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Saint Vincent's College and Theological Education

John E. Rybolt, C.M.

Saint Vincent's College has played a role in the life of Cape Girardeau since 1838. Its faculty taught the sons of Mississippi Valley settlers, and also provided education for the priesthood from 1859 to 1893. In this 34 year period, the seminary department rose, declined, and rose again. It endured threats from post-Civil War bigotry against Catholics, and abandonment by the sponsoring bishops. Surviving rumors of an unhealthy climate, Saint Vincent's went nearly bankrupt, but managed to prepare its graduates for the priesthood where they served the West with distinction.¹

The Vincentian Community, established since 1818 at Perryville, began to send Missionaries to Cape around 1825. Fr. John Timon, later head of American Vincentians, visited the area regularly from 1828. Within four years he had contacted enough Catholics on his visits to found a parish. Ralph Dougherty, a convert to Catholicism, sold 40 acres of property for the church in March 1833, not without some opposition.² His wife and family believed he had suffered

¹Mark Twain knew the College as Jesuit, not Vincentian. "There is a great Jesuit school for boys at the foot of the town by the river. Uncle Mumford said it had as high a reputation for thoroughness as any similar institution in Missouri." Life on the Mississippi, "Author's National Edition," vol. IX. (New York, 1917), 199. Twain's remark may have been common opinion, and not simply his mistake. William Dean Howells repeated the same in letters in his family's Ashtabula Sentinel, 3 June 1858:

Gerideau, a town nearly as old as the first French exploration of these regions, we passed yesterday evening. The Jesuit college is its chief edifice. Several of the Society of Jesus were seen taking the air, clad in long sombre coats, and touching their hats to each other at intervals, with a stately courtesy long disused among our go-ahead people.

²F.V. Nugent, C.M., "History of St. Vincent's College, Cape Girardeau, Missouri," Chapter VIII in Marshall Solomon Snow, Higher Education in
undue influence because of his new faith, and contested the sale. The parties settled only forty years later.\textsuperscript{3}

The arrival of Catholic settlers from Perry County, Missouri, in April 1836 opened a new chapter in Cape Catholicism. Their pastor, Father John Mary Odin, resided in Cape from that year. Shortly after, contrary to common expectations, the Congregation planned a school. Saint Vincent’s Male Academy opened October 22, 1838, and received boys from the area. Vincentian novices, too, arrived in May, 1841, to begin their training for religious life; they lived in a small log house near the site of the old church.\textsuperscript{4} One of those early entrants, Steven Vincent Ryan, C.M., would exercise leadership over the college and Community in years to come, as the college President, Vincentian Provincial Superior, and finally as Bishop of Buffalo, New York.

The Cape Vincentians soon realized the need for secondary education for the graduates of the Academy, and (in 1842) laid plans for a college. The Missouri state legislature approved the incorporation of Saint Vincent’s College in February, 1843, the date later used as its official

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\textit{Missouri.} (Washington D.C., 1901), 173-191. See 176-177. This sketch was reprinted in \textit{Annals of the Congregation of the Mission}, XII (1905), 357-363; 475-498.
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\textsuperscript{3}“Title Abstract of Cape Girardeau Properties,” in files of Vincentian Provincial Offices, St. Louis, Missouri. Ralph Dougherty’s baptism, September 28, 1832; Baptismal Records, St. Vincent’s Church, Cape Girardeau.
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\textsuperscript{4}Eberhard Pruente, “The Beginnings of Catholicity in Cape Girardeau, Missouri,” \textit{Saint Louis Catholic Historical Society Review} III (January-April, 1921), 64-73. His article is an annotated version of part of a manuscript now identified to be in the hand of John McGerry, an eyewitness of many of the events.
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founding. Besides students from the Cape Girardeau area, others came principally from Saint Mary's Seminary, Perryville. College students had enrolled there nearly from the beginning, studying secular subjects alongside the clerical students. This arrangement displeased many in the Vincentian Community, particularly its Superiors in Europe, who in exasperation once ordered the entire college closed. Although they rescinded this edict, the opportunity for the Perryville faculty to send the seculars south to Cape Girardeau offered a convenient solution to the irritating association of secular with seminary students. In May, 1844, therefore, the collegians moved from Perryville to Cape. They changed places with the novices, who returning to Saint Mary's, made the school now principally a seminary.

Even though established as a secular college, Saint Vincent's accepted seminary students as early as 1853. Bishop John Timon, C.M., former Missionary in Cape, sent his students from Buffalo to Saint Vincent's. He supported the college that he had overseen as Provincial. His students assisted the Vincentian faculty in teaching the secular students.

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5 Nugent, History, 177.

6 Frederick J. Easterly, The Life of Rt. Rev. Joseph Rosati, C.M., (Washington, D.C., 1942), 141, 145. The decree bears the date September 2, 1835; the reversal, April 8, 1837.

7 Nugent, History, 178.

8 Bartholomew Rollando to Peter Paul Sturchi, Cape Girardeau, March 8, 1844, DRMA. (Original in Italian.) Microfilm collection, Letter #318, reel 1.

9 "Minutes of Board Meetings 1843-1881, "meeting of September 12, 1853, "...also agreed to receive at least 12 Seminarians." DRMA.

10 S.V. Ryan to Jean-Baptiste Etienne, Cape Girardeau, February 12, 1857, DRMA. (Original in French.) The Metropolitan Catholic Almanac...for 1857 (Baltimore, 1856) reads "...There are 12 seminarians who whilst prosecuting
Father Ryan summed up his impressions of the early days thus:

May we not trace the finger of God, the ordinary secret, slow, but sure and steady workings of an overruling Providence realizing eternal designs and preparing for some great and lasting good, when we see a poor and inconvenient farm house with a handful of youths succeeded by a larger and crowded secular College, which notwithstanding a series of severe trials and disastrous accidents prospered to such a degree as to necessitate the erection of still more roomy and expensive buildings, in which a number of classical students were received as assistant teachers and formed for the Priestly State, and then by the rapid and seemingly causeless decline of the secular element and a variety of secretly operating causes the secular college gave place to a prosperous Provincial Seminary, just when the little Seminary of the Barrens originally transplanted from the Cape, had yielded rich and ripe fruit in sufficient abundance to enable us to have professors and take charge of such an establishment.\footnote{11}

Previous to the opening of a theology seminary at Cape Girardeau, students for the priesthood in the upper Mississippi Valley received their education at a number of institutions. The earliest students did not attend a seminary in the formal sense, but simply lived with Bishop Louis William DuBourg in Saint Louis, and studied theology under Father Felix DeAndreis, C.M., the first Vincentian Superior in the United States.\footnote{12}

\footnote{11}"Liber Decretorum Visitationis Tempore a Visitatore Factorum," unpaged record book; the quotation was from S.V. Ryan's official visit of November 4, 1861. DRMA.

\footnote{12}Charles L. Souvay, "Kenrick Seminary, Cass Avenue, St. Louis," \textit{Annals of the Congregation of the Mission} XI (1904), 337.
Clerical education took institutional form with the opening of Saint Mary's of the Barrens Seminary in 1818. Students for the Vincentian Community mingled with Saint Louis diocesan students and secular collegians. Clerical students from other dioceses soon joined them; they remained at the Barrens even after the Saint Louis seminary students transferred to the city in 1842. The same Vincentian Community took charge of this latter institution, in two locations until Bishop Peter Richard Kenrick assumed control in 1848 and transferred his students to a large house in Carondelet. The changeable Kenrick associated with Vincentians from his earliest days in Ireland. He had led the planned foundation of a group of Irish priests, calling themselves Vincentians. Though he left them on the point of their foundation, his interest in seminary education continued; for example, he worked with his brother, Bishop Francis Patrick Kenrick in the latter's seminary in Philadelphia. About his own seminary in Saint Louis, he disagreed with the Vincentians both theoretically and practically—fundamentally, he sought to run his own seminary in his own way. As a result, he assumed a more personal control.


14John Lynch to Etienne, Perryville, November 7, 1849. DRMA. (Original in French.) Microfilm, #113, reel 1; he reports on problems of the students; also, J.J. Buysch to Chenchon (?), Perryville, January 2, 1855 (Original in French.) Microfilm, #40, reel 2.


17Rybolt, "Carondelet," 397-398.
Kenrick had the support, at least originally, of local bishops, like John Hogan of Saint Joseph, Missouri. Nevertheless, the burden of staffing and funding an independent institution became too much for him. His Saint Louis Ecclesiastical Seminary closed in 1859. In a queer reversal, the Vincentians reassumed the management of the Carondelet seminary just the year before; faculty members then continued their teaching in Cape Girardeau the next year when the new institution opened.

The bishops of the dioceses which comprised the ecclesiastical Province of Saint Louis with Kenrick as Archbishop had discussed the merits of sponsoring a single seminary for their Province. They did so during the First Provincial Council held in Saint Louis in 1855. Some bishops preferred to amalgamate with the Vincentian staffed seminary in lower Louisiana, the "Ecclesiastical Diocesan Seminary of Saint Vincent de Paul." This institution bore the popular name of Assumption Seminary, from its location in Assumption Parish, near Donaldsonville, Louisiana. Others preferred going to the Cincinnati seminary

18 "I always regretted the closing of St. Vincent’s in St. Louis and the suppression that soon followed of the brave attempt at a Seminary in Carondelet," Hogan to Francis V. Nugent, quoted in St. Louis, Sunday Watchman, February 19, 1893, 8. (Originals or Microfilm copies available at St. Louis University.)


21 Ryan to Etienne, Perryville, January 7, 1860. (Original in French.) DRMA, Microfilm, #260, reel 2. Ryan believes that Bishops Odin of Galveston and Blanc of New Orleans agree.
because the tuition there was lower than at Cape. 22 They took no decisions at the Council, even though Kenrick had championed a single seminary for the Province over several years.23

During the Second Provincial Council, September 5-11, 1858, the bishops reopened the question. This time they chose Cape Girardeau for their common seminary, with the proviso that the arrangement be an experiment.24 Father Steven Vincent Ryan took part at the Council by reason of his office as the American Superior (or Provincial) of the Vincentians.25 Although he knew the Council's decision, he did not formally agree until the close of the school year, June, 1859, leaving the Carondelet faculty in some doubt.26 At that time he also persuaded the college faculty at Cape Girardeau to dismiss their secular students and to accept none but ecclesiastical students beginning the following September.27

22 Edward M. Hennessy, C.M., to Ryan (?), Carondelet, May 18, 1859, DRMA. He reports, "The Bishop of Alton would prefer sending to Cincinnati at $100 to sending to Cape Girardeau at $125."

23 Kenrick to John Purcell, St. Louis, February 15, 1853, UNDA. "With very few exceptions, Diocesan Seminaries cannot have the same advantages as Provincial Seminaries properly conducted possess."

24 Kenrick to Martin J. Spalding, St. Louis, July 13, 1859. Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore. Microfilm at Kenrick Seminary. Also Hennessy to Ryan (?), stresses the character of the decision, "it was a mere experiment at best made by you." Besides Kenrick, those in attendance were the Bishops of Milwaukee, Santa Fe, Kansas, Alton, Dubuque, and St. Paul.

25 Acta et Decreta Sacrorum Conciliorum Recentiorum Collectio Lacensis. (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1875), III, col. 313.

26 Joseph Alizeri, C.M. to Ryan (?), Carondelet, June 7, 1859, DRMA. "It is rumored that the Seminarians will remain in Carondelet next year."

27 "Minutes of Board Meetings 1843-1881," DRMA, meetings of June 6 and June 14, 1859.
Saint Vincent's College from 1853 on had received seminarians from Buffalo, and from 1856 even a few from Saint Louis. The proposed shift to purely clerical education, therefore, would not entail too great a change. What is more, seminary education formed part of the original Vincentian charter for coming to the United States in 1815. As a favor to Archbishop Kenrick, the faculty agreed to keep temporarily the secular program for the students then at Carondelet who had not finished their secular course.

Several difficulties faced the new program. The seminary had a young faculty and a disaster marred the opening—two young students drowned in the school pond when their boat capsized in the week preceding the new term. Yet the institution looked forward with high hopes, as an early advertisement attests:

This institution, under the direction of the Lazarists, or Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, is situated on the right bank of the Mississippi River, 15 miles (sic) below St. Louis, and 40 miles above the mouth of the Ohio. The site is elevated and beautiful, the buildings are large and commodious, the dormitories, study-halls, and various class-rooms are spacious, well-ventilated and comfortable:

28Ibid., September 12, 1853, see also Catholic Directories for 1856 (5 seminarians,) 1857 (12), 1859 (8.)

29St. Louis, The Leader, June 30, 1855, 9, reports on ordinations of diocesan students: three from Carondelet, one from Cape.

30Easterly, Rosati, 187-190. The agreement bears the date September 27, 1815.

31Kenrick to Spalding, St. Louis, July 13, 1859. Kenrick Seminary Archives (KSA), St. Louis, Missouri.

32Untitled Ms. at DRMA lists the faculty from 1859 to 1863, giving age, birthplace, etc. Of eight priests, four were 23-29; two, 32, 37.

33"Record of the Principal Events at St. Mary's Seminary During 1859, 60, 61, 62, 63, and 64," DRMA. September 3, 1859 reports the accident.
the playgrounds are extensive, planted with shade-trees, and well provided with ample means for the Students to take a variety of harmless and healthful recreation.

The College is now appropriated exclusively to the education of Ecclesiastical Students.\textsuperscript{34}

\textit{Engraving of Saint Vincent's College ca. 1870 (DeAndreis-Rosati Memorial Archives).}

The Civil War would change its exclusive ecclesiastical character and cause the decline of the seminary, a condition not arrested until the late 1880s.

Scarcely eighteen months after Saint Vincent's opened, South Carolina seceded from the Union. As war tensions grew, Cape Girardeau itself changed character, finding itself on the north-south border of Missouri. The military

\textsuperscript{34}Catholic Directory... for 1861. (Baltimore. 1860) 279.
presence was strong. The city of some 10,000, protected with four forts, had between 3,000 and 5,000 federal troops garrisoned there. The military command required passes to enter and leave but the seminary students received a dispensation to allow for their prescribed recreational hikes.

James McGill, C.M., Superior of the college, ever the optimist, reported in December, 1861 that God had blessed the college with a good number of students, more than 60. All of them were "good, pious and very well disposed," making the institution perhaps the largest of its kind in the country.

He later reported on various skirmishes near Cape, the most serious being the Battle of Cape Girardeau, April 26-27, 1863. The students and faculty, in turns, watched the action from the Tower. Another faculty member provided more details:

The cannonade was indeed loud and resounded between the two hills from two o'clock in the morning until two in the afternoon. Two pieces of cannon were set on a hill about 60

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36 James McGill to Mariano Maller (?), Cape Girardeau, March 5, 1862. DRMA, Microfilm, #126, reel 1.

37 McGill to Maller, Cape Girardeau, December 5, 1861. DRMA, Microfilm, #125, reel 1.

38 McGill to Maller (?), ibid., March 5, 1862. DRMA.


40 McGill to Patrick McMenamy, Cape Girardeau, April 28, 1863. DRMA.
paces from the College; they had even resolved to put another on the steps of our study hall; happily the attacking forces were far enough removed from us that the bullets did not reach our houses....Our priests, brothers, and students had no fear during the fight, at least the latter did not. They sat in the high galleries of the College and with field glasses were ocular witnesses of the battle that raged before them.41

The spacious college buildings offered the military commanders the idea of locating a hospital there in a wing of the building. Friendship between an elderly professor, Father McGerry, and a colonel, led them to decide instead on houses in town, so Saint Vincent’s remained open.42 In fact, faculty, seminarians and troops related generally well, with the latter attending Mass in the college chapel, sometimes bringing along their non-Catholic friends.43

While the College was fortunate to escape damage and to remain open amid good relationships with the military, the parents and the bishops of its seminarians must have questioned their safety. Consequently, for the 1862 school year only half the students from the previous classes returned;44 some simply remained home, others were

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42 Ryan to Maller, Cape Girardeau, May 17, 1862. DRMA. Microfilm, #270, reel 2.

43 McGill to Etienne, Cape Girardeau, December 5, 1861. Annales XXVII (1861), 285-289.

44 McGill to Maller (?), Cape Girardeau, December 1, 1862. DRMA, Microfilm, #127, reel 1.
drafted, at times directly from the college.\textsuperscript{45} The problem of low numbers became acute by 1864, student enrollments from Saint Louis particularly falling off sharply.\textsuperscript{46} Nevertheless, classes continued as usual. During summers those who could not return home—a few of the New Orleans students, for example\textsuperscript{47}—stayed at the seminary farm. In such an atmosphere divided sympathies occurred. The faculty generally supported the federal cause,\textsuperscript{48} while students divided: at least one left to join the Confederates;\textsuperscript{49} and southern seminarians transferred to the New Orleans seminary at Bouligny, formerly in Plattenville, La.\textsuperscript{50}

Into this situation stepped a newly ordained Vincentian priest, destined to suffer greatly for his southern loyalties. Abram J. Ryan, the “poet priest of the South,” joined the faculty, but lasted only a few months.\textsuperscript{51}

He had previously attended the college at Perryville,\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{45}Alizeri to Etienne, \textit{Annales} XXIX (1864), 219-223. Also McGill to John Odin, Cape Girardeau, August 4, 1863. University of Notre Dame Archives (UNDA) VI-2-g. Ryan reports the conscription of two Vincentian priests, Robert Rice and Dennis Leyden. \textit{Annales} 29 (1864), 263.

\textsuperscript{46}Minutes of Board Meetings, April 5, 1864. Despite the numbers, the Board "agreed to continue Theological Seminary."

\textsuperscript{47}Felix Guedry to Odin, Cape Girardeau, March 8, 1864. (Original in French.) UNDA, VI-2-h.

\textsuperscript{48}Nugent, \textit{History}, 186.

\textsuperscript{49}McGill to McMenamy, Cape Girardeau, February 25, 1863. DRMA. Mr. Purcell “left to join the Southern Army. We all regret it very much, but what can be done.”

\textsuperscript{50}Alizeri to Odin, Cape Girardeau, December 5, 1864. (Original in French.) UNDA, VI-2-h.

\textsuperscript{51}Ryan to Maller, La Salle, Illinois, April 10, 1862. DRMA, Microfilm, #356, reel 1.

\textsuperscript{52}Untitled Ms., listing student enrollments. Ryan entered September 16, 1851. (page 11.) DRMA.
and the Christian Brothers school in Saint Louis. He returned to the Barrens in 1854, joined the Vincentian Community, and took his Vows on November 1, 1856. After studies there, and at the Vincentian seminary in Niagara Falls, New York, he returned to the Barrens in 1859. One year after his ordination on September 12, 1860, he transferred to Saint Vincent's at Cape, assigned to teach dogmatic theology. He soon fell ill, however, and later complained that during his two month illness, he was "treated like a dog."

He left Cape to regain his health, and never returned. In the space of another year, with health restored, he became disaffected with Vincentian life, and petitioned a dismissal. Both hyperactive and talented, a poet of deep emotions, he ardently supported the secession. His

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53 [Floyd C. Shoemaker], "Missouriana, Father Ryan Poet-Priest of the Confederacy," Missouri Historical Review XXVI (October 1941), 62.

54 "Catalogus Sacerdotum et clericorum Congregationis Missionis in Provincia Statuum Foederatorum Americae Septentrionalis Usque ad Annum 1888," 15. DRMA.


56 Ryan to Maller, LaSalle, Illinois, April 10, 1862. DRMA, Microfilm, #356, reel 1. This letter corrects the chronology in McKey, Niagara.

57 Ibid. He repeated his request July 10, 1862. DRMA, Microfilm, #357, reel 1. He claimed he wanted to join the Paulist Fathers and wrote to their Founder, Father Isaac Hecker.

58 Such was the opinion of him published anonymously in Annales XCI (1926), 782-783, quoting from "Niagara Index."
Vincentian confreres, whatever their political differences, regretted losing his great talent.\(^{59}\)

While Irishmen like Ryan often supported the South,\(^{60}\) Germans generally supported the North. Students at Saint Vincent's heretofore had come largely from Irish backgrounds. The arrival of a significant percentage of German students, as the yearly catalogues show, brought differences in background to a head. Both Father John Hickey, the prefect of the seminary, with principal responsibility for the students, and Father James McGill, the rector, directly contributed to the tension. Hickey treated students severely, having come to the school with the task of rooting out laxity.\(^{61}\) To use the rector's terms, a "Reign of Terror" ensued.\(^{62}\) McGill expelled a German student, and others followed—German and Irish alike.\(^{63}\) Within two months, Hickey lost his office,\(^{64}\) and by January, McGill himself had left.\(^{65}\)

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\(^{59}\) This is reflected in several letters, e.g., McGill to McMenamy, Cape Girardeau, November 17, 1862. DRMA.

\(^{60}\) M.C. Walsh to McMenamy, St. Louis, August 23, 1862. DRMA. "All the Irish in St. Louis are nearly secessionists," the view of a student writing back to the College.

\(^{61}\) McGill to McMenamy, Cape Girardeau, November 17, 1862. DRMA.

\(^{62}\) McGill to McMenamy, Cape Girardeau, February 25, 1863. DRMA.

\(^{63}\) McGill to McMenamy, Cape Girardeau, November 23, 1862. DRMA. "So now we are clear of the Dutch crowd—no small relief, I assure you." Also, McGill to McMenamy, Cape Girardeau, December 25, 1862. DRMA.

\(^{64}\) McGill to McMenamy, Cape Girardeau, April 17, 1863, DRMA.

\(^{65}\) McGill to Etienne, Niagara, New York, October 23, 1864. DRMA. Microfilm, #132, reel 1. He felt "cast down from the highest position to the very lowest."
Archbishop Kenrick reacted to the German expulsions by keeping the students in Saint Louis for the balance of the school year.66 He then sent Linnenkamp and Muench, who left voluntarily, to the seminary in Milwaukee, which catered to German students.67 The Archbishop himself did not pay a visit to Cape, for reasons not known, until 1866.68 From this point on, the bishops' seminary experiment waned. Kenrick's attention and loyalty drifted away from Saint Vincent's.69 The diocese of Milwaukee, a part of Kenrick's Episcopal Province, opened its seminary in 1856 with a largely German faculty and student body.70 Then, in 1868, he sent his first students to the North American College in Rome71 and to other European and American

66McGill to Maller (?), Cape Girardeau, March 9, 1863. DRMA. Microfilm, #128, reel 1.

67F. Johannes, "Monsignor C.H. Linnenkamp," Pastoral-Blatt LVII (March 1923), 33-34. This sympathetic recounting speaks only of a misunderstanding. Linnenkamp was later the Vicar-General of the St. Joseph, Missouri, diocese.

68St. Louis archdiocesan chancery records show no visits between June 27, 1862 and May 27, 1866.

69James Knowd to Maller, La Salle, March 29, 1864, DRMA. This complaining letter cites Kenrick's inability to pay, and the withdrawal of the Dubuque students.


71Robert F. McNamara, The American College in Rome. 1855-1955. (Rochester, New York, 1956); treats Kenrick's opposition, then his support of this institution. See Henry A. Brann, History of the American College of the Roman Catholic Church of the United States, Rome, Italy, (New York, 1910), 547-570, for lists of St. Louis students, usually one or two sent yearly.
seminaries. By 1879, in fact, he reported that he had no seminary for his diocese.

A further war-time event, the arrest of the faculty, was more colorful than the Irish-German conflict, but less detrimental in its effects. During the war, the Missouri military government had prescribed a loyalty oath for those accused of supporting the rebel cause. The post-war constitution, the so-called "Drake Constitution" of 1865, continued these 1861 and 1862 decrees and prescribed an oath to be professed by ministers of religion in order to perform public acts of religion. Father Ryan, the Vincentian Provincial, and Archbishop Kenrick both opposed taking the oath.

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72 By 1885, Kenrick had students in St. Meinrad's, Indiana; Baltimore; Europe: Louvain, Belgium; Rome; Innsbruck, Germany, Carlow, Ireland. "Report of the Roman Catholic Theological Seminary of St. Louis," one page, December 10, 1885. Saint Louis Archdiocesan Archives (SLAA).

73 In a response to the annual questionnaire for Rome, "Responsiones ad Questiones a Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide propositas 1879," SLAA, 16 pages, signed by Kenrick.


76 Liber Decretorum, visitation record of S.V. Ryan, February 7, 1866. "...Novel species of persecution inaugurated by the so called New Constitution of our State with its obnoxious test oaths hampering religious liberty and warring against all Catholic educational institution...."

77 John Rothensteiner, History of The Archdiocese of St. Louis (St. Louis, 1938), II, 216 for a text of the oath.
At Saint Vincent's, marshals arrested the principal faculty members and confined them at Jackson, where they were indicted December 8, 1865. Their cases moved slowly through the court; further faculty members were arrested and indicted. Circuit judge Albert Jackson had a reputation as a harsh and difficult person, and one violently bigoted against Catholics. In fact, he had been impeached in 1859 on charges of judicial harshness, but received an acquittal on all counts after a sensational trial in Jefferson City. Despite his bias, the Vincentian cases remained inactive in his court until the trial of a former student at Saint Vincent's, Father John Cummings, could run its course. He had pleaded guilty to refusing to take the oath, was convicted, but later won on appeal to the United States Supreme Court, January, 1867. On this basis, Judge Jackson eventually dismissed the cases against the college faculty.

The case of the Sisters of Loretto, arrested in Cape Girardeau at the same time as the college faculty, offers

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78 Strangely, no references to the events occur in the Board Minutes.
79 Circuit Court Records, Cape Girardeau County, Book 7, 695 ff, and Book K, 36 ff.
80 W.V.N. Bay, *Reminiscences of the Bench and Bar of Missouri* (St. Louis, 1878), 567-568; and *History of South East Missouri* (Chicago, 1888), 390-391.
83 In the next sessions, June and December 1868; Circuit Court, Book K, 115, 133.
interesting parallels. A vivid eye-witness account describes the manner of their arrest, how Judge Jackson treated them insultingly, the disguises they needed to wear, and finally a reconciling visit by Missouri Governor Thomas C. Fletcher.84

The war greatly slowed the momentum of Saint Vincent's College. A smaller student body enrolled after the war. Lower numbers in turn decreased income and added to the debts of the college. To attract more students the faculty responded by raising tuition. But bishops, too, found themselves short of money. Lack of funds led the college inexorably toward bankruptcy.85

In addition, Saint Vincent's suffered from its Vincentian personnel. The Superior, James McGill, lacked skill and his Provincial soon had to remove him; the faculty, young and inexperienced, relaxed standards.86

Because of these conditions, bishops grew dissatisfied, and the reputation of the seminary declined. Vincentian bishops, such as Amat of Monterey, sent students, but had little money to offer for their tuition.87 Other, and cheaper,
seminaries competed with Saint Vincent's for students.

Meanwhile, the Vincentian students at the Barrens had transferred to Saint Louis in 1862.\textsuperscript{88} This departure left smaller numbers in the secular college at Perryville. Calls came in to reopen the college at Cape at the same time. The faculty did not act on this, either because the professors had too much parish work to do or felt unprepared to reopen.\textsuperscript{89}

A fire in the college building at the Barrens contributed at this very point to the decision to reopen; this event altered the mission of Saint Vincent's College from then on.\textsuperscript{90} The faculty at the Barrens, unable to rebuild the college building, asked to transfer their (secular) students to the nearly empty buildings at Cape. Both faculties agreed. With this, the “Classical” department, closed since 1859,\textsuperscript{91} reopened. To generate more enrollment, a two-year “Commercial” program opened at the same time.\textsuperscript{92}

This new venture had as its stated purpose the support of the theology department through increased finances and a larger source of recruits to an ecclesiastical vocation.\textsuperscript{93} At first, enrollment remained low, mainly since few students came from the South, until the war the chief source of

\textsuperscript{88}Ryan, circular to members of Province, Saint Louis, May 22, 1862; DRMA; announces the move and the reasons for it.

\textsuperscript{89}McGerry to Maller, ibid.

\textsuperscript{90}Daniel McCarthy, C.M., gave eyewitness details of the fire and its results in connection with a tax case. \textit{In the Circuit Court of Perry County, Missouri...Brief, Points and Authorities.} (Perryville, 1885.) DRMA.

\textsuperscript{91}“Board Minutes,” Meeting of May 26, 1866, “None but Catholic boys" were to be admitted.

\textsuperscript{92}Nugent, “History,” 187\textsubscript{e}

\textsuperscript{93}Annual Catalogue...1866-67, 4.
students. In addition, contrary to expectation, almost no one from either department of the college entered the seminary. As a result, the college soon became larger than the theologate, and gave the same secular tone to Saint Vincent's that in 1835 nearly caused the closing of the college at the Barrens.

Despite the small enrollment, Saint Vincent's could claim some successes in its alumni. The institution counted several bishop-alumni: Thomas Bonacum of Lincoln; Jeremiah Harty of both Manila and Omaha; John Hennessy of Wichita; Thomas Lenihan of Cheyenne; John Shanley of Fargo and Peter Verdaguer of Brownsville. Some faculty went on to be Provincials of the Vincentians: Thomas Smith and Patrick McHale; other faculty had sufficiently strong reputations in the ecclesiastical sciences to attend the Plenary Councils of American bishops (Fathers Alizeri and Hickey as rectors, with Burlando and Verrina as official theological experts).

From among the students, the college produced two newspaper editors, David Phelan, of the Western Watchman, and O.J. McDonald, of the Church Progress, both of Saint Louis.

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96 "Centennial St. Vincent's College 1843-1943," unpaged booklet. DRMA.
97 Conciliorum Plenariorum Baltimorensium II...Acta et Decreta, (Baltimore, 1868), lvii, includes Alizeri, Burlando, Verrina and Ryan. Acta et Decreta Concilii Plenarii Baltimorensis Tertii, (Baltimore, 1886), xlvi, lists Hickey, and xlviii, his old adversary, Christoph Linnenkamp.
98 Untitled enrollment book, DRMA. At the commencement of June 20, 1882, St. Vincent's conferred an honorary Doctor of Laws on Phelan (Trustees' Minutes, May 19, 1882, for decision.) McDonald, Class of 1871, maintained ties with St. Vincent's. See College Message 18:9.
Constantine Smith, ordained in 1862, assisted Archbishop Kenrick as his theologian for the Vatican Council in Rome.\textsuperscript{99} Martin Brennan, the "astronomer-priest," served on the faculty of Kenrick Seminary in Saint Louis in his later years, and often demonstrated his affection for his college home.\textsuperscript{100}

Other Vincentian faculty members contributed to the social, scientific and religious life of the country: James Knowd, a correspondent for the Smithsonian Institution; Joseph Alizeri, a theologian; John F. McGerry\textsuperscript{101} and Timothy D. O'Keeffe;\textsuperscript{102} Peter V. Byrne, and John H. Koop, philosophers.\textsuperscript{103}

Notable laymen who attended the seminary for some while included Thomas A. Rice, a Vincentian Community member from 1853 to 1860, who attained some prominence


\textsuperscript{100}St. Louis, \textit{Western Watchman}, October 9, 1827, 1, 5. \textit{Kenrick Seminary Calendar for Year 1928}, (n.p., n.d.), 71, commemorates this last surviving member of the original Kenrick Seminary faculty. He published several works of popular science from 1885 to 1912. Brennan to Nugent, St. Louis, March 5, 1890, DRMA, "...There is not a spot in the whole world dearer than old St. Vincent's...."

\textsuperscript{101}Nugent, \textit{History}, 180, 188. McGerry's pre-Vincentian career is noted in Edward McSweeney, \textit{The Story of the Mountain. Mount St. Mary's College and University} (Emmitsburg, Maryland, 1911), II, 98.

\textsuperscript{102}"Father Timothy O'Keeffe," in Louis Houck, \textit{Memorial Sketches of Pioneers and Early Residents of Southeast Missouri.} (Cape Girardeau, 1915), 77-79.

\textsuperscript{103}Both were involved with Orestes Brownson, the philosopher and savant; see references to both in Brownson papers, UNDA. Koop authored "The Possible, or Mundus Logicus," in \textit{Brownson's Quarterly Review}, Last Series (April-July, 1875), 223-230, 402-409.
in Saint Louis as a lawyer and educator;¹⁰⁴ and Judge W.G. Lorigan, of Santa Clara, California, a student in 1872-73.¹⁰⁵

Shortly after the war, Archbishop Kenrick returned to his plans for a seminary of his own in Saint Louis. The Vatican Council of 1869-70 interrupted him somewhat, since Pope Pius IX summoned bishops to Rome for its sessions.¹⁰⁶ Before leaving however, Kenrick deeded his library to this unbuilt seminary,¹⁰⁷ and the "St. Louis Roman Catholic Theological Seminary" incorporated October 12, 1869. According to official documents, the incorporators intended to build a seminary at the Annunciation parish in Saint Louis. They drew up deeds for this the following year.¹⁰⁸ The pastor of Annunciation at the time was Patrick J. Ryan, later coadjutor Bishop of Saint Louis, and then Archbishop of Philadelphia. Two supporters of the Vincentians, David Phelan and P.P. Brady, succeed him as pastor.¹⁰⁹

As previously, Kenrick's seminary plans did not succeed. Just why remains unclear. A significant reason must surely be the Archbishop's virtual retirement from public life. Due to his public opposition to the decree on papal infallibility, he felt humiliated and relegated many duties to his

¹⁰⁴Walter B. Stevens, St. Louis, The Fourth City, 1764-1909. (St. Louis, 1909), III, 989-990; Rice to Ryan, St. Louis, July 5, 1860, DRMA, explains his situation after leaving the Vincentians.

¹⁰⁵Lorigan to Nugent, Santa Clara, Ca., June 25, 1891. DRMA.

¹⁰⁶Miller, "Kenrick," 92.

¹⁰⁷Original deed, August 5, 1870, signed by Kenrick's attorney, Joseph O'Neil; SLAA.

¹⁰⁸Original in Circuit Court of St. Louis, Book 42, page 441.

¹⁰⁹Rothensteiner, History, II, 202-203; SLAA personnel records.
coadjutor. Lack of money probably influenced his decision, as well as the rapid urbanization around the parish in the next few years. By 1871 the plan seems to have collapsed, since in that year the Archbishop invited the Vincentians to take charge of Annunciation parish. Official correspondence reveals nothing of former or current plans for a seminary at the parish.

The decade of the 1870s brought few advances to the seminary. The total of ecclesiastical students declined while the number of collegians stayed between 80 and

Saint Vincent’s College in the late nineteenth century (DeAndreis-Rosati Memorial Archives).

110 Miller, “Kenrick”, 129-130.

111 Rothensteiner, History, II, 202, speaks of the parish’s ruinous condition because of the growth of the city.

112 “Minutes of the Provincial Council”, meeting of April 27, 1871, discusses the offer. Original in Vincentian Provincial offices, St. Louis, Missouri.
To accommodate them, Saint Vincent's added a new wing containing a large chapel and auditorium. The old issue of the unhealthy climate of Cape Girardeau surfaced again, as the pages of the College Message, the seminary newspaper, reveal. The school's reputation for being unhealthy may even have increased due to the premature death of the Vincentian Provincial, Father John Hayden, C.M., visiting the seminary on official business at the end of October, 1872. His death followed the deaths of two students, in 1870 and 1871—a not uncommon occurrence in those days, to be sure.

To remedy a decade of decline, the seminary Board decided to accept day students, beginning in the school year 1878-79. This would bring added revenue without the expense involved in boarding students. The faculty also determined to use professional canvassers, in addition to faculty members, to recruit students. At present a

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113 Seminary enrollments, based on Catholic Directories, 1871:25; 1872:18, 1875:10; 1878:4; 1880:7.
114 Nugent, History, 189.
115 Vol. 6:7, (November 1, 1879), 2, insists student fears about health are groundless. Vol. 7:1 (May 1, 1880), 8, contrasts the malaria and chills of the past with good health reports of the present.
117 “College and Church Accounts 1856-1869,” DRMA. Includes a necrology, drawn up in 1886.
118 “Student Register 1876-1909,” DRMA. The listing of “day scholars” begins in 1878-79.
119 Fiat to Smith, Paris, May 28, 1890, DRMA (Original in French.) Fiat forbade recruitment by the faculty, reserving it to the Superior only.
common tactic, but in 1880, canvassing marked a development in official thinking. These canvassers did not show the same care that the Vincentians did for the quality of the students, and the student body suffered thereby. For the canvassers enrollment implied quantity, since they received ten percent of the tuition paid for each new recruit.\footnote{\textit{Records of Domestic Council}, unpaged notebook. DRMA. Meeting of May 5, 1886. Also May 19, 1886, when the members discussed "the danger of getting too many Protestant boys." They agreed to take but not seek them out. During the next summer, faculty members did canvassing. A letter, T.W. Kearney, C.M., to Benjamin Cahoun, Cape Girardeau, September 14, 1880, attests to the practice. (Copies courtesy of Joint Collection, University of Missouri, Western Historical Manuscript Collection-Columbia; State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts.)}

By 1883, the Vincentian Provincial Superior, Father Thomas Smith, himself a former faculty member, announced his intention of returning Saint Vincent's College to seminary status. Enrollment statistics proved that the school had in fact lost all semblance of a seminary.\footnote{Smith to Antoine Fiat, Cape Girardeau December 3, 1883. (Original in French.) DRMA. Microfilm, #114, reel 3. At the same time, he urged the faculty to "Make the College...of the highest order. Aim to make it first of its kind in the West." \textit{Liber Decretorum}, Visitation record of November 21, 1883. DRMA.} The rector then sought the cooperation of the Archbishop of Saint Louis in the new venture.\footnote{Patrick McHale to P. Brady, Cape Girardeau, August 20, 1885. SLAA. Brady was Kenrick's Vicar General.} Smith himself sent three Vincentian candidates to study there.\footnote{Named in "Register of the Internal Seminary." DRMA.} And to further Smith's project, the faculty initiated several changes in their traditional approach to education. The academic catalogues became more representative and specific, listing...
developed policies and regulations.124 The Vincentians broadened the curriculum and took contemporary educational concerns into account.125 At the same time, administrators realized more strongly the need for a specifically theological library,126 as well as for individuals competent in specific fields, such as church music.127 Finally, the faculty had overdue repairs and improvements made to the building.128

Our Seminaries. An Essay on Clerical Training, dating from 1896, leveled criticism at American seminaries, while not singling out any institution in particular. The author, John Talbot Smith, lamented antiquated teaching methods and physical surroundings, poor facilities and inadequately prepared staff.129 His indictments, though written some years after the period in question here, attest to the poor state of training received at seminaries like Saint Vincent's during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

124 Evident first in the Annual Catalogue...1885-86.
125 "Archives of St. Vincent's College," notebook, DRMA. Entries for 1890-91 discuss changes, and include printed programs for academic and cultural events.
127 Correspondence relating to the hiring of Lucien Becker of Strasbourg to teach music, in DRMA. July-August, 1889. Becker continued at Kenrick Seminary for many years.
128 "Domestic Council," meetings of 1889-1890.
Against such a background, and because of changes at Saint Vincent's, bishops began again to look with more interest on Cape Girardeau as a theological seminary. The correspondence of the period shows both their willingness to send students and their ability to pay for them. The support promised by the bishops of the Saint Louis Province, however, never returned to the level promised in 1859. At the same time, the distinction between the seminary department and the college departments became greater, so much so that by 1890 the official title used by the institution on its stationery and catalogues was “Saint Vincent’s College and Ecclesiastical Seminary.” The College Message of 1891 reflected these developments:

The Cape is on the eve of the revival of her glorious days as a purely Ecclesiastical Seminary....The Cape now has a Seminary fully equipped, possessing all the advantages....

When Bishop Patrick J. Ryan, Kenrick’s coadjutor, transferred to Philadelphia, the Archbishop once more assumed personal control of his diocese. He visited Cape Girardeau in 1889, spending time with the faculty and administering confirmation in the local parish. He made his

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130 An extensive correspondence exists from this period between Nugent and the bishops of Denver, Brownsville, New Orleans, Davenport, Alton, Monterey, Little Rock, and St. Louis. DRMA.

131 College Message, September 30, 1891, 9. The Western Watchman, June 12, 1892, 8, refers to its “present flourishing condition...bright prospects.” Nugent’s correspondence reflects the same hope, “to place the Cape within the next two years, as high if not higher than ever she stood as a Seminary.” (Nugent to Brady, Cape Girardeau, February 5, 1891; untitled letterbook, pp. 29-30, KSA.)

132 Miller, “Kenrick.” 130.
final visit in Cape memorable in the following incident. Too weak, at age 83, to remain standing for the celebration of Mass in the church, he chose to enter afterwards, and while seated to confirm the 191 candidates present. At the end, there entered the church...

an old blind and lame Negro, Mr. Love, who was helped into the Sanctuary by two stalwart negroes. The Archbishop, the oldest and greatest of the Princes of the Church of God arose up to do him honor and signed him with the sign of salvation. It was a theme fit for a poet to see the sick and weak and worn out Archbishop do what he did not do for anyone else, Arise, put on his mitre and surrounded by the assisting priests sign the colored man.133

Kenrick had never abandoned plans for his own seminary. A rapid increase of students at Cape presented the Archbishop with the alternatives of refusing to accept students, or of building at Cape, or of opening a new seminary altogether.134 The impending sale in 1890 of the old Visitation Convent at 19th and Cass in Saint Louis offered him his opportunity. By April, he had determined to purchase the property from the Sisters,135 and asked the priests of the Sulpician Community to staff the new seminary for him. The Vincentians learned of his decision by year's end, probably through their old friend, Kenrick's

133 "Archive8 of St. Vincent’s College,” October 20, 1889.


135 Kenrick to Mother Juliana Anderson, Saint Louis, April 7, 1890. The Sisters accepted; Kenrick to Anderson, Saint Louis, April 11, 1890. (Original in Archives of Visitation Academy, Saint Louis, Missouri.)
Vicar General, Philip P. Brady.\textsuperscript{136} He himself interceded with Kenrick on behalf of the Vincentians, but the aged Archbishop made no change for an entire year. In the meantime, the Vincentians contacted the Sulpician Superiors about the issue, who then agreed not to accept the new seminary. They had explained that they never realized Vincentian sensibilities in the matter, and so turned down the Archbishop's offer to preserve harmony between Vincentians and Sulpicians, so closely linked in their origin and subsequent ministries.\textsuperscript{137} Once Kenrick offered the seminary to the Vincentians, the Fathers quickly accepted, particularly in view of the Archbishop's feeble health.\textsuperscript{138}

Kenrick's stipulation that the Vincentians themselves had to raise the funds to refurbish the old buildings clouded their victory somewhat.\textsuperscript{139} Father Francis V. Nugent, former student and now rector of Cape Girardeau, took charge of this undertaking for the Community; and P.P. Brady, for the diocese.\textsuperscript{140} By direct appeals from the pulpits of Saint Louis churches Nugent slowly raised the needed funds.\textsuperscript{141} His progress, to Kenrick's annoyance, matched

\textsuperscript{136}(Provincial Council Minutes), untitled book, in Provincial Office files, St. Louis; meeting of December 8, 1890, 10. Also, Smith to Hoover, Perryville, n.d., DRMA; examines his relationship with Kenrick.

\textsuperscript{137}A.L. Magnien to Smith, n.p., January 14, 1892. (Original in French.) DRMA, Microfilm, #11, roll 3.

\textsuperscript{138}Smith to Fiat, Perryville, May 26, 1892. (Original in French.) DRMA, Microfilm, #17, roll 3; also, August 15, 1892. #24, roll 3.

\textsuperscript{139}Smith to Brady, Perryville, October 10, 1892. SLAA.

\textsuperscript{140}Kenrick, Circular letter to clergy, Saint Louis, October 31, 1892, announcing Nugent's appointment. Western Watchman, November 6 and 20, 1892, 8, reports on Nugent's attempts.

\textsuperscript{141}By January 1894, he raised $20,848.55. Seminary Financial Records, SLAA.
that of the reconstruction of the buildings. They had deteriorated more than previously imagined.\textsuperscript{142}

At Saint Vincent's, meanwhile, both faculty and students began to sense what the impact of another seminary in the same diocese would have on them. The faculty and the Board continued undecided whether to maintain two seminaries or to close in favor of what came to be called Kenrick Seminary.\textsuperscript{143} This state of indecision remained even until the end of the final school year, May 1893.\textsuperscript{144}

Student enrollment also suffered. In the final summer, 1892, rumors circulated that the entire college, for seculars and clerics alike, would be closed in September, 1893. Despite the efforts of Father Hugh Dockery and other faculty members to visit bishops, only a few students sought admission in September, 1892.\textsuperscript{145} All during the final year, little happened at the institution. The customary Catalogue did not appear, the \textit{College Message} newspaper ceased, and the faculty did not meet. Having once lost momentum, the college did not regain it.

Consequently, with the opening of Kenrick Diocesan Seminary (to use the first official title), Saint Vincent's

\textsuperscript{142}Smith to Brady, Perryville, September 28, 1892, SLAA. "The buildings it seems having been neglected for years are now in a very dilapidated and unsafe condition."

\textsuperscript{143}"Provincial Council," meeting of May 18, 1891, 12. The name Kenrick Diocesan Seminary first appears in \textit{Sunday Watchman}, December 4, 1892, 8.

\textsuperscript{144}Smith to Fiat, Perryville, May 12, 1893. (Original in French.) DRMA, Microfilm, #356, reel 2. "It has long been languishing and was nearly lifeless." The Council of the Superior General approved the change, May 29; Typescript: "La Congregation de la Mission en Amerique du Nord," (Rome 1966), 53, DRMA.

\textsuperscript{145}William Musson, C.M., (Untitled Manuscript history of Western Province Vincentians, 1888—c. 1935), 26. DRMA.
Ecclesiastical Seminary simply closed its doors. The year marked, ironically, the Golden Jubilee of foundation, 1843-1893. The students transferred to Saint Louis, bringing along their customs, and accompanied by some of the faculty and part of the library. Nevertheless, this change did not simply involve a transfer of locations for the same institution. The college again sought to change its focus.

During his visits with the bishops, Dockery had encouraged them to send their preparatory seminary students, of high school age, to Cape Girardeau. Some evidence exists that at least the Saint Louis diocese did so until 1900. In that year, Kenrick Preparatory Seminary opened in part of the buildings of the larger Kenrick Seminary and Saint Vincent’s lost even more of its potential for students.

With the school year 1893-94, only 20 college students appeared, and of these only 10 boarded. The next two years saw enrollment slip to 11 and then to 8. This debilitated condition lasted until 1910, at which time the institution turned exclusively to the education of high school

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146 Seen in comparisons of Annual Catalogues of Saint Vincent’s with Kenrick Seminary’s catalogues.

147 Musson, (“History,”) ibid.

148 Smith to Fiat, Perryville, May 26, 1895. (Original in French.) DRMA, Microfilm, #382, roll 2. Also, November 19, 1900; Microfilm, #454, roll 4.

149 Smith to Nugent, Perryville, February 23 and March 23, 1900. SLAA. Kain to Smith, Saint Louis, March 21, 1900, SLAA, signifying his wish to open the preparatory school. A seminary board met first, May 1, 1900, and announced the new venture would open September 12. (“Minutes of Seminary Board. 1900-1945.” SLAA.)

150 "Archives of St. Vincent’s College," September 6, 1893.

151 "Archives," September 7, 1894; September 12, 1895.
students for the Vincentian Community. Following old tradition, the high school seminary moved from the Barrens, where the Vincentians had reestablished it in 1886. The seminary continued in Cape Girardeau until changes in enrollment once again caused a transfer, this time in 1979, to Saint Vincent’s Seminary, Lemont, Illinois. Saint Vincent’s continues to serve religious needs in southeast Missouri, fulfilling the spirit of its early days. The Vincentian Community moved Saint Vincent’s from boys school to college and seminary, and back again to a high school seminary—a history of adaptation to changing needs.

When we are satisfied that we have done everything in our power for the happy issue of an affair, we should preserve our tranquility and peace whatever may be the result.

St. Vincent de Paul

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152 "Centennial," unpagd. "Provincial Council," March 29, 1910, 109: "It was approved by all that the Cape be used for the future as an Apostolic School [high school seminary]."