

# St. Ann's Home Marks 50 Years

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(This time \$14,000) enabled her to erect a new building for her school on East Main Street in 1888. This Romanesque structure, adjacent to the present Corpus Christi Church has long been a familiar landmark to Rochesterians. It is presently vacant and marked for demolition in order to provide Corpus Christi Church with parking facilities.

Latter years has seen this historic old building, originally erected for the Home of Industry, serving as the St. Agnes Institute of Music and more recently as the cradle for the St. Agnes High School, which since 1954 is housed in a new modern structure on East River Boulevard.

It also was in this same East Main Street Home of Industry that the work of the present-day St. Ann's Home found its inspiration and birth.

Long before Mother Hieronymo's death (January 30, 1898), her Home of Industry launched upon a new role that ultimately supplanted the Home's original purpose. This new role was the care of the aged. In fact as early as 1876, when the Home of Industry was still at its South St. Paul Street location, the following public notice appeared in the press:

"The Sisters in charge of the Home are making arrangements to accommodate any old ladies who may wish to come there as boarders."

After its transfer to East Main Street the Home of Industry gradually became more and more a home for aged ladies. Apparently this development resulted from the declining need to care for the girls and the growing need to care for the aged.

So, by the time of Mother Hieronymo's death, the Home of Industry, intended as a home and training school for girls, had lost its original character.

**F**ORMAL CONVERSION therefore, of the Home of Industry into a home for the care of aged women exclusively, followed Mother Hieronymo's death. Provision for the young girls still remaining in the Home was made in private families and Catholic orphanages. At the same time, the name of the long famous Home of Industry was changed to that of "Home for Aged Women." However, Rochesterians, through force of habit continued for many years to call it the Home of Industry. Even the daily newspapers, at times, ignored the official title of Home for Aged Women and referred to the "Catholic Home for old Ladies" or the "Old Ladies Home."

This move, so decisive in the history of Rochester's social welfare work, was undertaken by the Sisters of St. Joseph with Bishop McQuaid's hearty approbation, if not suggestion.

The change over entailed heavy expenditures for the Sisters. They faced the task of completely remodeling and refurnishing the East Main Street building "from cellar to garret." This was necessary in order to accommodate the build to the new work of caring for aged women.

To help in the refurbishing of the building a group of prominent and charitable-minded Catholics formed a committee to conduct a public appeal. Heading the group was Dr. James W. Casey, popular, Irish-born doctor who served as its

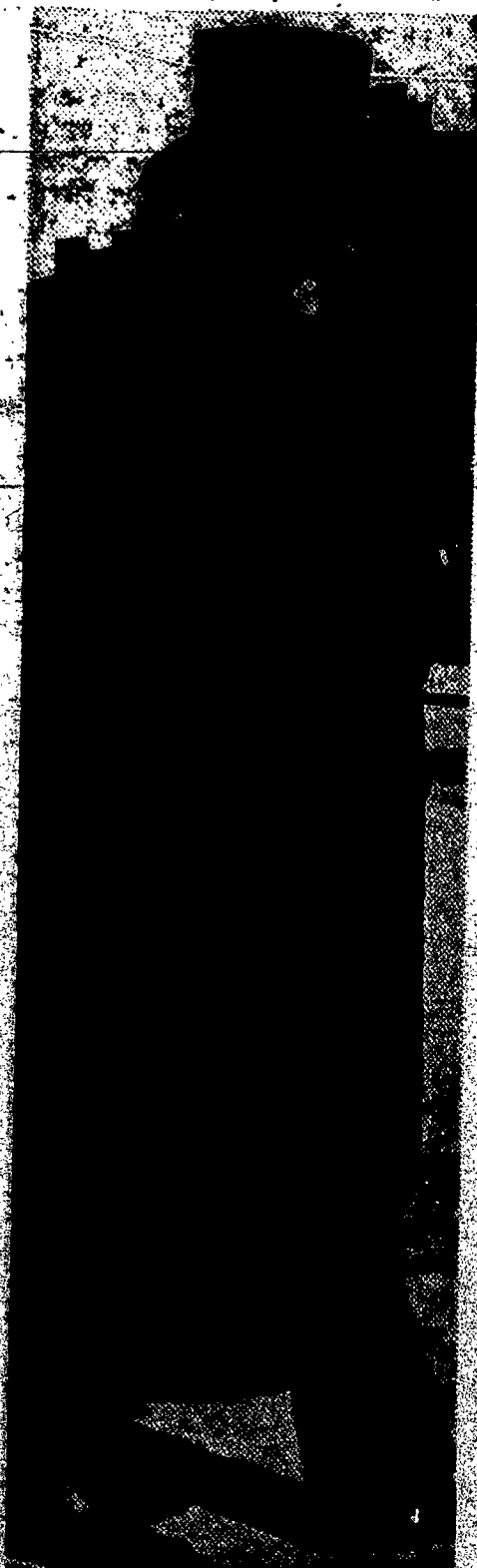
iting physician to the Home. Joined with him in this charitable effort were many Catholic women whose names for many years figured prominently in charitable assistance not only to the Home on East Main Street but also to its ultimate successor, St. Ann's Home on Lake Avenue.

Protestants as well as Catholics joined generously in helping convert the East Main Street Institution into a comfortable Home for Aged Women. Mrs. Hiram Sibley, a generous Protestant lady and member of a distinguished Rochester family, furnished and personally selected the appointments for the east reception room, which a reporter at the time described as "the very prettiest room in the house."

Thanks to the generosity of Rochesterians, the refurbished and remodeled Home for Aged Women was ready for opening by September 30, 1898.

According to modern standards, this East Main Street institution was not ideally equipped for its new work and was handicapped in many ways. There were no elevators or dumb waiters for the convenience of the aged tenants and the five Sisters in charge. These few Sisters had to do all the work themselves because they had no funds for hiring domestic help. Three times a day the Sisters carried meals up the steep stairs to the old ladies who were confined to their rooms and unable to attend the dining room.

**T**HE MANTLE OF authority which Mother Hieronymo had laid down only at her death now fell upon the shoulders of Sister Eusebius, a long time associate and protegee of the founder of the Home of Industry. Sister Eusebius who was destined to play a providential and pioneer role in the care of



Bishop McQuaid was over 80 when he started building St. Ann's Home.



Window watching the world outside.

Rochester's aged folk, now became the first superior and director of the new institution and immediately began to plan for its future development.

Refrigeration care of food was rather primitive in these early days and almost a luxury even in many institutions. Sister Eusebius was delighted, therefore, when the Home, during its first year, acquired a new refrigerator. She described it as "the largest and most complete of its kind ever placed in an institution in this city" up to that time.

"We used to have a dreadful time trying to keep meats and milk cool before we got the refrigerator," explained the mother superior, whom an interviewer described as being "as much pleased with the refrigerator as a little girl would be with a new doll."

Although the Home on East Main Street labored under many limitations, it marked one of the first major efforts in Rochester to recognize the needs of the city's elder citizenry.

From the beginning, the Home proved very popular but the fact that the East Main Street building lacked many conveniences and that it had no provision for old men moved Bishop McQuaid to make a momentous decision. He decided to erect a new institution which could care adequately for the aged, both men and women.

The 80-year-old Bishop was convalescing in Savannah, Georgia during the winter of 1904 (January) following an attack of illness when he revealed his plans in a letter to a friend as follows:

"I don't think it is worth while to die until I have completed the new St. Andrew's Seminary and the Home for Aged is built and equipped, for being old myself it would be gratifying to wind up my career with a work of charity for the worn out and weary."

The aged Bishop's own illness had made him more acutely aware of the plight of the aged poor and friendless. So he wrote:

"When prostrate upon my bed of sickness, receiving so much kindness, care, and help, I could not keep from thinking how hard was the fate of those who, being poor and friendless, had no one to help them, and thus were left to die."

While still recuperating in Georgia, Bishop McQuaid launched his plans for making his new Catholic Home for the Aged a reality. First, there was the matter of money. In a stirring appeal, he called on Catholics of Rochester and all kindly disposed citizens regardless of creed to patronize a city-wide Fair scheduled for Easter Week (April 4-11), 1904.

By means of the Fair the Bishop hoped to raise at least \$30,000 to pay for the construction of the new home for old people.

**D**URING THE BISHOP'S enforced absence, his vicar general and Cathedral pastor, the Very Rev. Thomas F. Hicksey organized civic and parish committees to arrange all details of the coming Fair.

As things developed, it became necessary to plan two Fairs, both to run simultaneously during Easter Week. To accommodate the expected crowd, one part of the Fair was slated for Fitzhugh Hall for parishes on the west side of the river. The other Fair center was the Armory for parishes on the east side of the river. At this time there were only 19 parishes in Rochester. As events turned out, many enthusiastic Rochesterians patronized both centers.

The breadth and scope as well as the overall organization of this 1904 fund raising venture would do credit to many of the professional fund raising experts of today.

Even a "Journal" chronicling events at the Fairs and carrying freshly published information each day was planned for distribution at both halls.

The community respect for Bishop McQuaid's noble undertaking was reflected in the number of cash donations received in advance of the Fair opening from prominent citizens of all creeds.

The donors of cash gifts in-



Sister Antenna takes turn at Home switchboard.

cluded George Eastman, pioneer-founder of Rochester's world famous photographic industry (\$200); and the Honorable J. G. Cutler, mayor of Rochester (\$100), and George W. Aldrige, noted political figure (\$75).

Cash gifts also came from well-known Catholics whose families still live in Rochester, and, in many cases continue to carry on the business enterprises established by their distinguished forebearers. Among these who so contributed to the fund for the new Home were: Mrs. Charles Wilkins (\$1,000), Walter C. Duffy (\$1,000), William C. Barry (\$500), Alexander V. Hona (\$500), Mrs. A. B. Hone (\$250), Thomas W. Finucane (\$250), Joseph P. Cunningham (\$250), Mrs. Bernhardt Liesching (\$200), Thomas J. Devine (\$100), and Rufus K. Dryer (\$100).

Business firms also made cash contributions to the fund for the new Home for the Aged. Among these were such old time city firms as Utz & Dunn, Fee Brothers, Brewster, Crittenden & Co., Whitmore, Rauber & Vicinus, Gleason Tool Works, Bryan Drug House, Charles Stern & Co., McCurdy & Norwell Co., William Eastwood & Son, Brewster, Gordon & Co., Mathews & Boucher, and Barnard, Porter & Vaill.

Chosen as general chairman to direct the Fair was a Rochester businessman, William C. Barry, head of the Barry Nurseries and official of the Ellwanger & Barry Building. His grandson, Peter Barry, is the present mayor of Rochester.

**W**HEN BISHOP McQUAID returned to Rochester at the end of March, he found the Fair arrangements going so well and enthusiasm so strong that he grew optimistic.

"There is nothing talked of in Rochester these days," he observed, "except the two Fairs for the Home for the Aged. The question now is how much over \$40,000 we are to realize."

Without exception, the press of the city opened its columns to the support of the Fair. On the eve of the Fair one newspaper hailed it as "one of the most gigantic undertakings of its kind ever held in Rochester."

First night of the Fairs was a gala occasion. Bishop McQuaid, accompanied by Mayor Cutler and Mr. Barry, went first to the Fitzhugh Hall where brief speeches were made opening the Fair for west side parishes. The Bishop took the occasion to explain

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