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Postcards from the Past: Emmitsburg, Maryland

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Postcards from the Past

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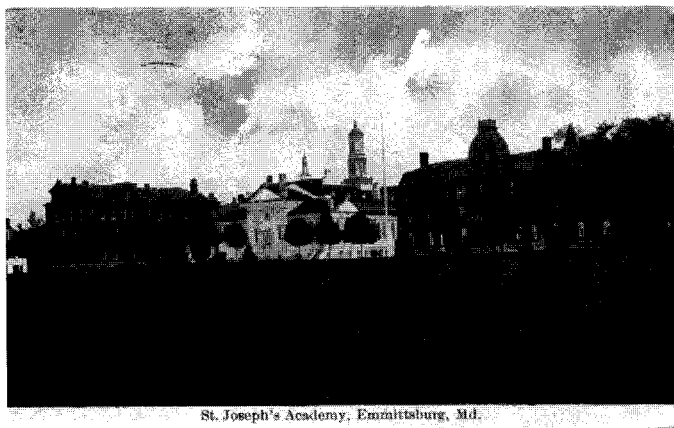
By

BETTY ANN MCNEIL, D.C.

- Emmitsburg, Maryland -

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, who founded the Sisters of Charity of Saint Joseph's (1809) near Emmitsburg, Maryland, based on the *Common Rules* developed by Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac, was a pioneer in Catholic education for women in the United States. Her humble foundation in Saint Joseph's Valley that offered free schooling for poor girls dates to 22 February 1810 and expanded in May of that year to include tuition-paying boarders, becoming the illustrious Saint Joseph's Academy. Saint Joseph's Academy and Free School later successively developed into Saint Joseph College High School (1890-1946), Saint Joseph's High School (1946-1982), and Saint Joseph College (1902-1973) which granted its first baccalaureate degrees to the class of 1914.

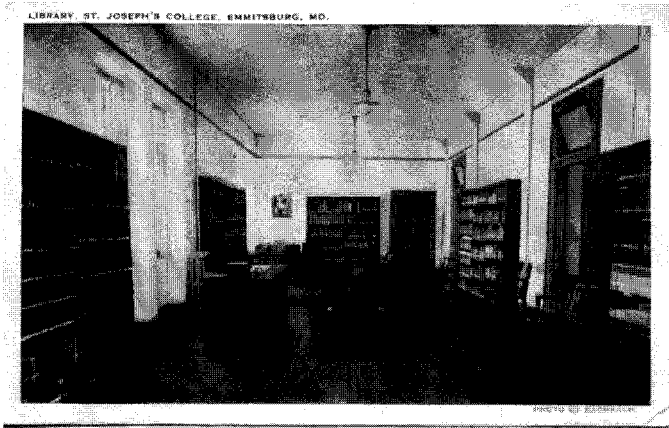
During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Saint Joseph's was a self-contained community operating its own farm, printing press, and cobblers shop, plus other support services. The sprawling campus, which served as the site of an encampment by 80,000 union troops 27-30 June 1863 (im-



St. Joseph's Academy, Emmitsburg, Md.

St. Joseph's Academy, Emmitsburg, Maryland, c.1898-1902. (Left) An Infirmary for the Daughters of Charity, first occupied in 1886, and converted in 1953 for use of the Seminary Sisters until 1964 when it was demolished. (Center) Chapel used by the Daughters of Charity and students. (Right) Burlando building which contained the distribution hall for the Academy. Postmarked June 8, 1909.

Vincentina Collection, DePaul University Special Collections, Chicago, Illinois



Library, St. Joseph College, Emmitsburg, Maryland, c.1917-1945, housed in the Verdier complex, which also included the science labs, high school classrooms, gymnasium, and a natatorium (swimming pool). Named for Rev. François Verdier (superior general of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity, 1918-1933). He was the first French superior general to visit the United States. Photo by Bachrach. *Vincentiana Collection, DePaul University Special Collections, Chicago, Illinois*

mediately before the battle of Gettysburg), is now owned by the United States federal government, and is headquarters for the National Emergency Training Center (NETC), which includes the National Fire Academy, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and related programs.

The Gothic Building, constructed 1845, was headquarters for the Sisters of Charity (after 1850, Daughters of Charity). Designed in the cloister style of the 15th century in Flemish gothic architecture, the edifice had an extension of the gothic cloister toward the chapel, necessitating the relocation of Mother Seton's home, Saint Joseph's House (the White House), which was dismantled board by board, marked, and rebuilt nearby. Union generals used its belfry for surveillance of the surrounding area during the Civil War. Renovated in 1945 and 1955, this wooden building was demolished in 1964.

The Burlando Building, designed by E. G. Lind (1829-1909) and Rev. Francis Burlando, C.M. (1814-1873, provincial director 1853-1873), for whom it was named, served the Academy (and later Saint Joseph College). Burlando was esteemed not only as a priest but also as an educator, businessman, theologian, architect, and builder. This building dates to 1871 and was the first building on the campus not facing Toms Creek (south). It faces westward in Second Empire Style with a flattop-mansard roof and a cupola for observation. It was the site of an



St. Joseph's Academy erected a shrine to Our Lady of Victory in gratitude for preservation of the sisters, pupils, and property during the encampments by Union troops, and later by detached regiments of the Confederate Army, in the summer of 1863. The great battle of Gettysburg was fought less than ten miles away from Saint Joseph's Central House. J.I. Mumper, Gettysburg, PA. Dated March 4, 1907.
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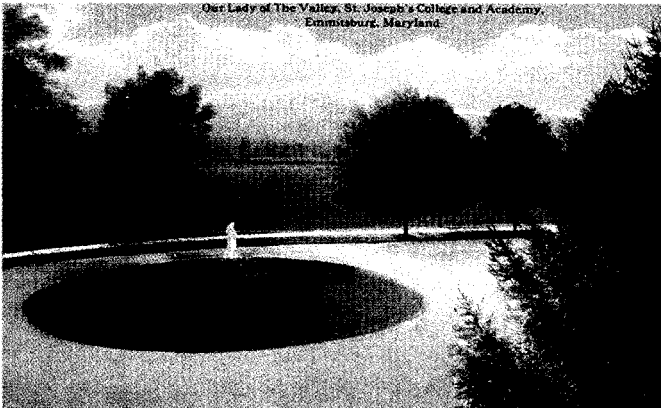


This postcard is probably c.1940-1959, showing Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton depicted in the traditional pose of the portrait commissioned by the Filicchi family of Livorno based on a 1797 engraving by Fevret de Saint-Mémin. The historic sites are open to the public through the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton.
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auditorium or distribution hall and later (1946) became the library of Saint Joseph College (named the *Sister Paula Dunn* [1869-1844, honorary president 1923-1943] *Memorial Library*). It is now the Administration Building for NETC and the National Fire Academy.

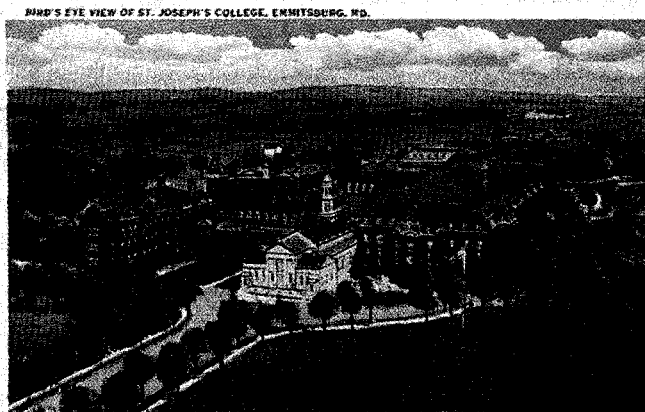
The Chapel (built 1839-1841) on the site was designated by Mother Seton in the Tuscan style of her choice (based on her time in Livorno, Italy), is now the Fallen Firefighters Memorial Chapel, and still retains its original marble, alabaster altars, and stained glass windows. Its interior was redecorated (1873), and the Perboyre extension was added with side altars (1889), with subsequent enlargement and renovation (1891 and 1944).

In addition to the Chapel and the Burlando Building, also placed on the National Historic Register in 1976, were the Mother Seton historical sites, including the Stone House (c.1750), the White House (1810), and the Mortuary Chapel (1845). The latter is a gothic structure designed by Eugene Girard to which William Seton contributed \$250 for its construction to honor his mother in the original cemetery of the Sisters of Charity, the first native community of apostolic women founded in the United States. The remains of Mother Seton were transferred and interred therein (1846) until their exhumation in 1962 in preparation for the beatification (and canonization in 1975) of the first native-born saint of the United States. They now rest in the National Basilica of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton.

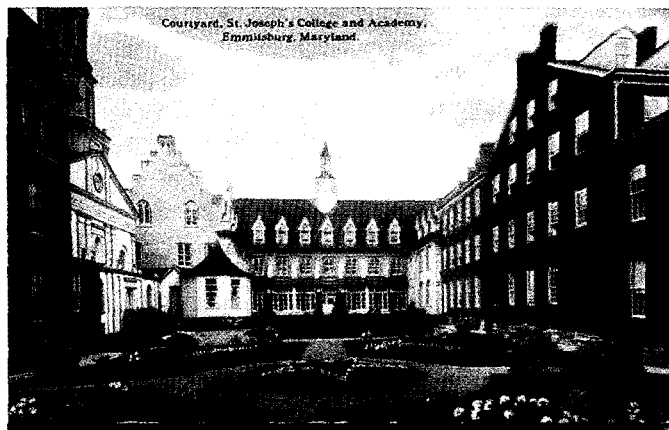


Our Lady of the Valley, St. Joseph College and Academy, Emmitsburg, Maryland, after 1932. This statue of *Virgo Potens* was purchased by Rev. Francis Burlando, C.M., on his last trip to Europe (c.1870), and was installed in the circle in front of the Burlando Building. From the series: "St. Joseph's College and Academy for Young Ladies, One of the Best Known Schools in the Country, Conducted by the Sisters of Charity."

Vincentiana Collection, DePaul University Special Collections, Chicago, Illinois



Bird's Eye View of St. Joseph College, Emmitsburg, Maryland, c.1920-1930. Sycamore trees lined the stately entrance creating a personality of its own for "The Avenue," beloved by generations of pupils and sisters. "The Avenue" led to the Chapel (center), heart of campus activity in buildings used by the Daughters of Charity (left) and Academy pupils and college students (right). Published by Progressive Pharmacy. Postmarked August 4, 1938. *Vincentiana Collection, DePaul University Special Collections, Chicago, Illinois*



Courtyard, St. Joseph College and Academy, Emmitsburg, Maryland, c.1908-1916. Nostalgically called "Mother's Courtyard," reminiscent of the original site of The White House (1810-1845) where Mother Seton and the first generations of Sisters of Charity of Saint Joseph dwelt (center left), flanked by the Gothic Building with a belfry (center), the Chapel, the Burlando Building (left), and the Dubois Building (right) and connecting buildings. From the series: "St. Joseph's College and Academy for Young Ladies. One of the Best Known Schools in the Country, Conducted by the Sisters of Charity." *Vincentiana Collection, DePaul University Special Collections, Chicago, Illinois*

As for myself, I don't know, but God has given me such a high esteem of simplicity that I call it my gospel.

*(Saint Vincent de Paul, conference to the Daughters of Charity,
24 February 1653)*