illustration in the Golden Jubilee booklet shows a three-story brick building, with a low tower in the center. The central part of the structure sets back and a large porch fills the space between the two end wings which project towards the street.

against the new structure within a period of five years. To financial burdens there was added the trial of sickness. Two epidemics, diphtheria and smallpox, visited Erie during the early years of St. Joseph's. Both took their toll of orphans. The outstanding figure during those dark days was the Reverend Thomas A. Casey, vicar general of the diocese, "whose heroic, priestly character was best expressed in his devotion to the orphans to whom he rendered every service, even to the digging of graves and tenderly carrying out the little dead in the stillness of the night for burial."³⁵

In proceeding westward in the Great Lakes area, the next cluster of orphan asylums was found in northern Ohio. Catholicity was brought into the region long before Ohio was made a state, or even before the Northwest Territory was organized. The earliest missionaries in the region were Jesuits sent to instruct the Indians. After a considerable white population sprinkled the area, missionaries were sent from Quebec. The last of these, the Reverend Edmund Burke, left the Ohio region in 1796. From that date until 1817 the state was without missionaries. In the latter year, Father Edward Fenwick³⁶ commenced to make visits to northeast Ohio and in 1820 the first Catholic church in northern Ohio was built at Dungannon. In 1826 many Irish Catholics came to Cleveland to labor in construction work on the Ohio Canal. Bishop

³⁵ Ibid., 8-10. The Sisters of St. Joseph opened an academy and a Novitiate in McSherrystown, in southern Pennsylvania, in 1854. From the earliest days, orphans were received. Records show that on June 13, 1856, five orphans were admitted at the Sisters' Convent; thus, Logue states, "as in the early days at Carondelet, these children became an integral part of the household at St. Joseph's. Eventually an entire building was given over to their use." Logue, 75, 214.

³⁶ Bishop of Cincinnati, 1822 to 1832.

Fenwick then directed the Dominican Fathers, stationed in Perry County, to send a priest to Cleveland. The Reverend Thomas Martin made his first visit to Cleveland in autumn of 1826; his successor was the Reverend Stephen Badin, the first priest to be ordained in the United States. When the Most Reverend John Baptist Purcell³⁷ found his diocese too large and the burden too great, he petitioned Rome for a division of the See. The Papal Bull creating the Cleveland Diocese was issued on April 23, 1847, but it did not reach its destination until the following August. The Reverend Amadeus Rappe, "zealous missionary of the Maumee," was selected as first Bishop of the diocese including all of the state of Ohio north of forty degrees and forty minutes North Latitude.³⁸

Bishop Rappe had scarcely set upon his duties when he evinced a deep interest in the orphans of his diocese. Avery affirms that "while directing and encouraging the organization of missions and congregations, Bishop Rappe also provided for the care of orphans and the education of the young, all under charge of devoted Sisters."³⁹ Another historian in a laudatory vein writes that "Good Bishop Amadeus Rappe, the pioneer shepherd of the Roman Catholic Flock, was a leader in the founding of orphanages and within a year had planted St. Mary's, afterward known as St. Joseph's for girls, and St. Vincent's for boys."⁴⁰

37 Bishop of Cincinnati, 1833 to 1850; Archbishop, 1850 to 1883.

38 Elroy McKendree Avery, A History of Cleveland and Its Environs, The Heart of New Connecticut, I, New York, 1918, 607-608.

39 Ibid., 609.

40 Samuel P. Orth, A History of Cleveland, Ohio, I, Cleveland, 1910,

The first orphan homes in this area appeared in small rural districts rather than in large urban centers as was the case with most of the institutions whose history has been so far related. More than a decade before the Cleveland Diocese was formed, the Very Reverend Francis S. Brunner, with the assistance of his saintly mother, established at Castle Löwenburg in the Canton of Graubundten, Switzerland, a Sisterhood of Sanguinists, of which his mother became a member. Perpetual adoration and the instruction of children were the two principal objects to which the Order was to devote itself. A branch of this Community founded in Switzerland, in 1834, founded a house in New Riegel (Wolf's Creek), Ohio, in 1844. Father Brunner, Provincial at this time, secured a sixty-acre tract of land upon which stood a log cabin which became the first convent of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. The six Sisters assigned to this mission opened a day school and an asylum for orphan girls in their convent home. The orphans were supported entirely by the Sisters. A new convent to provide for the increasing numbers seeking admittance was built in 1860.⁴¹

A second orphan home, not far distant, was begun by Father Brunner in Seneca County where he purchased eighty acres of land near St. Michael's Church in Thompson. Here, in September, 1845, the Sisters of the Precious Blood took up temporary abode in a log house. Orphan girls, dependent for everything upon

⁴¹ George Francis Houck, A History of Catholicity in Northern Ohio and in the Diocese of Cleveland from 1817 to December 31, 1900, I, Cleveland, 1903, 759-760.

the Sisters, shared the unpretentious home with them. A new log cabin proved to be the only improvement until a brick structure was built in 1870.⁴²

The chronicler who relates the unselfish services rendered by the sisterhoods in Cleveland during almost a century introduces the narrative thus: "Ninety-five years ago, October 10, 1851, a frail little woman with a great big heart arrived in Cleveland." This was Miss Anna R. Pance, a "cultured convent-bred Parisian" who belonged to the religious congregation of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart of Mary. Women of wealth founded the community in Paris during the latter part of the eighteenth century. It was one of those established during the crucial period following the French Revolution to revivify the Faith in France. The religious garbs of priests and nuns still aroused the ire of the enemies of religion; therefore, in order to be unimpeded in works of charity, the members "dressed modestly according to the mode of the day."⁴³

A few months before her arrival in America, Miss Pance had listened to a missionary appeal by one of her countrymen, Reverend Louis de Goesbriand, who had just returned from his missionary labors in the United States.⁴⁴

42 Ibid., 761.

43 Twenty-eighth Annual Campaign of the Catholic Charities Corporation: Honoring 95 Years of Service by our Sisters, May, 1946. Catholic Charities Archives, Cleveland, Ohio, 10A, 10B. (Paper covered, mimeographed book. Numbers and letters used in paging.)

44 Ibid., 10A. Father Goesbriand was the first Vicar General of the Diocese of Cleveland; he came to Ohio from France in 1840 in response to an appeal made by Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati. Bishop Rappe had only twenty-four priests in the Diocese of Cleveland and could not offer even traveling expenses to any missionaries who might volunteer to come. The only promises he could make were the "gratitude of a grateful Bishop," and a "field that was ripe for the harvest."

The appeal in behalf of the missions touched the generous heart of Miss Pance who obtained the approval of her superiors to go to America. With two companions, she left Paris in September, 1851. In the departure ceremony, the three magnanimous volunteers made a solemn pledge "to dedicate their lives to the assistance and protection of helpless little orphans."⁴⁵

Records are quite at variance as to the first site of the Ladies' home, as well as that of the orphanage they founded. Avery states that the Ladies of the Sacred Heart of Mary established St. Mary's Orphan Asylum for girls in a building located on St. Clair Avenue near Bond Street.⁴⁶ Rose mentions that a "small house on St. Clair Street near Bond offered a temporary asylum for the girls of St. Mary's Orphanage."⁴⁷ Another source records that the little band of Ladies arrived in Cleveland after a long voyage from Paris "found a house which might serve as a temporary shelter for their young charges at 103 Harmon Street."⁴⁸ The report of the Twenty-eighth Annual Campaign does not mention a St. Clair Street home, but refers to "two former homes" before moving into the Harmon Street asylum. The first of the former homes was "their own home on Superior Street," and a second house given by Bishop Rappe was larger but not large enough for the Ladies to have a Chapel. Apparently the Harmon

45 Ibid., 10B.

46 Avery, History of Cleveland, 610.

47 William Ganson Rose, Cleveland: The Making of a City, Cleveland, 1950, 243.

48 Cleveland News, July 25, 1939.

Street site was the third home; at any rate, it was the one built by funds given by Miss Pance herself.⁴⁹

The diary kept by Miss Pance contains this simple entry: "December, 25, 1851 - St. Mary's welcomed first orphans--five girls." The line takes on historical significance since it notes the opening of the first Catholic orphanage for girls in Cleveland. There were more than five orphans in the diocese at the time, "but the humble frame house on Superior Street could accommodate no more." The Motherhouse in Paris provided funds, in 1853, for the purchase of eight lots on Harmon Street. A legacy which Miss Pance inherited at the time enabled her to carry into execution her long-hoped-for plan to build a new St. Mary's asylum for girls. The legacy also permitted the erection of an extension to the original structure several years later which increased the capacity from twenty-five to over one hundred children.⁵⁰

A sad note accompanied the dedication of the first unit of St. Mary's in 1853. Bishop Rappe set the date for the event and preparations were completed for the transfer of the children to their new home. Miss Pance "longingly awaited" the first Mass in the orphanage Chapel, "which was their first Chapel in America." Bishop Rappe dedicated the Chapel and asylum and offered the first Mass in it--a Requiem Mass for Miss Pance who had died a few days before.⁵¹

49 Twenty-eighth Annual Campaign, 10C.

50 Ibid., 10B, 10C.

51 Ibid., 10C, 10D. At the Requiem Mass, Bishop Rappe used a chalice which had belonged to St. Francis de Sales and was one of the many priceless gifts given to Miss Pance by members of the family of the Saint. It was used

Unhealthful conditions made the Harmon Street location undesirable in time. To provide better surroundings, especially for the smaller girls, the Ladies of the Sacred Heart founded St. Joseph's Asylum "in the country" in 1862. It was located on the eastern outskirts of Cleveland on Woodland Avenue. The large unfinished brick house on the land was remodeled to suit the needs of an orphanage. St. Joseph's opened when twelve little girls from St. Mary's in the city were brought to their new home. A beautiful grove of five acres, adjoining the first property, was purchased in 1864. The Chapel, built in 1866, served as a parish church for Holy Trinity, Holy Family, and St. Elizabeth parishes successively between 1863 and 1881. In 1879, a three-story addition was joined to the original. The asylum could now accommodate two hundred fifty children.⁵²

For many years St. Joseph's was dependent on St. Mary's for food and all necessities. It is noteworthy that throughout the history of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's the Ladies never made a general public appeal. They were supported by church collections, by a proportionate share of the annual orphans' fairs which Bishop Rappe originated in 1854, by earnings from teaching in the parish schools, and from the handiwork of the Sisters and older girls. Donations were sent at times from the Motherhouse in Paris. During September and

in America for the first time at the Requiem Mass and for the last time by Archbishop Joseph Schrembs during the Eucharistic Congress in 1935 when the prelate offered Mass in Cleveland's Public Hall. It is now in the Motherhouse of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart in New York City and used only on the feast day of the Saint.

52 Ibid., 10D, 10F.

October each year, the Sisters that could be spared from the asylums traveled through the Cleveland vicinity to gather provisions for the coming winter. The Community annals reveal that Catholics and non-Catholics alike were generous contributors.⁵³

A second Sisterhood came to Bishop Rappe's diocese from France to assist him in caring for the children left dependent by the cholera epidemic of 1849 and 1850. The first group of Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine arrived in Cleveland from Boulogne, France, in October, 1851. These Sisters agreed to assume charge of a boys' asylum since the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, who reached Cleveland the same month, had made arrangements to care for orphan girls. Sisters Bernardine and Frances and two postulants, Miss Louise Brulon and Miss Cornelia Muselet, were guests at the Ursuline Convent on Euclid Avenue for some time.⁵⁴

St. Vincent's Asylum for boys actually had its beginning in the first St. Joseph's Hospital in Cleveland which opened in August, 1852. A very recent newspaper account states that St. Vincent's

dates back to the day one of the patients at St. Joseph's Hospital picked up what he thought was a bundle of rags. The bundle contained a year old boy. The child was brought to Sister Ursula who made room for the baby at the hospital, later to become St. Vincent's Orphanage.⁵⁵

53 Ibid.

54 Mary Colette Wolohan, "The Program of Parmadale, The Children's Village of Saint Vincent de Paul," Unpublished Thesis, Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, 1936, 9.

55 The Cleveland Press, April 17, 1953. Written when St. Vincent's ended seventy-four years of service and the children were transferred to Parmadale.

In the Reminiscences of Reverend Louis de Goesbriand, quoted in Houck,

The little boy's coming to St. Joseph's marked the beginning of child placement by Sister Ursula. When parents died at the hospital, Sister sent the girls to St. Mary's Asylum and kept the boys at the hospital until good homes could be found for them. The homes were investigated as Sister Ursula sought the spiritual as well as the physical well-being of the boys. Bishop Rappe "concurred in her request for a separate home."⁵⁶ The Bishop bought eight acres of land at the corner of Monroe and Willet Streets then some distance from the city limits. By a "judicious contract" with the Cleveland and Columbus railroad company, Bishop Rappe realized enough from the sale of sand and gravel on the property to pay for the land. A one-story brick building, thirty-two by one hundred seventeen feet, was erected.⁵⁷

Outstanding among the early pioneers at the new St. Vincent's Asylum was Sister Mary Joseph, the postulant Cornelia Muselet, who was the first

The Church in Northern Ohio and in the Diocese of Cleveland from 1817 to September, 1887, I, Chicago, 1887, 60, it is stated that Sister Ursula, superior at St. Vincent's from 1851 to 1863, was Miss Catharine Bisonette (sometimes spelled "Bissonette") of La Prairie, Michigan. Father de Goesbriand distressed at the large number of orphans left by the cholera looked about for matrons to care for them. Miss Bisonette responded generously and Father later wrote of her: "At my request, this courageous young girl, whose labors at La Prairie towards the instruction of children I knew, came at once . . . We made her take possession of a good house which had been deserted in the bay. There this devoted soul managed to provide for the wants of the orphans and parents until the terrible scourge had passed away."

56 Twenty-eighth Annual Campaign, 11C.

57 Houck, Church in Northern Ohio, 743. The first five boys admitted to St. Vincent's in May, 1853, had been kept by a good Catholic family on Champlain Street. Two of these boys were brothers. One of them died in 1927 after sixty-three years as a religious in the order of the Brothers of Mary. Twenty-eighth Annual Campaign, 11C.

instructor for the boys. Sister was "a firm believer in the adage that Satan finds mischief for idle hands to do", and the children's day began at five-thirty. Every hour was well occupied. Several skills were introduced, which not only taught the boys trades but also served as a means of revenue for the orphanage. An expert tailor taught tailoring to the boys and "there were few priests and seminarians who did not have their cassocks made at the orphanage." All clothes worn by the boys were made there. A certain Brother Michael of the Brothers of Mary, proficient in mechanics, taught the boys a number of trades, including cabinet work. Desks for Cathedral and St. Patrick's schools, chairs and tables for convents, bedsteads for the seminary, and furnishings for the Cathedral were made by the boys. Cash was not always received for the finished articles, but the Sisters gladly accepted "goods in kind" if they could be used for the asylum.⁵⁸

The number of boys at St. Vincent's increased rapidly, and living quarters had to be enlarged. The main building and the west wing were erected in 1859. Another wing was added in 1865 and a Chapel completed two years later. As the city and diocese population grew in numbers, so did the number of orphans. The Most Reverend Richard Gilmour⁵⁹ came to the rescue of St. Vincent's in 1883 by placing at the disposal of the Sisters and fifty orphan boys, a large building at Louisville, Stark County, Ohio. Thus, St. Louis Asylum at Louisville was in reality a branch of St. Vincent's in Cleveland. The

58 From the files of Parmadale, The Children's Village of St. Vincent de Paul, Cleveland. (Typewritten sheets)

59 Bishop of Cleveland, 1872 to 1891.

institution had, in turn, been St. Louis College conducted by Basilian Fathers, who had returned to Canada, and St. Joseph's Academy. The buildings were seriously damaged and required extensive repairing and remodeling. Both the parishioners of the Louisville parish and the diocese helped to bear the expense.⁶⁰

In 1855, a devout Catholic by the name of William Murrin deeded to the Most Reverend M. O'Connor, Bishop of Pittsburgh, two hundred fifty acres of land near New Bedford, Lawrence County, Pennsylvania. The Bishop erected thereon a two-story brick building which he intended to use as a diocesan seminary. This project failed and Franciscan Brothers opened a college and managed the farm. The college, too far removed from the city, was likewise unsuccessful. Bishop O'Connor then sold the property for three thousand to Bishop Rappe of Cleveland, who saw in the purchase, an opportunity to relieve the overcrowded conditions at St. Vincent's Asylum in Cleveland. The Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine brought the older boys and those who were frail to New Bedford in June, 1859. Bishop Rappe referred to them as "his children in the woods." However, disheartened by the "cheerless prospect presented by an uncultivated farm and its unattractive surroundings," the Sisters were glad to return to St. Vincent's in January, 1863.⁶¹

At about the same time, the Reverend Louis Hoffer, pastor of Louisville, Ohio, visited France with the intention of securing another religious

⁶⁰ Houck, Church in Northern Ohio, 744, 750-751.

⁶¹ Ibid., 762. By a special arrangement between the Bishops of Pittsburgh and Cleveland, New Bedford, although in Pennsylvania, was attached to the Diocese of Cleveland, The arrangement no longer obtains.

community for the Ohio mission field. In his search he learned of an order established by Reverend John J. Begel, in 1854, at Doumartin known as the Sisters of the Holy Humility of Mary.⁶² When Bishop Rappe was apprised of the possibility of their coming to America, he immediately invited the Sisters to come. Father Begel and the entire Sisterhood, twenty members, landed in New York, June 18, 1864. A few days later they arrived at New Bedford to find the farm and buildings in a lamentable condition. Accustomed to teaching and needlework, farm work became their sole means of subsistence.⁶³ The Sisters literally "put their hands to the plow," for they drained swamps, felled trees, farmed the land, and even baked the bricks which went into some of the buildings.⁶⁴

The Sisters had brought three orphans with them from France and the care of an orphan home for girls constituted their first work of charity. Later a hospital was also established. Although poverty impeded educational activities and the growth of the community for a time, by degrees conditions improved and membership increased. The land yielded better crops and the Sisters were enabled better to support the orphans who had become their wards. To provide accommodations for increasing numbers, the brick structure was doubled

62 Founded during the year in which the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was promulgated, the community has special devotion to the Blessed Virgin. The members wear her medal as part of their religious garb.

63 Houck, Church in Northern Ohio, 762.

64 Twenty-eighth Annual Campaign, 12B.

in size in 1869 and again enlarged in 1878. In July, 1881, a separate Chapel was dedicated by Bishop Gilmour.⁶⁵

At the earnest appeal of the Reverend A. Campion, pastor of St. Francis Church, in Toledo, Ohio, St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum was established in this city in October, 1855. Bishop Rappe secured the Sisters of Charity of Montreal to manage the asylum. The first orphan home was a rented frame house on Cherry Street. The primitive accommodations led to a search for a better home. In May, 1856, another temporary dwelling was found on Erie Street. Not until 1858 was work commenced on the first portion of a permanent building. This home, also on Cherry Street, received its first group of forty-seven children in August, 1858, on the first Sunday after the feast of the Assumption when the new St. Vincent's was blessed by Bishop Rappe. The third story served as a temporary hospital and was the beginning of St. Vincent's Hospital. The early history of the orphanage was "one long continuous struggle for existence," since it depended for support entirely upon the Catholics of Toledo and the western part of the Diocese of Cleveland, who were few in number and generally poor. As the work of the Sisters gained in favor, the condition of the asylum improved and non-Catholics, as well as Catholics, became staunch friends of the institution.⁶⁶

St. Francis Asylum at Tiffin, Ohio, had a two-fold purpose. It served as an asylum for orphan girls and as a home for the aged. The

⁶⁵ Houck, Church in Northern Ohio, 763. The Sisters established their Motherhouse, known as "Villa Maria," at New Bedford on the Ohio-Pennsylvania border.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 753.

institution was founded in 1867 by the Reverend Joseph L. Bihn. The following year Father Bihn founded a Sisterhood, the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, which assumed full charge of the asylum and home. In 1869, St. Francis was incorporated under the title, "The Citizens' Hospital and Orphan Asylum."⁶⁷

The first building was a two-story frame house which stood on a fifty-eight acre plot at the eastern edge of Tiffin. The original structure was replaced in 1871 by a large three-story brick building to which additions were made later. The beautiful Gothic Chapel, built in 1881, was dedicated by Bishop Gilmour on June 1 of that year. St. Francis was fortunate in the financial assistance which it received. A Mr. John Grieveldinger, his widowed daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Schaefer, together with her two daughters, united their entire holdings for the benefit of the home and asylum. Mrs. Schaefer, as Sister Frances, and her two daughters became members of the Sisterhood and served the cause of the orphans and the aged for a number of years.⁶⁸

The present State of Michigan once formed part of a vast colonial empire "visioned as reaching from Hudson Bay to the delta of the Mississippi and from the Appalachian Mountains to the Rocky Mountains." France had penetrated into the Continent through the St. Lawrence River and its tributaries, and "unrolled her stirring pageant of political and religious history in the very heart of America." Detroit, long an important military outpost in this region, had grown sufficiently in Catholic population to warrant its being

67 Ibid., 751-752.

68 Ibid., 753.

named as the seat of a new diocese in 1827. The appointment of the first nominee as Bishop of the new diocese was rejected and Detroit remained without an episcopal ruler until March 8, 1833, when a second Bull was issued to create the Diocese of Detroit. On the same day, Father Frederic Rese was appointed its first Bishop.⁶⁹

In 1827, Father Rese had been sent to Europe to recruit priests and to secure financial aid for the Detroit Diocese. He was highly successful in inculcating a foreign mission spirit among the Catholics of the German States. By the end of 1828 he had been responsible for the formation of the "Leopoldine Stiftung" in Vienna and the "Ludwig Missions Verein" in Munich. These organizations sent very substantial contributions to many of the earlier dioceses in America.⁷⁰

There is slight evidence that any considerable organized care of the poor or orphans existed until 1832 when a county poorhouse was built on Gratiot Avenue. The conditions there were deplorable indicating that the citizens in general were apathetic. This was not true in regard to a certain Father Kundig who shortly after his arrival in Detroit organized the women of St. Anne's Parish into a charitable society. Work was at hand immediately owing to the epidemics of 1832 and 1834. The Association petitioned the supervisors at the county poorhouse to remedy the evils there, and undertook to care for orphans that Father Kundig had gathered into a building on Larned Street near

⁶⁹ George Paré, The Catholic Church in Detroit, 1701-1888, Detroit, 1951, 1, 450, 365, 388.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 372.

Randolph.⁷¹ Father Kundig gave unflinching devotion to the orphans as is evident from his own recital of the appalling facts:

I was compelled, first to remove the dying parents to the hospital, and then to carry the children from house to house, before I could get anyone to take them in, and in most cases, not until I had promised \$2 per week for their board. . . . The expense of supporting them separately being very great, I thought it expedient to collect them together, in a house which I rented for that purpose, and had them conveyed thither, with the assistance of the aforesaid Ladies' Association.⁷²

The rented house, Detroit's first orphan asylum, had little means at its disposal, and Father Kundig went to the extent of selling part of his own furniture to supplement the small amounts of money that he collected.⁷³ The activities of the Women's Association greatly assisted Father Kundig in his work. The Minutes of the meeting of October 27, 1834, noting plans for an Orphans' Fair to be given on November 5 in the "Steamboat Hotel," state that the Association had twenty-eight orphans under its care, and urged the members to make appeals for their support. About one thousand dollars were realized from the Fair and the Association was enabled to pay its debts. Later it discussed the prospects of building an asylum and the advisability of securing the Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg to assume charge of it.⁷⁴

71 Ibid., 657-659.

72 Exposition of Facts Relating to Certain Charitable Institutions within the State of Michigan, Detroit, 1840. Pamphlet written by Father Kundig. Copy in Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

73 Paré, Catholic Church in Detroit, 661.

74 Minutes of the Catholic Female Association of Detroit, 1834-1837, October 27, 1834; November 11, 1834, 35; January 6, 1835, 43.

Father Kundig, encouraged by the better times that prevailed in 1835 and 1836, prepared for expansion, and wrote: "We now procured a lease of 20 acres of woodland, adjoining the county poor house, and erected there a building to which we removed the orphans."⁷⁵ Father Kundig held the office of superintendent of the poor from 1834 to 1839. As a result of the panic of 1837, Father Kundig became bankrupt and in the spring of 1839 some of his creditors seized and sold the very clothes belonging to the children under his care. The orphan home closed and the children were placed among friends and acquaintances.⁷⁶

The nuns of the Order of Poor Clares, who had a convent at the southwest corner of Larned and Randolph Streets, rendered valuable service during the cholera epidemic of 1834. The annalist of the history of St. Vincent's Asylum, the successor of Father Kundig's ill-fated home, wrote years later that the "orphans also were made partakers of their charity and of their house. Their convent was the link between the Orphanage of 1839 and the present St. Vincent's, which was begun in 1851." When the Poor Clares relinquished their Detroit foundation because of difficulties, their convent was converted into a hospital and orphan asylum and placed in charge of the Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg.⁷⁷ The asylum opened its doors on June 5, 1851. The following year

75 Exposition of Facts.

76 Silas Farmer, The History of Detroit and Michigan or the Metropolis Illustrated: A Chronological Cyclopaedia of the Past and Present, Detroit, 1884, 651.

77 Emmitsburg Archives. The Sisters of Charity had opened a school in Detroit in 1844.

Father Kundig makes only slight reference to the Poor Clares in his

the old building was removed and a large brick building erected on the same site.⁷⁸ Toward the end of that decade, a new home was built for Bishop Peter Paul LeFevre and the Sisters and orphans moved into the former residence of the Bishop on Randolph Street between Congress and Larned. A Detroit newspaper of the time carried the following notice of the transfer: "The change from the dingy, contracted and dilapidated quarters which they have formerly occupied, to the spacious and comfortable building in which they now are, is really a pleasing one." About eighty children were brought into the new home. There seems to have been but one deficiency in the institution, a shortage of beds. It was noted that twelve children had to sleep on the floor.⁷⁹ The Sisters found it difficult to sustain the many orphans who applied for admittance. Fairs, picnics and excursions, and the annual collections in the city churches supplied the revenue. On July 23, 1859, there was an excursion on the steamer Ocean for the benefit of St. Vincent's. The boat passed down the Canadian channel to Lake Erie; on the return trip through the American channel, it stopped at Wyandotte long enough to permit the excursionists to visit the iron works. Good music and plenty of refreshments were provided. In August, the "Peach Festival" was held in the orchard back of the asylum; peaches and cream were served. In June, 1860, a benefit picnic was given on Belle Isle. Two

pamphlet of 1840. However, from an account of his activities recorded in the Salesiamum, XIII, 12, which is based upon his reminiscences, the reader glean information concerning the help they rendered Father Kundig and the hardships that they underwent before their withdrawal from Detroit.

78 Farmer, History of Detroit, 651.

79 Detroit Free Press, October 12, 1853.

large steamers, Windsor and Ottawa, were engaged to ply regularly during the day to accommodate the patrons.⁸⁰

Up to 1867, both boys and girls were accepted at St. Vincent's. That year St. Anthony's for boys was opened and those from St. Vincent's were transferred. The Sisters still had over one hundred children so that larger quarters were again sought. The Sisters purchased a piece of property in the eastern part of the city. The Annual Report Register for 1871 describes the location as

All that part of the McDougall farm so called bounded on the north by the southerly line of Congress Street, on the south by the northerly line of Larned Street, on the east by the westerly line of McDougall Avenue and on the west by the dividing line between said McDougall farm and the Joseph Campeau farm so called.⁸¹

The plot two hundred fifty by two hundred sixty feet cost sixteen thousand dollars; the splendid building erected on it cost about seventy thousand dollars. The new St. Vincent's consisting of a large main structure and two wings was one of the "most commodious Asylums owned by the Community." The Sisters were so successful in collecting funds for the home that only seven thousand dollars debt remained when it was completed. The children were brought from the old residence in 1875, but the new asylum was not dedicated until July 19, 1876.⁸²

80 Ibid., July 19, 1859; August 25, 1859; June 1, 1860.

81 Emmitsburg Archives.

82 Ibid.

The Catholic Directory of 1875 lists a Sacred Heart Orphan Asylum, Jefferson Avenue, in charge of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart.⁸³ Information obtained in regard to this asylum indicates that it existed at a much earlier date. A certain Mr. and Mrs. Antoine Beaubien wished to devote a part of their fortune to the welfare of Catholic orphans in memory of their only child. In 1848 they offered property in Detroit to the Religious of the Sacred Heart, for this purpose. A year later the Beaubiens had secured permission from Bishop Paul LeFevre for the entrance of the nuns into his diocese. In the spring of 1851 Reverend Mother Hardey made arrangements for a foundation. On May 15 of that year Reverend Mother Trincano and five religious left New York for Detroit. Upon their arrival in that city, it was discovered that the property destined for the nuns was being used by someone else. Finally, however, Reverend Mother and the other religious were established in a rented dwelling, a three-story house on the north side of Jefferson Avenue. Here on June 2, 1851, an orphanage with three children was established. It had been Mrs. Beaubien's wish that orphan girls "of French Canadian descent and born in the state of Michigan" should be given preference. Some members of the Beaubien family did not favor Mr. Beaubien giving the property to the religious. Consequently, they instituted suit to recover the property which had not yet come into the hands of the nuns. There was long and troublesome litigation. The result was removal of the academy and orphanage to another property which Mr. A. Beaubien sold to the religious for a very small sum of money. Apparently,

83 Sadlier's Catholic Directory, Almanac and Ordo, New York, 1875, 176.

some time in 1853, the orphans, expressly in compliance with the request of their benefactors, were removed to the new Sacred Heart foundation at Sandwich, Ontario.⁸⁴

St. Mary's was the oldest German parish in Detroit. The first German immigrants came in 1834 to "a silent, plague stricken city." All business had been suspended. Barrels of pitch and tar burned night and day, and the only sign of activity were funerals and the passing of ambulances to the hospital on Cadillac Square. The cornerstone of St. Mary's Church was laid in 1841 at the southeast corner of Monroe and St. Antoine Streets. There was little money in Detroit at that time and construction was extremely slow. Dedication of the new church took place on June 29, 1843.⁸⁵

Paré observes that the German Catholics of Detroit "had the same sense of racial solidarity that characterized their countrymen in the older centers of immigration." They seemed more inclined to make sacrifices for an institution of their own. The School Sisters of Notre Dame came to Detroit in 1852, only two years after establishing their Motherhouse in Milwaukee, to take charge of a girls' school in St. Mary's parish. It is quite certain that they sheltered a few orphans in their convent on Macomb Street between St. Antoine and Hastings Streets. In 1855, the parish erected a four-story brick building at 165 St. Antoine Street (now 1011), which is still standing today, to serve as a convent for the Sisters and as a home for orphan girls of St. Mary's

84 Questionnaire.

85 The Detroit News, December 13, 1891.

congregation.⁸⁶ The author of a history of the School Sisters of Notre Dame corroborates these facts, but refers to the discontinuance of the orphanage in the statement that

At the request of the Redemptorist Fathers, the congregation took charge of St. Mary's School and an orphanage for girls at Detroit, Michigan, September 24, 1852. The number of orphans was small, and remained so for years. The number of parochial school pupils increased so rapidly that the Reverend Fathers were obliged to find homes for the 67 orphans among the families of their parishioners, and the orphanage was used for classrooms for the parish pupils.⁸⁷

The first strictly diocesan project for the care of orphans was inaugurated by Bishop LeFevre in 1866. Eight parish groups existed then in Detroit, two of which were German. The six non-German parishes merged resources to erect a male orphan asylum under the title of "St. Anthony's Male Orphan Asylum of the City of Detroit." On January 23, 1867, twelve trustees, two from each parish, were legally incorporated; land, on which a brick structure to accommodate eighty boys was erected near the northwest corner of Sheridan and Gratiot Avenues, was donated.⁸⁸ The first Annual Report of St. Anthony's contains a description of the site: "All that certain part of private land

⁸⁶ Paré, Catholic Church in Detroit, 668-669. An interesting morsel of information was found at St. Mary's Rectory in an old manuscript, which explains the origin of the Leopoldine Society: "Among others he interested the Archduchess Leopoldine of Austria, who exercised considerable influence at the Imperial Court and among the wealthy nobility of the empire. Under the patronage of this imperial Princess the Leopoldine Society was founded and capitalized liberally for the promotion of the missionary work of the Diocese of Cincinnati operated from Detroit."

⁸⁷ Mother Caroline and the School Sisters of Notre Dame, I, St. Louis, 1928, 68.

⁸⁸ Paré, Catholic Church in Detroit, 669.

claim number sixteen (16) more commonly known as the "Church Farm" lying north-westerly of the Fort Gratiot Road, for the purpose of establishing and maintaining thereon an Orphan Asylum for boys." Several zealous clergymen and members of the parishes solicited contributions for the erection of the asylum. Donations were generously given and a Fair which was held brought in over five thousand dollars. These successes prompted the commencement of building operations which progressed so well that at the close of 1866 a portion of St. Anthony's was ready for occupancy. The account comments on the ornaments of the building which consisted of "a projection of a part of the front in handsome brick caps and sills, and a heavy plain cornice."⁸⁹

Donations and products from the farm comprised the chief means of support. Donations for the year 1867 included one hundred dollars from Bishop LeFevre, a clothes wringer, five kerosene lamps, one set of harness, a stove pipe, one box of soap, and a fancy glass bowl. The farm products brought in almost fifteen hundred dollars. Among the sales were three thousand heads of cabbage for which the orphanage received about one hundred seventy dollars, a barrel of pickles which brought eight dollars, and two hundred bushels of potatoes sold for one hundred thirty dollars.⁹⁰

St. Anthony's opened officially on May 1, 1867, when four Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, whose Motherhouse is in Monroe, Michigan, took charge of the asylum. George, William and Noble Hardy, three little

⁸⁹ First Annual Report of St. Anthony's Male Orphan Asylum, Articles of Agreement and Association. By-Laws. Deeds of Trust. List of Donations for the Year Ending December 31, 1867, Detroit, 1868, 7, 17.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 24, 30-31.

brothers, were received on May 25, the same day on which their mother was buried.⁹¹

The congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, was incorporated under the laws of Michigan on February 6, 1860. Article III, of the Articles of Incorporation declares that "the objects of said corporation shall be to assist destitute and orphan children residing in the State of Michigan and to that end, to establish and maintain within said State, asylums for their reception, support, care and relief and schools for their education." As a matter of fact, St. Anthony's in Detroit remained under the direction of the Sisters only ten years. Difficulties befell the asylum when it lost its founder, Bishop LeFevre, and a great benefactor, Father Francis Peeters. Both building and staff were inadequate when the orphans continued to increase in numbers. By the spring of 1877, negotiations were under way to transfer the direction of the asylum to a community of Franciscan Brothers.⁹² In the Chronicles of St. Anthony's, under date of May 3, 1877, there appears this note of relief:

For sometime past we had desired and prayed that the Asylum might be transferred into the hands of Brothers who might do greater good to the children by keeping them above the ages allowed by our regulations and also by teaching them trades before leaving the institution. This, our desire, was realized on this day in the arrival from Cincinnati of nine Franciscan Brothers who at once took charge of the Institution. The Sisters left on

91 Paré, Catholic Church in Detroit, 669.

92 Sister M. Rosalita, I. H. M., No Greater Service, The History of the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Monroe, Michigan, 1845-1945, Detroit, 1948, 245-247, 302-303.

the same day after receiving, at the suggestion of the Brothers, the grateful adieus of the boys.⁹³

Although orphan asylums were not generally conducted by the Sisters, servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a small group of orphan girls were given a home at the Motherhouse in Monroe. For a half century after 1860, St. Mary's Orphanage, as the little home in Monroe was called, averaged twenty-five children annually. Only two events in its history are recorded by Sister M. Rosalita, in her history of the Community. In September, 1853, an extraordinary successful Fair lasting six evenings was held for the benefit of the orphans. A German band furnished music free of charge. Bishop Caspar Borgess visited the orphans at St. Mary's in October, 1877.⁹⁴ The orphans presented a program in his honor and following it, offered the Bishop six pairs of socks which they had knitted.⁹⁵

St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum, Saginaw, Michigan, had its inception when the Reverend Francis Van der Bom, pastor of St. Mary's Church, East Saginaw, provided a home for three motherless children. Their father, attacked and severely injured by an intoxicated Indian, could care for them no longer. Their first home, a small frame house on the west side of Welles Street (now Owen), was supported by members of St. Mary's parish. Miss Nellie Cashin opened the home to these children on September 9, 1870. The number increased

93 Ibid., 303. Quoted from the Chronicles of St. Anthony's Asylum.

94 Bishop of Detroit, 1870 to 1887.

95 Sister M. Rosalita, No Greater Service, 769, 795.

to twelve and poor health forced Miss Cashin to resign as matron. Her successor, Miss Mary Berry, remained until May, 1875.⁹⁶

Father Van der Bom, "whose interest in the institution increased as the population grew," appealed to the Sisters of Charity at Emmitsburg to take the orphans under their care. Two Sisters, Sister Felix Dwyer and Sister Martina Martin, were sent from the Motherhouse; they were joined by Sister Cecilia Casey who was sent from the hospital in Saginaw. A family of nine children robbed of parents by a fire and six other orphans formed the nucleus of the foundation begun by the three Sisters, May 24, 1875. Three lots were purchased on the corner of Bates and Emerson Streets,⁹⁷ and in the spring of 1876, a new and larger building was erected. When the Sisters and orphans moved into it in the fall of 1877, the number of orphans had increased to twenty-two. The custom of giving annual benefit banquets began in 1879 and became one of the main events of the year, requiring the largest hall available in the city. Children were soon received from other places than the Saginaws. Consequently, when the Diocese of Grand Rapids was created in 1882, St. Vincent's was named a diocesan institution. Thereafter, it received money from the annual collections in the parishes.⁹⁸

96 Emmitsburg Archives.

97 Elsewhere in the account the site is given as Emerson and Howard Streets.

98 Emmitsburg Archives. Sister Cecilia Casey was superior at St. Vincent's for forty years. She died in 1931 at the age of eighty-seven, having been a religious for seventy-one years. An obituary account states: "It was not an easy task that she had undertaken. The home was supported by charity and it was not always the simplest job to find the wherewithal to feed hungry mouths or to warm tiny bodies."

The little village of Chicago had less than two hundred inhabitants when the first small frame Catholic church was built in 1833. About 1840 a movement was set afoot for the creation of an Episcopal See at Springfield, Illinois. However, due to the phenomenal growth of Chicago and the great influx of Catholics into the city on the Lake, the Fifth Provincial Council of Bishops determined to select Chicago as the seat of a new diocese. Sixteen of the then existing twenty-three dioceses were represented by their bishops at this Council held on May 14, 1843. The Council petitioned the creating of Sees at Chicago, Milwaukee, Hartford, and Little Rock, and for a vicariate-apostolic in Oregon. The Most Reverend William Quarter, "Father and Founder of the Chicago Diocese," arrived in Chicago from New York to assume his episcopal duties on May 5, 1844.⁹⁹

By the end of 1846, "due to the zeal and capabilities of Bishop Quarter," Chicago had a college and a seminary, the University of St. Mary of the Lake; two churches for English speaking residents, St. Mary's and St. Patrick's; two German churches, St. Peter's and St. Joseph's. Thus boys and young men had been provided with good schools, but there were no educational facilities for girls and young women. To supply this need, it was necessary to procure a community of religious. Bishop Quarter applied to Bishop Michael O'Connor of Pittsburgh and "was granted a branch of the Order of the Sisters of Mercy."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ The Archdiocese of Chicago: Antecedents and Developments, Des Plaines, Illinois, 1920, 5, 15-17.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 23-24.

Five Sisters of Mercy,¹⁰¹ accompanied by the Mother Superioress, Mother Francis Xavier Warde, and the Reverend Walter Quarter, brother of the Chicago Bishop, who had been sent to conduct the Sisters to Chicago, arrived on September 24, 1846. Chicago was the first foundation from Pittsburgh where the Sisters of Mercy had established themselves upon their arrival from Ireland in 1843. Once in Chicago, the Sisters were welcomed at the episcopal residence by Bishop Quarter who took them to St. Mary's Cathedral, "a very unpretentious building one block west, on the corner of Wabash Avenue and Madison street." The kindly Bishop vacated his own home, a poor one-story frame dwelling, for the Sisters; yet, the chronicler states, that home was "a palace compared with that to which he retired on this occasion." A school was opened in the old frame church to the rear of the Cathedral. In 1847, a new convent was erected next to St. Mary's Church; the three-story brick building at 131 Wabash Avenue was known as St. Xavier's Academy.¹⁰²

Chicago had suffered several visitations of Asiatic cholera during its brief existence, but the disease broke out in virulent form in 1849 after it had been brought to the city by a traveler from New Orleans. The victim died almost immediately upon reaching Chicago and within a few days the epidemic was widely spread. Over six hundred of a population of twenty-three

101 Ibid., 24. These Sisters were Sisters M. Agatha O'Brien, Superioress of the new foundation, M. Vincent McGirr, M. Gertrude McGuire, M. Eliza Corbett, and M. Eva Smidt. The Sisters of Mercy were the first religious to enter Chicago; during the ten years following their coming, they opened the first parochial school, the first select school, the first academy, the first working girls' home, the first orphanage, and the first hospital.

102 Reminiscences of Seventy Years, 1846-1916, Sisters of Mercy, St. Xavier's Chicago, Chicago, 1916, 19-21, 27, 37.

thousand died that year. The scourge caused a high mortality during the next three years as well.¹⁰³

So many children were bereft of parents that it was necessary to find a home for them; hence, an orphan asylum was established in a building known as the Cumberland House on the southwest corner of Wabash Avenue and Van Buren Street.¹⁰⁴ The founding of the first orphan asylum in Chicago is attributable to the Most Reverend James Oliver Van de Velde, second Bishop of Chicago. Bishop Van de Velde, a Jesuit, was consecrated on February 11, 1849, and took possession of his See on April 1. The Diary of the Bishop contains the following entry relative to the first orphanage:

The Orphan Asylum was commenced to-day, under the patronage of the Right Rev. Bishop Van De Velde, bishop of the Diocese. The collection raised in the Cathedral on this day amounted to \$175.25. The congregation seemed delighted to find that the Bishop had provided a house for the reception of the poor, destitute orphans left by the cholera. . . . The Orphan Asylum will be under the charge of the Sisters of Mercy.¹⁰⁵

The Catholic Almanac for 1850 prints a report submitted by Sister M. Vincent McGirr shortly after the asylum was opened. Thirty-three girls were already with the Sisters in the small home and more were applying for admittance each day. "We rely on Providence for the support of them," Sister explained, and "the Catholics of the city, though scarcely any are in prosperous

103 Paul Gilbert and Charles Lee Bryson, Chicago and Its Makers: A Narrative of Events from the Day of the First White Man to the Inception of the Second World's Fair, Chicago, 1929, 112-113.

104 Reminiscences, 42.

105 Souvenir of the Silver Jubilee in the Episcopacy of His Grace The Most Reverend Patrick Augustine Feehan, Archbishop of Chicago, November 1, 1890, Chicago, 1891, 110. Date of entry, August 5, 1849.

circumstances, have generously responded to the call, and our Protestant fellow-citizens have evinced great interest and liberality on the occasion." To provide a home for orphan boys, Bishop Van de Velde vacated a small frame house near the Cathedral, the residence of one of the priests serving the Cathedral parish. Thirteen boys were happy to be received by the Sisters of Mercy on the opening day.¹⁰⁶

In 1850, the Sisters and the orphan girls from St. Mary's were moved to the North Side within the confines of Holy Name parish. Here in a rented building, about forty children were made as comfortable as the scanty means at the disposal of the Sisters would permit. Their "straightened circumstances" were greatly relieved when in 1852 St. Mary's was again removed, this time to a new brick building erected by the Bishop on Wabash Avenue.¹⁰⁷ In June, 1852, the Mercy Orphanages were incorporated by the State Legislature.¹⁰⁸

Disconcerted at the poor temporary quarters that the orphans had, Bishop Van de Velde arranged for concerts and charity sermons and by many other expedients endeavored to procure a suitable site for an asylum. Late in 1850, the Bishop purchased three lots on Wabash Avenue, between Jackson and Van Buren Streets on which to erect an asylum. A three-story brick structure at a cost of four thousand dollars was planned. The new home, however, afforded shelter for orphan girls only; the boys were obliged to remain in the small

106 The Catholic Almanac, 1850, 118.

107 Archdiocese of Chicago, 211.

108 Sister Mary Eulalia Herron, The Sisters of Mercy in the United States, 1843-1928, New York, 1929, 58.

rented dwelling near the Cathedral. At the end of 1852, eighty-two children lived in the two asylums.¹⁰⁹

In 1864, the Most Reverend James Duggan¹¹⁰ wished to place the orphans under the administration of lay trustees. The Sisters' disapproval of such a plan led Bishop Duggan to send a request to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, at St. Louis, to assume charge of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Asylums.¹¹¹ In response to the Bishop's "insistent demand," Sister Benedict Butler and four other Sisters left St. Louis on the evening of September 24, 1864. That was a harrowing night for the travelers. After crossing the Mississippi River by ferry, they boarded a train on the Illinois side for Chicago. Due to the spreading of rails on a soft embankment, the engine and the front coaches overturned. That coach in which the Sisters and a few other passengers rode stood tilted at a steep angle detached from the rest of the train. Delayed ten hours, the passengers reached Chicago via a relief train the following day.¹¹²

The Sisters of St. Joseph cared for the orphans in the "poor, plain building on Wabash Avenue," for two years. In 1866, the property was sold and Bishop Duggan turned over to the Sisters and orphans the splendid building of the University of St. Mary of the Lake at State and Superior Streets. The site was ideal, with a frontage on Lake Michigan of over two hundred feet and with

¹⁰⁹ Souvenir, Most Reverend Patrick Augustine Feehan, 116-117, 128-129, 133-134.

¹¹⁰ Bishop of Chicago, 1859-1869.

¹¹¹ Herron, Sisters of Mercy, 60.

¹¹² Sister Mary Lucida Savage, The Congregation of St. Joseph of Carondelet, 1923, 139.

extensive grounds and meadows. The asylum was placed in charge of Sister Mary Joseph Kennedy, "good Mother Joseph," as she was known in Chicago for twenty years.¹¹³

The orphans were domiciled at St. Mary of the Lake until that "memorable day of October 9, 1871, when the Chicago fire destroyed it." In this catastrophic event, Mother Joseph's "magnanimity and indomitable courage were put to the test." The conflagration "left the beautiful edifice a smoking ruin, and sent her with her community of eighteen Sisters and their two hundred and eighty charges wandering through the streets of Chicago to a place of security outside the limits of the doomed city."¹¹⁴ The Sisters had to carry many of the children and protect others who were able to walk as they hurried along in the crowd that was fleeing in wild confusion before the flames. Exhausted and terrified, they took refuge in the old cemetery near Lincoln Park. Fortunately, not one life was lost.¹¹⁵

When daylight came, the children were taken to the Jesuit College, west of Blue Island Avenue on Twelfth Street, where they were accorded kind hospitality for two weeks. In the meantime, a two-story school building nearby was prepared for a temporary home. Eighty of the smaller children were kept there by the Sisters, while offers of aid proffered by the orphan asylums in

113 Ibid., 139-140. The Brothers of the Holy Cross relinquished control of the University of St. Mary of the Lake in 1864. The seminary section was conducted until 1868.

114 Ibid., 140.

115 Report and By-Laws of the St. Joseph's Home for the Friendless, 739 East 35th Street, Chicago, (Not dated), 9.

St. Louis and Cincinnati were accepted. To each of these cities, about one hundred children were sent.¹¹⁶

Not until the middle of 1872 were the children again brought together. In May of that year, the building formerly occupied by veteran soldiers located at Thirty-fifth Street and Lake Park Avenue was purchased from the Government. Situated near Camp Douglas, it was used as a hospital during the Civil War. The home was known as St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum.¹¹⁷ The building is described as "a massive grey concrete structure composed of two wings and modeled after the square type of older architecture." It had been erected in the early eighteen sixties.¹¹⁸

After the Civil War, the need for additional orphan homes was felt. The German Catholics of Chicago, with the approbation of Bishop Duggan, founded the Angel Guardian Orphanage in 1865. The first annual report of the Managers refers to the purchase of property for the purpose:

For this purpose ten acres of land, comprising a house, a barn and an orchard, located in the vicinity of St. Henry's Church at Rosehill, seven miles from Chicago, were purchased on May 15th. This

116 Savage, Congregation of St. Joseph, 142.

117 Report and By-Laws of St. Joseph's Home, 10.

118 The Charity Watchman, March, 1920, 64. Published monthly by the Associated Catholic Charities of Chicago. St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum remained such until 1913 when the girls were transferred to St. Mary's Industrial School at Des Plaines. The institution at Thirty-fifth and Lake Park Avenue is at present the St. Joseph's Home for the Friendless, a temporary home for children until they are placed in other institutions or are returned to their homes.

institution is designated for the training of poor orphans of German parentage of the Diocese of Chicago.¹¹⁹

The home was ready for the reception of children as soon as a well was dug, a pump provided, a porch added to the farm house, the house and barn painted, and the fence repaired. On October 25, 1865, the first orphans, three siblings, arrived. They were Henry, Mary and Pauline Weishaupt and Mr. and Mrs. M. Traufler were engaged to assume charge of the little home. By the end of 1866, sixteen children lived in the orphanage. Since no more than twenty-one children could be accommodated, the managers planned for the erection of a new building. Three more acres adjoining the ten acres on the east were purchased. A two-story concrete building, forty by seventy-five feet, saw completion in 1868.¹²⁰

The latter year brought not only a new orphanage building but the first Sisters to take charge of the orphans as well. The Very Reverend Peter Fischer, Vicar-General of the diocese, was successful in securing three Sisters of the community of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ, whose Motherhouse is in Donaldson, Indiana. On November 18, 1868, Sisters Hyacintha, Corona, and Bella began their services in Angel Guardian Orphanage with about thirty children.¹²¹

In July, 1876, a new brick school building, two stories high, was completed, for which most of the material and labor was donated. A picnic late in July supplied the funds to wipe out the remainder of the debt. A third

¹¹⁹ Diamond Jubilee, 1865-1940, Angel Guardian Orphanage, Chicago, Orphanage Press, 1940, 9.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 13, 14.

¹²¹ Ibid., 14.

story was added in 1879. The asylum suffered a great loss when a fire destroyed the farm house, which served as a convent for the Sisters, and the main building erected and finished in 1868, on October 26, 1879. Although the fire occurred at night, no lives were lost. However, in spite of the fact that the orphanage walls were of concrete, the loss was complete. Fortunately the nearby school building and some of the furniture of the asylum were saved. Sister Paschalis, one of the pioneers at Angel Guardian, often related an amusing incident which occurred during the fire. One of the older boys, imbued with an heroic spirit, went into the basement of the burning building and carried out the rocks from the sauerkraut barrels.¹²²

The Board of Managers held the first of a series of meetings two days after the fire. Plans were laid for erecting a three-story building with basement. Money for the project came from various sources. Six thousand dollars insurance money was on hand. The Sisters volunteered to make a house-to-house collection and a picnic was held. Nevertheless, twenty-four thousand dollars had to be borrowed. On Pentecost Sunday, May 17, 1880, the Right Reverend Doctor Mullen, Administrator of the diocese, laid the cornerstone.¹²³

On September 20, 1872, the Angel Guardian German Catholic Orphan Society of Chicago was granted a charter. The Articles of Incorporation stated the particular object of the Society as: "The support, maintenance and education of such orphan and half-orphan children as the Society may choose to

122 Ibid., 20.

123 Ibid.

receive."¹²⁴ The Society conducted three cemeteries, St. Boniface, St. Maria, and St. Joseph. The net income of these cemeteries was applied to the support of the asylum.¹²⁵ Already in 1866, Bishop Duggan granted a request that a collection for the orphanage be taken up in the German churches of the diocese on Pentecost Sunday.¹²⁶ In this way the work of charity at Angel Guardian could continue and constant expansion was made possible.

The last orphan home founded in Chicago during the period of this study was St. Vincent's Asylum opened July 29, 1881, by the Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg. Sister Walburga Gehring and several other Sisters began in a small rented house at Franklin and Superior Streets. The home soon developed into a combination asylum and hospital. Only children under the age of three were accepted in the orphanage proper.¹²⁷

The large number of parentless children following the Civil War resulted in the establishment of another asylum in the Chicago area. In 1866 the Most Rev. John J. Luers,¹²⁸ Bishop of Fort Wayne, purchased one hundred acres of land near the town of Rensselaer, in Jasper County, located in northwestern

124 Ibid., 16, 18.

125 Archdiocese of Chicago, 751.

126 Diamond Jubilee, Angel Guardian Orphanage, 12.

127 Emmitsburg Archives. Notes in the Archives mention that the Sisters of Charity opened a school at La Salle, Illinois, some distance to the south and west of Chicago, on July 25, 1855. This school, located on First Street, had both boarders and orphans. Apparently no regular orphan asylum existed at La Salle since it is not listed in the Catholic Almanac nor in any other source used.

128 The Diocese of Fort Wayne was created in 1857. Bishop Luers governed the diocese from 1858 to 1871.

Indiana. Here the Bishop built a home for orphan boys and girls and requested the Sisters of the Holy Cross in nearby Notre Dame to staff the new institution.¹²⁹ Sister M. John, as directress, and Sisters Celestine, Veronica, and Christian were sent to open St. Joseph's Asylum in September, 1867. Hard times befell the new mission. The Sisters collected funds to furnish the home and to support themselves and the orphans. Some assistance came to them from the farm and dairy operated in connection with the orphanage. In time diocesan funds were made available. The asylum chapel served as a parish church until 1885 when a church was erected, but records are silent as to whether or not any financial aid was given the orphanage by the parishioners. The home averaged about sixty boys and girls during the ten-year period that both groups were cared for in Rensselaer.¹³⁰

A substantial bequest by the Reverend George A. Hamilton, pastor of St. Mary's Church, Lafayette, Indiana, led to the transfer of the boys from St. Joseph's in Rensselaer to a new asylum of the same title in Lafayette. Father Hamilton left about ten thousand dollars worth of real estate and money for the

¹²⁹ Charles Blanchard, ed., History of the Catholic Church in Indiana, I, Logansport, Indiana, 1898, 609.

¹³⁰ Sister M. Eleanore, On the King's Highway: A History of the Sisters of the Holy Cross of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception, Notre Dame, Indiana, New York, 1931, 284. Sister M. Eleanore writes of an ephemeral asylum for Indian children founded by Father Stephen Badin, who was sent from Kentucky to revive the Faith among the Pottawattomies and give them an opportunity to practice it. He built a log cabin on the bank of St. Mary's Lake within the present limits of Notre Dame. In 1833, "he established St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum for the care of the Indian children and secured two Sisters of Charity from Kentucky to take charge." The asylum was closed when Bishop Simon Gabriel Bruté came to visit Father Badin's mission in the spring of 1835. Ibid., 103.

purpose of establishing a manual training school for orphan boys in the vicinity of Lafayette. The property, about five hundred eighty acres, was located at Davis Ferry, between Lafayette and Battle Ground. The "project was further encouraged" by Mr. Owen Ball and Mr. J. B. Falley, who donated fifty-one acres of land south of Lafayette. On this tract of land, Bishop Joseph Dwenger built an asylum in 1875.¹³¹ Blanchard describes the asylum as commanding a fine view of the surrounding country and situated "over Fourth street hill, just across Durgee's run, on a commanding eminence reached by a gracefully winding road." The building, brick with stone trimming, was one hundred twenty feet long and four stories high. A seventy-five foot tower surmounted the central section. Ceremonies opening the new asylum occurred in April, 1876, when seven Sisters and thirty-nine boys came from Rensselaer to take possession. They found spacious dormitories on the third and fourth floors, steam heat, and an excellent dairy. For support the asylum relied upon the annual collection in the churches of the diocese and the income from the dairy and farm.¹³²

Three years before the Sisters of Mercy began their ministrations of charity in Chicago, the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul from Emmitsburg had arrived in Milwaukee. On July 15, 1846, three Sisters, Sisters Mary Simeon, Mary Paul, and Frances Agnes, "guided by Father Kundig, started out for

¹³¹ Bishop of Fort Wayne, 1872 to 1893.

¹³² Blanchard, History of Catholic Church in Indiana, I, 609-610. The girls were kept at Rensselaer until 1887 when they were transferred to Bishop's Dwenger's new asylum in Fort Wayne in charge of the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ. Our Provinces: Centenary Chronicles of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, 1841-1941, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1941, 84.

what was then justly styled a 'foreign mission,' a perilous journey bound for the City of Milwaukee."¹³³ Bishop John Henni's letter requesting Sisters for Milwaukee was made three years previous to the admission of Wisconsin into the Union.¹³⁴ A copy of the Bishop's letter, dated January 1, 1845, is preserved in the Marillac Seminary Archives in St. Louis. Its straightforward, earnest, and sincere tone is worthy of note. In part, it reads:

You will kindly permit me to approach you with a petition which has occupied my mind, since the very day of my appointment to the new See of Milwaukee--the petition to send to me, two or three of the Sisters of your Community. True, I am as yet poor--poor in everything about me; still, I believe myself tolerably prepared to receive and keep them decently,--moreover, I shall indeed always be ready to divide with the Sisters the last morsel of bread I have. The time is not far off, when we want a Hospital at this part, and before all, Asylums for poor orphans.¹³⁵

As indicated above, the request was granted. A long journey of five weeks intervened before the Sisters reached Milwaukee on August 20, for "distance had not yet been annihilated by steam nor electricity." They traveled by stage from Emmitsburg to Baltimore, from Baltimore to Buffalo; at Buffalo, they embarked a sailing vessel bound for Milwaukee. Once in Milwaukee, they went directly from Higby's Pier to the Cathedral and to St. Peter's Church to spend some moments "in silent prayer--prayer, no doubt, of thanksgiving for

133 Marillac Seminary Archives, St. Louis.

134 The Diocese of Milwaukee was created in 1843. The Most Reverend John Henni became the first Bishop in 1844.

135 Marillac Seminary Archives.

their safe journey, and of petition for blessings on their new field of labor." ¹³⁶

Warmly welcomed by the Bishop at his residence, His Excellency conducted them to their temporary home at 595 Jefferson Street. It was a small frame house, one and one-half stories high, the property of one of Milwaukee's first converts, Mr. Frank Putnam. Six wooden chairs and a small rocker were scattered around the rooms; two tables, one used for both dining room and kitchen purposes, the other "served the honorable duty of holding a small oil lamp," completed the downstairs furniture. A school was opened on August 31, ¹³⁷ 1846.

Almost two years later, on May 9, 1848, Bishop Henni, bearing a small bundle, entered the Sisters' dwelling. His Excellency usually "remarkably graceful" seemed on this occasion to be "just as remarkably awkward." The Sisters removed the shawl and found a little girl. Bishop Henni had come from the death-beds of a father and mother, "whose last moments were consoled by his assurance that their baby would be well taken care of by the good Sisters of Charity." Mr. and Mrs. Coffey had arrived a few days before from Ireland, but were stricken with smallpox on their arrival in Milwaukee where both died within a few hours of each other. This little girl, Kate Coffey, was the nucleus of the present St. Rose's Orphanage. ¹³⁸

136 Ibid.

137 Ibid.

138 Ibid. When Kate Coffey grew to womanhood, she became a Sister of Charity and received the name of Sister Martha. At one time she was sent to Milwaukee to teach, but died in Richmond, Virginia.

Reverend Peter Leo Johnson, the author of Daughters of Charity in Milwaukee, discredits the incident in which Bishop Henni is associated with the bringing of little Kate to the Sisters. According to Father Johnson, the prelate was abroad most of the year, returning to Milwaukee only on May 26, 1849. The Bishop shortly after paid a visit to the Sisters' convent for the purpose of arranging for the temporary care of a sick orphan boy that was carried by some person accompanying the Bishop. The child's parents, immigrants from Germany, had fallen victims to smallpox. Although they generally accepted only girls, Sister Simeon took the boy who died in a day or two. Father Johnson states that to the Reverend Peter McLaughlin, rector of the Cathedral, 1846-1849, "goes the credit for the real opening of St. Rose's Orphanage. On May 9, 1848, he precipitated this event by appearing at the Sisters' residence on Van Buren Street with a four-year-old girl, Katie Colfer, both of whose parents had died of typhus some weeks previous." This first orphan, Father states, returned to Milwaukee in 1862 as Sister Martha.¹³⁹

The Sisters remained in the cottage for only a short time; between 1847 and 1853, the convent was located on North Van Buren Street, and it was at this site that the orphanage was formally opened with a religious ceremony sometime between May 26 and October 15, 1849. This combination school and convent on the Cathedral block was a frame structure consisting of a two-story central section, the Sisters' home, and two one-story wings, the school rooms, chapel, and dormitories. In 1849, 1850, and again in 1854, Asiatic cholera

¹³⁹ Peter Leo Johnson, Daughters of Charity in Milwaukee, 1846-1946, Milwaukee, 1946, 139-140.

was rampant in Milwaukee. Because larger quarters became a necessity, St. Rose's was transferred to a two-story brick building north of the Cathedral on Jackson Street where it remained from 1853 until 1888.¹⁴⁰

The number of orphans always increased as a result of "classical destroyers as epidemics, disasters, and wars." The sinking of the steamer Lady Elgin, September 8, 1860, brought many orphans to St. Rose's. Out of the total of five hundred seventy-five parentless children enrolled between 1861 and 1865, one-fourth of them were daughters of soldiers.¹⁴¹ To relieve the overcrowded conditions, a junior branch of St. Rose's known as St. Joseph's was begun. In 1882, both St. Rose's and St. Joseph's were made archdiocesan institutions. The archdiocese then became responsible for the support of the homes, thus making them no longer solely dependent upon such sources as dues of charitable societies, donations, and soliciting tours by the Sisters.¹⁴²

The congregation of Sisters destined to assume charge eventually of the second orphanage in Milwaukee, St. Aemilian's, arrived in the city the same year that the Sisters of Charity received their first charges at St. Rose's. Fourteen tertiaries left Bremen via the steamer Hermann for New York. After their arrival in Milwaukee in May, 1849, they secured four acres of land

140 Ibid., 10, 139-141.

141 Ibid., 158.

142 Ibid., 139, 145. Records in the Emmitsburg Archives on St. Rose's Asylum state that after the Civil War, the City of Milwaukee gave three acres of land at North Point; the smaller girls were domiciled there. In 1888 St. Rose's and St. Joseph's merged in an asylum located at North and Lake Avenues.

about four miles south of the city. Some log cabins on the premises served as a home until the first convent was built that fall. The investiture of the tertiaries took place in 1850. In their rule, approved by Bishop Henni, they were exhorted to be "persuaded that whatever they did through love of their Heavenly Spouse, for the poor Orphan, . . . would be acceptable to Him as if they had done it to Himself." The care of orphans was a burden weighing heavily on priests and bishops in every diocese, hence, in the "matter of finding an appropriate scope of activity for the community, Father Heiss did not deliberate long. He urged that the diocesan orphanage for boys be transferred from the city to a site near the convent and placed under the direction of the sisters." Although highly advocated, the plan did not materialize until in 1854.

143

The direct predecessor of St. Aemilian's was a small frame house on Jackson Street north of the Cathedral rented by Bishop Henni for orphan boys. This home begun in 1849 was at first directed by lay women and later by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Bishop Henni often provided food, clothing, and bedding. Clergy and faithful lent it generous support. The St. Jerome Aemilian Society of Orphans was organized in 1850. The pastors of St. Mary's Church assumed the responsibility for educating the orphan boys by permitting them to attend the parochial school free of charge. The first home was destroyed by fire and in 1851 a two-story building was erected. Before long the

143 Sister M. Mileta Ludwig, A Chapter of Franciscan History: The Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Francis of Perpetual Adoration, 1848-1949, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 1950, xi, 48, 54, 66-67.

latter became overcrowded. In 1854, St. Aemilian's was moved outside the city near the convent of the Sisters of St. Francis, who then assumed charge of the orphan boys. In the spring of 1855, the interior of the building remained to be finished. Through the carelessness of a carpenter melting his glue, fire broke out and all but the four walls were destroyed. The Catholics of Milwaukee raised the funds necessary for rebuilding within a few weeks.¹⁴⁴

The Catholic Almanac for 1856 gives the following account of St. Aemilian's in the country place known as Nojoshing, Wisconsin:

This institution has lately been transferred from the city of Milwaukee to this more retired place, where a spacious brick building has been recently erected for the benefit of male orphans, numbering 49, all under the vigilant direction and care of some benevolent Daughters of the third order of St. Francis Assisium.¹⁴⁵

Sister Aemilian was appointed the first directress of the orphanage at Nojoshing. The Sisters now had "employment that promised to endure," for an average of fifty to sixty boys were cared for yearly.¹⁴⁶

The Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin, was created in 1868. About a decade later, the Most Reverend Francis Xavier Krautbauer¹⁴⁷ was offered a splendid opportunity to secure a building for an orphan asylum. The Ursuline nuns who had an academy at the corner of Crooks Street and Webster Avenue desired to return to St. Louis and sold the house and most of the furniture to

144 Ibid., 68-69.

145 The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac and Laity's Directory, for the Year of Our Lord 1856, Baltimore, 1856, 209.

146 Ludwig, Franciscan History, 69.

147 Bishop of Green Bay, 1875 to 1885.

the diocese for an asylum. Bishop Krautbauer purchased the property on June 29, 1877. St. Joseph's Asylum was opened by the School Sisters of Notre Dame with six orphans. Four of them had already been cared for by Mother Caroline as diocesan charges for over two years. Within fifteen months, there were thirty-two in the home. In 1878, an unusual occurrence accrued to the benefit of St. Joseph's. Miss Gertrude Zens and Mr. Nicholas Zens, a sister and brother, requested permission to make their home at the asylum, desiring nothing but care while they lived. Both "orphans" died the following year, the man aged sixty-four and his sister, sixty-three. The money which they willed to St. Joseph's enabled the Sisters to liquidate the debt and to make necessary repairs. The asylum was otherwise supported by church collections, surplus revenues from cemeteries, and generous alms.¹⁴⁸

Some distance to the west of Green Bay, at Polonia, Portage County, in the western part of the diocese, an orphanage for Polish children was founded. This St. Clare Orphanage for boys, conducted by the Felician Sisters of the Franciscan Order, was opened in November, 1874. The home was intended mainly for parentless children of Polish descent. In 1875, the institution was destroyed by fire, but the Catholics of Polonia by many sacrifices rebuilt the home. A second disaster attended St. Clare's when the new building burned to the ground. Again a new orphanage arose, which fact is surely a tribute to the contributors' love for the orphan.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Harry H. Heming, The Catholic Church in Wisconsin: A History of the Catholic Church in Wisconsin from the Earliest Time to the Present Day, Milwaukee, 1895-1898, p. 980.

¹⁴⁹ Questionnaire.

Two additional asylums remain to complete the history of the orphan homes along the long stretch of country from Lake Ontario to Lake Superior. These were located on the south shore of Lake Superior in Upper Michigan--one at Marquette, the other at Baraga to the west of Keweenaw Bay. The Marquette Diocese came into existence in 1857, but no orphan asylum was founded in this land hallowed by Jesuit missionaries until 1879 when St. Joseph's Asylum was opened in Marquette. Annual collections were made throughout the diocese to maintain this home for orphan girls. The Sisters of St. Joseph conducted St. Joseph's in Marquette, as well as St. Joseph's in Baraga. The latter was founded in 1881 by the Reverend Gerhard Terhorst for the orphan boys of the diocese. As might be expected, the home cared for a number of homeless Indian children.¹⁵⁰

CHAPTER VII

SPREADING INTO THE GREAT PLAINS

Less than a score of years after Lewis and Clark made their famous expedition, the settlement from which they started was already showing indications of becoming a great metropolis. The spot became the hub from which radiated, not only exploring routes, but spiritual activities, as well. St. Louis and the vast expanse that lay to the west had been under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Sees of Quebec, Santiago de Cuba, Havana, and of Louisiana and the Floridas successively. It eventually became the first diocese on the eastern edge of the Great Plains, the "first step toward that culmination being taken by the arrival there on January 5, 1818, of the Right Reverend Louis William Valentine DuBourg, third Bishop of Louisiana and the Floridas." Although the Episcopal See was New Orleans, "circumstances made it advisable for him to fix his residence for the moment in the northern city."¹

Bishop DuBourg, whom Father Garraghan names the "first great builder of Catholicism in the trans-Mississippi West," left St. Louis for New Orleans in 1821. When opposition to him developed, Bishop DuBourg went to Europe to tender his resignation, which was accepted at Rome on July 2, 1826. The same

¹ Gilbert J. Garraghan, S. J., Chapters in Frontier History: Research Studies in the Making of the West, Milwaukee, 1934, 175, 178.

day the Dioceses of St. Louis and New Orleans were created to replace that of the large Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas. The Diocese of St. Louis comprised the entire upper section of the Louisiana Purchase above Louisiana.² When the Territories of Mississippi and Alabama were erected into a Vicariate-Apostolic, the Reverend Joseph Rosati was appointed Vicar General with the title of Bishop of Tenegra in partibus infidelium. By an Apostolic Brief of March 20, 1827, Father Rosati was transferred from the titular See of Tenegra to the newly-created See of St. Louis.³

It was not long until three religious communities were engaged in orphan care in this frontier diocese. In the order of their first foundations, these were the Religious of the Sacred Heart, the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul from Emmitsburg, and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet.

The Religious of the Sacred Heart had already instituted the education of girls and young women in their academy in St. Louis, when "an interesting realty transfer, unique of its kind" was made by Mr. John Mullanphy, a noted philanthropist of the city of St. Louis. Mr. Mullanphy made a grant, in 1827, of a tract of farm land containing slightly over twenty acres, lying beyond Couteau's Creek "on the confines of the wilderness." The donor did not convey the property outright but leased it to the Religious of the Sacred

2 Ibid., 175, 180-181. The reader may recall that the Diocese of New Orleans was created in 1793 and placed under Spanish Bishops. However, in 1809, the diocese became a part of Bishop John Carroll's diocese of Baltimore, under whose jurisdiction it remained until erected again into a separate diocese in 1826.

3 Frederick John Easterly, The Life of Right Reverend Joseph Rosati, C. M., First Bishop of St. Louis, 1789-1843, The Catholic University of America Studies in American Church History, XXXIII, Washington, 1942, 65, 97.

Heart for nine hundred ninety-nine years in consideration of one dollar. The lease specified that the Religious

shall occupy said premises as a convent, and shall therein board, lodge, clothe and provide for and educate all such indigent female children who are orphans, or whose parents are both indigent and helpless, not exceeding the number of twenty at any one time, as shall be designated by said Mullanphy during his life, and after his death, by female descendants or the Catholic bishop of the diocese.⁴

The contract further stipulated that Mr. Mullanphy's female heirs or the Bishop of St. Louis should pay the Religious of the Sacred Heart ten dollars at the time of an orphan's admission, and also five dollars annually for each child, as long as such child remained in the home. In order to prevent orphans from "being educated above their station," Mr. Mullanphy required that they go barefoot in summer, "at least the smaller ones," and that they be given no tea nor coffee, and that they eat corn bread and not that made from wheat flour.⁵

On May 2, 1827, Mother Philippine Duchesne, Mother Mary Ann O'Connor, and three or four orphans from Florissant, took up their abode in the large empty house on the Mullanphy grant. The first night there was "a terrifying ordeal." A wild cat had found its way to the garret of the house where it "cavorted about in the darkness and filled the air with dreadful discord." A certain Father Saulnier in St. Louis, hearing of the poverty of the new

⁴ Louise Callan, The Society of the Sacred Heart in North America, with an Introduction by Reverend Gilbert J. Garraghan, S. J., New York, 1937, 198.

⁵ Ibid., 198-199.

foundation, sent a cow, a supply of vegetables, and a carload of furniture from St. Louis College temporarily closed.⁶

The first orphan children presented by the founder were Marie Laberge and two girls whose name was McMamus; these remained in the asylum seven, eight, and eleven years respectively. Between 1827 and 1833, Mr. Mullanphy, himself, placed twenty-five children in the home. For a time after his death, Bishop Rosati paid the entrance fees and the annual sum due for each child in accordance with the original agreement. In 1853, the obligation of the Mullanphy family to contribute to the support of the orphans in the asylum was cancelled by a donation of an unimproved piece of property given to the Society of the Sacred Heart. However, the admission of children into the home remained in the hands of Mr. Mullanphy's daughters as long as they lived. The regulation in regard to the number twenty was never strictly observed. During the cholera epidemics, as well as, during the Civil War the number sometimes reached forty.⁷

On June 23, 1828, Bishop Rosati informed Father Bruté at Emmitsburg that Mr. Mullanphy had offered land in St. Louis as a site for a hospital and two houses for an endowment. The rent from the houses was expected to amount to six hundred dollars a year. Mr. Mullanphy further offered to give one hundred fifty dollars as traveling expenses if the Sisters of Charity could be

6 Ibid., 199-200.

7 Ibid., 200-201. Apparently the only name by which the home was known was the Mullanphy Orphan Asylum. Since the Society of the Sacred Heart was founded principally for the education of young women, work with the orphans was discontinued following the establishment of other asylums in St. Louis.

induced to begin a hospital in St. Louis. In August, Bishop Rosati was happy to report to Mr. Mullanphy that a favorable reply had been received from Emmitsburg.⁸ There were four Sisters in the original group that left Emmitsburg for St. Louis. This brief statement recounts the departure: "Our Sisters left St. Joseph's, October 15, 1828, five minutes before five in the morning to take the stage in Frederick Town, Maryland, and great were the difficulties they had to encounter ere they reached their destination." Their route led through Cumberland, Louisville, and Vincennes. On November 5, they reached St. Louis, where before the close of the year the Sisters opened the Mullanphy Hospital, the oldest west of the Mississippi River. It was located on a plot of ground at Fourth and Spruce Streets donated by Mr. Mullanphy to Bishop Rosati.⁹

On December 6, 1831, Bishop Rosati blessed the new hospital and Chapel located at Fourth and Spruce Streets. Later that same month, Mr. Mullanphy bought a lot and two houses adjoining the hospital. This property was given to the Sisters who were to use one of the houses for orphan boys. According to the Reverend John Ernest Rothensteiner, a certain Dr. Fiffin gave the Sisters a lot in Carondelet, which was to be set aside for a place of recuperation for the sick and convalescent members of the community.¹⁰

⁸ John Ernest Rothensteiner, History of the Archdiocese of St. Louis: In Its Various Stages of Development from A. D. 1673 to A. D. 1928, I, St. Louis, 1928, 447.

⁹ Marillac Seminary Archives.

¹⁰ Rothensteiner, Archdiocese of St. Louis, 448.

Carondelet was not then within the corporate limits of the city of St. Louis; however, "the social and municipal interests of the two towns were so intimately associated that they were always considered as one in all, except in name."¹¹ The site on an elevation above the Mississippi River is described by Sister Lucida Savage in the following passage:

On the high ground above the village was the log church of our Lady of Mount Carmel erected in 1818, of which Felix de Andreis had placed the first post. Near it was the two-room rectory; and beyond the small graveyard adjoining the church lot on the south, stood the log cottage built in 1833 for the Sisters of Charity and their orphan boys.¹²

The historical data as recorded in the Emmitsburg records indicates that this Boys' Asylum was opened on February 11, 1832, under the superiorship of Sister Elizabeth Dolan. During the first year, forty-six orphans were cared for at "Vide Poche" or Carondelet. In 1835, the Boys' Asylum was moved into the city to Third Street between Market and Walnut Streets.¹³ This is apparently the site to which Father Rothensteiner refers when he writes that in 1834 "Bishop Rosati gave to this most charitable Sisterhood a small house on Third and Walnut Streets." According to the same author, this "the first Catholic Orphan Home of the West, stood within the church block, west of the Cathedral." Funds for the benefit of the proposed orphanage were raised during

11 Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet Archives, St. Louis. From a manuscript of Sister Monica Corrigan written in the year 1890.

12 Savage, Congregation of St. Joseph, 45.

13 Emmitsburg Archives. Carondelet, located five and one-half miles south of St. Louis, was a Spanish town prior to 1803. By 1836, its character was decidedly French. Settlers there were less prosperous than their neighbors; this gave rise to its name Vide Poche (empty pocket).

a three-day Fair and Festival held in June, 1834, at the National Hotel by prominent young women in the city.¹⁴ The cornerstone of the new edifice, known thereafter as St. Joseph's Male Orphan Asylum, was laid on May 11, 1835. A collection amounting to over three hundred dollars was taken up at the occasion. The following year, on July 22, five Sisters of Charity together with thirty-five orphan boys transferred from Carondelet to the new home. Carondelet was placed under the care of the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1836.¹⁵

St. Louis was the first permanent foundation in America of the Sisters of St. Joseph founded by the Reverend John P. Medaille, S. J., in Le Puy, France, on October 15, 1650. The new community included among its charitable works "the service of hospitals, the education and direction of orphans, and the visiting of the sick and poor." It is interesting to note that none of the six original members could read or write; therefore, many years passed before education became a leading work of the community. In 1836, in answer to an invitation of Bishop Rosati, Mother St. John Fontbonne, the superior at Monistrol in the diocese of Le Puy, "undertook the planning of a mission in America."¹⁶ The first home of the Sisters of St. Joseph in St. Louis was the

14 Rothensteiner, Archdiocese of St. Louis, 449, 451.

15 Carondelet Archives. One of the pioneers at St. Joseph's was Sister Angela Hughes, a sister of Archbishop Hughes of New York.

16 Sister Helen Angela Hurley, On Good Ground: The Story of the Sisters of St. Joseph in St. Paul, Minneapolis, 1951, 6-7.

Father Rothensteiner points out that the first mission in America was at Cahokia where a school prospered for eight years. The house in Carondelet, which the Sisters of St. Joseph were to occupy upon their arrival in St. Louis, was the abode of two Sisters of Charity and a number of small orphan boys. Only when the new orphan asylum in St. Louis was completed, could the Sisters

"humble abode" left vacant by the Sisters of Charity and the orphan boys when they left Carondelet for St. Joseph's on Market and Walnut Streets in July, 1836. Sisters Delphine and Felicite' arrived on September 12, and one week later the convent school opened with twenty pupils. The first morning session was brief, since the pupils were dismissed for lack of seating equipment. The latter was promptly supplied when the pupils returned in the afternoon with boxes, stools and logs of wood. Before the end of October, four orphans had been brought to the Sisters. The following spring, the convent was enlarged by the addition of a second story, two small rooms, and broad porches on the river side overlooking the Mississippi River. The annalist adds that a "covering of rough weather-boards changed the status of the building from a log house to the more pretentious frame building." A fifth orphan came in the course of the year. Victoire Cherbonneau, the motherless daughter of a Rocky Mountain trapper, was placed with the Sisters. Soon after, the trapper was killed by Indians and the little girl remained with the Sisters for a number of years.¹⁷

Although resources were few, the Sisters "full of confidence in Divine Providence," opened their door to poor orphans, and "in this way laid the foundation of the first female Orphan Asylum of St. Louis." Sister Monica Corrigan felt that the arrangements made with the Religious of the Sacred Heart

of St. Joseph live in Carondelet. In 1836, two Sisters were sent from Cahokia to Carondelet. The overflow of the Mississippi River proved to be dangerous to the health of the Sisters. The great flood of 1844 spread "ruin and disaster all through the Mississippi bottom and forced the Sisters to take refuge in their establishment in Carondelet, never to return to Cahokia." Rothensteiner, Archdiocese of St. Louis, 635-636.

17 Savage, Congregation of St. Joseph, 45-46, 51, 101.

in 1827 for the care and education of twenty orphan girls "did not make their Institute in either character or intent an orphan asylum." Therefore, the girls' asylum opened in October, 1836, and conducted for twenty-five years as a special department of St. Joseph's Convent, "may be truly designated the first Female Orphan Asylum of St. Louis."¹⁸

As stated above, in 1846, the Sisters of St. Joseph took charge of St. Joseph's Asylum in St. Louis after its care was relinquished by the Sisters of Charity. The recurrence of plague visitations at mid-century left many more children parentless and homeless. Late in the summer of 1849, St. Joseph's was transferred from Market and Walnut Streets to Clark Avenue and Thirteenth Street. The number of boys had increased from eighty in the previous year to one hundred fifty.¹⁹

St. Vincent's German Orphan Asylum, also conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph, had its inception when the Germans of St. Louis made provisions for the care and maintenance of the orphans of the German parishes. In June, 1950, when the German St. Vincent's Orphan Society celebrated its centennial, a St. Louis newspaper wrote in tribute:

and so on June 12, 1850, the German Catholics of the community, realizing the necessity of caring for the children who were left homeless by the death of their parents, organized the society

18 Carondelet Archives.

19 Savage, Congregation of St. Joseph, 101. In a footnote on this page, the author states that in 1889 the Sisters of St. Joseph relinquished the care of St. Joseph's Asylum and its care passed to the Sisters of Christian Charity.

which is now completing a century of wonderful service in the Archdiocese of St. Louis.²⁰

A plot of ground was bought on Hogan Street between Cass Avenue and O'Fallon Street, and the cornerstone of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum was laid in September, 1850, by Archbishop Peter Richard Kenrick.²¹ Five Sisters of St. Joseph from Carondelet took possession of St. Vincent's on July 3, 1851. Sister Angela, as superior, and Sisters Adelaide, Febronia, Stanislaus, and Ignatius, formed the initial group "who animated with confidence in Divine Providence, and zeal to promote the Glory of God, in the Orphans to be committed to their care, resolved through the grace of God to devote their lives, and energies for this Glorious Object."²²

In the history of St. Vincent's hardships were plenty. The institution experienced its first great calamity in 1854 when another epidemic of cholera afflicted the city. Within a period of two weeks, one Sister and fourteen children fell victims to the "awful scourge," and there were "six little corpses in the house at one time." The building was enlarged to meet the demands of increasing numbers of orphan boys and girls, but unfortunately a disastrous fire destroyed the building on October 2, 1860. The conflagration occurred in the daytime, making it possible to take the children and some articles from the burning structure. The St. Vincent's Orphan Society immediately inaugurated a rebuilding program. The orphans enjoyed their new home

20 The St. Louis Register, June 9, 1950.

21 Ibid. Archbishop Kenrick governed the diocese from 1843 until 1895.

22 Carondelet Archives.

for but a few years when again a second fire, "more costly than the first," left destruction in its wake on October 28, 1867. Once more St. Vincent's arose from the ashes to provide a home for the German orphans of St. Louis.²³

In 1859, Mother Saint John Facemaz made arrangements for the opening of St. Bridget's Half-Orphan Asylum in St. Louis. To this asylum, located at Twenty-sixth and Cristy Streets, the orphan girls were brought from St. Vincent's on October 6, 1860. Mother Agatha Guthrie, from Carondelet, became the first superior.²⁴

Two other institutions, St. Mary's Female Orphan Asylum and St. Philomena's, both conducted by the Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg come within the range of this study. As early as 1837, Bishop Rosati had taken steps to provide an asylum for the orphan girls of the city. However, it was not until 1842 that through the generosity of Mrs. Anna Biddle, daughter of John Mullanphy, that Coadjutor Bishop Kenrick could invite the Sisters of Charity to open a home. At that time Mrs. Biddle "kindly tendered the use of her own mansion at Broadway and Ashley, and donated the lot on Tenth and Biddle Streets, then a beautiful eminence on the outskirts of the city, for the erection of a suitable building for girls."²⁵

23 The St. Louis Register, June 9, 1950. The Sisters of St. Joseph continued to manage the affairs of the asylum until December 31, 1888, when they resigned and the care of St. Vincent's was undertaken by the Sisters of Christian Charity. Carondelet Archives.

24 Carondelet Archives.

25 Marillac Seminary Archives.

The Council at Emmitsburg approved the acceptance of a new mission and in April, 1843, sent Sisters Benedicta Parsons, Mary Elizabeth McGowan, and Mary Columba Long, who took possession of the residence on May 1. To the Biddle residence, renamed St. Mary's Asylum, the Sisters brought twelve orphan girls on May 12 from the Mullanphy Hospital founded some fifteen years earlier.²⁶

In a letter written the last day of May, Sister Benedicta expressed a lively satisfaction in the new work undertaken:

I never was more pleased with a place, and I wish no higher nor holier employment the rest of my life, than the care of the orphans. . . . We took possession of our house on the first of May; we prepared everything, for we entered an entirely empty house. On the twelfth instant we brought in our twelve orphans from the hospital, and on the twentieth, we had twenty orphans, and we had Mass in our house for the first time. . . . I got a sweet little altar made, worth forty dollars, but the gentlemen made fifteen dollars of it a donation, and the painter charged nothing, though he put a good deal of gilding about it. . . . We have had the whole house cleaned and whitewashed since here, and she [Mrs. Biddle] has paid for it; and she has sent many pieces of furniture, besides money to buy bedding. . . . We have received near two hundred yards of calico for the orphans, among other things. We have now twenty-three orphans, and we have daily applications; we could have fifty in a few weeks.²⁷

While the Sisters and orphans were in Mrs. Biddle's home, the erection of the center or main building of a new asylum, a structure seventy-five by fifty-five feet, three stories high, was commenced at Tenth and Biddle Streets. The new asylum was not yet completed when Mrs. Biddle requested the Sisters to vacate the dwelling in order that she might offer it to the

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid. Letter from Sister Benedicta Parsons to the Very Reverend Louis R. Deluol, St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, May 31, 1843. (Original in the Emmitsburg Archives.)

Visitation Nuns who had been driven from their home in Kaskaskia by the flood of 1844. The Sisters of Charity found a temporary home for their orphans until 1845 when the main portion of the new asylum was ready for occupancy. In January of that year, the Sisters, with forty-five orphans and accompanied by "some pious ladies," formed a procession and walked to their new home. A year or two later a wing was added to the main building and one hundred fifty orphans were given a home in St. Mary's. Soon another addition became necessary and the second wing was erected. It is worthy of note that when cholera visited the city in 1849 only two orphans were seized with the dread disease and one died.²⁸

The institution was supported chiefly by collections of the Orphans' Aid Society, donations from wealthier citizens of St. Louis, charitable bequests, and the Calvary Cemetery Board. In addition, the Sisters on various occasions solicited funds from the citizens of St. Louis.²⁹

Orphan girls were kept at St. Mary's until their twelfth or fourteenth year when they were sent to St. Philomena's Industrial School. The latter, forming a kind of adjunct to St. Mary's, was opened about 1844 on the southwest corner of Fifth and Walnut Streets. Owing to the "encroachments of trade," the site shortly became unsuitable and Archbishop Kenrick gave the Sisters of Charity a lot on the northwest corner of Summit and Clark Avenues. A handsome brick structure, three stories high consisting of a large main

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid. Two other locations are cited for St. Mary's: In 1854 the asylum was removed to Clark Avenue and Fifteenth Street, and later to Emerson and Harney. Apparently no history at these locations is extant.

building and two wings, was completed in 1868. The property on Fifth Street was sold for seventy-eight thousand dollars. The orphans at St. Philomena's received an education in domestic arts and Scharf states that "some of the finest sewing done in the city is the handiwork of the Sisters and of their pupils in the sewing classes."³⁰

The Catholic Almanac for the year 1839 lists an orphan asylum in Bethlehem, Missouri, conducted by the Sisters of Loretto and one at Kaskaskia, Illinois, in charge of the Visitation Nuns.³¹ The foundation at Bethlehem, opened in 1823 and closed in 1847, was primarily a school. The Reverend Charles Nerinckx, the founder of the Sisters of Loretto, "rejoiced at the opening of this school because we had as many orphans as other pupils there." On account of the large number of orphans, the school has often been referred to erroneously as an institution for orphans only.³²

Bishop Rosati was ever impressed with the education of youth. This inspired the prelate to invite the Sisters of the Visitation to come into his diocese to "introduce the splendid work which they had accomplished with so much success at Georgetown in the District of Columbia." Since the means of

³⁰ John Thomas Scharf, History of St. Louis City and County, from the Earliest Periods to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Representative Men, I, Philadelphia, 1883, 884.

³¹ The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac, and Laity's Directory for the Year of Our Lord 1839, Baltimore, 1839, 146.

³² Letter from the Loretto Motherhouse, Loretto, Nerinx P. O., Kentucky, March 9, 1953.

education had been provided quite well in St. Louis, Bishop Rosati suggested that the community begin a school at Kaskaskia in Illinois.³³

The Visitandines accepted the invitation; in 1833, they arrived in Kaskaskia, which settlement Father Rothensteiner asserts "deserves to be called the cradle of Western civilization." Yet by this date, Kaskaskia was but "a shadow of its former self." War, earthquakes, and floods had done their worst in the area. Extremely slow progress was made in erecting a building for the Sisters. The Sisters of the Visitation, devoted more to a contemplative life than an active one, became apprehensive of their new situation. A mounting debt and an insufficient number of Sisters for the academy and the orphan asylum prompted the Visitandines to express their desire to return to Georgetown. However, by 1839, the institution had arisen "to a high degree of efficiency," and the prediction of Father Benedict Roux, pastor at Kaskaskia, that the "convent and Academy of the Visitation would by its celebrity, immortalize Kaskaskia," seemed about to be fulfilled. Such a distinction was not in the designs of God, for the great flood of 1844 "toll[ed] the death-knoll of the Visitation Convent of Kaskaskia."³⁴ The reader will recall that it was on this occasion that Mrs. Anna Biddle gave her home in St. Louis, occupied for some time by the Sisters of Charity and the orphans, to the Nuns of the Visitation.

On May 6, 1833, the Diocese of Vincennes, the thirteenth in the United States, was erected. It comprised all of Indiana and the eastern part of Illinois, territory hallowed by the missionary activities of Father Pierre

33 Easterly, Life of Right Reverend Joseph Rosati, 149.

34 Rothensteiner, Archdiocese of St. Louis, 627-633.

Gibault and Father David Flaget.³⁵ Two orphan asylums developed in Vincennes, St. Ann's for girls and St. Vincent's for boys.

The Most Reverend John Bazin, third Bishop of Vincennes, seeing the necessity of an orphan home in his diocese, applied to Mother Theodore Guerin³⁶ in nearby Terre Haute, Indiana, for Sisters to take charge. Mother Theodore was "happy to cooperate in the good work" and appointed a number of the Sisters of Providence for the mission at Vincennes. Bishop Bazin set as a date in the summer of 1848 the opening of what was known for a number of years as the Girls' Orphan Asylum. The Bishop did not live to witness the realization of his plan, for he was called in death after governing the diocese only six months, from October, 1847, to April, 1848. Work on the orphanage proceeded after the consecration of Bishop Maurice de St. Palais in January, 1849. The asylum opened August 28, 1849, in a building near the Vincennes Cathedral. The first orphan received was Maggie Dill who had been promised admittance by Bishop Bazin. Mother Theodore, intent upon her community assisting the Church to support homeless children, gave the services of the Sisters gratis.³⁷

The orphan girls remained in the same home until about the year 1863, when they were removed to a larger structure, the "college building," later

35 Blanchard, History of Catholic Church in Indiana, I, 42-43, 49. The first Bishop was the saintly Simon Gabriel Bruté, 1834-1839.

36 Founded St. Mary-of-the-Woods, Terre Haute, Indiana, in 1840, and was the first Superior General of the Sisters of Providence in the United States.

37 Reverend H. Alerding, A History of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Vincennes, Indianapolis, 1883, 617-618.

known as St. Rose's Academy. It was at this time that the asylum was designated as St. Ann's. In 1876, its location was changed again; this time it was removed from Vincennes to Terre Haute where the Sisters and orphans took possession of a vacant hospital building.³⁸

Bishop St. Palais established the boys' asylum on July 1, 1850. The orphan boys were placed under the care of several seculars until April, 1851, at which time Mother Theodore sent Sisters "with the same understanding and for the girls' asylum." The initial home was the college building, mentioned above, later used for the orphan girls. After some years, Bishop St. Palais decided that a country location would be preferable for the boys' home. Accordingly, the latter was moved to Highland, a farm three miles from Vincennes. The property had been purchased by Bishop Celestine de la Hallandière, second bishop of Vincennes. The Bishop built a large attractive frame house on the land, but resigned before completing the improvements. Bishop St. Palais cleared the farm land, fenced a portion of it, and planted an orchard. The Highland house served as a seminary for a short time. In August, 1860, the boys' asylum was removed there and the land put under cultivation. A larger and more beautiful structure was completed in 1864, and in an impressive ceremony was placed under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul, to whom the Bishop was deeply devoted. The home was frequently crowded to capacity so that numbers of boys were placed with good families or adopted by them.³⁹

38 Ibid., 618.

39 Ibid., 619-620.

Catholics in western Illinois received spiritual ministrations from priests sent from St. Louis, since by a Bull of Pope Gregory XVI, 1834, that part of the state was attached to the Diocese of St. Louis. Had this area been incorporated in the Diocese of Vincennes, missionaries would have had a two-hundred-mile journey to settlements in western Illinois.⁴⁰ Several orphan homes of the boarding school-convent type grew up in this area of scattered population.

When the Black Hawk War ended in 1832, the country just south of Galena was opened to immigration and the necessity of providing for the Catholic inhabitants arose. In July, 1832, Father Charles Quickenborne, S. J., came from St. Louis to spend a few days at Dubuque and Galena "in order to make arrangements for the development of the religious possibilities of both places." One year later the Catholics living at the Dubuque mines held a meeting in which it was resolved: "That, as it is the general wish that a Catholic Church be built in this vicinity, the permit shall be obtained in the name of the Right Rev. De. Rosati, Bishop of St. Louis." The Third Provincial Council of Baltimore, 1837, at the request of Bishop Rosati, petitioned the Holy Father to erect Dubuque, Iowa, into an Episcopal See. In an Apostolic Brief of July 28, 1837, the area in the Territory of Wisconsin between the Mississippi River and the Missouri River was designated as the new Diocese of Dubuque.⁴¹

40 Rothensteiner, Archdiocese of St. Louis, 444.

41 Ibid., 537, 543, 599.

The Catholic Almanac for 1852 lists a St. Joseph's Female Orphan Asylum at Galena, Illinois, together with the statement that "orphan children, but few in number, are now kept at the Convent, under the direction of the sisters, till they can be more suitably provided for."⁴² The Sisters of Mercy from Dubuque conducted a boarding school at Galena at that time. Never were there more than a small number provided for here, and as other homes better equipped for such a service were founded, the children were transferred.⁴³

A St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum, conducted by the Sisters of Mercy in Ottawa, Illinois, is recorded in the 1867 issue of The Catholic Almanac.⁴⁴ The institution incorporated under the title of St. Joseph's Academy and Orphan Asylum was established "with the intention of founding an asylum at a later date." However, this object never saw fulfillment, for only the girls' academy became a reality.⁴⁵

Before the Diocese of Quincy was erected in 1853,⁴⁶ an orphan society had been organized in that city for the purpose of placing orphans left parentless by the ravages of cholera in the homes of good families. In 1851, at the suggestion of the "illustrious Father S. J. Weniger,"⁴⁷ who gave a mission at

42 The Catholic Almanac, 1852, 144. (Title page missing in volume.)

43 Questionnaire.

44 Sadlier's Catholic Almanac and Ordo, 1867, 136.

45 Questionnaire.

46 The Episcopal See was transferred to Alton in 1857, with the appointment of Reverend Henry Damian Juncker as first Bishop of Alton.

47 Also spelled "Weninger."

St. Boniface Church in Quincy that fall, the St. Aloysius Orphan Society was formed. It was in Quincy also, in 1860, that the first orphan asylum of the diocese was built. This home, known as St. Aloysius Orphan Asylum, was placed in charge of the School Sisters of Notre Dame from Milwaukee. Two other small short-lived asylums complete the trio of early orphan homes. In 1879, the Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood, of Ruma, Illinois, accepted the invitation to conduct the Pio Nono Orphan Asylum in Piopolis, Illinois. About the same time the St. Agnes Orphan Asylum was founded in Belleville, Illinois, with the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, Springfield, Illinois, assuming care of the orphans.⁴⁸

Soon after the consecration of the Most Reverend Peter Joseph Baltes as Bishop of Alton, in 1870, a movement began to consolidate the scattered institutions of child care existing in the diocese. On April 11, 1883, Bishop Baltes purchased the James H. Lea residence located directly opposite the Cathedral of Ss. Peter and Paul in Alton on what is today known as Prospect Street. The two-story structure was converted into an orphanage with very little alteration and named the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum of Alton.⁴⁹ The Sisters Adorers of the Most Precious Blood, of Ruma, were asked to take charge of the new asylum. On June 9, 1883, Mother Cecilia, the first superior,

48 Diocese of Springfield in Illinois: Diamond Jubilee History, 1853-1928, compiled and edited by Joseph J. Thompson, Springfield, Illinois, 1928, 573-574.

49 Sister Mary Elizabeth Utar, "A Study of the Program of the Catholic Children's Home, Alton, Illinois," Unpublished Thesis, St. Louis University, 1952, 5.

accompanied by Sisters Bridget, Mary Ann, Pauline, and Agnes, arrived in Alton. The orphans who formed the nucleus of the institution were received on June 21, when seven boys and girls came from Piopolis and eleven arrived from Quincy.⁵⁰

The St. Mary's German Orphan Asylum in Dubuque was founded by the Most Reverend John J. Hennessy,⁵¹ and staffed by the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Family. The community was founded at Herford, Germany, in 1864, under the direction of the Most Reverend Conrad Martin, Bishop of Paderborn. In 1875, the new Sisterhood was exiled by the "Bismarckian persecution" and came to the United States with a letter of introduction to present to Bishop Hennessy from Bishop Martin. The latter was at that time a prisoner in Fort Wesel because "of his fearless denunciation of the unjust measures of the Kulturkampf." From September 8, 1875, to December 17, 1878, the exiled Sisters "found a home and kind friends in Iowa City."⁵²

Upon the earnest request of Bishop Hennessy, Mother Mary Xavier Termehr, superior of the Sisters of St. Francis in Iowa City, moved her small congregation to Dubuque to take charge of an orphan asylum. The first home was an old stone parish church, Holy Trinity, on Eighth and White Streets. On October 5, 1879, the combined Motherhouse and orphan home was transferred to the Joshua Duncan home on Davis Avenue. The Duncan Estate was originally the residence of the Honorable Timothy Davis, United States Congressman, and

50 The Western Catholic, Quincy, Illinois, March 1, 1935.

51 Third Bishop of Dubuque, 1866 to 1893; Archbishop, 1893 to 1900.

52 Reverend Mathiaz Martin Hoffman, compiler and editor, Centennial History of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Dubuque, 1938, 609.

purchased by Bishop Hennessy for an asylum. This new home was made possible by the generosity of Mr. Senes Huegle and his wife, Scholastica, who bequeathed all their property to the Bishop of Dubuque to use as a foundation for an orphan asylum. The first child admitted at St. Mary's was Margaret Nies of Keokuk, Iowa, who later became Sister M. Leocadia. The first death recorded is that of Joseph Kapp who was fatally injured on November 21, 1881. Joseph, a survivor of the disastrous flood of July 4, 1876, in which his parents had lost their lives, had been admitted in August, 1879. The number of children increased steadily so that in August, 1884, the construction of a west wing was commenced.⁵³

The Sisters of Mercy, a "branch of the order from Davenport, established a house in Dubuque in 1879." The institution comprised three departments, an infirmary for the sick and aged, a House of Providence for homeless and unemployed girls, and an orphanage for the education and care of destitute children.⁵⁴

As the frontier moved westward and northward farther into the Great Plains, so did missionaries, pastors of pioneer churches, and Sisterhoods. Spiritual and charitable activities along the fringes of settlement reached into two additional areas. In each there developed several orphan asylums.

53 Ibid., 607, 611-613. The Sisters of St. Francis received orphans in their Convent in Iowa City as early as 1876. Ten children were brought along to Dubuque in December, 1878. Among these were Mary Brophy and Catherine Danby, who entered the community later and became known as Sister M. Clementia and Sister M. Angelina, respectively. Ibid., 611.

54 Sister Mary Eulalia Herron, The Sisters of Mercy in the United States, 1843-1928, New York, 1929, 276.

One location included a stretch along the Missouri River where such towns as Leavenworth, Omaha, Kansas City, and St. Joseph had sprung into existence; a second cluster of homes was found along the upper Mississippi River, mainly in the Twin Cities and in La Crosse.

The territory now included in the Dioceses of Kansas City, Missouri, Kansas City in Kansas, and Omaha was a part of the huge Diocese of St. Louis until Vicariates-Apostolic were established in the eighteen-fifties. In 1851, Nebraska and Kansas formed what was known as the "Vicariate Apostolic of the Territory East of the Rocky Mountains." The first Vicar Apostolic, and later Bishop, to exercise jurisdiction over this area was the Most Reverend John Baptist Miede, S. J. Father Miede had been ordained in Rome and had arrived in St. Louis in the fall of 1849. Two years later he was sent to govern the newly erected Vicariate of Leavenworth.⁵⁵

The beneficent work of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas, began in the Territory of Kansas before it was admitted into the family of States in 1861. However, Leavenworth, as a frontier post, had been of historic interest for a number of decades because of the fort from which the town took its name. The land west of the Missouri River was a wilderness when Colonel Henry Leavenworth set out from St. Louis in 1827 with instructions to build a military post on the east bank of the Missouri River, somewhere near the mouth of the Platte River. Colonel Leavenworth, contrary to orders, established a

⁵⁵ Reverend Michael Shine, The History of the Catholic Church in Nebraska. (Manuscript.) The Diocese of Leavenworth (now Kansas City in Kansas) was erected in 1877 three years after Bishop Miede had resigned his office.

fort on the west bank which later formed the nucleus around which grew a thriving frontier village.⁵⁶

The reader will recall the plight of the little group of Sisters of Charity in Nashville, Tennessee, who sold their property to repay creditors, and who when all obligations had been met, could claim a few orphans and nine dollars in currency. While a disposition was being made of the real estate and personal effects in the convent, Mother Xavier Ross resolved to seek for adoption elsewhere. A most opportune occasion arose when, in 1858, a Metropolitan Council was held in St. Louis, of which See Nashville and Leavenworth were both suffragans. Mother Xavier went to St. Louis to lay the whole case before Archbishop Kenrick, who assured her that he would place no obstacle in the way if a suffragan bishop wished to adopt the community.⁵⁷

Mother Xavier's hopes were heightened when, in an interview with Father Pierre Jean De Smet, the famous Jesuit missionary of the Rockies, she was advised to consult Bishop Miege who had made known his intention to attend the Council in St. Louis, and there secure Sisters to teach in Leavenworth. Therefore, great was Mother Xavier's joy when Bishop Miege assured her that the community was welcome to establish a new home in his Vicariate.⁵⁸

In Nashville, the little community was eagerly awaiting Mother Xavier's return. A novena had been made to the Queen of Heaven imploring her

⁵⁶ Facets: The Story of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth and of the Activities of the Diamond Jubilee Year, 1933-1934, Leavenworth, Kansas, 1934, 8.

⁵⁷ History of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, 44-45.

⁵⁸ Facets, 6.

to provide a new home for them. Mother Xavier hurried back to Nashville as soon as she had received the favorable answer from Bishop Miege. Her greeting to the anxious Sisters was "the Blessed Virgin has heard our prayers." Before taking the Sisters to Leavenworth, Mother Xavier went there to assure herself that the new location would be satisfactory for her congregation. Once in Leavenworth, Bishop Miege extended a hearty welcome to her and proudly showed the house intended for the Sisters' first convent, on Kickapoo Street, the former residence of the Bishop. In the annals, the latter is designated as "eight tiny bits of rooms." Filled with "courage and gratitude" she returned to Nashville where preparations were made for the transfer to Leavenworth.⁵⁹

By November 1, 1858, several Sisters and an orphan girl, Rosa Kelly, who "was no less a dauntless trouper than the members of the community," began their trip to the Kansas plains. The second group, five Sisters and three orphans, Kitty Moran, Mary Johnston, and Mary Killelay, departed from Nashville on the first of December. Mother Xavier and Sister Joanna remained in Nashville until the last day of January, 1859, to attend conscientiously to every detail before making the final departure.⁶⁰

The first orphan received by the Sisters after they were domiciled in the small home on Kickapoo Street was a "small blue-eyed damsel, three years old, Fannie Tolton by name." As time went on, more orphans applied for

59 Ibid., 7.

60 Gilmore, Come North!, 91-95, 102-107. Among the items which the Sisters brought to Kansas from Nashville was the small plaster statue of the Blessed Virgin, "dear to the Sisters because before it their successful novena had been made." Facets, 7. (The statue, now beautifully painted, occupies a hallowed niche in the Motherhouse at Leavenworth.)

admittance at the academy on Kickapoo Street and at St. John's Hospital, opened in March, 1864. A desire "very near and dear to the heart of Bishop Miege was that the Sisters of Leavenworth should have an orphan asylum." Hence, as the number of children increased, the Sisters and the members of the two Catholic congregations were impressed by the imperative need of a separate home. Plans were laid for a fair to raise funds. Non-Catholics as well as Catholics were "indefatigable in the good work." The community historian asserts that during the Civil War money was plentiful, and that all were "astonished when it [the fair] resulted in a sum exceeding seven thousand dollars." Lots were purchased immediately on Kickapoo Street opposite the academy and a two-story brick building, with a good basement, was ready for the orphans in less than a year. Thus was founded St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum of Leavenworth, the first orphanage west of the Missouri River.⁶¹

On the first page of a large Register at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, the following citation appears:

The St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum was established in the year of Our Lord 1866 by the Right Rev. J. B. Miege, S. J.

The immediate cause of founding this Asylum was that by the death of their parents several small children were left orphans and thus thrown on the cold charity of the world. The Catholic people of Leavenworth assisted by some of their non-Catholic friends procured the necessary means for the building of a small house situated in the city of Leavenworth on Kickapoo Street which served as a shelter to the orphans till 1885.⁶²

61 History of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, 111-113.

62 Archives, Motherhouse Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas, Register of Admissions. The Most Reverend Louis M. Fink, Bishop of Leavenworth from 1877 to 1904, purchased a site south of the city, known as Muncie land. The children were removed there in the spring of 1885.

In a letter dated January 14, 1867, Bishop Miege stated that the orphanage cost thirty-five thousand francs, and that a few days after it opened, twenty-three orphans were already in the home. The Bishop likewise mentions his having organized an association for the benefit of the orphans. The members were to pay twenty-five sous a month, and he hoped that upwards of one thousand beneficent souls would join.⁶³ Sister Stanislaus Bannon was the first superior assigned to St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum. Assisted by Sister Hildegard Butler, they set up a dressmaking establishment in the orphanage to raise funds to help support the orphans. A dress form stood in the window, "the sole advertisement of skill." The Sisters and orphan girls made rag rugs, patch quilts, and other articles from scraps of material that were donated.⁶⁴

Many interesting eventualities coeval with pioneer life have been recorded in the community annals. Sister Rufina Jullein, one of the original band who braved the early years in Kansas, relates that there was but one means of transportation to Leavenworth from where the Sisters and orphans lived. That sole conveyance was the town ambulance. The signal for the ambulance driver that the Sisters wished to go to town was a sheet hung from a window on the top floor of the orphanage.⁶⁵

63 Ibid. Original in French.

64 Gilmore, Come North!, 127.

65 Leavenworth Archives. Sister Rufina Jullein, a native of Kansas City, was still living in 1953, aged ninety-three years. Sister had recorded much of the early history of the community in Leavenworth. Mother Xavier Ross died on April 2, 1895, at the age of eighty-two. Shortly after her death, her brother, an "aged itinerant revivalist" came to Leavenworth, apparently unaware of the fact that the town had been the home of his sister for many years. The epitaph on the little white marker in the community cemetery met his gaze and

As far as records indicate, the first Mass celebrated in Omaha was in the early summer of 1855, four years after the area had been erected into the "Vicariate-Apostolic of the Territory East of the Rocky Mountains." On this occasion, the Reverend W. Emonds who came from St. Joseph, Missouri, gathered the faithful in Representative Hall in the old territorial capitol building. Two years later contracts were drawn up for a church. In 1859, the Reverend James O'Gorman was consecrated Titular Bishop of Raphanea and Vicar Apostolic of Nebraska by Bishop Kenrick of St. Louis. The Vicariate of Nebraska included the present states of Nebraska, Wyoming, eastern Montana and Dakota west of the Missouri River.⁶⁶

In 1864, the Right Reverend James O'Gorman applied to the Mother Superior of the Sisters of Mercy in Manchester, New Hampshire, for a small group of Sisters to be the nucleus of the order in Omaha. Eager to participate in missionary work, the Superiors in Manchester appointed Sisters for the Nebraska mission. It took months for them to reach Omaha. For seven or eight weeks, the Sisters remained in the Mercy Convent in Chicago waiting for transportation to bring them westward. A second extended delay occurred in St. Joseph, Missouri. Seven Sisters arrived in Omaha on October 21, 1864. They stepped from the conveyance at a point which is now Twenty-fourth Street and St. Mary's Avenue. At that time the spot had no name. Nothing met the gaze of the Sisters

led him to make inquiries. Connections with the Ross family had been severed many years before, when, as a young woman, Sister Xavier (Ann Ross) had become a member of the Catholic Church.

⁶⁶ The True Voice, Tenth Anniversary Edition, 1903-1913, December 5, 1913, Omaha, Nebraska.

"except the vast prairie and the bleak brick house which was to be the future convent home."⁶⁷

About a year after the Sisters arrived in Omaha, the Omaha World Herald proudly notified its readers that

Not less than twenty miles of the Pacific Road is completed already, and it will soon be the privilege of the people of the Platte Valley to hear the whistle of the locomotive and the ringing of the car bells, signals of the approach of the greatest enterprise of modern days.⁶⁸

John Rush, a vivacious pioneer, who came to Omaha from St. Louis in 1866, later penned recollections of the early days in Nebraska. At that time there were only four priests to assist the Vicar Apostolic in his ecclesiastical duties. He points out that in the promotion of advancement the Catholic Church invariably forms the vanguard, and states that if "a non-Catholic ever reads these records, he will pardon the writer for reminding him that the Catholic church has always been the pioneer in the work of civilization. This cannot be denied."⁶⁹

The first work entered into by the Sisters of Mercy in Omaha was education. The following statement appears in a history of Omaha:

Three acres of land were purchased and a boarding school for young ladies built by the Sisters of Mercy. This building stood on the north side of what was named, from the convent, St. Mary's Avenue.

67 Sister M. Madeleine Flaherty, Early Days of the Mercy Order in Omaha, Omaha, 1922, 1.

68 The World Herald, Omaha, Nebraska, November 10, 1865.

69 John Rush, A Pioneer's Reminiscences, Omaha, 1928, 23, 36.

The land was purchased from Harrison Johnson for \$150, and in 1887 it was sold for \$82,000.⁷⁰

St. James Orphanage, Omaha, conducted to this day by the Sisters of Mercy, had its origin in the early seventies when a man with two small children came to the old St. Mary's Convent and asked to speak to the superior. The man had come all the way from South Dakota to bring his children, left motherless three weeks before, to the Sisters. Although it "nearly broke his heart to part with them," he was compelled to do so, he explained, in order to make a living. The superior hesitated because the Sisters "really had no room." Further appeal settled the question; the superior called Sister Gabriel, a novice, and asked the latter to make the children as comfortable as circumstances permitted. That was the beginning of the first orphanage in Omaha.⁷¹

Another incident resulted in the erection of a separate building to house the orphans. One of the Sisters who had the duty of locking all exits in the evening, opened a door under a stairway. Sister started back with a scream, for under the stairs was "a poor little child about ten years old, with wild, frightened eyes, looking out." The "whole convent was alarmed," but when the child came from her hiding place, Sister M. Madeleine Flaherty, the author of the early history and an eye witness, recognized the girl as a child of the neighborhood. She was given supper and put to bed. The following morning the

⁷⁰ James W. Savage and John T. Bell, History of the City of Omaha, Chicago, 1894, 347.

⁷¹ Flaherty, Early Days of the Mercy Order in Omaha, 31.

newcomer explained that she had fled from her home to escape a promised whipping.⁷²

The problem of inadequate space for orphans needing care was discussed at every visit of Bishop O'Gorman to the convent. Very shortly after the above incident, the Sisters saw workmen in the back yard laying out a place for a small building. The Bishop had given orders that a frame house be erected. The latter provided sleeping accommodations for about forty boys and girls, a large classroom, and a dining room. This was the first orphanage building in Omaha. From that time on, the Bishop spoke frequently of constructing a larger orphan home. With this project in mind, funds were accumulated. A banker in the city, named Mr. Miles, intensely interested in Catholic charity, opened a subscription list, and "headed it with a donation of \$2,000.00."⁷³ Mr. James Monroe Pattee, a benefactor of the Sisters of Mercy, began his contributions to the orphanage in February, 1872, with a check of one thousand dollars. Essentially, however, the "enterprise was a private one supported by the Sisters and their own exertions."⁷⁴

In 1880, orphan asylums were founded in Kansas City and St. Joseph, Missouri, both conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet. The

72 Ibid., 31-32.

73 Ibid., 32-33.

74 Sister Mary Edmund Groghan, R. S. M., Sisters of Mercy of Nebraska, 1864-1910, Dissertation, Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., 1942, 92-93. The Sisters and orphans remained at Twenty-fourth Street and St. Mary's Avenue until 1886. A Motherhouse was built on Fifteenth and Castelar Streets and the orphans accompanied the Sisters to their new home in 1888. The present St. James Orphanage, Omaha, was built by the Sisters of Mercy at a later date. Flaherty, 6.

history of Catholicity in Kansas City is much older than that of organized orphan care, for it was approximately in the year 1834 that the "Reverend Benedict Le Roux, a pious and learned French priest, was sent from St. Louis as pastor of the half-bred congregation at Kansas City." During his stay a contract was made to build a log church and a parsonage. This settlement in the northwest part of Missouri was in the large area over which the Bishop of St. Louis exercised jurisdiction. Kansas City witnessed a rapid growth because of its location on the historic Santa Fe Trail. Another noted pioneer pastor and the founder of the first orphan asylum in Kansas City was the Reverend Bernard Donnelly, ordained in 1845 and appointed to Independence, Missouri, on the day of his Ordination.⁷⁵

In a letter written in December, 1879, Father Donnelly states: "I was the third duly appointed resident pastor of Kansas--it was simply Kansas--no "City" affixed when I came to Independence." The pioneer priest writes of a village named Westport, three miles south of the river, and describes it as a "waiting place for the thousands going southwest to Santa Fe, and to the mountains, the gold fields of California, and Pike's Peak." The Westport church was built by Father Donnelly, in 1866, from funds raised from the sale of bricks made from the clay in a ten-acre tract of land placed at his disposal. During the same year, Father Donnelly applied to the Motherhouse in Carondelet for teachers for St. Theresa's Academy on Twelfth Street. This academy

⁷⁵ Reverend William J. Dalton, The Life of Father Bernard Donnelly, With Historical Sketches of Kansas City, St. Louis, and Independence, Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri, 1921, 98-100, 159.

was likewise, made possible through the untiring energy exerted in the brick-yard.⁷⁶

The Sisters of St. Joseph, the first religious women to arrive in Kansas City, were engaged as teachers in Father Donnelly's parish for almost fifteen years before the orphan asylum was established. It was Sister Delphine Bray who suggested the founding of an asylum to Father Donnelly; the proposal "met his warmest approbation, for he had so great love for God's poor bereaved ones that he even cared for them in his own little home." Mother Agatha Guthrie, then the superior general, gladly complied with the request for Sisters to staff an orphan home. Father Donnelly purchased a ten-acre plot of ground south of the city and on the fourth day of May, 1879, the cornerstone was laid. Father Donnelly also purchased and laid out a tract of forty-four acres southwest of the city for a Catholic cemetery, Mount St. Mary's, and "it was his dying wish that an annual revenue from that source be given to furnish bread for the orphans."⁷⁷

The cornerstone was laid with impressive ceremonies concerning which a newspaper account notified the public that

This will be a memorable day in the annals of Kansas City . . . that of laying the corner-stone for an asylum for the sheltering of poor parentless children. . . . The exercises will be under charge

76 Ibid., 139, 152, 162. The letter mentioned was written by Father Donnelly to Reverend William J. Dalton, who had asked for an account of early days in Kansas City. Father Dalton was editor of the Catholic paper, The Western Banner.

77 St. Joseph's Orphan Home for Girls, 13. (Pamphlet published on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee celebrated on the grounds of the Home, July 4, 1904.) Father Donnelly had purchased the ten-acre plot for a cemetery, but because of the rocky nature of the soil, it was found unsuitable for burials.

of the venerable Father Donnelly, who has undertaken the erection of the Asylum which will serve as a monument of his zeal when he shall have passed from earth.⁷⁸

The asylum was located at Thirty-first and Jefferson Streets.⁷⁹ Its cornerstone bears the following inscription: "Mount St. Bernard, St. Joseph Orphan Asylum, Erected by Rev. B. Donnelly, May 4, A. D. 1879." A facsimile of the sheet containing pertinent information at the time of the laying of the cornerstone and placed within the latter is set forth in the Silver Jubilee booklet:

On the fourth of May in year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and Seventy nine, (1879) His Holiness Leo the thirteenth--being Sovereign Pontiff, --Most Reverend Reverend T. R. Kenrick, Arch-Bishop of St. Louis and Rt. Rev. T. J. Ryan coadjutor Bishop, --Rutherford B. Hayes being President of the United States of America and William a Wheeler Vice-president, His Excellency John A. Whelps Governor of the State of Missouri and the Honorable George M. Shelly being Mayor of Kansas City, the Corner Stone of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum under the Patronage of St. Joseph, was ceremoniously Blessed and Laid, --by Rev. Bernard Donnelly assisted by Rev. Fathers Faivre, C. SS. R., Rev. Francis Curran.⁸⁰

St. Joseph's Asylum opened on January 6, 1880. One child registered that day and six little companions joined the girl two days later. The first superior, Mother Justine Lemay, was replaced before the close of the year by Mother Octavia Sexton. In the beginning, the orphanage was intended for boys

78 The Kansas City Daily Times, May 4, 1879.

79 St. Joseph's still retains its original location, but the environment has completely changed. The city built around the asylum the picturesque Karnes Boulevard and laid out the Penn Valley Park opposite the institution. The orphanage site lies along the famous Santa Fe Trail.

80 St. Joseph's Home for Girls, 20.

and girls, but after a year or two, the boys were sent to St. Joseph, Missouri, where the Sisters of St. Joseph had opened a home for orphan boys.⁸¹ Many hardships were experienced in the beginning. The home was in the midst of a forest outside the city limits, was poorly equipped. The Sisters solicited alms in the city. The earliest benefactor was a prominent Kansas City resident, Major Blake L. Woodson, who provided dormitory furnishings to replace the children's first cots, improvised of store boxes.⁸²

The Diocese of Kansas City, Missouri, was created the same year that St. Joseph's Asylum opened its doors. Its first Bishop, the Most Reverend John J. Hogan, was transferred from the St. Joseph, Missouri, See which had been founded already in 1868. It was due to the inspiration and initiative of Bishop Hogan that St. Mary's Orphanage for Boys was established in St. Joseph. A tract of land, known as Corby Place, was donated by John Corby for a cemetery. Instead of applying the gift for the latter purpose, Bishop Hogan requested that a number of Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet be sent to assume charge of an orphan home. Accordingly, five Sisters arrived in St. Joseph in April, 1880, to take charge of thirty-three orphan boys in the frame building on the Corby property.⁸³

81 Savage, Congregation of St. Joseph, 90.

82 Ibid., 192.

83 Ibid., 193. Sadlier's Catholic Directory, Almanac, and Ordo, 1871, 284, lists an Orphan Asylum conducted by the Sisters of Charity in St. Joseph, Missouri. No separate orphanage existed in St. Joseph until the Sisters of St. Joseph came in 1880. The Sisters of Charity operated St. Joseph's Hospital and it is possible that some orphans were given a home there by the Sisters.

Mother Agatha, Mother General of Carondelet from 1872 to 1904, wrote the following message to the Motherhouse in St. Louis from St. Joseph, Missouri, on April 6, 1880:

You will be glad to know your travellers arrived safely at our Fathers City--about one o'clock on Monday. The weather is fine and Orphan Asylum is progressing slowly. No hurry about opening it--as a great deal has to be done before the Sisters can begin to receive the Orphans there.⁸⁴

Three years later the boys were removed to a well-improved farm of forty acres, given to the Sisters by a certain Mr. Francis Brown, a "prominent and benevolent Catholic" of St. Joseph, who also aided generously in the erection of buildings.⁸⁵

What is now Minnesota was at one time included in the domain of their Catholic Majesties, Ferdinand and Isabella. Then, in turn, the area was under the jurisdiction of the Bishops of Quebec, under the Vicar Apostolic of England, and finally it became a part of Bishop John Carroll's diocese, the whole of the present United States. After the latter witnessed several subdivisions, the Diocese of St. Paul was erected in 1850 with the Most Reverend Joseph Cretin of Dubuque as its first Bishop.⁸⁶ The newly appointed Bishop arrived in St. Paul, the seat of the recently erected Episcopal See, in the spring of

84 Carondelet Archives. Original letter in files. The Register of Superiors in the Archives lists Sister Clemence Motchman as the first superior in St. Joseph, Missouri.

85 Savage, Congregation of St. Joseph, 193.

86 Reverend James Michael Reardon, The Catholic Church in the Diocese of St. Paul from Earliest Origin to Centennial Achievement, St. Paul, 1952, 13, 24, 61. Bishop Cretin governed the diocese until 1857 when he was succeeded by Bishop Thomas L. Grace.

1851. Toward the close of that year, word was received by Bishop Cretin that the Society for the Propagation of the Faith had allotted the sum of thirty-seven thousand five hundred francs to St. Paul. Although the contribution "was not more than 7500 dollars, yet it made an actuality of not only the sisters' school but also a hospital, a school for the Indians, and an orphanage."⁸⁷

Four Sisters of St. Joseph arrived in St. Paul on the morning of November 3, 1851. A school and hospital engaged the labors of the Sisters during their first years in St. Paul. An epidemic of cholera which visited the city in 1853 took a considerable toll of lives and added to the number of homeless children. These orphans found a temporary refuge in the newly-erected St. Joseph's Hospital which was also a novitiate for the Sisters. The date recorded for the founding of the St. Paul Catholic Orphanage is 1859.⁸⁸ Soon after the formal establishment of St. Joseph's Hospital in 1854, thirty children were receiving the devoted attention of the Sisters at the hospital. "Orphans were cared for in every establishment of the Sisters of St. Joseph, but this group at the hospital was the largest. Part of the original grant from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith was used to support them, and this was supplemented by an annual Orphans' Fair."⁸⁹

For a time the orphans were supported by the Sisters in their home adjoining St. Joseph's Academy. In 1869, the orphanage was incorporated and established as a separate institution in lower town at Grove and St. Paul (now

37 Sister Helen Angela Hurley, On Good Ground, 29.

38 St. Paul Catholic Orphanage Archives.

39 Sister Helen Angela Hurley, On Good Ground, 79.

Oliver) Streets. Fifty-six orphans were transferred from the Academy, the Hospital, and other homes where they had been sheltered to the new St. Paul Catholic Orphanage. Nine thousand dollars had been paid by the diocese for the property and in 1870 a large frame addition at a cost of three thousand dollars was built. The orphan asylum had an average enrollment of eighty boys and girls under the care of eight Sisters. In 1878, when an orphanage was built in Minneapolis for boys, the St. Paul institution was reserved exclusively for girls. The latter were provided with a splendid new home at 933 Carroll Avenue in 1883. The four-story structure was dedicated by the Most Reverend Thomas L. Grace, O. P.⁹⁰

The Sisters of St. Joseph likewise staffed the Minneapolis Catholic Orphan Asylum, now called the Catholic Boys' Home, founded in 1878. On February 18, 1878, Bishop John Ireland presided at a meeting "to consider ways and means of establishing a Catholic Boys' orphanage in Minneapolis." A society was formed to assist in carrying out such a project. In March a wing of the Winslow House in St. Anthony, then unoccupied, on the site of the old Exposition Building was rented for three hundred fifty dollars a year. The place was remodeled to accommodate two hundred orphans and placed in charge of Mother Angela Smyth. Before the end of that year, a transfer was made to the west side of the river where the Day Homestead, at Sixth Avenue, North, and Third Street, was bought from a certain Annie Kelly. The property costing in excess of four thousand dollars was renovated and enlarged. To this institution were

⁹⁰ St. Paul Catholic Orphanage Archives. Bishop Grace tendered his resignation in 1884.

brought the boys formerly living in the St. Paul Catholic Orphanage. Three years later plans materialized for a removal to Forty-sixth Street and Tenth Avenue, South, the present site of the institution.⁹¹

A second St. Paul Asylum was that conducted by the Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict named the St. Joseph's Home for Children. Due to the rapid growth of the city, one institution did not suffice. For this reason, in 1868, the St. Joseph's German Catholic Orphan Society was organized. The primary object of the association was to procure funds for the rental of a house that could serve as an orphan home. Initial zeal soon grew cold. Membership decreased almost to the "vanishing point, so that for about eight years nothing to speak of was accomplished." With the election of Mr. George Mitsch to the presidency in 1877, the society was reorganized and immediately temporary quarters for an orphanage were secured in a two-story frame building on the corner of Ninth and Robert Streets. This home, the property of Mrs. Mary Willette, was rented for seventeen dollars a month. The home opened with six orphans transferred from the St. Paul Catholic Orphanage and was in charge of several lay persons.⁹²

The next problem confronting the society was to secure Sisters to take charge of the orphans. At a conference between the directors and the Reverend Valentine Stimmler, O. S. B., then pastor of St. Mary's Assumption Church, it was decided to make an appeal to the superiors at the Benedictine Convent at

91 Reardon, Diocese of St. Paul, 665-666.

92 St. Joseph's Home Archives.

Shakopee, Minnesota. To Mother Benedict and Sister Agatha was given the mission to open the St. Joseph's Orphan Home. Under the superiorship of Mother Benedict "the frail craft was piloted through many a storm." The first inmates of St. Joseph's, formally opened on March 19, 1877, were Michael Bartosch, John Moller, Eva Redley, Helen Zuraba, Sophia Rappand, and Pauline Dolzen.⁹³

It was soon found necessary to remove the orphanage to a more favorable location, since the present one was far removed from church and school. A more convenient and satisfactory home was found opposite the parochial residence of the Assumption parish, the property of Mrs. Cavietzel, rented for twenty-two dollars a month. This proved to be another short-lived abode, for "zealous parishioners looked forward with eagerness to the time when they might possess an orphanage suited to their needs." A movement to buy suitable property for the purpose was soon set afoot. Negotiations were entered into with Mr. Haggerty, who had available property adjoining St. Joseph's Hospital. The property was purchased for three thousand dollars and the three houses on it razed. By October 27, 1880, the new orphanage, costing nine thousand dollars, was ready for the reception of the orphans. The institution was blessed with a solemn ceremony on December 9, 1880, by Bishop Grace, and the first Holy Mass was read by Father Stimmler in the orphanage chapel on December 14. For some years, the asylum had no regular source of income, but was dependent upon the generosity of the society and the residents of St. Paul and its surrounding

territory. The orphans attended the Assumption School until 1888 when a separate school was opened at the asylum.⁹⁴

The last asylums to be founded in the Great Plains region were located at La Crosse, Wisconsin, and at Sparta, a short distance to the north-east. Prior to 1868, Catholic orphans from the western part of the state were sent to Milwaukee institutions. However, with the erection of two additional dioceses in the state, Green Bay and La Crosse, in 1868, the respective Ordinaries became responsible for the orphans in their dioceses. Therefore, one of Bishop Michael Heiss's chief concerns was the establishment of an orphan asylum in his diocese.⁹⁵ Because of the influx of Catholics into western Wisconsin at the time, the need for an orphan asylum became pressing. Lack of funds prevented the erection of a building for some years. Orphan boys were taken to St. Aemilian's in Milwaukee, while the girls had to be placed elsewhere.⁹⁶

Almost immediately after the arrival of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Perpetual Adoration in La Crosse, some orphan girls were entrusted to them. This community owes its foundation to the "fervor, devotion, and self-sacrifice of six holy and gifted Tertiaries of Kaufbeuern, a little town of Bavaria, Germany." The group banded together for the purpose of beginning a religious community. They came to America "intending to labor in the cause of Catholicity." In April, 1849, the Sisters arrived in Milwaukee and were directed by

94 Ibid.

95 Bishop of La Crosse from 1868 to September, 1881, when the prelate was promoted to the Milwaukee See.

96 Ludwig, Franciscan History, 222-223.

Bishop Henni to begin a house in Nojoshing, now St. Francis, Wisconsin. There they erected a small one-story frame house. The first years were ones of bitter struggle for an economic existence. The Sisters taught two schools and for a time had charge of the diocesan orphanage for boys. The Motherhouse was removed to Jefferson, Wisconsin, until after 1868 when La Crosse became an Episcopal See and Bishop Heiss, regarding himself as the founder of the Sisters of St. Francis, expressed the wish that they transfer the Motherhouse to La Crosse. The cornerstone of their new Motherhouse was laid on August 21, 1870.⁹⁷

Bishop Heiss, in hopes of being the recipient of a substantial legacy, made plans for building an orphan asylum in La Crosse. In a report sent in 1874 to the Archbishop of Munich, the Bishop states that the basement was completed and the building, seventy-four feet long and thirty feet wide, two and one-half stories high, would be finished the next spring. Bishop Heiss stated further that the home "is designed for orphan girls of whom I have already gathered about fifteen and lodged them for the time being being, with the Sisters. For the boys, I will, with God's help, build a home in the country twelve miles from here as soon as I can find the necessary means."⁹⁸

The building project progressed rapidly, but legal complications arose concerning the legacy. In June, 1875, the Bishop wrote to a friend that the orphanage he was building was already under roof, but "I have hardly

97 Hoffman, Archdiocese of Dubuque, 599.

98 Ludwig, Franciscan History, 223-224.

enough money to finish it." The Supreme Court declared the will of the Reverend Patrick Murphy, which involved two farms and a house and lot in Prairie du Chien, void because of "indefiniteness and vagueness of expression." The result was that the diocese never erected a separate boys' asylum. On November 22, 1875, Sister Raphaela Neumeyer, the superior, and fourteen girls took residence in the new St. Michael's asylum on Winnebago Street. One week later it was dedicated by Bishop Heiss. Orphan needs were only partially provided by the erection of St. Michael's which could accommodate but fifty children. The demand for a boys' home was acute. In the emergency, Bishop Heiss purchased the first St. Wenceslaus parish rectory located in the same block as St. Michael's. The first resident pastor, Reverend Leo Suchy, was transferred to the Milwaukee Diocese, and Bishop Heiss saw there an opportunity to provide a house for the boys. The Sisters of St. Francis took care of this small new home as well as St. Michael's.⁹⁹

Records indicate that soon both boys and girls were received at St. Michael's and both remained there until 1878, when the available quarters could no longer provide space for the increasing numbers. The diocese was too poor to erect another building. The Sisters of St. Francis now found a solution. The community was just entering upon an additional field of endeavor, that of secondary education. St. Mary's Academy at Sparta, a short distance northeast of La Crosse, was approaching completion and Mother Antonia offered the use of the building to the diocese for an asylum. The Bishop accepted the offer with sincere gratitude. The new institution opened in the fall of 1878 under the

⁹⁹ Ibid., 224-226.

title of St. Mary's Home for Girls. Twenty-four girls were brought from St. Michael's and the latter home became a home exclusively for boys. Both homes flourished as the Sisters continued to render gratuitous service. Annually, they made solicitations from parish to parish in the Diocese of La Crosse. In 1883, the first addition, a west wing was built to St. Michael's; in 1885, an east wing completed the original plans.¹⁰⁰

100 Ibid., 226-229. This work contains the Heiss-Kleiner Letters which reveal much of the history of the two orphan homes at La Crosse and Sparta.

CHAPTER VIII

FOUNDATIONS IN THE PACIFIC AND ROCKY MOUNTAIN STATES

Not all those who made the long peregrinations, beset with great difficulties, to the coast of California in the mid-nineteenth century were seekers of gold. Quite another motive animated the pioneer band of seven Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, from Emmitsburg, Maryland, who arrived in San Francisco on August 18, 1852. They had gone by boat to Panama, crossed the Isthmus on foot or on donkeys, and again sailed by boat up to San Francisco Bay. Sisters Ignatia and Honorine, worn out by the "excessive heat and drenching rain" of the Isthmus, fell victims to cholera. The other five, Sisters Francis McEnnis, Fidelis Buckley, Sebastian Doyle, Bernice Williams, and Corsina McDay reached California, exhausted from the arduous journey and saddened at the loss of the two Sisters.¹

San Francisco had, so to say, grown up overnight, for as late as 1844, the little village contained not more than a dozen houses and not over fifty settlers. In 1847, it was still known as "Yerba Buena." But gold was discovered and by 1850 San Francisco had an estimated population of over twenty-four thousand.² Father Francis Garcia Diego y Moreno, O. F. M., was

1 Caritas Christi: Centenary of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul in San Francisco, 1852-1952, 6. (Brochure)

2 Ibid., 5.

the first bishop in California. Consecrated in 1840, he took possession of the Diocese of Monterey in January, 1842, governing the diocese until his death in 1846. The Most Reverend Joseph Sadoc Alemany, O. P., succeeded to the See in 1850. In the spring of 1852, Bishop Alemany attended the First Plenary Council of Baltimore and, while in the East, obtained the Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg for the Diocese of Monterey.³

Cholera had ravaged San Francisco and an orphanage was a necessity. Almost five hundred died during the last three months of 1850. Early the following year the Catholic people met to discuss means of providing for destitute parentless children. The Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum and Free School Association had been formed by Catholic men in the city to assist in the financial support of the orphans left by the epidemic and for other Catholic school children as well. The establishment of parishes and the care of orphans was almost simultaneous. In 1848, Father J. B. Brouillet erected a frame building on Vallejo Street, naming it St. Francis Church, the first to be built in the city proper.⁴ The nucleus of a second parish was founded shortly after by the Reverend John Maginnis. For three months, Father Maginnis held divine services in a rented house at the corner of Third and Jessie Streets. By September, 1851, the building known as St. Patrick's Church was opened in Happy Valley, fronting Market Street, between Second and Third Streets. The site was likewise that of the first St. Vincent's School and the

3 William Gleeson, History of the Catholic Church in California, San Francisco, 1872, 201, 205.

4. Caritas Christi, 5-6.

Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum.⁵ This was the state of conditions when the Sisters of Charity landed in San Francisco in August, 1852.

When the five Sisters arrived at their destination, they were met by a committee of Catholic men who escorted them, in the sole vehicle then available, to their lowly home in Happy Valley, ironically so called, for in reality the district was a hollow of swamps and sand dunes. Therefore, writes the annalist, it depended upon the newcomers to create a cheerful atmosphere. Their first home was a dilapidated brown frame building consisting of eight rooms on Market and Montgomery Streets adjoining St. Patrick's Church which served the purpose of a school also. Here a group of fifteen eager little girls and an elderly priest in a threadbare cassock awaited the coming of the Sisters to live in San Francisco. The "wonder and curiosity of the children, reminded the on-lookers, of the amazement of the Indians, who greeted Columbus and his followers." It is recorded that the children took one amazed look at the strange cornettes and fled into the house, slamming the door behind them. That evening "despite the scarcity of newspapers," the news of the sisters' arrival "reached every home by the little prattlers."⁶

5 Frank Soule, John H. Gihon and James Nisbet, The Annals of San Francisco Containing a Summary of the History of the First Discovery, Settlement, Progress, and Present Condition of California, and a Complete History of All the Important Events Connected with Its Great City: to Which are Added Biographical Memoirs of Some Prominent Citizens, New York, 1855, 697.

6 Marillac Seminary Archives. This history of the coming of the Sisters to San Francisco, the opening of the orphanage and school, and their work there for the next twenty-five years was written by Sister Vincentia Halligan, who was a child in San Francisco at the time the Sisters arrived there. Many years later, as a Sister of Charity, Sister Vincentia wrote the history of the asylum for the Archives.

The Sisters had little time to prepare the old brown house to receive orphans; neither was there a formal opening of an orphan home. The Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum for Girls began with the landing of the Sisters in San Francisco, for they brought one tiny orphan girl with them. The mother had died on board the Ohio, the same vessel which brought the Sisters. The father was one of a troop of soldiers on shipboard; he and the mother had requested that the Sisters care for the child. Owing to the cholera, other motherless children soon joined the little orphan.⁷

In October of the same year, St. Vincent's School opened--in the little brown house. Previous to the coming of the Sisters, Father Maginnis used the church for services on Sunday and as a school during the week. Now Father Maginnis and an old Irish schoolmaster, Mr. Barry, taught the boys in the church building, while the Sisters instructed the girls. By the end of the term there were ninety crowded into the Sisters' little dwelling. The classrooms served as dormitories at night, and the beds were put away every morning and arranged again in the evening. This state of affairs continued for a time, but the old brown house began to leak so freely that umbrellas were necessary overhead and logs or bricks under the tables, as the Sisters and children sat at meals. Such a situation could not be permitted to continue, and Father Maginnis ordered a collection to be taken up for the orphans and other pupils. On this occasion, Archbishop Alemany "stressed his sense of the emergency" by taking off his gold chain and cross and placing them on the

7 Ibid.

collection plate. The sum of fifteen hundred dollars was realized and the old brown house was decked with a new roof.⁸

In 1854, the second band of Sisters of Charity came from Emmitsburg, having traveled on the first train to cross the Isthmus of Panama. The same year a new church was built and the old St. Patrick's was placed at the disposal of the Sisters who were then teaching the boys as well as the girls. Even that additional space was insufficient for the rapidly increasing number of orphans coming to the asylum. Therefore, plans were drawn up for a new and larger building. The work commenced on May 1, 1854, when the pastor of St. Patrick's, Father Maginnis, extended a general invitation to the men in the city to assist in removing a sand hill from the proposed site of the new orphan asylum on Market Street. The appeal received a hearty response. Progress was so rapid that the new structure was ready for dedication on December 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. It is an interesting coincidence that a medal of Mary Immaculate, badly showing the marks of time, was found on the site. The cost of the building was approximately twenty-five thousand dollars and within a few years the benefactors, who had lent money for the new orphan home, received remittances in full.⁹

In the summer of 1862, another large brick structure was added to the first asylum on Market Street. As has been seen from reading the foregoing

⁸ Ibid. According to the account as given in Charitas Christi, Archbishop Alemany contributed his chain and cross at the time collections were taken up for the first regular orphanage building erected in 1854. San Francisco became the seat of an Archdiocese in July, 1853.

⁹ Ibid.

chapters, numerous ways and means were devised to raise funds to maintain the orphan asylums. In this instance, an exceptional method was employed. A part of the new building was designed for stores and offices; the rent accruing from these would help in defraying the cost of the new asylum, about fifty thousand dollars.¹⁰

The city of San Francisco had grown so rapidly that soon the Market Street location became wedged in on all sides and unsuitable for the vicinity of an orphanage and a school. Hence, the Sisters determined to sell the Market Street property and began to look for a better spot. Through the efforts of Dr. Thomas Bennett, whose name was prominent among the benefactors of the San Francisco Sisters, an elevated tract of land overlooking the Bay was purchased in South San Francisco for eight thousand dollars. A little later the Weldon Homestead, a five-acre plot, was added for a sum of eighteen hundred dollars. The latter had a sizeable cottage almost hidden from view by vines and shrubbery. Into this new home the Sisters moved on July 2, 1861, with the infants and twelve smaller children. The cottage proved to be far too small. Consequently, in the fall of 1862, work on a large four-story building was commenced on the tract secured through the aid of Dr. Bennett. On March 19, 1863, the new home was dedicated by Archbishop Alemany and placed under the patronage of St. Joseph. The orphan home thereafter was frequently called Mount St. Joseph Orphan Asylum.¹¹

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

A large number of the older children continued to live in the Market Street home until the avenue became a constantly crowded thoroughfare in the heart of the business district. In June, 1872, the Market Street property was sold and possession was to be given in six months. For some years the Sisters had in mind transferring the children to Mount St. Joseph in South San Francisco and disposing of the older orphanage. This meant providing another building at the new location. A loan was secured and the cornerstone of a large frame addition to the original structure had been laid on December 8, 1869. However, at the expiration of the six-months' period, the new asylum was not as yet completed because of lack of funds, and the Sisters and orphans were forced to remain on Market Street where a substantial monthly rental had to be paid. Two generous benefactors, Mr. T. Parrott and Mr. Joseph A. Donahue, assumed the rental obligation until the transfer to the new home was made in February, 1873.¹²

A sister institution, St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum, was founded at San Rafael, California, January 7, 1855.¹³ Inspired by a "laudable desire of providing for the moral and intellectual culture of Catholic youth in the vicinity of San Rafael," Mr. Timothy Murphy, whose name was always associated with charitable activities in San Francisco, donated three hundred acres in

¹² Ibid. The Palace Hotel is now located on the spot occupied by the asylum for almost twenty years. The Mount St. Joseph's Orphan Asylum was completely destroyed by fire in October, 1910. About five hundred children were removed from the burning building. One child, ten years old, returned unnoticed into the building to get her doll and was burned. San Francisco Chronicle, October 10, 1910.

¹³ Emmitsburg Archives.

Marin County, to the Church for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a school. The duty of staffing the new institution was given to the Sisters of Charity by Archbishop Alemany himself when he specifically stated that: "The Sisters of Charity of this city of San Francisco, California, are appointed to take charge of the School of St. Vincent, at Las Gallinas, Marin County, California, to carry out the intentions of Mr. Timothy Murphy."¹⁴

The Sisters erected a frame building at a cost of about five thousand dollars to which Sister M. Corsina McKay, two lay women, and four orphan children came from St. Joseph's in San Francisco on January 7, 1855. The same day a school opened for the education of children in the neighboring district. The Sisters of Charity remained at San Rafael for some months, but "desirous of concentrating their efforts in the city," they resigned the appointment in favor of a secular priest, Father Robert Maurice, who administered St. Vincent's for two years. The site had the advantage of affording an excellent country climate, but was accessible only by boat.¹⁵ The Emmitsburg Archives state that the mission was discontinued on September 6, 1855, because of lack of religious facilities and inaccessibility to the city. Miss Maginnis, a sister of Father Maginnis, pastor of St. Patrick's Church in San Francisco, took charge of the domestic duties at St. Vincent's after the departure of the Sisters.¹⁶

14 Gleeson, Catholic Church in California, 209.

15 Ibid., 210, 215.

16 Emmitsburg Archives.

"Gold had invaded the imagination, befuddled the brain, and bewitched the soul," writes Father Walsh, but the solicitude of the Church for its members continued as always and its ministers provided as best they could for the spiritual needs of their flocks. Thus, elsewhere in the State of California charitable institutions were established as the need arose. The Reverend Thomas Dalton, assigned to the Grass Valley parish in 1855, was a "great church builder." He also built schools and "witnessed broken homes, and sought to provide shelter for the destitute offspring."¹⁷ The Sisters of Mercy laid their first foundation in San Francisco in 1856. Father Dalton applied to Mother Mary Baptist Russell, the Superior there, for Sisters to staff a school in Grass Valley, a mining town about twenty-five miles northeast of San Francisco. Mother Mary Baptist "was willing to share her small flock, and accordingly, four Sisters who offered themselves to labor in the mining district went to Grass Valley to establish themselves there." The Sisters of Mercy opened a school in September, 1863.¹⁸ When the Sisters arrived in Grass Valley on August 20, 1863, Father Dalton presented them with his own residence in order to provide them with a home. The day school opened in the old frame church on Chapel Street.¹⁹

17 Reverend Henry L. Walsh, S. J., Hallowed Were the Gold Dust Trails: The Story of the Pioneer Priests of Northern California, Santa Clara, California, 1946, 14, 181-184.

18 Mercy Convent Archives, Omaha, Nebraska.

19 Walsh, Story of Pioneer Priests, 195.

Need for more Sisters became imperative and Father Dalton went to Ireland "in quest of other generous souls who would help in carrying on the work so nobly begun by the San Francisco Sisters." Father Dalton brought two professed Sisters and one postulant to America. They arrived in Grass Valley in October, 1864; the community now numbered seven members, and a boarding school, St. Mary's Academy, for girls was opened. The Sisters helped to carry the stones for the new building and even lay them.²⁰

In March, 1865, construction began on the St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum. One year later, the Sisters moved into the newly-erected building. On April 20, 1866, a family of four destitute children from Sierra County "were the first to claim refuge." These were followed shortly by four from Shasta County. The charity of a Mr. Edward McLoughlin came to the assistance of the asylum, when he furnished thirty beds and other sorely needed equipment and supplies. In February, 1872, it became necessary to open another house for the boys. A lot was purchased on Pleasant Street and St. Patrick's Home for Boys was ready for occupancy by June 6, 1872. By 1878, the Sisters were obliged to seek larger quarters and eight acres of land were purchased to add to the boys' premises.²¹

On August 22, 1950, the Most Reverend J. Francis A. McIntyre, Archbishop of Los Angeles, wrote the following tribute:

The Los Angeles Orphanage is a venerable institution as well as a renowned name. It is redolent of good deeds prompted by love and affection for the needy of God's children.

20 Mercy Convent Archives, Omaha.

21 Walsh, *Story of Pioneer Priests*, 488.

The Daughters of Charity have devoted their lives to the development and care of the orphans. Their work has brought blessings in abundance upon the pueblo as well as the metropolis of Los Angeles.²²

The "venerable institution" to which Archbishop McIntyre refers is the Los Angeles Orphan Asylum founded in 1856 by the first religious women to enter into what is now the Diocese of Los Angeles. Most Reverend Thaddeus Amat, Bishop of Los Angeles and Monterey from 1854 to 1878, announced in his first pastoral that he had been successful in securing six Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg, Maryland, to devote themselves to the service of the needy in California. To prepare for their coming he called an assemblage of the citizens of Los Angeles in the Plaza Church. After outlining the purposes of the meeting, Bishop Amat appointed Abel Stearns, president, and John G. Downey, secretary, of an organization designed to aid the Sisters upon their arrival. Land conveniently located for a permanent establishment was purchased.²³

From Emmitsburg, the Sisters traveled to New York, and from there to the Isthmus by ship. There they "dauntlessly clambered on mule-back for a long ride over the jungle-bordered trail; from the Isthmus by ship again to San Francisco, for the 'liners' of the day ignored the tiny port of San Pedro." The passengers returned by boat from San Francisco to Wilmington where Phineas Banning had a stage coach waiting for them. A ten-hour drive from Wilmington brought them to the Plaza del Valle.²⁴ A Los Angeles

22 The quotation is an excerpt from a letter written by Archbishop McIntyre and printed in a campaign leaflet distributed when the historic orphanage of Los Angeles had to be razed in 1950.

23 Los Angeles Orphan Asylum Archives.

24 The Tidings, Los Angeles, California, April 17, 1938

newspaper, El Clamor Publico, announced the arrival of the Sisters:

Six Sisters of Charity arrived in this city last Saturday, January 6, 1856. Their names are as follows: Sisters Marie Scholastica, Marie Corzina, Anna, Clara, Francisca, and Angela. Three are from the United States and three from Spain; consequently, both languages will be taught attentively in the school.²⁵

Everything was done to insure the comfort of the Sisters in the dusty little pueblo of Los Angeles with no more than two thousand souls. Upon their arrival they were made at home with Don Ygancio del Valle until property purchased from Senator Wilson for eight thousand dollars was ready for them. Bishop Amat gave them a cordial welcome and "tendered them a house and four acres of orchard on the southeast corner of Alameda street and a lane now a part of Macy street." The Union Station stands on the site at the present time. A day school and a home for orphan children of Los Angeles and the neighboring counties was opened and incorporated under the name of "Los Angeles Orphan Asylum and Sisters' School." The first home, a frame structure, was replaced already in 1856 by a brick building. A second band of Sisters came to Los Angeles in December, 1857, to assist with the work that had grown so rapidly. In 1858, the Sisters purchased a certain John Moran's "home place," five acres immediately joining and fronting on Alameda Street.²⁶

25 Los Angeles Orphan Asylum Archives.

26 Ibid. The following observation was made in The Tidings, Los Angeles, October 28, 1949: "You couldn't buy the site of Union Station at Macy and Alameda Sts. for a million dollars these days. But the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul once purchased the 10 acre tract for \$8,000." The orphanage remained at this location until 1890 when a stately, red brick building overlooking the city from Boyle Heights across the river was erected.

The records contain some interesting historical extracts. The Sisters were in Los Angeles before Isaias W. Hellman opened the first bank in town and citizens customarily brought their valuables to the Sisters for safe-keeping. On New Year's Day, 1883, the Sisters at the Orphanage permitted their charges to go "around the corner" to Commercial and Main Streets to witness a "miracle." An electric light, the first on the west coast, had been installed there. It was a cluster of four arcs of six hundred candlepower on a mast one hundred feet tall.²⁷

The Los Angeles Orphan Asylum was the sole large institution in southern California. A number of smaller homes, usually combination of boarding school, day school, and orphan asylum, developed during the quarter of a century following the founding of the initial home in 1856. St. Vincent's in Santa Barbara was opened on January 5, 1857, with three Sisters from Emmitsburg in charge: Sisters Mary Mullans, Andrea Gibbs, and Angelita Mombrado. At the time there were but eight English-speaking persons in Santa Barbara. The first year the Sisters lived in a rented house. Later they moved to Cienquitas Rancho, where vegetables, fruit orchards, and cattle and sheep ranching supported the institution. In 1863 and 1874, because of a severe drought, the Sisters and the children endured much hardship. The academy practically turned into an orphanage when orphans and destitute outnumbered boarders. Besides the farm, the Sisters acquired a block of land with a large brick building on it in the city. The state appropriated some funds to St. Vincent's and a fair was held every other year. Although it was regarded as a diocesan

institution, no diocesan aid was given during the early years. In the early eighteen seventies the home was destroyed by fire but rebuilt on the same site.²⁸

At Santa Cruz, California, Sister Corsina Kay and several other Sisters from Emmitsburg opened a boarding school and asylum on December 24, 1862. This Holy Cross Asylum, as it was called, stood at Emmett and School Streets. Formerly part of an old mission, it had served as the "Eagle Hotel" for a time. In 1865, Holy Cross Asylum was slightly damaged by an earthquake. In San Juan, San Benita County, Bishop Amat founded St. John's Orphan Asylum for Girls in 1864 and placed the Sisters of Charity in charge. The State of California appropriated on hundred dollars annually for each full orphan and seventy-five for each half-orphan or abandoned child under fourteen years of age. In 1870, the Sisters of Charity relinquished charge of the asylum in favor of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The Sisters of Charity likewise took charge of Immaculate Conception School and Asylum in Los Angeles in about the year 1880. The day pupils far outnumbered the orphans and boarders.²⁹

The Diocese of Nesqually comprising the extreme northwest corner of the United States was erected in 1850. The Most Reverend Magloire Blanchet, consecrated Bishop of Walla Walla in 1846, was transferred to Nesqually in 1850.³⁰ Into this remote area of civilization, two religious orders of women

28 Emmitsburg Archives.

29 Ibid.

30 Official Catholic Directory, 1952, 225.

extended their activities in behalf of the poor and unfortunate and to offer educational opportunities for the young.

In 1856, the Sisters of Charity of Providence, from Montreal, Canada, came to Fort Vancouver to teach the white children of the Hudson Bay Company families. When a half-breed Indian child wandered into the house of the Sisters and no trace of her parents could be found, the Sisters took the child and from this beginning two orphanages developed, St. Vincent's Male and St. Genevieve's Female Asylums. At the time the Sisters came Vancouver had a population of four hundred whites and Indians and two hundred soldiers encamped in the Fort. St. Vincent's and St. Genevieve's were the only orphanages in the Oregon Territory at the time and children were brought from distant parts to this vast wilderness to be taken care of by the Sisters. In 1860, a separate building was erected for the boys. The asylums consisted of six inconvenient and too small houses until in 1873 when Mother Joseph erected one large building to accommodate all the orphans. This building was known as "Providence of the Holy Angels" and today is "Providence Academy." Gradually the orphans were absorbed into the boarding school departments and, after 1881, the term "orphans" or "orphanages" was no longer used. Over nine hundred orphans were cared for between 1856 and 1881.³¹

The second asylum founded in the far northwest was in Portland, Oregon, by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, in 1859. This community was established in Marseilles, France, by Monsignor Eugene de Mazenod in 1844; its first novitiate in America was in the small Canadian village of

Longueuil in the Province of Quebec.³² The summer of 1859 "opened a new era" for the new congregation in the eventful visit of a missionary prelate from the Far West, the Most Reverend Francis Norbert Blanchet, of Oregon City, Oregon.³³ The Archbishop's call at the Canadian convent "heralded the carrying of the standard of Jesus and Mary into the far and unknown West." The zealous prelate pleaded for Sisters; schools and homes for orphaned children were needed. "Eagerly and promptly" the Sisters offered themselves; twelve of the volunteers were selected. On September 16, 1859, the following left the Motherhouse: Sisters Mary Alphonse, superior, Francis Xavier, assistant, Mary Febronia, Mary of Mercy, Mary Margaret, Mary of the Visitation, Mary of Calvary, Mary Florentine, Mary Perpetua, Mary Arsene, Mary Julie, Mary Agathe. They sailed in the Star of the West to the Isthmus of Panama, crossed the Isthmus, and took passage on the Golden Age as far as San Francisco. From there they continued the voyage on The Northern to Portland. The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary are essentially a teaching order; however, the missionary character of the area in which they found themselves required that they extend their activities.³⁴

32 Gleanings of Fifty Years: The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in the Northwest, 1859-1909, Portland, Oregon, 1909, 8.

33 The Vicariate-Apostolic of Oregon City was erected in 1843; Archdiocese of Oregon City created in 1846. Bishop Blanchet resigned in 1880.

34 The Hope of the Harvest: The Life of Mother Veronica of the Crucifix, Second Superior General of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, 1820-1903, Portland, 1944, 144-147, 152.

On October 21, 1859, the religious reached the "little pioneer town of Portland." Their first dwelling, "the Lownsdale House," was a vacated house that had served as a refuge for vagrants and was entirely unfurnished. In its place there soon rose a new stately building, a credit to the Sisters and the Catholics of Portland. Just twenty-six days after their arrival, on November 16, the Sisters received their first orphan. The boys' orphanage stood at the southwest corner of the block, next to the academy. It was formed from one of the wings of the Lownsdale House, remodeled and enlarged. Orphan girls were cared for in a boarding school, St. Mary's Academy, opened in 1860. In 1863, twelve more Sisters were sent from Canada to assist with the work in the growing mission. Mother Veronica was appointed superior of the Oregon group in 1864, spending nine years in Portland.³⁵

When the Sisters came to Oregon, there were no charitable institutions and they were called upon to care for the sick, the orphans, and the insane. To their first orphan, there was added a waif who had been left on the doorstep of Mayor Farrar of Portland. It was no uncommon occurrence for the Sister Portress to find a baby on the porch or at the gate when she made her rounds in the morning. As the number of orphans grew, a separate building was provided in 1870 and designated as St. Joseph's Orphanage.³⁶

The author of The Hope of the Harvest relates some interesting notes in regard to naming the children brought to the Sisters. On the first of a

35 Ibid., 152, 173-179, 193.

36 Questionnaire.

certain May, the Sisters offered a "bouquet of love" to the Blessed Virgin, a little six-year old girl abandoned by her parents. She was named Mary Ann Fairchild. One year the vigil of the Epiphany brought "another tiny gift from God." This one was named Mary Brigid East, "to commemorate the coming of the Wise Men from the Orient." Another victim of abandonment was an infant with face badly bruised found in the garden. Baptism was administered and the name, Mary Margaret, and a "significant surname" that of "De Racht" (meaning Redeemed) bestowed upon the child. A certain Mrs. Kennedy, living a few miles from Portland, brought a tiny child left on her porch. Too poor to provide for the little boy, she begged the Sisters to take him. This child received the name Clement La Porte, suggested by the "little stranger's appearance near the doorstep of Mrs. Kennedy's home."³⁷

A unique incident occurred in 1868 when the Mother Superior had asked St. Joseph to see about window shades badly needed in the orphanage. The Saint's response came on April 13, 1868, when the Mother found a letter containing two hundred ninety-one dollars from Mr. Ben Holliday, president of an Iron Company of California and Oregon. Mr. Holliday was assured that the boys would repay their kind donor with "generous and efficacious prayers."³⁸

The first orphan home to be founded inland from the west coast was at Virginia City, Nevada, a city that could boast of a population of forty thousand inhabitants. Like many other "ghost towns" it has since dwindled to

37 The Hope of the Harvest, 197-198.

38 Ibid., 235.

a mere two hundred fifty persons. The initial official Catholic action in Virginia City took place when the Reverend Joseph Gallagher was sent from San Francisco to the newly created parish of Genoa, Carson, and Virginia City, in August, 1858. On September 17, 1860, Virginia City became a part of the new Vicariate-Apostolic of Marysville under the Right Reverend Eugene O'Connell, Vicar Apostolic. A certain Father Patrick Manogue arrived in June, 1862, to minister to his parish--all of Nevada north of the thirty-ninth parallel. In 1864, Father Manogue began the construction of a combined building, school and orphan asylum, fronting on H Street a few blocks from his church.³⁹

When gold diggings in California began to diminish greatly toward the end of the 1850's, the Territory of Nevada "moved into the spotlight." One prospector chanced upon some deposits on the banks of a small creek, immediately below Virginia City. The prospector, a native of the Old Dominion was nicknamed "Old Virginny." When the town was laid about a year later, it was named in his honor. Other seekers of wealth came and at the end of the Six-Mile Canyon they discovered the famous Comstock series of mines. Between 1860 and 1864, the population of Virginia City grew by leaps and bounds. Generous donations were made by Catholics and non-Catholics alike for a new frame church and St. Mary's Girls' School and Nevada Orphan Asylum, the first home for orphans in the Territory of Nevada. A Mr. and Mrs. John Mackay donated not less than one-fourth of a million dollars to Father Manogue's projects. A Mrs. Theresa Fair's benefactions amounted to hundreds of thousands.

³⁹ Reverend Thomas K. Gorman, D. D., Seventy-five Years of Catholic Life in Nevada, 1860-1935, Reno, Nevada, 1935, 41-45.

The fact that "Harry Lunch's buggy horses were shod with silver shoes," indicates that money was plentiful in Virginia City. The building was completed and occupied in October of 1864. Father Manogue secured a number of Sisters of Charity from Emmitsburg, who, under Sister Frederica McGrath, took up duties in the school and orphanage.⁴⁰

Church, school, and orphanage received public funds until Nevada was admitted as a State and "politicians went to work and secured passage of a bill creating an orphan asylum under control of the State." Little state aid was forthcoming thenceforth until about in 1880 when the legislature appropriated some funds to help the institution "weather the financial depression of the period." By 1884 the Nevada Asylum had reached the apogee of its development. At that time about one hundred orphans and half-orphans were cared for in Virginia City by the Sisters of Charity.⁴¹

What is now the State of New Mexico was at one time under the Mexican Dioceses of Michoacan, Guadalajara, and Durango. When New Mexico became a part of the United States in 1848, it was left spiritually neglected. Accordingly, the Most Reverend Joseph Machebeuf, Titular Bishop of Epiphania and Vicar Apostolic of Colorado and Utah, called the attention of the Holy Father to the situation. As a result, the Reverend John Baptist Lamy of

40 Walsh, Story of Pioneer Priests, 196-198, 202, 208. Father Walsh points out that Nevada was a field for missionaries from the Archdiocese of San Francisco, the Marysville Vicariate, the Grass Valley and the Sacramento Dioceses. 195.

41 Gorman, Seventy-five Years, 45, 49. When the mines closed, the parish and Sisters shared the vicissitudes of the city. The Sisters were obliged to abandon their institution and leave Virginia City in 1897.

Covington, Kentucky, was consecrated and appointed to the Vicariate-Apostolic of New Mexico in 1850. The diocese of Santa Fe was created in 1853; here only the diocese was new but "foundations were ancient."⁴²

Bishop Lamy, "full of pity for the people to whom he had been sent," asked the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, of Cincinnati, Ohio, to send Sisters to establish an orphanage for the native children and a hospital "for the ailing of any and all races and creeds." Four Sisters were designated by the Superiors to make the long trek to the Southwest: Sister Vincent, a druggist; Sister Theodosia, assigned to executive and domestic duties; Sister Catherine, a cook; and Sister Pauline, a teacher. "From the beautiful motherhouse, on the banks of the Ohio, they went forth unquestioning, unfaltering and obedient."⁴³ The Sisters went by train to St. Louis; from St. Louis to Omaha by river boat. At Omaha they took a stage coach destined for Denver, where the Sisters of Loretto received the weary travelers and afforded them several days rest. The remainder of the journey to Santa Fe was made by stage.⁴⁴

The end of the trip came on September 13, 1865. The Sisters were received "with open arms" by the Sisters of Loretto who had come to New Mexico

42 Lamy Memorial: Centenary of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, 1850-1950, 20-21.

43 Olive Eunice Hite, "The Black Caps in New Mexico," The Santa Fe New Mexican, September 3, 1909, (no page). Olive Eunice Hite accompanied the first four Sisters to Santa Fe. Copies of Santa Fe New Mexican in Motherhouse Archives, Cincinnati.

44 Sister Rosanna, Saga of the Little Black Cap, 11. (Pamphlet)

some time prior. The old episcopal residence, an adobe building, was given to the Sisters for a home--and a hospital, school and orphanage, as well. Two rooms in the residence were reserved for the Bishop. It was discovered at the first rainfall that the ceiling leaked. The Bishop on such an occasion took his meals beneath an umbrella; the Sisters, it is noted, "followed his good example."⁴⁵

Santa Fe had a military post, which was a stopping place of army personnel protecting the interests of the Southwest. The St. Vincent's Orphanage had its inception when General Carleton sent a little papoose that he had found on the battlefield to the Sisters of Charity. The Sisters named the tiny Indian, Mary Carleton. As the number of orphans increased, occasional assistance was given by the Generals in Santa Fe. At one time, General Carleton assigned rations for eighteen orphans at the asylum and extended to the Sisters the privilege of purchasing provisions from the United States commissary. Fortunately for the orphan asylum, school, and hospital, there was the "California Fund" from which General Carleton could draw for those left destitute by Indian fights. From the fund, the Sisters received one thousand dollars with which to defray some of their expenses.⁴⁶

On May 10, 1867, three more Sisters for the New Mexico mission left Cincinnati. Bishop Lamy manned the caravan of covered wagons over the Santa

45 Archives, Mount St. Joseph-on-the-Ohio, Cincinnati.

46 Ibid.

Fe Trail. It was a perilous journey because of the constant danger from the Indians. One of the Sisters of Charity contracted cholera on the way and was laid to rest in a lonely grave on the plains of Colorado." Sister Augustine and Sister Louise finally reached the brown-walled plaza in Santa Fe on August 15.⁴⁷

Before the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth had completed their first decade of unselfish service in Kansas, the community was invited to extend its activities into the missionary territory of the Rocky Mountains. Father De Smet had begged for Sisters to open houses in the Indian mission and in response, six Sisters departed from the Motherhouse in Leavenworth on the feast of St. Michael, September 29, 1869.⁴⁸ Father De Smet himself accompanied the Sisters as far as Omaha and financed their journey. In a letter dated October 7, 1869, Father wrote: "I am just back from Omaha whither I have escorted six Sisters of Charity and I feel stronger. Those zealous sisters are on their way to Helena, the capital of Montana. I am glad to have been able to participate in their undertaking and to furnish all the funds for their long journey."⁴⁹

47 Hite, The Santa Fe New Mexican.

48 Archives, Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth.

49 Chittenden, Hiram Martin, and Alfred Talbot Richardson, Life, Letters and Travels of Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, S. J., 1801-1873, Missionary Labors and Adventures among the Wild Tribes of the North American Indians, Embracing Minute Description of Their Manners, Customs, Games, Modes of Warfare and Torture, Legends, Tradition, etc., All from Personal Observations Made during Many Thousand Miles of Travel, with Sketches of the Country from St. Louis to Puget Sound and the Altrabasca. Edited from the original unpublished manuscript Journals and Letter Books and from his Printed Works with Historical,

The following spring the Indian missionary wrote of two trips--to Omaha and to the Pottawatomie Indians in Kansas. The one to Omaha again relates to the Helena foundation and contains much pertinent information:

Our missionaries in the Rocky Mountains had urged me to obtain them some religious ladies for the education of young girls in Montana, and to take care, later, of orphans and the sick. With the design of commencing this first Catholic establishment or boarding-school, the Fathers offered their own house, situated in Helena, the capital of the Territory. With my superiors' consent, I went to work without delay in view of the approach of winter and the great distance to be traveled. I obtained a colony of Sisters of Charity, chosen among sixty-six nuns. I accompanied them to Omaha, in Nebraska. Well recommended, they took their places upon the Pacific railroad, to go 1,100 miles and then take stage from Corinne, in the Territory of Utah; a six-horse stage, which makes the 500 miles to Helena in thirty-six hours. I have since learned, from private letters and the public prints, that the good sisters reached their destination, amid the acclamations of the citizens without regard to creed. Deo gratias!⁵⁰

In 1870, St. John's Hospital was established in Helena, and at that institution the first orphan home in the Territory of Montana had its humble beginnings. The Government had requested the Sisters to care for psychopathic patients at St. John's from the entire Territory. As the number increased, it became necessary to provide a separate building, which for years remained an adjunct of the hospital--first as a asylum for the insane and later as an orphan home⁵¹

Geographical, Ethnological and other Notes; Also a Life of Father De Smet, IV, New York, 1905, 1537. Letter to Nephew Paul and Niece Augusta. (Original in French)

50 Ibid., III, 928.

51 Archives, Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth.

Fortunately the government had just relieved the Sisters of the care of the insane when the need arose for a building in which to house orphans. The community records give this brief story: "In the early spring of 1881, three small children in the great mining camp that was at Butte, Montana, were left motherless. A grief stricken young father looked helplessly about to find some one to rear them." The Superior of the hospital, Sister Mary Baptist Carney, remodeled the vacated wing and on April 4, 1881 there was formally established in the Territory of Montana the first home for orphans.⁵²

A bit of interesting history is associated with one of the three Sullivan children who were the first to be admitted. The oldest was a boy named Ambrose and for him the home was called "St. Ambrose's Orphanage." Another source mentions that the orphanage was known as "St. Jerome's," "the appellation being derived from the baptismal name of the first orphan admitted." The community archivist, noting the contradiction, searched through all available early papers for facts to warrant one or the other statement. The following conclusion appears on the Archive records: This name St. Ambrose is attested by printed letter-heads still extant; a brief history of the Home published in 1903; and by communications with Sisters who have been intimately associated with the activities of the Home:⁵³

Before many months passed, forty children were living in the cramped quarters of the small building and, in the small yard of the hospital, there was not enough room to play. The demands had increased to such an extent that

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid.

the Superior looked about for "a more healthful site and adequate accommodations." The unanimous opinion of the Sisters was that the new locality should be in the valley. A timely circumstance favored the wish of the Sisters. The Fathers of the Society of Jesus had planned the building of a college and had acquired property in the Prickly Pear Valley. Later the project was abandoned and the Society gave Mother Josephine part of the land. The Superior then purchased an additional plot of ground and a new building was erected on the site.⁵⁴

The last orphan home to be opened during the period of time included in this history was that of St. Vincent's in the city of Denver, Colorado. It is described as being one of the "older and the most important of the institutions for the care of such children," located on Homer Boulevard between West Forty-second and West Forty-third Avenues in North Denver. The asylum had its origin "in the zeal of Bishop Machebeuf," who determined in 1880 to establish an orphan home in Denver.⁵⁵ The prelate's "big heart was ever open to the wants of the needy and he saw around him a growing number of helpless and otherwise unfortunate beings for whom no provision had been made."⁵⁶

Late in the summer of 1882 Mother Xavier Ross and Sister Francis Xavier went to Denver from Leavenworth to select a site for the construction

54 Ibid.

55 Jerome C. Smiley, ed., History of Denver, Denver, 1901, 777.

56 Reverend W. J. Howlett, Life of the Right Reverend Joseph P. Machebeuf, D. D., Pueblo, Colorado, 1908, 392.

of a building to provide a home for the orphans of the city. On September 1 of that year, Bishop Machebeuf, Mr. Quayl, an architect, and the two Sisters of Charity went to inspect the five-acre plot which the Highland Park Company had proposed to give the Sisters of Leavenworth on condition that they would erect upon it a building worth ten thousand dollars. The Bishop favored the proffer and urged the Sisters to accept it. Two and one-half acres of ground, adjoining that already given to the Sisters, was owned by Bishop Machebeuf; this was donated by him to the orphans, giving the asylum an excellent frontage. Lack of water in the vicinity made the Sisters hesitate to make the final decision. To overcome this objection, the Bishop suggested the digging of a well and the erection of a windmill and water tank on the premises. For some months, thirteen orphans had been cared for at St. Joseph's Hospital. The urgent need for an orphan home prompted the Sisters to undertake the construction of a building on the site offered to them.⁵⁷

Construction began at once and, as the structure neared completion, a number of Sisters went daily the six miles from the hospital to the orphanage to put the place in order for occupancy. With this work of the Sisters, there is connected the informal opening of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum of Denver. Sometimes the Sisters were compelled to walk the entire distance because the sole vehicle owned by the hospital was needed for other purposes. The Sisters usually carried a lunch with them and remained all day for work. On February 15, 1883, a very cold day, they failed to bring food. At five o'clock,

⁵⁷ Archives, Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth had previously founded St. Joseph's Hospital in Denver.

the Sisters, hungry and fatigued, were preparing to walk to the hospital, when a woman with two children walked into the unfinished building. The mother without hesitation informed the Sisters that she had come to leave the children with them. No amount of argument on the part of distressed Sister Francis Xavier could persuade the determined mother that the orphanage was not yet ready to receive children. The mother, who had arranged to work in Central City, Colorado, left on the next train--the children remained with the Sisters.⁵⁸

The children, John and Georgie Philips, five and seven years of age, were unable to walk, and the Sisters decided to remain over night. Fortunately, food was presently discovered. A society of Catholic women, who had given a fair on the premises the preceding week for the benefit of the orphanage, left some eatables stored in a concealed place in the cellar. The Sisters faced the emergency and made things as comfortable for the little waifs as possible. At the hospital, Mother Xavier had been greatly concerned over the non-appearance of the Sisters, and "great was her surprise to hear that St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum was in operation."⁵⁹

Three days after this occurrence, a Denver paper announced that an asylum for orphans and homeless children had been opened in North Denver. It stated further that the asylum

58 St. Vincent's Dedication Souvenir Book: Containing Complete History of Orphanage and Program of Dedication Day Exercises, 1903, 1-2.

59 Archives, Motherhouse of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth.

consists of a three story brick building with large and airy rooms, and provided with the latest improvements with regard to the arrangement and interior workings . . . The Sisters, within three days, have received not less than twenty children, and will be ready at any time to open their doors and extend their care to the orphan and the waif, irrespective of creed or nationality.⁶⁰

An organization composed of Catholic women, known initially as the "Dorcas Society," was formed in the fall of 1882. Its purpose was the care and relief of poor widows and orphans. The Society proved to be the main support of St. Vincent's for some years.⁶¹ In November, 1884, the Sisters were the recipients of a check "for the handsome sum of \$535.15," the receipts of a ball given by the Hungarian Flour Mills in aid of St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum.⁶² Thus supported, the Sisters could continue the splendid service that they began for the spiritual and physical welfare of the orphans in the Denver area.

60 Rocky Mountain News, Denver, Colorado, February 18, 1883.

61 St. Vincent's Dedication Souvenir Book, 3.

62 Rocky Mountain News, November 28, 1883.

CONCLUSION

Primarily the orphanage movement in the United States was the concern of the Catholic Church expressed through the untiring efforts of its hierarchy, its clergy, its religious communities, as well as, the Catholic laity. The hearts of thousands of its parentless children were gladdened by their zeal during the century and a half covered by this study. Rare were the orphan homes existing under state or municipal management. Non-Catholic orphan children, who became dependents of a state or city and who were not placed in a Catholic asylum, were customarily brought to an almshouse for want of a more suitable place of protection. Not until the third quarter of the nineteenth century were state laws enacted which prohibited the placement of young children in poorhouses. From their inception, the Catholic asylums accepted all orphans irrespective of creed, color, or nationality. Hence, when almshouses were closed to state wards, the latter found a refuge in some Catholic orphan home. Care of orphans under Catholic auspices became an integral part of the very life of our land.

The major share of this magnanimous work of Christian charity sponsored by the Catholic Church was effected by religious communities of women. Most inauspiciously, a small group of Ursuline nuns from France inaugurated the work of orphan care in their diminutive convent home in the city of New Orleans in 1727. Almost one hundred years passed before the members of a

second Sisterhood embarked upon this benevolent work. With the establishment of the Sisters of Charity at Emmitsburg, Maryland, in 1809, the number of orphanages grew rapidly in both the East and the South. By the middle of the nineteenth century, several other orders of Sisters joined the valliant pioneers in this great service for those who had lost their natural protectors. It is worthy of note that more than thirty different communities of religious women were engaged in orphan care in our country by the last quarter of the last century. Hundreds of Sisters dedicated their lives to the cause of the Master's homeless children. For the most part, their deeds were unnoticed and their praises were unsung, but we may presume that the greathearted Sisters would prefer it so.

In great measure, this eleemosynary pursuit followed closely upon the advance of the frontier and the erection of new dioceses in the United States. Settlers, missionaries, and pastors of remote pioneer churches formed the vanguard in frontier regions, but these were quickly joined by intrepid members of religious congregations eager to open schools, orphanages, and hospitals.

A large percentage of the more than one hundred fifty asylums whose history is told in the pages of this study were located in the eastern section of our country. The earliest ones were founded in Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and Washington. Six states along the eastern seaboard could boast of possessing child-caring homes under Catholic auspices before 1850. Twenty years later, Catholic charity had extended its ministrations to orphans from Virginia to Maine. Although originally orphan care had begun in the South, the

institutions there outside of the city of New Orleans were not numerous. Yet from Charleston, South Carolina, to San Antonio, Texas, and as far north as Nashville, Tennessee, they were geographically fairly well distributed.

In far greater numbers were asylums found in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes area. Here they were concentrated mainly in the larger urban centers. The rapid growth of population in this section accounted for the erection of several new dioceses within a relatively short period of time. Almost immediately upon taking possession of a See, the bishop made an appeal for Sisters. St. Louis, at the eastern edge of the Great Plains, emulated other cities of its size in the erection of orphan homes. From this focal point, the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers served as routes of travel to points farther north and west. Sisters were requested to care for orphans in such distant places as Omaha, Leavenworth, Kansas City, and St. Paul. Communities likewise extended their activities into the Pacific States and Rocky Mountain regions. Already in 1852, Sisters followed closely upon the heels of the California gold seekers and homes were opened in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and inland as far as Nevada. In fact, in nearly all of the middle and western states at least one home was established. Two orders of religious arrived from Canada in the 1850's to commence the care of orphans in Washington and Oregon. Geographically the location of the last homes founded during the period, namely those in New Mexico, Colorado, and Montana, coincided with the final stretch of frontier in the United States.

In nearly every instance, the arrival of orphans preceded the establishment of an asylum. Children left with no one to care for them, were

confidently brought to the Sisters who frequently shared an already too small convent home. Infants were deposited on convent doorsteps. These formed the nucleus of asylums which forever remain a credit to those self-sacrificing religious women who conducted them. Beginnings were humble, unostentatious, and generally unplanned. Simplicity, poverty, and hardships were the most outstanding marks of the early homes. Formal openings, accompanied by elaborate dedicatory ceremonies were unknown in the first little orphan homes. Well furnished and adequately equipped buildings came only at a later day when, through many difficulties on the part of the Sisters and with the aid of philanthropy, splendid structures arose to replace simple cottages and even log cabins. Involved techniques, meticulous record keeping, and regulations of welfare societies were not earmarks of the works of charity in pioneer days. Objectives of the day can be stated quite simply as the wholehearted desire to serve orphan children and to perform the task without thought of self or reward.

Three types of institutions developed: the large orphan asylums where hundreds of children received care, the small homes connected with Sisters' convents, and those founded by national groups within individual parishes.

The first named represented those institutions where the sole purpose was to provide a home for orphans. In these homes, opportunities for receiving an education were made available in the asylum itself. To supplement a grade- or high-school education, orphans were taught trades and various skills adapted to their talents and interests. The Sisters conducting the homes felt it their

obligation to prepare their charges for gaining a livelihood after leaving the orphanages. This type of home was largely confined to the larger cities.

The small homes forming an integral part of Sisters' convents were chiefly found in rural areas or towns where the numbers seeking admittance did not make a separate institution mandatory. In these, the Sisters customarily cared for orphans in addition to teaching in a parochial school or conducting a hospital. Another group of the small type included those which were opened for orphan children of mainly one nationality. These were commonly established in larger cities where the immigrants of one nationality tended to concentrate in large numbers, frequently forming whole parishes.

Great increases in the number of children seeking admittance to asylums resulted from epidemics, the Civil War, and disasters of various kinds. Owing to the fact that asylums grew in size as needs arose, frequent transfers to more spacious buildings occurred in the early history of most of the orphanages. Expansion called for funds. Charity is ingenious and regard for the poor orphans found expression in finding ways and means to further the noble work. A variety of methods and schemes were employed to accumulate the wherewithal to build and maintain the homes. Considerable reliance was placed upon orphans' fairs, picnics, benefit concerts, and similar types of entertainment. Charity sermons, especially by renowned personages, were prevalent in the nineteenth century. Surplus funds from Catholic cemeteries, diocesan and parish collections, and money obtained by personal solicitations of the Sisters in charge of the orphan homes were also sources of revenue for the improvement of the asylums.

To the religious engaged in this work of God, material aspects were never of paramount concern. Their implicit trust in Divine Providence was remarkable. They gave unstintingly of themselves and God blessed their labors in a multitude of ways. Their magnanimous services in behalf of the many orphans they mothered are immortalized in the splendid orphan homes which today are scattered over our land.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The greater part of the first-hand information used in this dissertation was obtained from the archival material and the numerous other sources of a primary nature listed in the first section of the Bibliography. The writer is deeply indebted and most sincerely grateful to the religious communities and to many individual Sisters, who not only permitted free access to their archives and files, but who, also, gave generously of their time by locating data on their respective asylums. In a few instances extant records were meager; however, cases of this nature were rare when consideration is taken of the total number of institutions whose history is included in this study.

For data on far distant asylums and the more or less isolated orphan homes, the writer prepared a one-page questionnaire which was sent, together with a letter, to fifty some institutions. In the letter it was suggested that if there were printed material available on their orphan homes, it would be gratefully received. Many institutions sent brochures which supplied much more information than could have been gained from the questionnaire itself. The latter requested the following information: Name and address of institution, title of community of Sisters in charge, location of Motherhouse, date when orphanage was established, the occasion which prompted its founding, the principal sources of revenue, and a list of the most important events in the history of the orphan home.

The books consulted provided information especially on the many noted personalities whose activities were closely associated with the growth of the asylums in the United States. They likewise gave much secular and Church history relevant to the period covered by the study. This was considered pertinent in order that the histories of single institutions would not be isolated from the time, places, and persons properly belonging to the decades included in this history.

The histories of the various religious communities were very helpful in supplying additional acquaintance with the history of the orphanages. The history of a number of institutions was found in the excellent unpublished theses and the dissertations written by persons who left no stone unturned to set forth all the facts relating to the history of a particular home.

APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Sister M. Viatora Schuller, O. S. F. has been read and approved by five members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

June 4, 1954
Date

Joseph Roubicek S.J.
Signature of Adviser