

The Mercy Guild

Laywomen conduct fund-raising ventures for Community

THE MERCY GUILD of St. Theresa, the Little Flower, has written a story of financial help for the Rochester Sisters of Mercy during the last three decades. Since the first days of the organization in 1927, Guild members have given the Sisters close to \$200,000 for support of the community's work and Motherhouse.

Founded to organize the Rochester friends and relatives of the Sisters of Mercy for financial assistance, the Guild has also been a public-relations voice to make the Sisters better known. Backing the Sisters in every phase of their expansion for 30 years, the Guild is an integral part of all modern Mercy history in Rochester.

The formation of the Mercy Guild was the result of the first appeal of the Sisters of Mercy for public help

since their arrival in Rochester seventy years before.

The late Archbishop Thomas F. Hickey had given permission in 1927 to the Sisters to erect a high school for girls and a motherhouse to replace the original motherhouse destroyed by fire in 1916. Land was ready on Blossom Road and the need for both buildings was urgent. One important thing stood in the way—the lack of funds.

In order to organize backers and talk of fund-raising, Rev. Mother M. Irene invited a group of Catholic ladies, friendly to the Sisters of Mercy, to meet on October 13 at Old St. Mary's convent on South Street. Mrs. Edward Lucas was chosen chairman of the founding group. During the following three months, regular meetings were held to draw up the



Mrs. Walter B. Hickey, Mercy Guild President, discusses plans with Mother Francisca.

constitution of the newly formed organization and to outline a program of spiritual and social activities.

When the first election was held in January 1928, Mrs. Walter A. Callhan became president. Previous to the election Rev. Mother M. Irene had died having suffered a heart attack. Rev. Mother M. Liguori, who had become the new Mother Superior, became the first Honorary President of the Guild and one of its most devoted advisers.

Activities began in earnest under Mrs. Callhan's direction. Each of the original group began a canvassing campaign to enroll members in the Guild. The final financial report of the first year lists \$4,243 solicited for membership dues alone.

At the end of the first year the new Mercy Guild turned over to the Sisters \$6,975, accumulated from social activities.

Since the beginning the majority

of Guild members have been relatives and friends of the Sisters in the Community.

DURING THE PAST 30 years the following Catholic women have acted as presidents of the Mercy Guild: Mrs. Walter A. Callhan, Mrs. Walter Smith, Mrs. John Garin, Mrs. Joseph Ritz, Mrs. Joseph R. Lara, Mrs. Frank Dykell, Mrs. George Conway, Mrs. Charles Baker, Mrs. John H. Gould, Mrs. Edward Belkitch, Mrs. Frank Clifford, Mrs. Clement Hanss, Mrs. Bryan Ford, Mrs. Joseph Honpel. At the present time, Mrs. Walter B. D. Hickey is president.

The Mercy Guild with Mrs. Walter B. D. Hickey as president, has just completed a successful 1957 membership campaign. Because of the twenty-year of the Sisters' promotion put forth an extra effort to increase membership. At the annual spring luncheon, \$3,172 in membership dues was presented to the Mother Mary Magdalene, Mother General.

St. James Mercy Hospital — Hornell

Mercy Sisters Operate Modern Hospital in Southern-Tier City, Also Conduct New York State Accredited School Of Nursing

BACK IN February, 1890, Father James M. Early, pastor of St. Ann's Church, Hornellville (now Hornell), was called to administer the last rites of the Church to a man badly injured in the yards of the old Erie Railroad. He found the dying man being treated by the doctor on the floor of a saloon in the village since there was no hospital in the vicinity to take the injured victim.

This experience prompted Father Early on the same day to purchase a farm house on the present Canisteo Street to be opened as a general emergency hospital. Sister Mary Aid and Sister Mary Desales were assigned to nursing duties of the new 15 bed hospital while Sister Mary Catherine was the superior and superintendent.

Today, St. James Mercy Hospital, occupying property valued at millions of dollars, and caring for thousands of patients annually in 130 beds, is the pride of Hornell and the entire Southern Tier. Still managed by Sisters of Mercy, aided by a fully accredited Nursing School and a skillful staff of physicians of many faiths, its history attests to the century contribution of the Sisters in the Rochester diocese.

Pioneer days in the undertaking are hard and trying ones but in his past work the task is particularly difficult and laborious. The Sisters at St. James were often called upon to perform every type of hospital manual work besides tending to the needs of the patients. It was not unusual to be on 24-hour bedside duty.

Since no provision had been made for chapel facilities in the small farmhouse hospital, two Sisters walked to St. Ann's Church, a distance of two miles every morning to attend Holy Mass. One Sister always remained at the hospital to care for the sick.

UNTIL THE TURN of the century there was only one private room available (\$2.00 a day). Ward beds were rated at \$1.50 a day. Patients were charged an operating fee of \$5.00.

Early hospital records show the first operation for a compound fracture of a left leg was performed in 1893, when a ten penny nail and a hammer were used for a successful operation.

Father Early's will provided the following interesting conditions for the operation of the hospital he founded:

"All persons in need of medical treatment or nursing shall be admitted without distinction of nationality, or creed, or color. I further desire:

"That the Sisters of Mercy shall have perpetual charge of same, and at least two of their number shall be members of the Board of Trustees thereof.

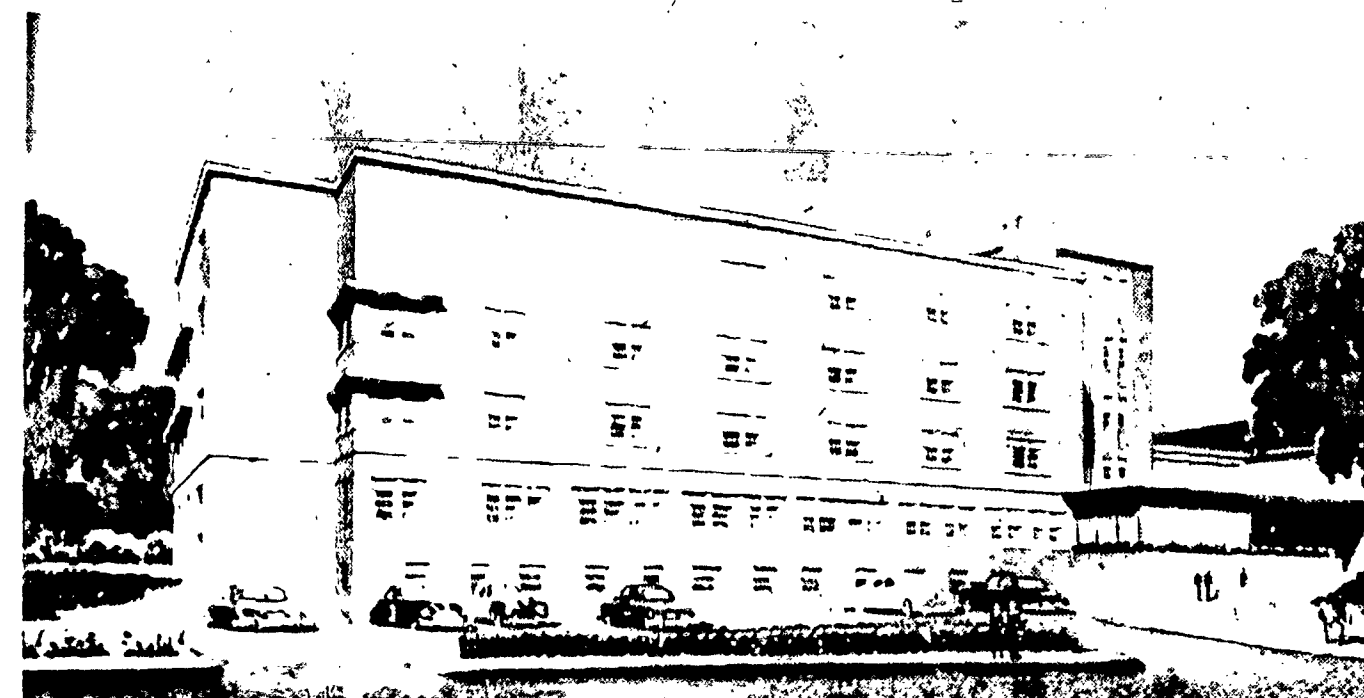
"That the ministers of the different denominations in the city, shall have free visitation privileges in the sick."

"This institution derives its income from donations, pay patients, and the city of Hornell and Steuben County for the care of its sick poor."

The building of the Maternity Cottage was an early undertaking of the Women's Board, organized in 1905. The hospital kept outgrowing its capacity so a north wing, south wing and additional operating rooms were built before 1923.

SISTER MARY AQUINAS broke ground in 1949 for the million dollar wing to St. James Mercy Hospital which was finally dedicated in 1951. The hospital now has a 130-bed and 18-basinet capacity. The fourth floor is a complete surgical suite and supply room. Second and third floor has 22 private rooms and semi-private and ward accommodations.

Well-appointed administration offices are housed on the first floor. Medical records room and library, x-ray department, emergency room and pharmacy are also accommodated here. With the erection of the new wing came the renovation of the old building.



St. James Mercy Hospital Opened Million dollar wing in 1951



SISTER AQUINAS

The pediatrics unit with 26 cribs and junior beds is now located here. The Women's Board completely furnished the nursery dedicating it to Sister Mary Aquinas. It has been pronounced one of the finest in the state.

Future plans for expansion of hospital facilities outline a 60-bed nursing care unit for the chronically ill. According to hospital authorities this is a crying need.

Sister Mary Scholastica is now superintendent while Sister Mary Thomas is assistant administrator. Besides the Sisters in the Nursing School who likewise see active duty, the hospital is staffed with: Sister Mary Irene, dietitian; Sister Mary de Sales, supervisor of operating room; Sister Mary Cornelia, assistant director of nursing service; Sister Mary Frederica, executive housekeeper; Sister M. William, business manager; Sister Mary Grace, financial secretary.

Fully qualified personnel manage every department in the hospital.

St. James Mercy Hospital received full accreditation from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals in 1954.

ST. JAMES MERCY Hospital, Hornell, directed by the Rochester Sisters of Mercy since 1890, is one of the smallest in the state to have an accredited school of nursing.

The hospital opened a registered school of nursing in 1912 with a class of eight students. Since then, 361

Sister Mary Aquinas

SISTER MARY AQUINAS, superintendent of Hornell's St. James Mercy Hospital since 1934, recalls with genuine sentiment her first 29 years on the nursing staff when she headed the maternity department.

Virtually thousands of babies saw "the first dawn of life" during Sister's days in that department. Nursing was trying in those days, according to Sister, for there was no delivery room in the second floor nursery, in the two story building built by the Women's Board shortly after Sister Aquinas' arrival in 1905.

Many babies born at St. James, now grown to adulthood can credit their life in those beginning days to Sister Aquinas. Early board members state "she practically breathed life into the little ones, sometimes even when doctors had given them up."

One story relates that Sister immersed a baby in pans of cold and warm water alternately. The shock of changing temperature revived the infant. This quick action in emergency is characteristic of Sister Aquinas.

Appointed superintendent in 1934 to succeed Sister Mary Aid, Sister Aquinas campaigned for more adequate facilities and a larger, well-trained nursing staff.

Her prayers were answered in 1951, when she saw the new million dollar wing of St. James Mercy Hospital opened to the people of the Southern Tier.

nurses have been graduated. Today's student enrollment is 60 girls.

Miss Edith Chafee of Philadelphia was the first director of nurses. Sister Mary DeSales became director of nurses in 1915. She headed the school for several years until her work as operating room supervisor became too demanding for her to continue. Sisters Mary Justina and Miriam Joseph succeeded her.

In 1925, because of its small size, the hospital found it impractical to meet state requirements for nursing school registration. The school facilities were discontinued but for 14 years students were accepted in small classes and given training which made it possible for the nurses to qualify for RN ratings later.

THE SCHOOL of nursing was reopened in 1939, with the approval of the state. Miss Helen Lynaugh headed the school for a short time and in 1940 Miss Ann McKeivitt became director.

Since 1942, all graduates of St. James have been required to pass state board examinations. The school of nursing was accredited by the New York State Education Department in 1943.

Professional standards at the school have been raised constantly during the past decade. In 1949, the National Committee for Improvement of Nursing Services rated St. James in the upper third of the middle bracket.

In "clinical facilities and experience" and "student health" the school received top rating. More than 1,200

nursing schools in the United States, Hawaii and Puerto Rico were studied by the national committee in this evaluation.

The course of instruction in St. James Mercy Hospital School of Nursing covers a period of three years. The major part of the training is given at the hospital.

Students obtain experience in pediatric nursing at St. Mary's Hospital, Rochester, in psychiatric nursing in Rochester State Hospital and in the care of tuberculous patients at Mount Morris Tuberculosis Hospital. They also observe public health nursing techniques at the district office of the New York State Department of Health.

SISTER MARY VALERIAN is the present Director of Nursing Education and Nursing Service. Assisting her is Sister M. Elizabeth Anna, who likewise is science instructor. Others on the faculty include Sister M. Andrea, nursing art instructor; Sister Theresa Mary, instructor of obstetrics; Sister Mary Kieran, instructor of operating room techniques; and Sister Mary Claude, instructor in medical and surgical nursing.

The X-Ray Technology School connected with St. James Mercy Hospital is a two-year course. Sister Miriam Joseph and Sister Mary Collette, X-Ray technicians, teach on the faculty.

St. James Nursing School will graduate 14 nurses and 2 X-Ray technicians this year. Expansion plans for the Nursing School list a nurses' residence to be erected in the near future for the enlarged classes seeking admission.

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