

# Overcoming Odds Features 85-Year Record of Nuns

Imminent demands for care of sick and wounded at the time of the Civil War and met by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul laid the foundation for St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester. Imminent demands for care of sick in the present World War and unquestionably for care of the wounded soon has brought about the erection of a modern hospital building to meet those needs.

The Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul have an 85-year record in the treatment of the ill and halt which covers four wars, depressions and tragedies, all of which have been met with fortitude inspired by their great patron, Saint Vincent de Paul.

In 1857 three Sisters of the community came from the Mother House at Emmitsburg, Maryland, on invitation of Bishop Timon, Bishop of Buffalo, of which this area was then a part.

Undaunted by what seemed to be insurmountable obstacles the sisters purchased land at Bull's Head, Main St. West and Geneva St. and converted two stone stables into Rochester's first hospital.

Conditions were such then that the sick had to be treated in their homes or physicians' offices.

### Mother Hieronyma Cited

Beginning the work then that was to make her name renowned in the care of the sick throughout the country was Mother Hieronyma. Directed by the Reverend Mother, the sisters fitted up the buildings as best they could. They cared for the poor, the sick and the infirm, most of them penniless.

Principles upon which St. Mary's Hospital has been conducted since its beginning were set forth in this statement of Mother Hieronyma issued in September, 1857:

"The institution shall ever be open to the sick of all denominations or none; no distinction will be made. Patients who desire spiritual help from pastors of their belief shall have every facility afforded them to obtain this consolation. The sisters are ever willing to admit the sick poor gratis as far as their means will permit."

During the first hard year the Sisters took care of 250 patients. They used a large drygoods box for a table by day and at night drew from it their mattresses to sleep on the floor.

### Tireless in Efforts

The same tireless energy shown by their successors today was manifested by the Sisters then. They went about sowing seeds for their work. They erected a two-story building connecting the two stables. In 1859 they found their facilities again inadequate.

In that year they built the three-story structure which is the east wing of the old hospital on West Main St. More than half their pa-

tients were charity cases, others paid small amounts, the Sisters debts mounted.

Then came the Civil War. The Sisters' problems mounted as the demand for caring for the wounded soldiers increased. They were forced to move civilian patients across the street in Geneva Street to a hall while they cared for the soldiers in the hospital.

During the war the Sisters cared for 5,000 soldiers. Payment by the government of a fixed sum for the care of each soldier, increased public interest in the work of the hospital and volunteering by women of the city for duty in the emergency eased the situation.

Mother Hieronyma was head of St. Mary's until 1870 when transferred but her influence has left an indelible imprint. From 1857 to 1882 the hospital took care of 21,631 patients in addition to the Civil War casualties.

### Nuns Save Patients

Fire swept through the hospital building on Feb. 15, 1891. All that remained were the stone walls. The 19 nuns in charge disregarded personal danger to assist the 300 patients to safety. Not a life was lost.

The Sisters had just been given \$20,000 by city residents for needed improvements. However, the clergy, sisters and laity of the diocese began immediately to set about repairing the damage caused by fire.

From then on the extensive program of progress resulting from increased demands on the Sisters was carried out. A Nurses' Training Center was organized in 1891 and the first class was graduated in 1894.

An operating pavilion was built in 1898. The contagious pavilion was erected in 1899. Inauguration of a maternity department took place in 1903. A sum of \$80,000 was required to build the beautiful hospital chapel where Holy Mass is celebrated and other services conducted, in 1904.

The first motor-driven ambulance was purchased in 1914, and the following year saw a new power house and laundry constructed at a cost of \$40,000.

The new St. Mary's School of Nursing home was dedicated in 1923 after a building fund of \$334,000 was subscribed by citizens. With church dignitaries and

(Continued on Page 1)

# New Hospital Building's Need Evidenced In Cooperation Met



A monument to the rare service and faith of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul is seen in the Diocese, being a distinct need in the community of Rochester, the new St. Mary's Hospital is being opened today after almost insurmountable obstacles had been overcome by all concerned in its completion.

The 11-story hospital building at 20 Geneva St. was given last minute attention yesterday for dedication by His Excellency, Bishop Keenan, today.

The six-story, 200-bed hospital structure has been brought to completion by the combined efforts of architect, general contractor and expert craftsmen with the help of officials in Washington who saw the need for the hospital in these war times.

Joseph P. Flynn, the architect, and Daniel J. Meagher, general contractor, who himself went to Washington to confer on the matter of priority after the CDM was established, worked strenuously with Sister M. Martin, hospital superintendent to complete the gigantic job.

Tribute is being paid this week to the construction staff which remained on the job despite the late



IN THE NEW HOSPITAL—The oratory site (top photo) will be a center of Catholic interest in the new St. Mary's Hospital. Lower photo shows three leaders in erection of the new Hospital from left: Daniel J. Meagher, general contractor in charge of construction; Dr. Leo F. Simpson, hospital president and chief of staff; and Joseph P. Flynn, architect and designer of building.

## HIGHLIGHTS IN HISTORY OF ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL

Highlights of St. Mary's Hospital history taken from the Diamond Jubilee Souvenir published in 1932:

- 1857 - Beginning of Hospital Movement in Rochester - erection of temporary hospital from two stone stables on the West Avenue property. Sister Hieronyma, President of the Board of Directors.
- 1858 - A two-story building erected, connecting the two stone stables originally used as the hospital.
- 1860 - The large East Wing, three stories high was added.
- 1861 - The Halstead Hall across Geneva Street was rented as an Annex for Civilian patients, as the hospital proper was needed by the U. S. Government for wounded Civil War soldiers.
- 1862 - The present building facing Main Street was started.
- 1863 - Hospital building finished and occupied exclusively for sick and wounded soldiers as a regularly designated United States Hospital. During the war more than 5,000 soldiers from the great battlefield of the South were received and cared for, 700 being in the wards at one time.
- 1866 - Twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Hospital celebrated with Solemn Pontifical Mass celebrated by Bishop Bernard J. McQuaid.
- 1867 - February 15th, at midnight, fire broke out and the fruit of thirty years' efforts was wiped away in a few hours.
- 1868 - First public Graduation Exercises for Nurses.
- 1869 - Dr. Casey reports two well-equipped and well-managed ambulances in operation at St. Mary's Hospital.
- 1869 - The Operation Pavilion was added to the East Wing of the Hospital to replace the old operating rooms in the tower.
- 1869 - The Contagious Pavilion was built for isolation of patients suffering from contagious diseases.
- 1869 - The special Maternity Department was opened for obstetrical cases in the new West Wing of the hospital.
- 1865 - The Society of Seton Workers was organized under the direction of Miss Susan Engest.
- 1866 - The Chapel building was erected. This added fifteen more private rooms for patients.
- 1867 - September 8th marked the fifteenth anniversary of the foundation of the Hospital.
- 1866 - The Perpetual Help Society, the oldest connected with the Hospital, entertained the Seton Workers.
- 1872 - The Flower League was organized.
- 1872 - The Catholic Charity Guild of Rochester was organized by the Most Rev. Thomas F. Hickey, D.D.
- 1874 - The first "Motor Ambulance" replaced the horse ambulances.
- 1875 - New Power House and Laundry erected.
- 1875 - The World War depleted the corps of physicians and nurses, many enlisting for active service.
- 1876 - First floor remodeled and refurbished by Medical Staff.
- 1877 - Dispensary organized and licensed. First floor of Chapel building made into an Out-Patient Department.
- 1875 - Perpetual Help Society redecored the Chapel.
- 1876 - Seton Workers furnished their various wards with latest hospital equipment.
- 1878 - Advisory Board with Hon. William F. Love as chairman was organized.

of higher wages. There was not a single labor dispute. No serious accident occurred to any workman.

"We have had nothing but the friendliest cooperation from all who participated even in the busiest season in the construction of the building," General Contractor Meagher said this week. "Notwithstanding the confusion in Washington, we were shown the utmost friendliness."

"We feel that much of this constitutes a grand tribute to the Sisters of Charity and the staff of St. Mary's Hospital. We have tried to do a grand job and we feel sure that a very notable work will be carried on in the new hospital."

Visitors to the hospital today will find it complete and modern in every detail. Sterilization equipment, conveniences for the medical staff and last minute equipment for the patients have been installed after much care and thought had been given to their planning and ordering.

Bishop's Suite Included  
A suite of rooms for the Bishop of Rochester, a brand new feature, will be found in Wing A of the first floor, a few steps from the oratory where clergy, the Sisters and laity may drop in to pray and meditate.

The Bishop's suite consists of an office, bedroom, shower and toilet room. Rooms are provided also nearby for the convenience of the hospital chaplain.

A butcher shop and bakery are on the ground floor below street level. The equipment includes new

(Continued on Page 4)

1890 - Volunteer Aides organized by the late Mrs. Frank Collins.

1891 - Pediatric Department organized.

1892 - Diamond Jubilee celebrated.

1891 - Ground broken for new hospital.

1893 - New hospital dedicated and opened.

## Noted Catholic Laymen Share Building Honors

Two outstanding Catholic laymen had a major share in the construction of St. Mary's Hospital.

They are Joseph P. Flynn, architect, and Daniel J. Meagher, general contractor. They cooperated with Sister Martina, erection superintendent and Dr. Leo F. Simpson, Chief of Staff in the Buildings.

Mr. Meagher, originally from the old Cathedral parish, has been one of Rochester's foremost building contractors and his part in personally seeing to it that materials came through for the new hospital is winning for him countless congratulations, this week.

A graduate of St. Mary's Orphan Home, old Cathedral High School and of Notre Dame University, Mr. Flynn, known to his innumerable friends as "Stubby," has in the past 26 years designed buildings which cost more than \$12,000,000 to construct. These include churches, convents, as well as city buildings.

In the World War, Mr. Flynn attended the Aerial School of Photography and was sent to France, where he became a Sergeant, First Class.

He completed three successful terms as Grand Knight of Rochester Council, Knights of Columbus, this year and was given a testimonial by the Council for his many years of service. He is the founder of the Notre Dame Club of Rochester and belongs to Order of the Alhambra, the Fourth Degree Assembly and several other organizations.

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BY REV. MRS. W. M. HART, V.G.,  
Editor-in-Chief  
REV. JOHN S. RANDALL, Managing Editor  
HOWARD W. CHIFFERT, Manager  
THOMAS H. O'CONNOR, News Editor

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