Sheltering the Distressed

Mother Euphemia Blenkinsop: 1866-1887

For twenty-one years following the Civil War, the role of the visitatrix was ably and warmly filled by Mother Euphemia Blenkinsop. During this time three Vincentians served as provincial directors: Francis Burlando, 1853-1873; Felix Guidry, 1873-1877; and Alexis Mandine, 1877-1892. Each of them guided, supported, made recommendations, and directed the spiritual journey of the province. Nevertheless, it was Mother Euphemia who bore the responsibility for the province, which now extended from New England to California. Her effectiveness in rebuilding, unifying, deepening roots, expanding services and coping with social problems influenced the direction taken by the Community well into the twentieth century.

The first problems to be faced were the direct results of the war: a multitude of sick and disabled, widows and orphans, unemployed and homeless—which particularly in the South, which lacked resources to help them; a bitter regionalist spirit which threatened to infiltrate even the Community; and the challenge to adapt, to meet crises with new services in new locales.

Serving in the War-Ravaged South

Reconstruction in the South stagnated because of the punitive policies of radicals in Congress. Experienced leaders were banned from office because of their known links to the Confederacy; government fell into the hands of unscrupulous carpetbaggers. Military occupation and repression led to violence and intimidation, to the masked terror of the Ku Klux Klan.
In Mississippi fifty thousand had died in the war; many of the veterans who returned were amputees, unable to farm the land. Former slaves were for the most part unemployed, untaught, rootless; no funds were available to set up the services they needed. There were ten thousand war orphans; Saint Mary's Home in Natchez was overcrowded.

Conditions were similar in Alabama and Louisiana. At this time when needs were greatest and thousands, both black and white, were unemployed, the sisters had all they could do to feed, clothe and educate the multitude of orphans in the bulging homes under their care. One sister wrote to Burlando that the house was in no condition to shelter so many older girls. He replied that she should make what repairs she could, but give up the idea of replacing the building; all debts must first be paid. This unusual advice from Burlando—who normally encouraged the timid to strike out boldly, relying on the bank of divine Providence—underlines the hopelessness of the South's destitution. The Archdiocese of New Orleans was so deeply in debt that by 1880 it was on the verge of bankruptcy.

From the end of the war until near the turn of the century, the sisters in the South opened only a few schools—no other missions. In Carrollton near New Orleans, Saint Mary's School housed the overflow from the girl's orphanage. Saint Joseph's in Natchez and Saint Vincent's in Mobile separated from the orphanages to allow more room for child care. Saint Vincent's in Whistler, Alabama, and Saint Mary's in Jefferson, Texas, had to be relinquished after five years because of lack of support. Saint Francis School in Natchez, opened in 1890 to educate the black children of Cathedral Parish, lasted less than a year, unable to survive the opposition engendered by the "Jim Crow" temper of the times.

Obviously other, and new, works were needed. Despite heroic efforts to meet the needs of the people, the sisters could only stretch the resources of existing institutions—like Sister Mathilde Comstock who, after teaching all week at Saint Simeon's, New Orleans, offered for black families on the weekends basic and religious education, job training, and help in finding jobs. The lack of resources prevented more than this.
Charity Hospital in the Reconstruction Era

In New Orleans the situation of Charity Hospital—a state institution for the poor, dependent upon appropriations from the Louisiana legislature—was critical indeed. The amount voted for its support in 1867 was only a fraction of the amount needed. When the Freedmen's Hospital for Negroes (the old Marine Hospital) was closed in 1869, the entire burden of the state's sick and homeless fell upon Charity. By 1871 the hospital was $65,532 in debt. According to Stella O'Connor, historian of Charity Hospital:

There were no funds and no means of obtaining any. The buildings were in a most dilapidated condition, the beds were without mattresses, and the food supply entirely inadequate. Local dealers would no longer honor the hospital's credit. The institution would assuredly have been compelled to close its doors but for the Sisters. In this time of grave crisis they agreed to countersign all bills contracted by the hospital, and the Central House of the Community assumed the responsibility for their payment. . . .

In 1874 a medical supply house refused to furnish further medications until its long overdue bill of $13,000 was paid. For the first eleven months of that year only $7,500 was received from the state by the hospital . . . The hospital at this time was operating on the pitifully small budget of thirty-six and a half cents per patient a day.

The Community faced the difficult question of discontinuing the sisters' services at Charity Hospital, which had become a severe drain on the financial and personnel resources of the province. But Sister Agnes Slavin, who had replaced Sister Regina Smith in charge of Charity,* pleaded for the work to continue with the only argument that holds weight in Vincentian thinking: "The poor are here, and if we leave they will have no one to care for them." The Community continued to support the hospital until the state was again solvent and could resume its responsibility.

*For two brief periods Sister Avellina McDermott held this responsibility.
Epidemics throughout the South

These decades of destitution in the South were punctuated by recurrent epidemics. The virulent black yellow fever—which had caused fourteen deaths among the sisters in 1853—struck again in September 1867, filling the wards with its victims and exposing the sisters to contagion through their care of the sick and children. New Orleans recorded deaths at the rate of one hundred fifty a day. Within two months, ten sisters had died in New Orleans and two in Mobile. Again in 1878 it raged from July to September, causing the deaths of ten sisters in New Orleans and one in Vicksburg, Mississippi. In response to the bishop's request, sisters had been nursing in several Mississippi cities during the epidemic: Natchez, Port Gibson, Vicksburg, and Yazoo City.

Rebuilding and Expanding Coast to Coast

It was not only the South that needed rebuilding after the war. From California to New England, institutions caring for increasing numbers needed to expand or to replace timeworn buildings. At the same time, requests for new services came from bishops, doctors and citizen groups who promised resources to help make their goals possible. A massive construction campaign was undertaken throughout the province. Burlando, who had considerable skill as an architect, drew the plans for buildings using iron pillars for support, some with the Parisian-style mansard roof. The use of his plans, with many variations, saved considerable expense and gave a sense of familiarity to institutions built at this time. The new administration building at Saint Joseph’s in Emmitsburg was designed by him and named for him: the Burlando building.

California

The Market Street building housing the school and orphanage in San Francisco was destroyed by earthquake in 1868, rebuilt, then smothered by factories. In 1873 the sisters sold the property, moved the orphans to a new site overlooking San Francisco Bay, and constructed in 1875 a separate home for infants, the Mount Saint Joseph Infant Asylum. For girls who had formerly attended school
with the orphans, Saint Vincent’s School was opened on Mission Street. After 1887 the boys had their own school, Saint Patrick’s, also taught by the sisters. By 1893 enrollment in the two schools had climbed to eight hundred. Typing and other commercial subjects were offered in both schools, which were staffed by notable educators: Sisters Mary Vincent Collins, Mary Alice Maginnis, Alexis Kuhn, and Caroline Collins, among others.

Sister Stanislaus Roche, in charge of the Roman Catholic Orphanage after the death of Sister Francis Assisium McEnnis, discontinued keeping boarders. Still the number of girls grew, even as the application of state laws became stricter. Girls fourteen or over, no longer wards of the state, could not be lodged with the younger ones. In 1886 Saint Francis Technical School was opened to prepare them for jobs as dressmakers, seamstresses, housekeepers, shop girls, or in professional laundering and alterations. In order to prepare the girls in San Francisco and later in Santa Barbara as certified laundry operators, Sister Mary Bernard Cissell became California’s first female licensed engineer and a member of the engineer’s union.

Saint Vincent’s Institution in Santa Barbara struggled for survival for many years—at first on the land at Las Cieneguitas four miles from the city, purchased from the government with the help of Judge F. J. Maguire. Here ranching was the main support of the school; but when prolonged drought caused the loss of nearly all their livestock, the sisters resorted to grain and orchard crops. For seventeen years they eeked out a meager existence on the ranch; then in 1873 they bought land in town and built a brick school, which burned down before school began. Borrowing money, they built again and expanded their work to include boarding and day schools, an orphanage, and for a short time even a small infirmary. By the turn of the century the orphanage had become their principal work.

Sacred Heart in Hollister, the only Catholic school in San Benito County, was confided to the Daughters of Charity in 1891. The parish stretched for miles around the foothills as far as the New Idria mines forty miles away. The pastor was as generous as he could afford to be, but the sisters drew no salary. Tuition and even board were paid for with potatoes and vegetables left at the door on Sundays. The sisters kept chickens, a cow, and a horse named Diget, which pulled the old buggy for miles as the sisters sought out children to prepare for first Communion, visited poor families, or
made their weekly trips to the county almshouse. The more talented among the sisters taught music and painting for extra fees.

In Los Angeles the hospital moved first to an adobe house near the Plaza, then to a mansion—rich-looking but without water supply—near the railroad grounds. Incorporated in 1869 as the Los Angeles Infirmary, it became a separate mission under Sister Ann Gillen. In 1884 the hospital moved to a six-acre site in Beaudry Park near Sunset Boulevard; here Sister Eugenia Fealy set up the two-year nursing program in 1899. When smallpox struck Los Angeles in 1877 and again in 1886, sisters from the hospital, led by Sister Xavier Schauer, staffed the isolation hospital for all the city's victims of the epidemic. In 1918 the hospital was renamed Saint Vincent's.

The original Los Angeles Charitable Institution continued to house the orphanage for thirty-four years. In 1884 Sister Josephine Leddy, who replaced Sister Scholastica Logsdon as sister servant, purchased property on Boyle Avenue overlooking the city and planned the new building which, in the next sixty-two years, would be home to over nine thousand girls. The house was popularly known as "Boyle Heights."

In San Jose a new house of charity, built in 1889, combined several forms of care. Judge Myles P. O'Connor, a former Saint Louis lawyer who had come west and prospered in gold rush days, donated a two-story brick building in San Jose to be a home for the aged and needy, an orphanage, and a sanitarium or hospital. Sister Severina Brandel's letters describe the delight of the people in having the sisters, the progress of the building at Race and San Carlos Streets, the beauty of the fourteen acres against the backdrop of orchards, golden fields of mustard, the majestic Mount Hamilton to the east and the Santa Cruz range to the west. The south wing of the building housed women; the north wing, men. Above the store room and kitchen were apartments divided for families. The basement contained the engine room, furnace, and laundry.

Judge O'Connor wanted the home to be as self-sufficient as possible. The building had steam and was lighted by gas manufactured on the premises; an artesian well and pump house on the grounds provided water. Nuts, vegetables and fruits were raised in abundance. By September 1889 there were twelve guests, most of them boarders paying their own way. Those with no means of their own were supported by the O'Connors. Doctor J. Underwood
visited daily.

Gradually the purpose of the institution changed from a house of charity to a general hospital. A larger chapel was added in 1892, a school of nursing in 1898, and a surgical annex and X-ray department in 1902, making the San Jose Sanitarium an up-to-date hospital at the turn of the century. Among the last of the boarders living there were the O'Connors themselves, no longer wealthy: the judge blind for the last seven years of his life, and his tiny widow surviving him by seventeen years, lovingly cared for by Sister Aloysia Bowling, one of the pioneers.

*Nevada*

The sisters at Saint Mary's, Virginia City, were by 1867 caring for 125 boarders (orphans and others) and teaching 250 children in two day schools: Saint Mary's for girls and Saint Joseph's for boys. Among the pupils were the sister, and later a nephew, of Buffalo Bill Cody. New buildings were added in 1867 and 1874.

By 1875 Virginia City had a population of over 75,000. Through the generosity of John Mackay, co-owner of the Consolidated Virginia Mine, the Marie Louise Hospital (named for his wife) was built and confided to the sisters. It was the first hospital in Nevada, with three public wards for fifty patients each and a number of private rooms. Doctor J. Grant was the regular physician, Sister Ann Sebastian Warms the sister servant and administrator. One unusual feature of the hospital was a health insurance program, probably among the earliest in the nation. Over five hundred miners were enrolled, paying one dollar a month toward the support of the hospital—an amount secretly matched by Mackay. Each was guaranteed free hospital care when needed, including bed and board, medicine and surgery, services of the doctor and the sisters. Other miners joined the plan—at one time there were six thousand miners on the Comstock—but when owners of the Justice Mine tried to make it compulsory for all their workers, objections were raised in the press and the owners backed down.

In the fire of 1875 much of Virginia City was destroyed, thousands of families left homeless. For days rescuers searched for survivors; the classrooms and corridors of the school buildings were turned into relief shelters. Mackay and his partner distributed supplies generously and paid the fare of over two thousand who
fled to San Francisco. The city was rebuilt, but the bonanza lasted less than twenty years longer. Mines began to close; by 1894 the population had declined to under three thousand. In 1897 the school and orphanage were closed. The hospital, which had admitted only sixteen patients in the entire year, was sold to Storey County at the end of 1897.

Missouri

The Homestead Act of 1864 offered a settler up to eighty acres near a railroad or one hundred sixty away from it, on condition that he live on the land and farm it for five years. As the Union Pacific pushed its rails to the West Coast, feeder lines grew up along the way, opening new areas for settlement. As the land developed, so did the cities that supplied the farmers. Kansas City developed as a riverport and railroad center, thriving on the livestock trade. Saint Joseph, fifty miles to the north, was the starting point for wagon trains going west as it had been for the Wells Fargo Pony Express.

In 1869 a group of sisters arrived in Saint Joseph to begin a hospital on land donated for that purpose. The next year Bishop John J. Hogan asked them to open a school on the first floor of the hospital building. The school flourished; an academy for girls was added. The hospital, however, remained small and was discontinued in 1872. John Corby donated a block of land at Tenth and Powell to which the school was moved; a new two-story brick building was erected in 1883. In 1891 the school was discontinued and the hospital reopened in its place. Known as the Saint Joseph Corby Hospital, it grew rapidly, doubling its bed capacity within a dozen years, adding pharmacy, operating pavilion, and a school of nursing which became a three-year program in 1898.

Development in Kansas City came later, with a home for boys and, after the turn of the century, an infant home, both begun by groups of Catholic lay women. The sisters were asked to take over both institutions: the Kansas City Boys' Home in 1897 and the Saint Anthony Infant Home in 1909. A small maternity hospital called Saint Vincent's was conducted by the sisters who staffed the infant home.

The population of Saint Louis, which had multiplied tenfold between 1840 and 1860, doubled again by 1870, making it the
fourth largest city in the nation. No new works of the sisters were established in the next decades, but existing ones expanded and relocated. Saint Louis Hospital, begun in 1828 as Missouri’s first and only hospital, moved from Fourth Street to a spacious location just east of Grand Avenue, the new city limits. To keep alive the memory of John Mullanphy, its first benefactor, it was renamed Saint Louis Mullanphy Hospital. Among its eminent physicians were Doctor Simon Pollack, an active member of the United States Sanitary Commission during the Civil War, who conducted an eye and ear clinic at the hospital for forty-five years; and Doctor Charles Bosliniere, a pioneer in the use of forceps to save the unborn child, who founded at Mullanphy the first gynecological clinic in America.

Saint Vincent Free School also moved from downtown to Grand Avenue, where it was known as Saint Vincent Seminary and patronized by all levels of society until its closing in 1909. Saint Philomena’s, which began as the girls’ section of Cathedral Orphanage and continued as the earliest of the technical schools, moved to a large new building in Saint Malachy’s Parish. It housed older girls, working and unemployed; over one hundred older orphans; and three schools. These were: the industrial school, Saint Malachy’s Parish school for girls, and a select school known as the “Isabella.” The latter offered an academy-type education to a wealthier clientele during the twenty years it took to pay off the mortgage on the building. When the westward movement of industry reached Twenty-Ninth Street, this building near Saint Malachy’s was sold, and Saint Philomena’s moved in 1909 to its final location on Cabanne Avenue.

Other institutions in Saint Louis also moved to better and larger facilities. Saint Ann’s Home for Infants and Widows purchased land in 1888, but had no funds to build. A dairy farm was maintained on the land until 1905, when a new building was finally completed. This building housed pregnant girls and a maternity hospital as well as infants and widows.

Saint Mary’s Home for Girls had in 1897 two hundred sixty-seven girls in the house on Biddle Street and sixty tots in the cottage nearby. Overcrowding, partially due to an increased number of retarded children—difficult to place and so remaining at the home all their lives—led to increased danger of epidemics. An average of three hundred fifty children “passed through” Saint Mary’s each year before being placed in adoptive or foster homes. Those
remaining at age twelve or fourteen were placed in a home or a job, or moved to Saint Philomena’s to be made proficient as seamstresses or dressmakers. After 1870 a contract was signed between the institution and the family wishing to hire an adolescent girl as a live-in worker. The family guaranteed that the girl would receive food and clothing, good treatment, a Catholic education, and an outright gift of two hundred dollars when she reached eighteen years of age. The pastor of the parish recommended the family and was a witness to the contract. If an inspector sent from Saint Mary’s found that the agreement was not being kept, the family lost all rights and the girl returned to Saint Mary’s. Overcrowding at the home was greatly relieved by the move in 1900 to a large modern building on nine acres of land near Calvary Cemetery, donated by Father J. Hayes.

Saint Vincent’s Institution for psychiatric care had expanded considerably in its Soulard location, adding another story and a wing for inebriates. During the Civil War the hospital absorbed sixty-seven patients from the state asylum at Fulton, temporarily closed. By the 1880s the choice of a new site was imperative. Sister Magdalen Malone selected a large farm in Saint Louis County; here a castle-like building was completed and occupied in 1895. Shortly after the move was completed, the vacated building in Soulard was destroyed completely by a tornado.

Damaged severely in the same tornado was the House of the Guardian Angel, where orphan and half-orphan girls were sheltered and taught industrial arts. The building was repaired and continued in use for another fifty years.

In 1907 sisters were sent to the parish school in Perryville, Missouri, site of the first Vincentian establishment in the United States. At first named for Felix de Andreis, leader of the Vincentians who came from Rome in 1818, the school was soon renamed Saint Vincent’s.

Iowa

When in 1867 the sisters opened Saint Vincent’s School in Keokuk, a Mississippi river town, Iowa was added to the number of states served by the Daughters of Charity. The school was for girls, but in 1874 a class for small boys was added. Saint Peter’s Academy for girls developed; by the turn of the century it had
become a coeducational parish high school and was housed in a new building. Now known as Cardinal Stritch High School, it is the oldest permanent educational institution in the Davenport Diocese and the second oldest in the Northwest Territory.

Indiana

With expanding farm populations in Illinois and Indiana, boom times came to river cities along the Ohio and Wabash Rivers. By 1872 Evansville, Indiana, had a population of thirty thousand. Father Deydier's dream of bringing Sisters of Charity to Evansville was realized when Sister Marie Voelker and her companions arrived in the summer of 1872 to open Saint Mary's Hospital. This was the only hospital within a radius of one hundred miles. The sisters purchased the former marine hospital for rivermen; patients began to arrive immediately. In 1893 a new Saint Mary's was built in a better location; here Indiana's first school of nursing opened three years later.

Saint Vincent's Infirmary in Indianapolis was commenced in 1881 at the request of Bishop Silas M. Chatard. The hospital's first patients were an opium addict and an alcoholic. Since the three-story brick hospital had no furnace and no servants, the sisters carried coal up and ashes down the three flights of stairs, did the laundry, cooking and serving of meals, and other labor. A new building completed in 1889 was destroyed by fire in 1904; so the old one had to serve until it could be replaced in 1913. The school of nursing began in 1897.

Illinois

Chicago developed rapidly from a fort to a town to a flourishing rail-and industrial center. In 1861 the Daughters of Charity had opened their first mission in the city, the School of the Holy Name in Cathedral Parish. During the Civil War the school closed while the sisters served in ambulances and military hospitals, but after the war they returned to teach. In 1867 the Community accepted Saint Columba's School and opened the House of Providence to those who needed shelter: mothers with infants, the lonely aged, the unemployed, an assortment of afflicted humanity. Religious
instruction and home visiting in Cathedral Parish were part of the apostolate.

Bishop James Duggan had asked the sisters to begin a hospital for the north side of the city; but in his illness he seemed to have forgotten his request and his promise of aid. "Rent a house and make a beginning," Burlando told Sister Walburga Gehring. "You must make a beginning, even if you will be obliged to break it up." There was much opposition, but the sisters finally rented an old summer residence near what is now Diversey and Clark for fifty dollars a month. They renovated, put in beds for thirty patients, and opened Providence Hospital 30 June 1869. Two years later they purchased a lot on Garfield Avenue and began construction of a three-story hospital with two wings to be added later, at a total cost of fifty thousand dollars. The name was changed to Saint Joseph's Hospital.

Meanwhile the Community had accepted another school in Chicago, Saint Patrick's. It had been in session three weeks when there occurred the great fire which was to burn out the heart of Chicago, leaving at least ninety thousand homeless.

The fire which began Sunday evening in Pat O'Leary's barn spread rapidly, generating such heat that it built up its own seventy-mile-an-hour winds. By midnight the fire had leaped the river, exploding kerosene tank cars in the railroad yards, attacking the Gas and Light Works and the waterworks. By the time the rains came Monday night, over two thousand acres of the city were destroyed. Loss in assets was estimated to be two hundred million dollars; the death count is unknown to this day. Pestilence attacked the homeless survivors, already weakened by shock, hunger and exposure.

Holy Name Cathedral and School and the House of Providence, all in the direct path of the flames, were totally destroyed. Sister Mary McCarthy was given the Blessed Sacrament from the Cathedral to carry to safety. Some of the sisters formed a procession with residents of the house and school, reciting the rosary as they walked toward the hospital two miles away. At the hospital the sisters gave food and drink to hundreds of terrified refugees until their supplies were gone. The fearful crowd fled on; but the wind changed, rain fell, and the hospital was spared.

The Relief Committee gladly sent provisions and fuel to the old hospital and the finished part of the new, where the sisters had set up shelters for the homeless. As epidemic followed privation, the six
hospital sisters were divided, three staffing Saint Joseph's, three a barracks hospital two miles away launched by the Relief Committee.

Saint Joseph's had several famous doctors on its staff, including Alexis Carrel and Nicholas Senn. In 1884 the hospital added a clinic and outpatient department, and in 1893 a school of nursing which was for many years the principal training center for hospital sisters of the Community in the Midwest.

In the summer of 1891, Saint Vincent's Infant Asylum was opened in a rented house; adoptions began the following year. By 1898 the institution, housed in a four-story building on LaSalle and Superior Streets, included the infant asylum, a maternity hospital open to the general public as well as to single mothers, an orphanage for preschool children, and the work of visiting the poor and sick in their homes.

Holy Name School and the House of Providence were never reopened by the Daughters of Charity after the fire, but Saint Columba's continued to serve Chicago girls until 1907. High school classes were introduced there in 1902. Saint Patrick's also added grades nine and ten, specializing before 1910 in business subjects, instrumental music, and Irish history and literature.

**Wisconsin**

The new Saint Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee, overlooking Lake Michigan at North Point, had steam heat—a marvel to the sisters, who had nicknamed their previous building "The Crystal Palace" because of the frost and icicles which adorned its walls and windows in damp weather. The steam heat apparatus was the invention of a blind resident of the hospital, James Judge, who felt his way with his cane to get accurate dimensions, then whittled wooden models to be cast in metal. The system cost $3500 and was so efficient and economical that it was later recommended for state institutions.

With no endowments and few donations, the hospital relied for support on government payments for its care of seamen. Other patients paid what they could; those who could not were called by the sisters "representatives of God." Deficits were common. In 1878, for example, the income from care of marine patients (at the rate of fifty cents per patient day) was $3731.75. Income from paying
patients was $2618.99. The deficit for the year was $1542.45. In 1894 a nurses' training school was begun, and in 1899 the first medical/surgical staff prepared the hospital for a more sophisticated type of patient care. A new building was needed, but Sister Dolores Gillespie, administrator from 1904 to 1927, could not get a loan. Saint Mary's was considered a poor risk because it carried too many charity patients.

Across the street from the hospital Saint Vincent's Infant Asylum was begun in 1877 to care for mothers, newborn infants, foundlings, and dependent children up to the age of five. Two years later Saint Rose's Orphanage separated from Saint John's School and moved into a new building on North Point. In the additional space at Saint John's a high school was added, one grade at a time.

**Michigan**

Michigan Retreat for psychiatric patients moved in 1870 from Detroit to Dearborn, where it was renamed Saint Joseph's Retreat. Within the next decade three more buildings were added.

The new House of Providence in Detroit took over the care of destitute mothers and abandoned infants formerly shared between Saint Mary's Hospital and Saint Vincent's Orphanage. Providence also offered maternity care and some general hospital services to the public. When a new Providence was built in 1909, almost two hundred infants and preschool children were still being cared for there.

Saginaw, Michigan, was the site of a new mission accepted by the sisters in 1874. In the former Monitor Hotel they opened Saint Mary's Hospital, which was to become well-known among the lumberjacks and mill hands of northwest Michigan. Having undertaken the work, the sisters also took the responsibility of finding the means to support it. They visited lumber camps to sell five dollar tickets entitling the workers to total hospital care, including medicine and surgery. This health insurance, inaugurated in 1874 and among the first in the nation, was the main support of the hospital, enabling it to move to a better location in 1876.

In 1875 the Community accepted the care of Saint Vincent's Orphan Home in Saginaw, which had previously been conducted by Father Francis Van der Bom and the ladies of the parish. A new
building was constructed in 1877. Destroyed by fire, it was rebuilt and the work continued for more than fifty years.

**West Virginia**

In 1883 the sisters returned to Martinsburg in the new state of West Virginia to open Saint Joseph’s School. Landowners were no longer rich and many families were in real need. Martinsburg became a strong Catholic center in an unchurched region of Appalachia.

**Virginia**

After the Civil War Saint Vincent’s Hospital in Norfolk, housed in the Behan Mansion, was in dire need of repair and expansion. Between 1870 and 1881 three separate additions enlarged the facility. Damaged by fire, it was again rebuilt and modernized with surgical, X-ray, laboratory and pharmaceutical equipment. Later known as DePaul, it was for many years the only Catholic hospital in Virginia.

In Richmond Bishop John McGill wished an improved school for Saint Patrick’s Parish. In 1867 Sister Innocent Cunningham opened a girls’ school and academy in a rented house. The first year one hundred fifty girls attended. In 1868 the sisters purchased a nearby lot where a larger school was built to accommodate boys and girls in the parish school as well as the academy for older girls.

The pattern of Catholic education until well after the Civil War had called for separate schools for boys and girls, with the girls taught by sisters or laywomen and the boys by priests, brothers or laymen. In the spring of 1875 Bishop James Gibbons, who had succeeded McGill as Bishop of Richmond, made a trip to Emmitsburg to ask for sisters to teach in a parish school in Petersburg, Virginia. Because the parish was too small to support two schools, he asked Mother Euphemia to join him in an experiment of confiding both boys and girls to the sisters in the same parish school. The Council agreed; sisters were sent in 1876. The school, named Saint Joseph’s, opened with ninety children, thirty-five of them boys. When decades later a name change was sought for the high school, it was appropriately named Gibbons High.
School.

Twice more Gibbons visited Emmitsburg asking for sisters to staff parochial schools. By the end of the century the Daughters of Charity were conducting eight schools in Virginia, well in advance of public school development in the state at the time. Where public schools had a five-and-a-half-month school year, the sisters’ schools had a nine-to-ten-month year. Secondary education was not, for the most part, a concern of the public schools until the twentieth century, while the four academies—Saint Joseph’s and Saint Patrick’s in Richmond, Holy Cross in Lynchburg, and Saint Joseph’s in Portsmouth—offered a complete secondary course, emphasizing both cultural and practical subjects. Saint Joseph’s in Petersburg and Saint Francis in Staunton offered a partial high school course.

The experiment suggested by Gibbons had been extended. Both Petersburg and Lynchburg parish schools had boys and girls taught by the sisters in the same school but in separate classrooms, while at Saint Francis School in Staunton boys and girls were taught in the same classroom by the same teacher.

Maryland

In 1877 Gibbons was appointed coadjutor archbishop of Baltimore with the right of succession. Within a year he presided at the burial of his predecessor, Archbishop James Roosevelt Bayley, in the mortuary chapel at Emmitsburg built for Bayley’s aunt, Elizabeth Seton. A few months later Gibbons officiated at the obsequies of Mother Seton’s first biographer, Charles I. White, pastor of Saint Matthew’s Church in Washington, who had baptized the infant Gibbons in Baltimore Cathedral forty-two years earlier.

As archbishop of Baltimore, Gibbons continued his interest in the concerns of the Daughters of Charity. In 1889 the sisters and children moved from the old Saint Mary’s Asylum to a new facility in Roland Park. For boys who had outgrown the preschool program of Saint Vincent’s Asylum, the sisters staffed Saint Vincent’s Home from 1899 to 1911.

Baltimore was the scene of the Third Plenary Council in 1884. In preparing the agenda for the Council, Gibbons sought to extend to all dioceses the high standards of Catholic education that had been achieved in a few. The topics ranged from the establishment
of a national Catholic university (achieved in Washington, D.C. in 1889) to an education suitable for the children of immigrants. Legislation of the Council required the building of elementary schools in all parishes, placing the onus for their support upon pastors and parishioners rather than religious communities. While preservation of faith and morals was a primary purpose of the Catholic school, excellence in teaching was also to be pursued. Teacher preparation was stressed. Competent diocesan boards were to be set up to test and certify teachers, supervise curricula and textbook selection, maintain standards of excellence. A series of Baltimore Catechisms resulted from the Council, forming a standard for religious instruction in the parish school, in classes for public school children, or in the home.

The urgency for Catholic schools on the parish level marks the language of the pastoral letter accompanying the decrees of the Council:

No parish is complete till it has schools adequate to the needs of its children, and the pastor and people of such a parish will feel that they have not accomplished their entire duty until the want is supplied.6

In his own archdiocese of Baltimore, Gibbons continued to appeal to the Daughters of Charity for educational leadership. In 1882 Saint Martin’s Academy separated from Saint Joseph’s House of Industry to become Saint Martin’s parish school. In Saint John’s Parish in 1903, and again at Immaculate Conception in 1907, the sisters took over the education of the parish boys in classes separate from the girls.

Gibbons encouraged the relocation of Mother Seton’s original free school to Saint Vincent’s Hall in the town of Emmitsburg, where it became the parish school. It soon expanded to include boys; a school for black children was added in 1886. In 1903 the sisters accepted another coeducational parish school, Saint Anthony’s, in the mountains not far from Emmitsburg.

The enrollment at Saint Joseph’s Academy in Emmitsburg was considerably reduced by the removal of the day school into town. Father Mandine, as director of the province, brought to Archbishop Gibbons the concern of the Council with regard to the academy, and their thoughts about closing it. Gibbons responded with a strong request to keep the academy open and make efforts to
increase the enrollment.* The course of studies offered was far in advance of most curricula, including science, mathematics, philosophy and several languages: Latin, French, Spanish, Italian and German. Many gifted teachers were on the faculty: Sister Lucia May in the music department; Sister Victorine Petry who taught German, French and Spanish for twenty-eight years;** and Sister Felix McQuaid, an excellent Greek and Latin scholar whom Father John McCaffrey, president of Mount Saint Mary's, declared to be “the most brilliantly intellectual woman in the United States.”

Sister Francis Lawler, directress of the academy, was the guiding spirit in the evolution from academy to college. Already students were taking advanced courses. The distinction between the four-year secondary course and a more advanced college curriculum was made, and in 1902 the charter which had given the academy legal existence in 1816 was amended, granting Saint Joseph's the power to conduct higher education for women and to confer degrees. Thus it became one of the first handful of Catholic four-year liberal arts colleges for women in the United States. Sister Francis Lawler became the college's first academic dean, while remaining directress of the academy. Scholarships were offered so discreetly that teachers never knew which of their students paid tuition. Enrollment gradually increased; boarders came from fifteen states as far west as California. Two decades after the college began conferring degrees, it became necessary to construct two residence halls.

Washington, D.C.

What was probably the first instance of a Congressional appropriation to help build a Catholic hospital occurred in Washington, D.C., just after the Civil War. Providence Hospital, as the only health care institution for civilians in the District of Columbia, had a unique relationship with the federal government. During the war Congress had appropriated six thousand dollars a year "for the support, care and medical treatment of forty transient paupers, medical and surgical patients." After the war the funding was

*In 1890 there were only fifty-one students. With the founding of the alumnae association in 1897, the picture began to change.
**Sister Victorine was born in Rhenish Prussia and educated in Lorraine.
renewed, the annual appropriation raised to twelve thousand dollars, the number of indigent patients to be cared for increased from forty to sixty, and an additional thirty thousand granted for an addition to the building. In 1868 another thirty thousand dollars was appropriated for the completion of the hospital building.

These authorized expenditures were under the direction of the Surgeon General of the Army, who made periodic reports to the Congressional Committee on Appropriations. In 1870 Surgeon General Joseph K. Barnes wrote:

I have every reason to be satisfied with the manner in which their contract with the government has been fulfilled by the Sisters in charge of Providence Hospital, and there is no similar institution in this city through which this most necessary and useful appropriation could be made to meet the intentions of Congress.7

In 1897 when it was proposed to erect an isolation building on the hospital grounds, some questioned funding services given in a Catholic hospital. Surgeon General George M. Sternberg testified before a joint committee of Congress, pointing out that the sisters and staff physicians cared for the indigent gratuitously, and that Providence usually hospitalized 110 to 140 destitute patients per month—considerably more than the 95 stipulated by Congress.

I will say in the first place that it amounts to 54 cents a day for patients cared for under this contract. That is all the government is paying, and I do not believe that there is another hospital in the District that can care for them at that cost.8

Congress authorized the funds, but the appropriation was challenged on the grounds of violating the First Amendment. The matter reached the Supreme Court as the case of Bradfield v. Roberts. The Court ruled that Providence was a charitable corporation fulfilling its purpose; religious affiliation of the incorporators or the auspices under which the hospital is conducted “are wholly immaterial... All that can be said of the corporation itself is that it has been incorporated by an Act of Congress and for its legal powers that act must be exclusively referred to.” According to its charter the hospital cared for the sick and injured without regard to race, color, or creed.9 This case proved to be a turning point, influencing subsequent appropriations made by Congress in favor of hospitals staffed by religious.
The isolation building was built in 1899, and a nurses' home and school added two years later with government help. The school of nursing, established in 1894 and extended to a three-year program in 1895, became a recognized leader in the education of nurses, including male nurses after 1909. Medical students from Georgetown and Columbia Universities observed operations in the surgical amphitheater, including bloodless surgery introduced in 1902 by Doctor Adolph Lorenz of Vienna. An outpatient department opened in 1904, a department of social service in 1907, and a day nursery in 1909. This day nursery served a dual purpose: to care for children of working mothers, and to provide a field of observation of the well child for medical and nursing students.

Providence also cared for sick and injured merchant seamen from the ports of Alexandria and Georgetown; these were sent by the Collector of the Ports under the care of surgeons of the Marine Hospital Service. When the United States Public Health Service evolved from the Marine Service, care at Providence under government contract was extended to all government employees with service-connected injuries or illnesses.

In 1903 the sisters were requested to serve another hospital in Washington—the United States Soldiers' Home and Hospital. Seven sisters were sent to replace the student nurses who had been caring for the veterans. This was the only military hospital staffed by the Daughters of Charity in peacetime.

Other apostolates in the city of Washington continued to develop. Immaculate Conception School, opened in 1865, had an addition built in 1886. By 1902 a four-year high school had developed.

Saint Ann's Infant Home acquired a summer house in Berwyn, Maryland. Saint Vincent's Orphanage moved to Edgewood, near Catholic University. Saint Rose's Asylum was an 1872 outgrowth of the dressmaking class begun in the orphanage in 1868. When Saint Vincent's moved, Saint Rose's continued in the old location, developing a program geared to prepare girls to be self-supporting and independent, and above all, strong in faith and Christian values. Saint Rose's also acquired a summer home, this one in Ocean City, Maryland; but it was sold in 1908 to finance a new Saint Rose's in the city. This was near the Apostolic Delegation, which provided chaplains for the school.

As the ready-to-wear clothing industry developed, it caused the gradual phasing out of industrial schools in the early twentieth
century. Some of the buildings continued to serve as homes for working girls. For the most part, the thrust to provide job training for women took two new trends beginning for the Daughters of Charity in the 1890s: schools of nursing in the hospitals, and commercial classes in the high schools. Saint Rose’s in Washington had a longer and more influential existence than technical schools in other parts of the country, largely because of the vision of those sisters who planned its curriculum, which combined industrial and homemaking arts with commercial and standard academic high school subjects.

Pennsylvania

Saint Joseph’s Orphanage at Seventh and Spruce in Philadelphia was the oldest Catholic child-care institution in the United States. In 1882 a summer home was purchased in Germantown; by 1892 both houses were filled to capacity year round. A new building was erected on the Germantown property and named Gonzaga Memorial Home, in honor of Sister Gonzaga Grace, who had given sixty-seven years of service to the children of Philadelphia. In 1898 it became a separate institution supplementing Saint Joseph’s at Seventh and Spruce.

Saint Vincent’s Home was started at mid-century to handle the overflow from Saint Joseph’s. Both institutions were soon filled beyond capacity in spite of numerous additions; both were in industrialized areas. To relieve the situation, the infants from Saint Vincent’s were moved in 1885 to the summer home in Paschalville; it became a separate institution known as the House of the Guardian Angel. As a maternity hospital developed, the name was changed to Saint Vincent’s Hospital for Women and Children. Services were offered to the general public as well as to dependent mothers. By the turn of the century the Paschalville building proved inadequate; Sister Mary Joseph O’Brien dreamed of buying the property of the asylum for the blind, but had no money for such a purchase. Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan was aware of her hopes. When he received funds totaling one hundred fifty thousand dollars on the occasion of his jubilee in 1903, he bought the building at Twentieth and Race, financing renovations and improvements as well. The residence served for another generation, housing as many as six hundred children at a time.
For some time the bishops had been opposing the placement of Catholic children in non-sectarian houses of refuge or in non-Catholic homes. After 1890 the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in major cities became involved in this effort. The numbers of children in Catholic orphanages swelled as Catholic children formerly in other institutions were transferred to the care of the archdiocese. Juvenile courts after 1900 were established in the larger cities. Saint Vincent de Paul men kept in contact with the courts to make sure the Catholic homes were receiving the Catholic children. Ladies of Charity in Philadelphia and other cities not only assisted in the orphanages, but also were involved in aftercare for children discharged from the institutions, visiting them and evaluating the conditions under which they lived, and reporting to the sisters in charge of the homes.

The Ladies of Charity were also concerned with the day nursery which opened in 1903 at Saint Vincent’s Asylum. The work grew; eventually it outgrew the space allotted, and became Cathedral Day Nursery.

Mrs. Catherine Medary left a legacy for a home in Reading, Pennsylvania, to remove Catholic girls from the poorhouse. In 1872 twelve children were gathered into Saint Catherine’s Asylum, to which a new building was added in 1874, and a new wing just three years later.

Two schools in rural Pennsylvania, just over the state line from Emmitsburg, were accepted at this time: Saint Francis Xavier School in Gettysburg (1899) and Saint Aloysius School in Littlestown (1901). Both were transferred to the Sisters of Mercy in 1920.

**Massachusetts**

Two schools commenced in Massachusetts in this era were too far from Catholic population centers to be financially viable. Saint Mary’s in Dedham began in 1866; Saint Mary’s in Franklin in 1893. Both struggled for about twelve years before the sisters were withdrawn.

Saint Peter’s House in Lowell, where textile mills were drawing immigrant workers, began in 1865 as a parish center offering Sunday classes, visits to the sick, and evening education for factory girls. An orphanage, started in 1870, was closed by the new pastor.
in 1887.

Meanwhile, in 1867 five sisters had opened Saint John's Hospital in Lowell. The new building erected the following year was enlarged twice, and a school of nursing added in 1892.

Carney Hospital, founded in South Boston in 1863, added an ophthalmic department in 1869, famous for its work on color blindness. Doctor Hasket Derby, author of *The Modern Operation for Cataract*, was the consulting surgeon. An outpatient department opened in 1877; the fee was ten cents a visit. In 1882 the first abdominal surgery in Boston, an ovariectomy, was performed at Carney; in 1891 the city's first skin clinic was opened. The school of nursing, begun in 1892, was the first Catholic training school in New England.

The maternity and infant care wing of Carney had been incorporated in 1868 as Saint Ann's Infant and Lying-In Hospital. In 1874 it was removed to Dorchester, where it functioned as a foundling home, maternity hospital, and shelter for dependent mothers under the auspices of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. The name was changed to Saint Mary's Home and Saint Margaret's Hospital. The sisters withdrew in 1890, but returned three years later at the request of the board of trustees. In 1905 a day nursery was added to care for the children of working mothers.

In 1907 another day nursery—named "Columbus" to honor the Knights of Columbus who served on its board—was opened in the vicinity of Carney Hospital. A social service department served the needs of the neighborhood families. From these beginnings Laboure Center developed.

The Home for Destitute Catholic Children, founded in 1866 to care for children orphaned by cholera and the war, moved in 1871 to larger quarters on Harrison Avenue. The home was enlarged twice and was always crowded.

In 1902 Archbishop John J. Williams of Boston set up the Catholic Charitable Bureau to cooperate with state authorities in finding Catholic homes for Catholic children. One of the first of its kind, the bureau included family welfare work on a small scale and led to a diocesan childplacing program.

*New York*

The concern of the bishops of northern and western New York
for the care of immigrant children influenced the Daughters of Charity to take on six additional child-care institutions during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

In Albany six sisters took over Saint Joseph School, separated from Saint Vincent Asylum. An industrial school was begun after the Civil War and flourished until 1911. In 1886 during an epidemic of measles, sick children from Saint Vincent's Asylum were isolated in the old Schuyler Mansion. In 1889 this became a separate institution, known first as Saint Francis de Sales Infant Asylum, later as Saint Catherine's Infant Home. In 1880 a sister was assigned to visit the poor; the Saint Vincent de Paul Society paid her board at the orphanage.

Across the river in Troy, the parish school was separated from Saint Vincent's Asylum in 1872. Classes continued to be taught at the orphanage. Some of the Community's best educators were assigned to teach in child-care institutions in New York at this time in order to bring their schools up to the New York Regents' Standards. The orphan, having no one else on whom to depend for decision-making or support, had the most need of a good education.

In Utica in 1895 the sisters took charge of Saint Joseph's Infant Home, already organized by a group of ladies, and began a two-year nursing course there.

In Buffalo an emergency hospital was established in 1901 as a branch of Sisters Hospital, to extend crisis services to other parts of the city. The school of nursing, begun in 1889, became a part of the Emergency Hospital. Saint Vincent's Orphanage moved to larger quarters; a technical school for older orphans was opened as a separate mission.

The former poor house in Syracuse was purchased by the Saint Vincent de Paul Society in 1872 as a home for orphaned and dependent boys. Sister Francis DeSales Minges kept the boys busy with baseball, hikes, berrying, nutting and other activities, in addition to school work. On the sixty-acre farm they learned about crops and farm animals. In 1899 she organized a drum and bugle corps with donated instruments. The boy who led the band followed parades in the city and came home whistling tunes, which a blind resident then picked out on the piano. The corps learned about forty catchy pieces this way. A new building acquired in 1890 included a nursery for two-to six year olds. Destroyed by fire in 1907, it was rebuilt in 1910.
In 1900 the sisters assumed charge of Saint Mary’s Infant Asylum, Syracuse, then in its ninth year of service. A public maternity hospital and shelter for infants and mothers followed. From 1906 to 1913 a day nursery was housed there.

Saint Mary’s Hospital in Rochester, New York, was destroyed by fire in 1891, but all three hundred patients were evacuated safely. To determine if funds could be raised to rebuild, the sisters called a meeting. Those present gave more than seven hundred dollars and went out to solicit from others. Before the year’s end the hospital was rebuilt. In 1892 a nurses’ training school began. The first six students graduated after two years, but the course soon became a three-year program, certified under the Nurse Practice Act in 1905. In 1898 a ten-room operating pavilion was erected; a year later, an isolation pavilion.

The outpatient department, incorporated in 1870 as Saint Mary’s Dispensary, continued to function as an extension of the hospital, sharing in all the technological advances available at Saint Mary’s. These were impressive: in 1896—one year after Roentgen discovered X-rays—Saint Mary’s Clinic offered X-ray services to patients. In 1902 a newer X-ray machine was purchased by the medical staff. The radiologist explained:

We are now able to assist the surgeons in all their cases of fractures and bone diseases, to treat malignant conditions from our medical wards, and to aid in the diagnosis of many abnormal conditions of the softer parts.10

The X-ray machine truly was used to treat malignant conditions. In May 1902 Sister Anacaria Hoey, suffering from a cancer of the mouth and tongue so severely enlarged that she was unable to eat or even to receive the Eucharist, was sent from Emmitsburg to stay with the sisters in Rochester and receive X-ray treatments. Her biographer relates that the cancer responded to treatment, actually shrinking in size; but Sister Anacaria, still unable to eat, died before the course of treatment was completed.

**Strengthening the Bonds of Unity**

The first visit of a superior to the West occurred in 1875 when Sister Euphemia made a visitation of each of the missions of California and Nevada, met with bishops and pastors, and visited with
sisters individually. This journey was her opportunity to know the Western sisters, share their concerns, observe conditions of the apostolates, appreciate the work being accomplished, and settle some difficulties. In the next few years many sisters who had made their seminary in the West were missioned East and South, while those who had been too long in North or South were sent to other parts of the country. This deliberate blending preserved the sisters from the contagion of regional bitterness so rampant in the nation at that time, while reminding them of Saint Vincent’s teaching that a Daughter of Charity is not for this place or that, but for wherever the will of God calls her.

During this journey Sister Euphemia officially welcomed into the province seventy-five Daughters of Charity from Mexico, exiled in 1875 by the more stringent local application of the anti-Catholic measures which had been written decades previously into the Mexican Constitution. A few came through New Orleans, but the majority arrived in California, possessing only the clothes they wore. Some went immediately to missions in Latin America—at least eight or ten to Peru, and two groups to Panama. Many were incorporated into the province and served with sisters of the United States in Emmitsburg and on California missions for a number of years. To the English-speaking sisters their companionship was enriching and challenging. To live with sisters who had endured persecution, who were accustomed to poverty and deprivation, gave the Americans an appreciation of their own privileges and a new understanding of how demanding the vows of a Daughter of Charity could be in other parts of the world. The painful joy of missionary departures was a new experience for companions who said good-bye to groups of sisters leaving for Panama in 1879, 1882, 1883; for Guayaquil, Ecuador, in 1880; and for San Salvador in 1882. The Mexican sisters had so long been a part of the province that bonds of affection were strengthened and the missionary zeal inherent in the Vincentian spirit enkindled. The universality of the Community was challenging the American Daughters to look beyond the shores of the United States.

The unity of the Community was important to Sister Euphemia. Also dear to her were its American roots. She requested that Sister Juliana Chatard spend some time in the seminary in Paris so as to learn her duties as directress of the seminary in the United States. Sister Alix Merceret was sent in 1867 to serve as American secretary in Paris, a service she rendered until her death in 1926. Sister
Euphemia enlarged the print shop at Saint Joseph's, which fulfilled Samuel Cooper's dream of providing a workshop to employ natives of Emmitsburg, while supplying the sisters of the United States with translations of Community biographies, conferences and letters—all the spiritual helps available to their sisters in Europe.

With Father Burlando Sister Euphemia encouraged the older sisters to write their memories of service during the Civil War and of pioneer days on the missions; others were to record memories of sisters who had lived in Mother Seton's time. She restored Mother Seton's White House, previously used as an orphanage and later as an emergency shelter; again it became a classroom—this time for domestic economy.

The secretariat in these years was the charge of Sister Marie Louise Caulfield, sent to the Community from New Orleans by Sister Regina Smith and received by Mother Rose White. After teaching in the Academy until 1850, she was sent as secretary to Paris to learn the work of the general secretariat; the year 1850 saw the union of the American Community with France (of which she compiled the first history). Sister Marie Louise returned in 1851 bringing models of Community registers kept at the Motherhouse. For fifty years (1844-1895) she served as provincial secretary. One of her assistants, Sister Martha Daddisman, had come as a student to Emmitsburg in 1811 and in 1814 entered the Community, almost seven years before the death of Mother Seton. After serving in several missions Sister Martha returned to Emmitsburg in 1857, and for thirty years helped in the secretariate, making copies of letters and documents, documenting from her accurate memory the store of Community tradition with tales or anecdotes of early days in the Valley.

After celebrating Mass at Saint Joseph's 3 August 1882, Archbishop Gibbons visited with the Community. Speaking of Mother Seton, he told the sisters he would like to introduce her Cause for canonization, and described the steps that would have to be taken to prepare for this. Her letters, journals, notebooks and many of the items she had used had already been carefully preserved at Emmitsburg as Community treasures. In the years following Gibbons' suggestion, the sisters of the secretariat collected these writings, and those of Bishop Simon Gabriel Bruté, her spiritual friend and confidant, into two small volumes printed in 1885 and 1886 for distribution within the Community. Charles I. White's biography of Mother Seton was already available to the sisters on
the missions. The publication of these pocket volumes made the Seton writings, as well as the letters and instructions of Bruté, accessible to all.

**New Hope for a New Century**

Mother Mariana Flynn 1877-1901
Mother Margaret O'Keefe 1901-1921

After the death of Mother Euphemia in 1877, Mother Mariana Flynn was chosen visitatrix. She directed the province until her death in 1901, when she was succeeded by Mother Margaret O'Keefe. The Vincentians who served as directors of the province during these years were: Alexis Mandine, 1877-1892; Sylvester Haire, 1892-1894; Robert A. Lennon, 1894-1907; and James J. Sullivan, 1907-1910.

Mother Mariana brought to her role a strong awareness of the need for professional preparation for the sisters; a concern for women who had to support themselves and their families; and a keen missionary zeal to make God and his Church known. During the Civil War in Richmond she had witnessed the effectiveness of hospital work in breaking down prejudice and opening paths to evangelization.

Sister Margaret was directress of the seminary under Mother Mariana, and succeeded her in 1901. During her early years in office Mother Margaret carried out many of the policies initiated by her predecessor.

**Upgrading the Education of the Sisters**

The preparation of sisters for their apostolic duties—according to prevailing practice—had consisted of basic education (obtained at Saint Joseph's Academy for sisters who had come without it) followed by on-the-job training in partnership with an experienced sister. By 1890, however, such apprenticeship was no longer sufficient. In the field of education New York was leading the way in requiring both teachers and students to pass the Board of Regents' examinations. Unless the sisters were sufficiently prepared, their role of teaching would have to be turned over to others.
The hospital field also had changed. Since 1865 when Joseph Lister introduced antiseptics, great advances had been made in surgery. The 1890s marked a real turning point in medical history. Most hospitals housed up-to-date operating theatres, well-equipped X-ray, pharmacy, laboratory and emergency departments. A different kind of nursing education was needed to prepare professionals for the modern hospital.

**Summer Normal Schools**

As early as 1818, records show, a normal school had been set up in Saint Joseph's Academy, Emmitsburg, to prepare sisters. They were freed to study by the hiring of lay help to do the laundry. In 1886 Mother Mariana initiated a series of summer normal sessions, bringing back sisters from the missions for intensive study, to learn methods as well as content. At first these were non-credit courses, the emphasis on knowledge rather than certification or degrees. Subjects taught in the first session included elocution, stenography, penmanship, grammar, model drawing, geography, literature, composition, bookkeeping, physiology, phonetic spelling and reading, geometrical drawing, and directed teaching. Even Father Mandine taught methods of teaching religion; he presided with Mother Mariana at discussions of school administration and teacher qualification. In 1889 Sister Cecilia Clarke was made superintendent of the normals. She enlisted well-known professors for the next summer's sessions. Gradually a systematic program was arranged.

In 1892 several normals were held. Besides those at Emmitsburg, there were sessions at Point Pleasant, New Jersey, and Hollister, California. Later LaSalle, Illinois, and Saint Simeon's, New Orleans, were added. In this way sisters from more distant missions were able to participate without the expense of long travel. Sister Gertrude Hayes conducted the sessions at Emmitsburg, both in the summer and those during the year for young habit sisters preparing for teaching before actual responsibility for classes.

**Other Assemblies**

Summer sessions were not limited to teacher preparation. Housekeepers, bookkeepers, administrators, sisters in orphanages or
foundling homes were invited to their own sessions, often following a spiritual retreat. To sisters in child care Mother Mariana said, "Guard with jealous care the interests of the poor lest we be withdrawn from their service." She told sisters of the 1895 session that diplomas were not to be framed or hung up on display. "Value them simply because they are, in a measure, necessary at this time."

Two hospital assemblies were held at Emmitsburg in 1897. Doctor Harriet Turner of Rochester gave a series of lectures and Sister Lucia Bell taught the classes. In the December meeting small groups shared experiences and exchanged ideas. One hundred thirty-one sisters attended the meeting of 1898; Doctor Joseph M. Spellissy of Philadelphia lectured on surgical nursing. After Saint Joseph's had been granted the right to confer degrees, credit could be offered for these well-planned courses.

The Education of Sister Nurses

Mount Hope in Baltimore, the leading Catholic psychiatric hospital in the nation, was the preferred site of inservice education for hospital sisters. Records show that many sisters postulated there; it was for others a first mission before being sent to other hospitals. In the 1880s a special series of lectures was presented by the doctors of Mount Hope and other specialists. It was a diploma program open only to Daughters of Charity; those who completed it in 1892 became graduate nurses. But in many hospitals doctors were asking not only for professionally trained sisters, but for schools of nursing open to lay women.

In the hospitals of the nineteenth century the sisters did all the nursing, assisted only by male orderlies and few and rare dedicated women. Even military hospitals where the sisters nursed during the wars were staffed completely by sisters. This policy may have been a factor in the Community's initial resistance to the idea of training schools for lay nurses. The principal difficulty, however, was that early training schools were subject to a board independent of hospital administration. It was this dichotomy of authority, when student nurses worked in a hospital without being accountable to its administration, that the sisters were trying to avoid. Only when the control of schools passed from a school board to hospital administrators, with the schools an integral part of the hospital, did
it become feasible for Catholic hospitals to sponsor schools of nursing.

The Decision to Train Lay Women

The turning point came at a landmark meeting held 20 April 1892 at Mount Hope. Mother Mariana and Sister Angeline Davis, treasurer, had called together for consultation "some of the hospital sisters not too remote," to discuss the establishment of schools where young lay women could receive instruction in the scientific care of the sick and, at the same time, be filled with the Christian spirit which should animate that service. The sisters present were administrators of hospitals in Baltimore, Washington, Boston, Buffalo, Rochester, Dearborn, Chicago, and Saint Louis. No minutes were kept of the meeting, but its results were evident in the policy changes put into practice: the involvement of lay nurses in the hospital apostolate, and the establishment within the next three years of nine schools of nursing in the hospitals administered by the Community.

Schools of Nursing

By 1910 the Daughters of Charity had twenty-seven schools of nursing in the hospitals they staffed. In addition to Charity, New Orleans—a state institution—there were schools in Community-sponsored hospitals in New Orleans, Chicago, Milwaukee, Norfolk, Baltimore, Washington, Troy, Buffalo, Rochester, Boston, Dorchester, Lowell, Evansville, Indianapolis, Birmingham, Mobile, Saint Louis, Saint Joseph, Los Angeles, San Jose, El Paso, Dallas, Waco, Nashville, Greensboro and Bridgeport. A few of these were the first in the state; others were the first under Catholic auspices. Several admitted male candidates.

Few of the schools charged tuition; the terms of the contract were education and board in exchange for service. In 1894 in Saint Louis the first students were on twenty-four hour duty, even sleeping in the ward, with one free half-day per week. By 1900 this had been reduced to twelve-hour duty, with the program lengthened from two to three years. In Lowell students on active duty after probation were paid eight dollars a month.
In most hospitals the evolution from a two-year to a three-year program was rapid, and the school became truly professional, an institution of learning rather than a service to the hospital. Affiliations in obstetrics, pediatrics, and long-term care were made available. By 1910 Providence in Washington had a university affiliation with Georgetown.

Some hospitals had training programs in other specialties: physical therapy at Emergency Hospital in Buffalo; training for dietitians at Saint Joseph Hospital in Philadelphia. A program in child care, preparing women for jobs as nursemaids, was offered in several of the infant homes. Job placement was part of the service offered in these programs.

Concern for the Working Woman

Immigrants who came after 1880 followed the lure of industry rather than of free land. Concentration of workers around mines, mills and factories, as well as their dependence on sometimes ruthless employers created a volatile situation—the birth of labor unions and clashes between equally violent strikers and strikebreakers. Journals kept by sisters on local missions describe the strikes witnessed, cracked heads tended, families of the unemployed fed and clothed. There is evidence that, while the bishops were concerned with the plight of the workingman and his family, the sisters were considering also the situation of the working woman.

Seventeen percent of women over sixteen, finding it necessary to support themselves and their children, were employed or looking for employment. The world had changed almost overnight because of numerous inventions: linotype, cash register, telephone, telegraph, typewriter, adding machine, trolley car, automobile, phonograph, and incandescent lamp, to name a few. Sisters struggled to master these innovations so that their students could be adept in their use and readily employable. Graduates of Saint Vincent’s in San Francisco, Saint Rose’s in Washington, Saint Patrick’s in Chicago were in demand in the business world because of their knowledge of office and telephone equipment, shorthand, typing and bookkeeping, enhanced by character and integrity. In Norfolk Sister Genevieve Maher begged a typewriter from a benefactor of Saint Mary’s Home so that she could equip the orphan girls with this skill. Sister Mary Peter Muth mastered three different systems
of shorthand in a dozen years as the preference of the business world changed from Perman to Pitman, and then to Gregg.

Working girls continued to board in some of the industrial schools; but not until 1900 was a house opened specifically for working women without families. This was Seton Home in Troy, which also included a day nursery for the children of working women. Other day nurseries were set up in Syracuse, Boston, and Washington. Besides day care they offered mothers’ clubs where women made friends while they learned cooking, sewing, health care, and especially child care.

Missionary Outreach to the World

Until 1908, when Pope Pius X gave the Church in the United States equal status with the older Catholic countries of Europe, North America had been considered mission territory. Yet twenty years before that time, missionary zeal stirred the hearts of American Daughters of Charity.

The first American Daughter to realize her desire to carry the faith across the world was Sister Catherine Buschmann. Born Dora Thumel, married in 1890 and widowed less than a year later, she became an active promoter of the Holy Childhood Association. This interest was the seed of her vocation as a missionary and as a Daughter of Charity. A child inquired: “Who will make sure that our pennies are used to save the pagan babies in China?” In her heart she found the answer, “I will, Lord.”

In 1896 she was called to the missions in China, where she served thirty years, mostly in Peking and Shanghai. She greatly encouraged the founders of Maryknoll with practical advice about formation for the Chinese missions; when her own niece entered Maryknoll she rejoiced. Before her death Sister Catherine joyously welcomed other American Daughters called to missionary work in China.

The Spanish American War

Soon after Sister Catherine’s departure for China, other Daughters of Charity were embarking for foreign service—this time, to care for American soldiers in the Spanish American War.
After the explosion of the battleship _Maine_ "from unknown causes" in a Cuban harbor, the nation's most unnecessary war was declared against Spain 25 April 1898. Within three months Americans had driven the Spaniards from Cuba, destroyed the Spanish fleet in the Philippine Islands, and invaded the Spanish colony, Puerto Rico. Peace came 12 August 1898: Spain granted independence to Cuba, ceded Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines to the United States. Hawaii, too, was annexed at this time. American battle casualties were few, but tropical diseases conquered the conquerors. Malaria, typhoid, dysentery, were rampant; even yellow fever and cholera were seen.

At the outset of the war Mother Mariana offered the services of the sisters to the president. During August and September requests came for sisters with various specialties: surgical nurses; those who could speak Spanish (to bring comfort to prisoners of war in Norfolk); sisters immune to typhoid and yellow fever for service in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The service was of brief duration; most sisters had returned to their missions by November, except those in Puerto Rico and a few in Portsmouth who remained until February 1899.

Sisters served in camps and tent hospitals in: Chickamauga, Georgia (62 sisters serving 60,000 men); Montauk Point, Long Island, New York (112 sisters, 20,000 patients); Jacksonville, Florida, Camp Cuba Libra (20 sisters, an unknown number of men); Knoxville, Tennessee (20 sisters, 150 patients); Huntsville, Alabama (35 sisters, 200 soldier patients); Camp Alger, Virginia (10 sisters, unknown number of men); Lexington, Kentucky (25 sisters, 600 patients); Newport, Kentucky, base hospital (20 sisters, 600 patients); Portsmouth Naval Hospital (5 sisters, unknown number of both troops and prisoners); Ponce General Hospital, Ponce, Puerto Rico (19 sisters, and unknown number of patients); and Santiago, Cuba (12 sisters, 200 patients). Sisters nursed on transports also, bringing the men home from Cuba and Puerto Rico. Altogether 190 Daughters of Charity served as army nurses in the Spanish American War, many serving in several camps or hospitals; four of them died from diseases contracted during their service.

Both Cuba and Puerto Rico had been served by large numbers of Vincentian priests and Daughters of Charity, Spanish and native. The parishes, schools, orphanages, military and state hospitals, refuges for the insane, the afflicted, the homeless in which they worked were supported by the government of Spain. In Havana,
for example, there were forty-six sisters in the civilian, sixteen in the military hospital, serving a total of four thousand patients. In the evacuation of these hospitals because of blockade and bombardment, many of the patients died. The sisters were not allowed to accompany the survivors, since the hospitals would no longer be supported by Spain, and neither would the new government support them. Sister Hedwiges Laquidain, vice-visitatrix of Havana, described the famine that prevailed: “Most of these poor people we meet look like dry roots.” She then reported the conditions in the houses the sisters had been forced to abandon, including “our asylum for the insane at Mazorra, where five hundred of these poor people have perished from diseases contracted by insufficient food.”

The contact with Spanish sisters serving in Ponce and Santiago deepened in the American Daughters their appreciation of the missionary vocation within the vocation of a Daughter of Charity. Several of these sisters were soon to experience their own call to foreign missions.

The Call to Puerto Rico

Since Puerto Rico became, after the Spanish American War, a possession of the United States, American congregations replaced the Spanish missionaries. One of the earliest to establish missions in Puerto Rico was the Redemptorist community. In 1905 their provincial, Father William Licking, asked for six Daughters to open a parochial school in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, in a Redemptorist parish. Sister Adelaide D'Aunoy, who had been in charge of the hospital at Montauk Point during the war, was chosen as first sister servant. One of her companions, Sister Fortunata Garvey, also had served during the war.

The pastor anticipated about two hundred pupils, so he prepared three classrooms. The first day of school seven hundred children came. Father removed the Blessed Sacrament from the church so that it too could be used as a classroom. There were no textbooks, no pictures or charts, no paper or pencils. Most of the sisters did not know Spanish. They did have a blackboard, and mutual learning took place when they drew pictures, named them in English, and got the children to give their Spanish names. Before long, both teachers and pupils were passably bilingual.
The need for education in Puerto Rico was so extensive that in 1906 the sisters took on a school in the La Playa section of Mayaguez in addition to the Immaculate Conception Academy and the parish free school. They were asked also to prepare and supervise lay teachers and catechists for country parishes. By 1910 there were fourteen hundred children enrolled in the three divisions of the two schools. In addition, hundreds of sick and destitute were visited; through soup kitchens the sisters provided meals for the children and their families. Mayaguez gradually grew in prominence as a Catholic center, a relatively prosperous city, and a source of Catholic leadership on the island.

Santo Tomas Hospital, Panama City

The first Daughters of Charity had gone to Panama in 1875. French sisters, assisted by those who had come from Mexico by way of the United States, had by the turn of the century built up a province enriched by many native vocations. Their works included government hospitals—which were, however, inadequate by American standards.

In 1902 the United States signed a treaty with Panama to build the Panama Canal. When the Americans took over the Canal Zone, Sister Goeury, visitatrix of Panama, asked the help of American sisters in modernizing the Santo Tomas Hospital in Panama City. The Ancon Hospital had already been taken from the sisters and staffed by lay nurses. The bishop seconded Sister Goeury's request, fearing that Santo Tomas also would have to be laicized if it could not be brought up to American standards.

Sisters Raphael Jones, Mary Joseph McEvoy, and Martha Lawlor were sent to Panama City in 1906. Though warmly received by the sisters there, they found the situation appalling: Santo Tomas Hospital was an ancient institution consisting of a number of cottages and two large wards (one for men and one for women) housing the most acute cases. In her first letter, dated 30 March 1906, Sister Raphael asked for five more sisters: a housekeeper and four to tend the sick. She revealed that since the older sisters staffing the hospital knew little about nursing and were not prepared to learn, it would take some time to train the younger native sisters, who were for the most part uneducated. Orderlies drawn from among the convalescents were the only hired help
available.

Sister Martha became the surgical nurse for the hospital; Sister Raphael nursed in the ward for women, and Sister Mary Joseph in that for men. The three had much to suffer from the intense heat, insects, dirt, communication problems resulting from their ignorance of Spanish, and, finally, tropical fevers to which they succumbed. Perhaps the hardest to bear was the lack of progress; moreover, they had to recognize that their presence had not lessened the prevalent immorality. A letter of 18 April 1906 reveals what may have been their only achievement: the isolation of tuberculous patients from others (into an isolation ward with separate dishes and supplies) and the introduction of disinfectants.

Mother Margaret, in the meantime, had been asked by superiors in Paris about the feasibility of accepting the hospital as a house of the United States Province. Sister Raphael was not encouraging. It was her belief that immorality was so rampant in the region that it would impede any good that could be done. In April 1907 superiors at Emmitsburg decided to withdraw the American sisters from Panama.

_Apostolic Outreach through Hospitals_

Mother Mariana shared the belief of many bishops that Catholic hospitals were the most effective instruments of evangelization in areas where the Church was little known. The record of hospitals opened during her fourteen years in office reflects this belief, which Mother Margaret, her successor, seemed to share. Most of the hospitals newly opened between 1892 and 1909 were in areas where Catholics were little known and less trusted—areas where a new version of the American Protective Association was finding fertile fields for anti-Catholic propaganda: Texas, Tennessee, and Alabama.

_The Sisters Return to Texas_

The first mission in Texas had been the short-lived school in Jefferson, opened in 1869 and closed five years later. In 1892 the Daughters of Charity were called to open the first hospital in the city of El Paso, Texas, on the Mexican border. Sisters Stella
Dempsey, Frances Hennessey and Dolores Eggert were the pioneers. By 1894 they had moved from temporary quarters into the newly built hospital, named Hotel Dieu after the large Parisian hospital served by the early Daughters of Vincent and Louise. In 1897 a new operating room was installed; in 1898 a school of nursing opened; and in 1903 the first X-ray machine in the Southwest was set up in the hospital. Arrangements with the Santa Fe and Mexican Railway Company to care for their patients were made in 1907; similar contracts with other companies followed. By 1910 thirteen sisters were serving in El Paso and a group of Ladies of Charity had been organized.

Mother Mariana had assigned Sister Stella to the El Paso foundation with these words:

Not very long ago I was regretting in my mind that our dear Lord did not ask the Community to go among people to whom He is not known and where He is not served. Now He asks this, and you, dear Sister, are the one chosen to lead the band.16

The same apostolic zeal expressed in this letter led Mother Mariana and her Council to accept other missions in Texas.

Saint Joseph’s Orphanage in Oak Cliff, near Dallas, was offered to the Daughters of Charity in 1895. Discouraged by poverty and hardships, another community of sisters had given up the work. In agreeing to staff the orphanage, the Council made certain stipulations: separate quarters for boys and girls and, to begin with, certain minimal repairs to the building, particularly the roof, stairways, and other structural deficiencies. Sister Benedicta Roach and three companions took over the work 1 May 1895. About forty boys and girls, ages one to twelve, occupied the old three-story wooden structure. Sister Benedicta set to work painting, carpentering and, as she described it, “bedbug gathering.”

Oak Cliff was then a rural area about an hour’s drive from Dallas; a priest came on weekdays to offer Mass for the sisters and children, but never on Sundays. Most of the children were short of clothing, covered with sores, and not prepared for first confession and Communion. This was soon remedied; within the first year five children were baptized, two made their first Communion and were confirmed. The sisters had been at Oak Cliff twelve years when the Council decided to withdraw them. The two stipulations in the
original agreement had not yet been met; the sisters were frequently deprived of Sunday Mass; and the number of orphans remaining was very small.

A group of Dallas physicians approached Bishop Edward J. Dunne, desiring to obtain Daughters of Charity for a hospital and clinic in Dallas. Sister Stella Dempsey was again chosen to pioneer the foundation. She arrived in 1896 and stayed at the Oak Cliff orphanage, going by carriage into the city each day to confer with doctors, examine equipment, look for a site for the hospital. In spite of a broken arm and rapidly developing cancer, she succeeded in drawing up plans with the doctors before her death 23 August 1896. Sister Mary Bernard Reardon, her successor, opened the hospital in 1897 in a small cottage. The following year the new Saint Paul Hospital was completed. Nine sisters and their patients moved in. A school of nursing was opened in 1900; the first three nurses graduated in 1903.

Three other hospitals followed in rapid succession in other cities of Texas: Seton Infirmary in Austin in 1902; Saint Vincent’s in Sherman in 1903; and Providence in Waco in 1904. Sister Mary Bernard Reardon and three companions opened the forty-bed hospital in Austin. Sister Lucia Smith, then sister servant in Dallas, supervised the erection of the hospitals in Sherman and Waco.

The Texas hospitals were a new experience for the sisters in those early days. Among many Texans of this time, Catholicism was not only misunderstood, but feared and despised, while the work of the sisters was, for the most part, unknown. They had to contend with mistrust, bigotry, and harassment, particularly in Waco, a cattle and cotton town on the Chisholm Trail where the Ku Klux Klan had a large following. A contract signed between Providence in Waco and the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad in 1909 filled the hospital with patients—in one year over three thousand of them. By the time the seven-year contract terminated, the sisters’ work had given evidence of their good will and efficiency, and the hospital beds were filled with local patients.

New Hospitals in Alabama

In 1898 Bishop Edward P. Allen of Mobile, who as president of Mount Saint Mary’s College in Emmitsburg had known the Daughters of Charity, requested four sisters to establish Saint
Vincent's Hospital in Birmingham. The five sisters appointed for this mission responded as soon as they were released from serving in the camps of the Spanish American War. Sister Chrysostom Moynahan, named sister servant and administrator of the hospital, was delayed in Portsmouth to nurse Spanish prisoners (severely burned when their ship went down). She joined the others in March 1899, and was the first registered nurse licensed to practice in the State of Alabama.

The first patients were received before repairs to the building were completed, and the first surgery performed on what should have been opening day. Before a year was completed, an epidemic of black smallpox caused the hospital to be quarantined. Three of the sisters fell victim to the disease; one died. Next, a portion of the hospital was badly damaged by a cyclone which killed or injured many in the city.

Since Saint Vincent's served as the city hospital in Birmingham, about half the patients were cared for without pay. When resources were stretched too thin, Sister Chrysostom would say, "If we don't have enough money to meet all the bills at the end of the month, we just wait and hope for the next month to pay for itself and clear the back debt as well." With what she called her "five-dollar nest egg" she opened Birmingham's first outpatient clinic that served all, regardless of ability to pay. The Ladies of Charity group she organized in Birmingham collaborated in the hospital's mission to serve the poor.

Four more Daughters of Charity came to Birmingham in 1903, to staff an orphanage in suburban East Lake. The home was called the Athenaeum, for the former college whose building it occupied. The journal kept at the hospital by Sister Placida, and later Sister Vincent, gives evidence of the close bond existing among the sisters of the two houses.

In 1901 Denis Savage, pastor of Saint Peter's Parish, Montgomery, asked Sister Chrysostom to come to the capital to see what could be done for the sick there. With the cooperation of the governor and business leaders, Sister set up a temporary asylum and clinic in the Watts mansion, and supervised the construction of Saint Margaret's Hospital. The people raised ten thousand dollars toward the cost of the building, and four sisters were sent to staff it. The Watts house, situated on five acres, was used as a hospital until the new building was ready in September 1903.

Sister Chrysostom organized Alabama's first school of nursing
also, in 1900, at Saint Vincent’s Hospital in Birmingham. In 1982 she was inscribed in Alabama’s Hall of Fame for her pioneering work in health care in the state.

Tennessee Beginnings

The first mission of the Daughters of Charity in Tennessee was Saint Thomas Hospital in Nashville, begun in 1898 at the request of Bishop Thomas Byrne. The sisters began service in the Dickinson Mansion and formed a group of Ladies of Charity to help them. In 1904 the new hospital was ready for occupancy; Sister Scholastica Kehoe replaced Sister Philomena Coupe as administrator. The five-story building featured sun parlors on each floor, a roof garden, six suites, six three-bed wards, and another fifty patient rooms. The surgical building had two operating rooms; an electro-therapy, an etherizing, a sterilizing, and an instrument room; and an amphitheatre with a seating capacity of fifty, used primarily as a classroom from which medical students observed various types of surgery. On one occasion a relative was permitted to observe a thyroidectomy performed on his brother. Standing to get a better view, the man fainted at the sight of his brother’s blood and fell through the observation window into the surgery below, bringing with him a shower of glass and the need for immediate stitches. Never again were lay observers permitted in the amphitheatre.

Sister Scholastica, administrator for twenty-three years, set high standards of service which extended beyond the hospital walls. The sisters began religion classes in west Nashville which laid the foundation for Saint Ann’s, the city’s first black parish. They visited, counseled and taught in the tuberculosis hospital, the state penitentiary, the reformatory, the state school for the blind, the home for the feeble-minded, and the industrial school. Sister Austin Corbett, who had charge of the hospital kitchen for thirty-two years, spent her Sundays visiting the poor farm, the insane asylum, and primarily the penitentiary, where she took coffee and sandwiches to “her boys,” prepared them for the sacraments, paved the way for a priest to offer Mass for them, and interceded effectively for them with governors and prison authorities. She asked for better-ventilated cells for men in solitary confinement. Reminded of their offenses, she retorted, “We have all offended God, but He gives us air.” Her request was granted. She petitioned Governor Austin Peay to
pardon one old prisoner in the final stages of tuberculosis so that he could die at home among family members. “You know the Bible as well as I do,” she told him. “You know what mercy means.” “Yes,” he replied; “it means Sister Austin.” And he wrote the pardon.\(^18\)

In a state where the Catholic population was less than 2 percent and many false stories about the Church circulated, the work of Saint Thomas Hospital and the charity the sisters and Ladies of Charity carried beyond it made Tennesseans see the Catholic Church as a compassionate and positive presence.

**Two More Firsts: Connecticut and North Carolina**

In 1905 Saint Vincent’s Hospital in Bridgeport, Connecticut, was opened on a site overlooking Long Island Sound. The school of nursing trained male as well as female nurses. The hospital soon became an influential center of Catholic health care in the state.

Another new area of service for the Community opened in a poor part of North Carolina, where Catholic development was slow. In April 1906 the sisters began Saint Leo’s Hospital in Greensboro, adding a school of nursing and outreach care to the poorer sections of the city. Besides health care, this outreach included adult basic education; help in finding jobs and qualifying for them; evangelization and religious education; and witnessing to God’s love and the Church’s concern for all. A town of fifteen thousand, Greensboro was a factory and railroad center. One of the methods used to provide health care for the working poor was to persuade factory owners and railroad officials to rent beds in the hospital to be used for sick and injured employees.

**Responding to Natural Disasters**

In times of crisis the sisters were always ready to serve. When a cyclone struck Mount Vernon, Illinois, in 1888, sisters from Mullanphy Hospital in Saint Louis nursed in an emergency hospital set up in the courthouse there. When a similar disaster struck Marshfield, Missouri, they nursed there too. The same care was extended to victims of smallpox epidemics in Dallas, Texas, and Rochester, New York.

In 1893 when gulf storms devastated offshore islands near New
Orleans, sisters from the city assisted the injured and provided for the homeless. When a few years later the last of the great epidemics, a disease resembling yellow fever, struck New Orleans, sisters nursed in the vacant Beauregard School set up by the Board of Health as a quarantine hospital. An isolation hospital was later built on the grounds of Charity Hospital.

**Indian Camp Plantation**

In 1894 the Louisiana State Legislature appointed a Leprosy Control Board as a public health measure, with the primary purpose of halting the spread of the disease in Louisiana. Doctor Isadore Dyer, a member of the board, subscribed to a second purpose: the care of those suffering from the disease. He later resigned from the board because other members did not seem to share this concern. But first he approached Sister Agnes Slavin, sister servant of Charity Hospital, New Orleans, to ask if Sisters of Charity would undertake the care of the patients gathered into isolation at the long-abandoned Indian Camp Plantation near Iberville, Louisiana. Sister Agnes forwarded his request to superiors at Emmitsburg, and four sisters were named to this unique apostolate. Sister Beatrice Hart had twenty years’ experience in hospital administration. Her companions were Sisters Annie Costello, Mary Thomas Stockum and Cyril Coupe.

Hansen's Disease, as it is called today, is essentially a disease of the peripheral nerves, affecting also the eyes and skin. It is the least infectious of the communicable diseases; the majority of the population have a natural immunity to it. But a century ago these facts were not known. The public attitude towards the disease was characterized by ignorance, fear and horror; and even among doctors, the fight to control it was directed more against the patient than the disease. In Louisiana the regulations called for the absolute isolation of all leprosy patients, the prevention of marriage and procreation, the registration of all sufferers and members of their immediate families, all under the supervision of the Board of Control.

The place selected by the board for isolation of the patients was an abandoned plantation in a bend of the Mississippi River seventy-five miles above New Orleans. The mansion was not habitable except for two rooms hastily and superficially prepared for the use
of the sisters. More than twenty patients were scattered in dilapidated slave cabins. The peninsula was a snake-infested swamp lacking even the most necessary outhouses. In times of drought, water had to be hauled over the levee from the river; at other times paths to the cabins were flooded. Kept handy beside the sisters' beds were an axe and lantern—the axe for killing water moccasins which infested even the house, the lantern for finding their way by night to the cabin of the patient who had rung his handbell. All supplies had to be requisitioned, and sent by steamer from New Orleans.

The contract specified a resident physician and a resident chaplain. The doctor left shortly after the sisters arrived; the board decided that weekly visits from a New Orleans physician would suffice and save expenses. The chaplain died before the year was out, and for weeks at a time the sisters and patients were deprived of Mass and the sacraments. In July 1896 Sister Beatrice wrote to Mother Mariana about the negligence of the Board:

There are many little things they could do for us to lighten the burden that would not cost them anything except the time needed to come here and go over the place with me and allow me to point them out. But to think we have been here three months, nearly, and not one ever came to see how we were, or if we needed anything...They could not do worse than that.19

The board finally came 15 August and listened to Sister's requests, but the promised repairs and water supply were not provided. The condition of the patients deteriorated; some became incapacitated; some died; but always others were sent in to fill the cabins. Sickness occurred among the sisters too. Heat, exhaustion, attacks of malaria so regular that they came to expect them, were part of life in the bend of the Mississippi. During the summer of 1901 Sister Beatrice carried on in spite of illness and fatigue, finally going from the bedside of a dying patient to her own deathbed.

Her successor, Sister Benedicta Roach, was a believer in action rather than endurance. She went to New Orleans to face the board over the question of a water supply, refusing to accept the answer that they had no money. "I shall make a public appeal through the newspapers," she told them. "The people of New Orleans will not tolerate having the Sisters care for the lepers without even water to keep them clean."20

The board borrowed money and installed a water plant. The
legislature appropriated $10,000 for improvements. New cottages replaced the slave cabins; covered walkways were provided; clinics, laboratory, pharmacy and operating room were built. A heating plant replaced the old cabin fireplaces, but the appropriation to build it did not include an annual sum for its operation; Sister Benedicta was blamed for the resulting debts.

The report of 1906 listed forty-four patients (thirty-nine white and five black). By 1909, when a hurricane severely damaged the administration building and destroyed the stable and outhouses, the number had increased to seventy-six; before long it would pass the hundred mark.

Earthquakes!

Kate Smith, a San Francisco benefactor, left a legacy to build in the city a hospital for women, to include a maternity ward and a shelter for the sick poor. It was to be called Mary's Help Hospital. Archbishop Patrick Reardon entrusted the project to the Daughters of Charity; the building progressed as far as the foundation and frame.

Then in the predawn hours of Wednesday, 18 April 1906, disaster pounced upon northern California in the form of an earthquake, smashing through Humboldt County north of San Francisco, swallowing forests, biting off mountain bluffs and chewing up cliffs to spit tons of rock into the ocean. Death and destruction reached as far as San Jose. Mission San Juan Bautista was wrecked. In San Francisco pipelines snapped, the waterworks were destroyed, the reserve supply of water lost. Buildings buckled and cracked; streets undulated like ocean waves; crevices opened in solid earth. Fire followed the earthquake; but water mains were broken, hydrants useless. Men fought bravely without water and without leadership, for the fire chief was killed in the first devastation of the quake. Refugee camps were set up in parks and in the Presidio. Meals were served; but without water, medical care could be little more than first aid.

When the fires finally burned out and families were reunited, it was possible to count the toll. In San Francisco nearly 400 were dead, 5000 injured, 100,000 homeless. In San Jose 21 were dead, 8000 homeless. Property destruction exceeded $500,000,000.

In Emmitsburg superiors waited anxiously for news. When it
came, the Daughters of Charity could view their losses with joy and thanksgiving, for no lives had been lost, either among the sisters or the children under their care. But property damage ran high. In San Francisco the beginnings of Mary’s Help Hospital were totally destroyed; it would be necessary to clear the rubble and start again. Saint Vincent’s School was destroyed by the fire; Saint Francis Technical School was badly damaged. In San Jose the hospital building was so badly damaged that patients had to be removed and housed in tents. In Hollister the School of the Sacred Heart was thrown off its foundation; in Santa Cruz the school was slightly damaged.

Mother Margaret was on her way to Puerto Rico; but Father James J. Sullivan, assistant director, hurried to San Francisco to help the sisters meet the emergency and rebuild. He was pleased to find the sisters nursing the wounded in temporary shelters, and the displaced orphans already distributed among the southern California houses.

**Trial by Fire**

The Roman Catholic Orphanage in San Francisco, spared in the earthquake, was destroyed by fire a few years later. Over four hundred girls were sleeping when a sister discovered the predawn fire and alerted the other sisters, who woke the children and got them out of the house in silent ranks. In less than five minutes seventeen bands of children, each in charge of a sister, were gathered on a large terrace. The sisters were calling roll by the light of the fire when the building collapsed. Sister Helena McGhan informed superiors that they had saved nothing but the children and $600. Temporary accommodations were found for the children until the home could be rebuilt.

**A Time for Rejoicing**

There were times of trial and sadness in that era, but times for rejoicing also. In 1885 Saint Vincent de Paul was declared patron of all charitable societies. This was followed in 1890 by the beatification of John Gabriel Perboyre, a Vincentian martyred in China in 1840. The Cause of beatification of Louise de Marillac was intro-
duced in 1892, with much support among American bishops for the recognition of the saintliness of the Foundress of the Daughters of Charity. The effectiveness of her work was undeniable.

During the Holy Year of 1900, James Cardinal Gibbons introduced the cause of Mother Elizabeth Ann Seton. Father Antoine Fiat, superior general, had already written of it to the procurator general in Rome, and in December Patrick McHale, C.M., was named vice-postulator of the Cause. By March 1907 the judges of the Ecclesiastical Court had been named and the examination of witnesses and of Mother Seton’s manuscripts had begun. Among the witnesses were Sister Gervase Pujol of the secretariat, who also edited and organized Mother Seton’s correspondence, and Sister Juliana Chatard, who culled from her writings quotes suitable for distribution. In August 1908 the Community began the recitation of the prayer for the glorification of Mother Seton. In 1911 Joseph Cunnane, Notary of the Cause, sailed for Rome bearing copies of the letters and biographies of Mother Seton.

The Church in the United States had grown from one and a half million in 1850 to over twelve million in 1900. The Community too had grown. In 1905 the American Province numbered almost seventeen hundred sisters.

_A Time for Change_

The diary kept by Sister Vincent Steward at Saint Vincent’s Hospital, Birmingham, gives vignettes of the grass-roots reaction to events of the passing years: the assassination of President McKinley; the baptisms of a notable number of the hospital’s employees and nurses; the thirty-seven pound tumor removed from a patient by Doctor Riggs; the missioning of sisters to and from Birmingham. In January 1908 she noted that Prohibition had gone into effect in Alabama; confiscated beer and whiskey were sent to the hospital for medicinal use. Later she recorded that Sister Baptista Lynch, sister servant of East Lake, was treated for a bad carbuncle on her neck. Doctor Whelan had donated skin from his arm, Sister Vincent herself cut it off and transplanted it onto Sister Baptista’s neck. In 1909 she recorded that Sister Baptista was missioned home to Saint Joseph’s, Emmitsburg, leaving the sisters at East Lake brokenhearted.

Sister Baptista was recalled to Emmitsburg to become seminary
directress there, replacing Sister Augustine Park, who had traveled to Saint Louis with several seminary sisters to establish the new seminary there. When Mother Margaret made her retreat in Paris in 1907, superiors had discussed with her their decision to divide the United States into two provinces. The second seminary, in Saint Louis, was a step in this direction; in effect, a vice-province in the United States was taking shape.

The earthquake of actual division would come—but when? Even sisters on remote missions were aware of this, as a January 1910 entry in the Birmingham diary shows: “Prevailing topic of conversation is on the Great Divide.” There are many digressions from this subject, including the announcement of 28 April: “Haley’s Comet seen by a large number at 4:00 a.m.” But the entry of 31 July returned to the prevailing topic:

Great Excitement. A circular from Saint Joseph’s saying that the much talked of division of the Province has really taken place, and to our great surprise, Alabama is in the Western Province.21
In crowded urban neighborhoods, the settlement house offered classes, economic and social assistance, and day nurseries to help immigrant families adjust to life in America.

Beginning in 1922, American sisters worked among the people of the Kiangsi Province of China.

El Carmen Mission near San Antonio, staffed by the sisters in 1958, was one of many parishes in the Southwest where sisters taught and worked with Hispanic Catholics.

In 1931 Saint Joseph Villa in Richmond was rebuilt on the cottage plan. Each group became like a family, with a sister as housemother.

In World War I ten sisters served with the American Expeditionary Force at Base Hospital #102 on the Italian Front.