

*Sisters of Charity of Providence
in Fort Benton, Montana*

by

Sister Mary Norita La Porte, F.C.S.P.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
PREFACE	iii
I. FORT BENTON	1
II. THE CHURCH IN FORT BENTON	8
III. FORT BENTON BUILDS A HOSPITAL	20
IV. FOUNDATION STONES	26
V. THE HOSPITAL GROWS	36
VI. PROVIDENCE WILL PROVIDE	50
VII. GOLDEN BELLS	72
VIII. FRUITS OF APOSTOLIC LABORS	76
IX. LATER YEARS	87

Chapter	Page
APPENDIX A: BIOGRAPHIES OF THE FOUNDRESSES	103
APPENDIX B: NAMES OF SUBSCRIBERS	111
APPENDIX C: SISTERS ON MISSION	116
APPENDIX D: CHAPLAINS	121
APPENDIX E: STATISTICS OF THE HOSPITAL	123
APPENDIX F: HOSPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, REPAIRS, ADDITIONS	125
BIBLIOGRAPHY:	129

PREFACE

The present study is an attempt to give the history of the third house established by the Sisters of Charity of Providence in Montana. It is written principally for the instruction of the Sisters themselves but it will prove of interest to those who know the Sisters and are desirous of learning more about their works.

Because all might not be familiar with the location of the houses of the Community of Sisters of Providence and because a certain amount of historical background is necessary to appreciate the founding and the growth of the houses in question it was thought practical to give a short history of the cities in which the Sisters are found.

The sources from which the history has been drawn have been, principally, the chronicles of the Sisters, records kept yearly in each house, and the volumes of the River Press, Fort Benton's second newspaper. The works of Father Lawrence B. Palladino S.J., Father DeSmet S.J., Father Gilbert J. Garraghan S.J., and the books of the Montana Historical Contributions have been valuable in the study of the growth of Montana.

I am deeply indebted to Sister Martha of Bethany of Mount St. Joseph, Spokane, Washington, who not only helped me with the chronicles of each house but was tireless in

aiding me in any way that she could; to Joel Overhouser and Nora Harber of the River Press of Fort Benton who were most patient and willing to help me find information; to Miss Virginia Walton, librarian of the Historical Society of Montana, who sent me material from the State Historical Library; and to Sr. Marciana, Superior of Fort Benton Hospital and all the personnel of the house who gave me so much of their precious time. I also wish to thank Mother Flora ^Mary, Provincial Superior and all the other Sisters who helped me, especially those who were "on mission" in Fort Benton in the early days and were ready and willing to tell of their experiences.

CHAPTER I

FORT BENTON

The story of the Louisiana purchase and of the journey of Lewis and Clarke up the Missouri is known by most of the people of the United States but probably few could tell of the existence, much less of the history, of Fort Benton, the head of navigation on the Missouri and the real birthplace of Montana.

When the country was opened and its promise of a rich fur harvest made known, fur companies organized to enter the region. According to the accounts in the Historical Society of Montana Contributions the American Fur Company was the most successful in establishing posts in the country of the Blackfoot confederacy.¹ In 1832 a post bearing the name of McKenzie was erected by David D. Mitchel for the American Fur Company near the mouth of the Marias River, a short distance below the place where Fort Benton is today.² Kenneth McKenzie who had ordered the building of the fort was a member of the American Fur Company.³ Although David Mitchell was a successful trader he intended to withdraw from the Company.⁴ Therefore, in 1834, Alexander Culbertson was given charge of Fort McKenzie which he handled, to the satisfaction of the Indians by whom he was trusted, and to the profit of the enterprising American Fur Company,

until 1841 when he was assigned to Fort Laramie in Wyoming.

F.A. Chardon and Alexander Harvey were left to manage Fort McKenzie. Chardon had no patience with the Indians and soon precipitated a war with them.⁶ He then moved to a new fort, Fort Chardon or Fort F.A.C., which he had constructed at the mouth of the Judith River, and set fire to Fort McKenzie.⁷ Fort Chardon existed in a state of siege from its founding in 1842 until 1843 when Major Culbertson returned to bring peace.⁸ According to Lt. Bradley,⁹ Alexander Harvey had worked well with Culbertson but had an impetuous manner and influenced Chardon to treat the Indians harshly.¹⁰ After the failure of Forts McKenzie and Chardon, Harvey returned to the States.¹¹

Major Culbertson built Fort Lewis a short distance above the present Fort Benton and there the Blackfeet, after a pow-wow, renewed trade with the whites.¹² However, when the Indians found that the ice jams or floods hindered them from reaching the Fort during winter and spring they asked that another post be built. Therefore, in 1846 Fort Lewis was dismantled and the logs were rafted downstream to the more desirable place chosen for the new Fort.¹³ Christmas day 1850 the rebuilt Fort Lewis was christened Fort Benton after Senator Thomas H. Benton of Missouri who had given valuable service to the American Fur Company.¹⁴

Meanwhile, Alexander Harvey who had formed a partnership with Joe Picotte, Charles Premon and Robert Campbell, returned to found Fort Campbell,¹⁵ sometimes called Fort

Opposition. Lt. Bradley says that the original Fort Campbell was located on the south bank of "the Missouri upon valley bottom opposite Cracon-du-nez."¹⁶ But when Major Culbertson moved to the present site of Fort Benton, Harvey built near it. Fort Campbell was so close to Fort Benton that their names were sometimes mixed and today, Fort Benton's townsite covers Fort Campbell, the location being the end of Arnoux Street.¹⁷ Still another fort, Fort La Barge,¹⁸ was erected about 1862 near the two but soon failed in business. The American Fur Company finally bought Fort Campbell.¹⁹

In 1854 Major Culbertson returned to Fort Benton from his annual trip to Fort Union with Andrew Dawson who was to succeed Culbertson in the management of the Fort and was to finish the work of adobe construction that the Major²⁰ had started.²¹

The '60's brought the gold rush and many people to Montana. Since the steamboats came up the Missouri, Fort Benton, as head of navigation, became very important. It was a link through which supplies flowed to the miners, traders, and trappers of the territory and of Canada. It was the trading center for the Northwest and the mining country to the south.

Since all the activity indicated the need for a town, Captain W.W. DeLacy surveyed for a townsite in 1865.²² In the same year the American Fur Company sold out to the Northwest Fur Company and business continued as before.²³

It did not take long for the merchants to establish stores in the new Fort Benton town. I.G. Baker and Company set up trading posts within a radius of two hundred miles from Benton to trade in robes and furs. The company realized tremendous profits. T.C. Power arrived in 1867 with a small stock of trade goods and developed one of Montana's greatest mercantile businesses. He was joined by his brother John and the business became strong and wealthy through investment in fur trading, retail and wholesale merchandising, river steamers, wagon freighting and lucrative government contracts.²⁴ T.C. Power became the first U.S. Senator from Montana when Montana was made a state.²⁵

The merchants of Fort Benton grew rich by supplying Montana and Canada. John J. Healy and A.B. Hamilton built Fort Hamilton in 1867 in southern Alberta, in Blackfoot country, to trade with the northern Indians, using liquor to increase business and profit. They brought freight up from Benton by bull team and thus it happened that John Power, going up to trade, gave the fort the name by which it is now known in history. When John came back to Fort Benton he was asked how the new post was doing and he reported that they were "Whooping-er-up."²⁶ Thereafter the post was called "Fort Whoop-Up" and business boomed for some years, until the Mounties came to investigate the liquor traffic with the Indians.

In 1870 the trading post of Fort Benton became a military post and soldiers were stationed there until 1881.²⁷

After the military left the Fort fell into disuse. Now little is left except a few adobe walls.

River business was heavy until 1883 when it declined only to be again stimulated by the discovery of gold in the Sweet Grass hills.²⁸ River trade was the mainstay of Fort Benton until the railroads came in 1887. By that time agriculture, sheep and cattle had found an important place in the economy of the town.²⁹

The River Press of January 2, 1884 describes the town as situated on the Missouri River in the "heart of a great agricultural and grazing region of Northern Montana."³⁰ It was, at that time, the county seat of Choteau County with a population of two thousand. An incorporated city, it was the headquarters of the customs district of Montana and Idaho, possessed two papers, the River Press and the Record, had an "excellent graded school," a large school fund, two banks, a \$50,000 court house and a \$15,000 Sisters' hospital.³¹ The hospital was not open in 1884 but would "be given to a group of Sisters well prepared to care for all needs."³²

The year the Sisters reached Benton, 1886, saw one of the worst winters ever experienced. Montana's stockmen suffered crippling losses in the winter of 1886-7,³³ but such is the gamble taken by all men who pasture stock on the open range.

Notes for Chapter I

1. Lt. Bradley, "Affairs at Fort Benton", Lt. Bradley's Journal, Historical Society of Montana Contributions, Vol. III (Helena, Montana 1900) p. 233. Hereinafter referred to as Lt. B.J.
2. Ibid., p. 205
3. Ibid., p. 204
4. Ibid., p. 210
5. Ibid., p. 233
6. Ibid., p. 237
7. Ibid., p. 238
8. Ibid., p. 221-238
9. Lt. Bradley was stationed in the Fort and kept a daily journal which was published by the Historical Society of Montana in 1900. Lt. Bradley was killed in a skirmish with the Indians.
10. Lt. B.J., p. 221-238
11. Ibid., p. 241
12. Ibid., p. 240-244
13. Ibid., p. 251 See also, Gilbert J. Garraghan, Chapters in Frontier History, (Milwaukee, 1934) p. 144-5
14. Lt. B.J., p. 264
15. Historical Society of Montana Contributions, Vol. IX p. 351 and Vol. X p. 265 See also Lt. B.J. Vol. III p. 247
16. Lt. B.J., p. 247
17. River Press, August 21, 1946
18. Lt. B.J., p. 281
19. River Press, August 21, 1946
20. Lt. B.J., p. 264

21. Lt. B.J., p. 271
22. Ibid., p. 286
23. Contributions Vol. IX p. 346
24. Ibid., p. 317-348
25. Hubert Howe Bancroft, Works of, Vol. XXXI (San Francisco 1890) pgs. 796-806 See also "Merchant Princes of the Plains" by Paul F. Sharp, Montana Magazine of History Winter 1955.
26. Paul F. Sharp, "Merchant Princes of the Plains", Montana Magazine of History, Winter 1955 (Helena, Montana)
27. W.S. Bell, Old Fort Benton, (Helena, Montana 1909)p. 23
28. River Press, August 21, 1946
29. Ibid.
30. River Press, January 2, 1884
31. Ibid., January 2, 1884
32. Chronicles St. Clare Hospital Vol. I., p. 2
33. Ibid. See also The River Press, August 21, 1946

CHAPTER II

THE CHURCH IN FORT BENTON

Father De Smet and Father Nicholas Point visited Fort Lewis on the Missouri in 1846.¹ During this trip Father De Smet witnessed a formal peace between the Blackfeet and the Flathead nations which made possible the building of Saint Peter's Mission, the third mission of the Jesuits in Montana. After spending six weeks among the Blackfeet (Gros-Ventres, Pegans, Gens du Sang and Blackfeet proper) Father De Smet went on to St. Louis and Father Point started to evangelize the Indians.²

Major Culbertson of Fort Lewis was pleased to have the missionaries and provided them with quarters.³ Still later, according to Granville Stuart, Fort Campbell, a rival fort, was used by the Jesuits as a mission.⁴ Both companies seem to have been friendly to Fr. Point⁵ who speaks of both Forts in his letters.⁶ In an account of his trip Fr. Point says that Fort Lewis was dismantled, moved down three miles, and rebuilt on the opposite bank of the Missouri river in 1847, to be known thereafter as Fort Clay.⁷ However, other accounts say that Fort Lewis was reformed in 1846 and was known by that name until 1850 when it was christened Fort Benton.⁸ The present city of Fort Benton dates its birth from 1846.⁹

Father Point succeeded in baptizing many Indians, probably the earliest baptisms in Montana east of the mountains.¹⁰ Writing to his superiors Father gave his method of instructing the Indians he was able to contact at the Fort. "During the winter I was accustomed, daily, to give three instructions, or catechetical lessons, proportioned to the three very different classes of my auditors. It is unnecessary," he continues, "for me to say that the prayers have all been translated into Black-Foot, and learned in Fort Louis and in the camp of the Pegans, and there is scarcely any camp among the Black-Foot in which the sign of the cross is not held in veneration and even practised, at least among those individuals who have had any intercourse with the missionary.¹⁰

....Every day after mass, I teach the children their prayers; every evening the men recall them to memory mutually; at six o'clock in the evening these recite their prayers in common in my own room, after which I give them an instruction; then comes the turn of the women."¹¹

Few adults were baptized because there was no resident priest to care for them and Fr. Point did not think that the desires of the adults for baptism were "sufficiently imbued with the true principles of religion."¹²

Among the Blackfeet Fr. Point baptized more than six hundred persons but when he was recalled to Canada in 1847 the region was left without a priest for some years. However it was not left without priests interested in the Indians. Fr. De Smet spoke of his desire to open a mission

there in a letter to the editor of the *Precis Historiques*,
 Brussels,¹³ Fr. Point offered to return to the Blackfeet,¹⁴
 and Fr. Adrain Hoeken S.J., writing to Fr. De Smet, added
 his voice to the plea that a mission be opened among the
 Blackfeet.¹⁵

Reverend James Croke, who later became vicar general of
 the Archdiocese of San Francisco, baptized seventeen half-
 breed children in Fort Benton in October 1855.¹⁶ Fr. Nicholas
 Congiato, Superior of the Rocky Mountain Missions, baptized
 four half-breed children in 1858 in Fort Campbell or Fort
 Benton;¹⁷ Fr. DeSmet, in 1859, baptized eight half-breed chil-
 dren and some Indians in the Fort and married two couples;¹⁸
 in 1860 Fathers Adrian Hoecken, C. Imoda and N. Congiato
 were in Benton;¹⁹ Fr. C. Imoda spent the spring of 1861 there
 and Fathers Giorda and C. Imoda spent the winter of 1861 in
 Fort Benton on their way to establish St. Peter's Mission.²⁰

After St. Peter's Mission was established near the mouth
 of Sun River, Fort Benton was visited by the priests of St.
 Peter's Mission.²¹ According to information in the *Montana
 Historical Society Contributions*, St. Peter's Mission was at
 one time re-established at Fort Benton "where ample accom-
 modation of Fort Campbell, not occupied as a trading post,
 had been tendered them by Mr. Dawson of the American Fur
 Company."²² After St. Peter's was closed in 1866 the Jesuit
 Fathers from Helena, Fr. John B.C. Imoda and Fr. Leopold
 van Gorp, attended the people of Fort Benton until 1874
 when St. Peter's reopened.²³

In the matter of religious jurisdiction the territory of Montana was in the peculiar and unhappy position of belonging to two ecclesiastical provinces. The Rocky Mountain range was the dividing line between the ecclesiastical province of St. Louis and that of Oregon city.²⁴ Montana embraced some of the territory of Dakota, Wyoming and Idaho when it was made a territory in 1864,²⁵ thus its land was on both sides of the Rockies; it straddled the mountains.²⁶

Furthermore the Province of Oregon City stemming from the See of Quebec²⁷ retained the laws and customs of Quebec which differed in feasts and fasts and other points from the customs of the Province of St. Louis. This caused confusion and difficulty.²⁸

To alleviate the unpleasant situation, the 2nd Plenary Council of Baltimore petitioned the Holy See in 1866 for the erection of two Vicariates Apostolic, one east and the other west of the main range of the Rocky Mountains, to be called the Vicariate of Montana and the Vicariate of Idaho.²⁹ This request was granted but Father A. Ravoux of St. Paul, Minnesota, appointed in charge of Montana could not perform his duties because of ill health and asked to be released.³⁰ In 1875 Bishop L. Lootens, Vicar Apostolic of Idaho, also resigned because of ill health.³¹ The Vicariate of Montana was then put under the jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of Nebraska; that of Idaho was given to the Archbishop of Oregon City.³²

After visiting Montana and finding the dual jurisdiction and the distance from the see cities a great disadvantage the Most Reverend Charles Seghers, Coadjutor Archbishop of Oregon City pleaded Montana's need before the Holy See.³³ Finally, on March 5, 1883, the whole of Montana territory (146,080 square miles) was made a Vicariate Apostolic.³⁴ April 7, 1883 the Most Reverend John B. Brondel, Bishop of Vancouver Island in the British Columbia was named administrator of the huge territory.³⁵ Though he retained his title of Bishop of Vancouver Island he was to reside in Montana.³⁶ Bishop J. B. Brondel became the first Bishop of Montana when the Vicariate was elevated to the dignity of a diocese by Pope Leo XIII on March 7, 1884.³⁷ The Holy Father gave the diocese the name of the see city, Helena.³⁸

Bishop Brondel, true shepherd that he was, came to Montana in 1883 to visit his Vicariate and made his residence in Helena where the church and house of the Jesuit fathers became the Bishop's cathedral and palace.³⁹ The stationery head for the Bishop's correspondence in the early years of the diocese bore the name "Cathedral of the Sacred Hearts."⁴⁰

Since the diocese was so vast the increasing population, spread from east to west, made the position of Bishop a task too great for one man. Therefore, His Excellency, Bishop Brondel asked that a new diocese be created for the eastern two-thirds of the state.⁴¹ His request was granted but he died on November 3, 1903 before the official document creating the diocese of Great Falls was issued from Rome, May

18, 1904.⁴² Rev. Mathias Lenihan of the archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa was consecrated first Bishop of Great Falls, September 21, 1904.⁴³ The diocese of Helena includes the western half of the State (although the division line does not cut Montana exactly in half) and that of Great Falls covers the eastern portion. Thus Fort Benton is located in the diocese of Great Falls.

During the time Montana was growing the Jesuits were more concerned with missionary activities among the Indians than with the development of strictly white settlements, but the Fathers, in time, erected churches or chapels in various parts of the territory where priests could be stationed or could visit from time to time.

The first chapel of the Immaculate Conception in Fort Benton was erected by Father Imoda in 1878-79 and regular services were held there.⁴⁴ From that time until 1893 Jesuit priests lived there and served Benton and the missions around the vicinity but Father Palladino says that the Fort was never a "residence of the Society."⁴⁵

In 1880 Father H.J. Camp . was stationed in Fort Benton and had spiritual charge of the area.⁴⁶ The Book of Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages and Deaths, Vol. I, 1880-1900, Fort Benton, starts with entries by Father Camp. The first entry is a baptism on July 4th of "Ed. Legg (or Lake) born Feb. 8 '80, Bapt. July 4 '80."⁴⁷ In 1881 the book shows two baptisms by Father Imoda S.J., while in 1882 Father Prando S.J., Father C. Imoda, and Father Damiani visited

and baptized. Father Camp's entries start again November 26, 1882. Fathers J. Damiani and Peter Bandini visited in 1883.⁴⁸ Father Camp returned again in April 1883 and was there until Father Frederick Eberschweiler S.J. came in October 1883.⁴⁹

Father Camp was very active in the affairs of the parish. The River Press, second newspaper of Fort Benton, carried the following notice in its issue for October 27, 1880.

Catholic Church services will be held at the several Churches as follows:
 Fort Benton—First and last Sundays of each month.
 Sun River—Second Sunday of each month.
 Fort Assinaboin and Fort Shaw (alternately)—Third Sunday of each month. First Mass 8 A.M. High Mass and Sermon 10:30 A.M. Sunday School 2:30 P.M. Evening Service and Lecture 7:30 P.M. Rev. H.J. Camp S.J. 50

This notice was in each issue of the paper through 1881.

The people of this growing Montana town, like the people of today, enjoyed a change in routine and Father Camp took advantage of it, as the following accounts show.

Rev. H.J. Camp S.J. will deliver a series of lectures during the coming winter. The first lecture will be given some time next month at the Court House. Invitations will be issued in due season, stating the time and subject. 51

The first lecture of the series by Rev. H.J. Camp will be given at the Court House on to-morrow evening. The subject will be, "Robert Ingersoll and the Great Hereafter, or, Is There a Future Life?" The interest which Col. Ingersoll has excited in the popular mind in his long discussion of this subject affords Fr. Camp a pertinent theme, which he is exceptionalby capable of handling, and his remarks thereon should draw a full house to hear him. 52

Although traveling by stage coach was probably easier and safer than traveling by horse or on foot it could present difficulties to delay the missionary and add to his hardships.

Rev. Fr. Camp who has been on one of his periodical visits to Assinaboia returned to Benton last Monday. Fr. Camp had a pretty hard trip in being obliged, with a number of others, two of whom were ladies, to pass one night in a stage stable on the road. The stock tender gave up his room and the fire to the women folks and the men slept in the stable with the horses. They were three hours making one mile and a half, and from 7 o'clock in the morning until 7 at night—twelve hours—going from one station to another, a distance of 18 miles. 53

When President James G. Garfield was assassinated the Fort Benton River Press gave several columns to the memorial services conducted in the Catholic Church in memory of the "martyr president."⁵⁴ According to the paper most of the townspeople attended the services held Sunday evening in the Catholic Church for the article reports the Church as being "filled to capacity by every creed, party and nation."⁵⁵ A brass band under the direction of Professor Walker played the funeral march and the Episcopal choir helped in the singing. William H. Hunt Jr. Esq., Judge J. W. Tattan and Father Camp spoke and Father Camp, in a stirring speech, urged prayers for the country.⁵⁶

Besides ministering to the missions near Benton Father Camp seems to have been in demand in other cities. The River Press, following his journeys, records that, "Fr. Camp conducted a successful mission at Butte recently and on the 6th inst. left Helena for Missoula to engage in the same work."⁵⁷

When Father came back to Benton in November 1882 he was well received by his friends.⁵⁸ Encouraged by the warmth of the welcome and believing that the territory needed the services of a Sisters' hospital Father began to enlist support for the project.

Since Fr. Camp has been in Benton, about two years now, he has baptised exactly one hundred children, a pretty good baby record for Benton.

The matter of taking the first steps towards securing the erection of a Sisters' hospital at this place will be delayed until the return of Fr. Camp from Fort Assinaboine, early next week. It is then proposed to call a meeting of the citizens and see what can be done towards forwarding this most worthy object. 59

The hospital was not yet built when Father Eberschweller succeeded Father Camp in 1883 to labor in the area until 1887.⁶⁰

Father Philibertus Tornielli had charge of the place in 1887 and 1888.⁶¹ but after that the baptismal book carries records made by Fathers Schuler, Tornielli and Monroe⁶² (all Jesuits) until April 21, 1893 when a diocesan priest, Carol Cornelius Gustavus Follet,⁶³ was named pastor.

After the Sisters came in 1886 the priest appointed to Benton exercised the duties of chaplain of the hospital, pastor of the parish and missionary to the surrounding country. Sometimes the duties of pastor and chaplain encroached upon each other, but while Montana was young and until she had a clergy of her own, one priest had to perform the task of several. Even today, Montana is so large the priests are spread thin.

Notes for Chapter II

1. Peter J. DeSmet, "Letter XVIII to editor of Precis Historiques," Brussels, Western Missions and Missionaries, (New York 1856) p. 253 Hereinafter referred to as W. M & M See also Gilbert J. Garraghan S.J., Chapters in Frontier History p. 145-152
2. W. M & M. p. 253
3. Gilbert J. Garraghan, S.J., Chapters in Frontier History (Milwaukee 1934) p. 145
4. Granville Stuart, Forty Years on the Frontier as seen in the Journals and Reminiscences of Granville Stuart, ed. by Paul C. Phillips, Vol. I & II (Cleveland 1925) p76
5. Gilbert J. Garraghan, S.J., Chapters in Frontier History (Milwaukee 1934) p. 145
6. Ibid., p. 145
7. Ibid., p. 151-52
8. Hiram Martin Chittenden, American Fur Trade of the Far West, (New York 1902) p. 973
9. W. S. Bell, Old Fort Benton (Montana 1909) p. 12
10. Garraghan, Chapters p. 148
- 10b W.M. & M. p. 254
11. Ibid., p. 255
12. Ibid., p. 257
13. Ibid., p. 261
14. Gilbert J. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle United States Vol.II (New York 1938) p. 454-455
15. W. M. & M., p. 302-3 Letter of Fr. Hoeken to Fr. De Smet. Fr. Hoecken's name is sometimes spelled Hoeken.
16. Lawrence B. Palladino S.J., Indian and White in the Northwest (Pennsylvania 1922) p. 301 Hereinafter to be referred to as Palladino.
17. Ibid., p. 302
18. Ibid., p. 302

19. Palladino. p. 303
20. Ibid.
21. William N. Bischoff, Jesuits in Old Oregon, (Idaho, 1945) p. 94
22. Montana Historical Society Contributions Vol. 9 (Montana 1900) p. 315
23. Palladino p. 304
24. Ibid., p. 289
25. Palladino p. 289-290 See also Hubert Howe Bancroft, Works Vol. 31, History of Washington, Idaho and Montana, (San Francisco 1890) p. 642, 660
26. Palladino , p. 290
27. Garraghan, Jesuits of the Middle U.S. Vol. II p. 236-441 gives an account of the hierarchy of Oregon. Sr. Letitia Mary Lyons, Francis Norbert Blanchet and the Founding of the Oregon Missions , discusses the jurisdiction of the see of Quebec, diocese of St. Louis and its claims to Oregon, also the possibility of the jurisdiction of the Bishop Provencher at Red River pgs. 129-148
28. Palladino p. 290
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., p. 293
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid. p. 294 & 425
37. Ibid., p. 294 & 431
38. Ibid., p. 431
39. Ibid., p. 430

40. The letter head of letters of Bishop Brondel to the Mother House of the Sisters of Providence in Montreal written in the years 1884,1886,1888 and 1891 carries the title "Cathedral of the Sacred Hearts."
41. Eastern Montana Catholic Register Dec. 3,1954, Jubilee Number
42. Ibid.
43. Chronicles of Fort Benton Vol. I p. 60 See also Eastern Montana Register Dec. 3,1954
44. Palladino., p.304
45. Ibid., p.305
46. Ibid., p. 304 Fr. Camp was not a Jesuit and is not listed in the Jesuit book. Catalogus Defunctorum in Renata Societate Jesu ad a 1814 ad a 1970 P. Rufo Mendizabal S.J. Collegit Rome Curia Gen Archivum Hist. SI Via dei Pentenzieri 20 Vita Functi in Renata Societate Jesu #20 Index Alaphabeticus Cognominum 1972 Gonzaga University Archives has the above book which lists all Jesuits with full name and date of death.
Sadliers' Catholic Directory Almanac & Ordo for the year of our Lord 1883 with reports of the Dioceses U.S.,British America, Ireland, England Scotland 51st annual pub. D.& J. Sadlier & Co. 31 Barclay St. N.Y. 1883 pg. 524 does list the name of H.J. Camp (Neb) Helena, Montana. Thus, according to the direcorey he was a l priest from Nebraska. although the chancellor of the archdiocese of Omaha Neb. could find no information relative to him.
47. Book of Baptisms, Confirmations, Marriages and Deaths Vol I, Fort Benton 1880-1900
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. River Press, Fort Benton, Montana Oct 27,1880 p.8
51. Ibid., Vol I Nov. 10, 1880 p.8
52. Ibid., Nov. 24, 1880 p.8
53. Ibid., Feb. 16, 1881 p.8
54. Ibid., Sept 28, 1881 p.8
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., May 10, 1882 Vol II
58. Ibid., Nov 29, 1882 Vol III p.5
59. Ibid., Dec. 6, 1882 P.5
60. Palladino p.305 See also Baptisimal Book, Fort Benton 1880-1900
61. Ibid.
62. Baptisimal Book, Fort Benton 1880-1900
63. Ibid. See also Palladino P 305 See Appendix D

CHAPTER III

FORT BENTON BUILDS A HOSPITAL

Perhaps the building boom of 1882 conditioned the citizens of Benton to accept and support the suggestion of building a hospital. At any rate, under the inspiration of Father Camp, no time was lost. December 13, 1882, the two newspapers carried banner news.

Fr. Camp informs us that active steps will be taken immediately to secure the erection in Benton of a Sisters' hospital. He expects the willing co-operation of our citizens and in connection with other gentlemen will make a canvass of the town early this week to secure subscriptions from those who are willing to assist in so good a work.

A building is contemplated which would cost about \$4,000, exclusive of the ground which will be presented by the Catholic congregation in their block on Baker street and Choteau Avenue. In the course of a few years this building will not be adequate to the demands of the city when it may be enlarged, or the Catholic congregation will purchase it for a school house or residence for the priest and a new one can be erected.

Strangers and parties throughout the county, outside of Benton will reap the same benefits as our citizens and they will also be given an opportunity to subscribe something to the good cause. To that end subscription lists will be opened in the hotels and stores and it is to be hoped the contributions will be general.

The want of such an institution has long been

felt in Benton and there is no telling which one of the subscribers will first receive his reward in the way of attentive and patient nursing at the hands of the good Sisters.

...a building committee will be elected, consisting of members of different denominations, plans and specifications secured and the contract let, so that in early spring the structure may be commenced and pushed through to speedy completion. 1

Accordingly, a meeting was called in the court house for the purpose of planning the Sisters' hospital. Judge John W. Tattan was selected chairman and Colonel J.J. Donnelly, secretary. The need for the hospital was discussed and the chairman pointed out that if the Sisters had the care of the county poor it would be less expensive for the county. Father Camp spoke in favor of the hospital and it was decided to erect the building on the block belonging to the Catholic Church and on which the Church stands. The building would be built on the corner of Choteau and St. John Street.²

Father Camp asked that a committee of trustees be appointed who could solicit subscriptions, have plans drawn up and material furnished, let the contract and supervise the funds and work. He suggested that committee-men be named regardless of religious affiliation. The following were chosen: C. E. Conrad, chairman, T. A. Cummings, treasurer, John W. Tattan, secretary, Edward Dunne, Jere Sullivan, John W. Power and T. E. Collins, committeemen. They adopted the following resolution:

Resolved: that the Trustees appointed at this meeting be and they are hereby authorized and empowered to collect funds necessary to erect suitable buildings on the southerly corner of block number 62, in the town of Fort Benton, as an hospital for the use and occupation of the Sisters of Charity or Mercy, and to expend the said funds for that purpose, according to their best judgment, and to report their action at a meeting, of the subscribers to the fund, to be called by the chairman of said Trustees. 3

The trustees decided to solicit subscriptions from the different mining camps, military posts and settlements and to publish weekly the names of the subscribers. That very evening the men present pledged \$2,640. The list included most of the prominent men of the place.

T.C. Power & Bro.	500.00
I. G. Baker & Co.	500.00
Collins Duer & Co.	300.00
John W. Tattan	250.00
Atkisson & Kneedler	100.00
T. A. Cummings	100.00
W. S. Wetzel	100.00
J. J. Healy	100.00
Wm. L. Kneedler	100.00
J. J. Donnelly	100.00
Choteau Club	60.00
Kennedy & Kelly	50.00
Richard Mee	50.00
Edward Dunn	50.00
M. A. Flanagan	50.00
Joe Sullivan	50.00
Jere Sullivan	50.00
Patrick Murphy	50.00
Gus Senieur	25.00
W. B. Settle	25.00
J. C. Bourassa	20.00
E. Trombly	10.00

The men proposed to erect a \$10,000 building for which they hoped to raise at least \$6000 in Fort Benton. 5

During the first week the committee was successful and the amount increased to \$5,500. In the Saturday daily it 6

was announced that plans and specifications for the Sisters' hospital were to be prepared at once and that the erection of the building would be "commenced at the earliest practicable day in the next season." ⁷

That the hospital was not finished "in the next season" is evident from the scolding administered by the editor of the Benton Weekly Record, February 9, 1884.

It is a great disgrace to Benton that her citizens did not complete the Sisters' Hospital before the winter set in. Having carried the enterprise so far, there should certainly have been energy and money enough to plaster and furnish it. The fearful cost to the county should have been inducement enough, but people outside of our town will soon begin to assert that there is no enterprise in Benton, and that will have more to do with preventing railroad communication than anything else that could be said about us. There is already considerable indifference on the part of our citizens and the withholding of capital where a small loan on good security would result in great public benefit. It was not so a few years ago, when there was less money and fewer capitalists, and there appears to be a selfish suspicion creeping over our people that was formerly unknown in Fort Benton. Helena has been sustained for many years by the liberality and enterprise of wealthy men and Fort Benton has been safely brought through several critical periods of her existence by timely investments for the development of her resources. We have the greatest natural advantages of any town in Montana, but if we have not energy enough to complete so small an enterprise on this Sisters' hospital what is the use of talking about developing a town or building a railroad? ⁸

Perhaps the enthusiasm for the hospital waned when the driving energy of Father Camp was withdrawn. Whatever the cause, work on the hospital was slow and it was not completed until August 1884. ⁹

When the building was finally ready to be used Montana had reached the stature of a diocese and the Church in Montana had its first Bishop, the Most Reverend J. B. Brondel. Nothing could be done to open the hospital in Benton until the Bishop came and made arrangements for the assignment of Sisters. His would be the task of finding a group of religious women with sufficient subjects to undertake the management of a hospital. Notices in the River Press attest to the fact that the Chief Shepherd found his task difficult.¹⁰

At last, when His Excellency visited Benton October 8, 1884, to bless the church bell he told the people that he had had difficulty in securing Sisters to take charge of the hospital but had finally obtained the promise of Sisters from the Sisters of Providence in Montreal and that they could be expected in the Spring.¹¹ However, his troubles were not over as the Sisters did not arrive until 1886 !

Notes for Chapter III

1. River Press, December 13, 1882 See also The Benton Weekly Record, Dec. 7, 1882 pg. 5
2. Ibid., Dec. 20, 1882 p. 3
3. Ibid., Note-- the court house does not have a record further back than 1909.
4. Ibid. See Appendix B
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., Dec. 27, 1882
8. Benton Weekly Record, Benton, February 9, 1884, p. 8
9. River Press, August 20, 1884 p. 8
10. Ibid., Oct. 8, 1884 p. 8
11. Ibid. The weekly issues of the River Press summarized the news given daily. Only the weekly issues are kept.



MOTHER NOBLE
Superior General 1878-1886
Accepted Fort Benton



MOTHER MARY JOSEPH
Superior General 1886-1898 when the
mission opened

CHAPTER IV

FOUNDATION STONES

In 1864 Bishop Brondel, though but recently appointed for the diocese, wrote to Mother Amable, Superior General of the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor of Montreal, Canada, asking her to open a third house in the diocese of Helena at Fort Benton where the Catholics had built a hospital worth \$12,000.¹ In his letter His Excellency told Mother that the Jesuit Fathers who had charge of the mission said that the hospital was finished and that the people wanted to know "when and how many Sisters" would come.² The hospital was located in the same block as the Church and the Bishop declared himself ready to make the deed in favor of the Sisters for the part where the hospital was built.³ The Sisters would have the care of the sick of the county and be able to commence their good work immediately. There was a \$7000 debt but the important men of the place who built the hospital would assist the Sisters and the debt could be reduced gradually "without great difficulty."⁴

In view of the fact that there would be three houses in the diocese, Bishop Brondel asked that a Sister Vicar be named and that the houses be erected into a province.⁵ In his letter he adds the interesting information that the voy-

age from Helena to Fort Benton by carriage takes " a day and a half—a distance of 150 miles. From Helena to Missoula, by train, takes seven hours. From Missoula to St. Ignatius, three hours."⁶ Perhaps Bishop Brondel hoped to convince the Superior General of the need of a Sister Vicar by mention of the distance each house would be from its "sister-house" in Montana.

Mother Amable thanked him for the offer of the hospital but regretted that the lack of subjects and the number of houses opened prevented her from accepting the work at that time.⁷ In answer to the Bishop's request for a new province Mother did not feel that a "Vicairie" was needed for the Sisters in Montana because of the ease of correspondence and of travel and because of the small number of Sisters in the diocese. She very frankly states that the number of houses in the diocese were not "sufficient to occupy a Sister Vicar."⁸ The Bishop was not discouraged but was willing to wait until the next spring.⁹

January 20, 1885 Bishop Brondel wrote expressing his joy at receiving the news that the Community accepted Fort Benton. He instructed Mother Amable to have the Sisters go to Helena to take a stage from there to Fort Benton.¹⁰ In the same letter he describes the hospital as being a brick building, 48 feet by 60 feet with two stories "built on the same block as the church but at a suitable distance."¹¹ He states that the land on which the property is located "will be given

to the Sisters by the Jesuits and the inhabitants (of the town) will present the building the moment that the Sisters arrive."¹² However, he warns that there is a debt of six or seven thousand dollars for which the trustees are responsible and the Sisters are not to accept the building until they can see if the resources of the place will enable them to pay the debt.¹³ It is probable that the Bishop had tried to discourage the project as he remarks that the contracting of the debt to finish the building was contrary to his orders.¹⁴

Mother Amable answered him in April, again expressing her regret that she would be unable to send Sisters at the time because many Sisters had been ill or had been taken by death during the winter. She felt that it would be possible to send subjects in September.¹⁵ After discussing certain aspects of the plan with his Excellency when he visited Montreal in the spring of the year, the Superior sent him, in July, a list of the conditions which she had proposed in regard to the hospital project.¹⁶ The conditions concerned the discharge of the debt, the transportation of the Sisters, and the agreement with the county for patients.¹⁷

It was the Bishop's turn to object. He found that the conditions could not be met at the present but he felt that he could promise that the important men who had been responsible for the building of the hospital would help reduce the debt. According to information received the principal revenue would be from private patients as there were many

cattlemen in the region and the nearest physician's house or hospital was sixty to eighty miles. The Bishop warned that if the Sisters did not come soon the hospital would be sold and used for other purposes.¹⁸

By the end of April 1886 the affairs were finally arranged. The debt was \$5000 and the bank would be responsible for the capital for three years at interest of eight percent.¹⁹ Later the Bishop suggested that the Sisters might borrow the money elsewhere at a lower rate of interest.²⁰

Mother Godefroy, Assistant General, writing for Mother Amable who was ill, accepted the property of Fort Benton in May 1886. However, there were still problems to be overcome. She asked that the price of transportation for six Sisters be paid and that the Sisters and sick have the services of a priest in Fort Benton.²¹ The Bishop responded that the debt had been reduced to \$5000, that the Jesuit fathers would give the part of the block where the hospital was built for \$125, therefore the Sisters could have the land and the building for \$5125, that there was a church and residence of a Jesuit there and that the Sisters could collect enough to reimburse them for the cost of the transportation after they arrived in the mission!²² He advised opening immediately by sending one Sister from Missoula and one from St. Ignatius.²³ Could the haste have been because the trip from Missoula and St. Ignatius would be less expensive than a trip from Montreal?

Resignedly, Mother replied, in a letter dated June 11, 1886, that the hospital had been accepted "counting on Divine

Providence, the support of Your Grace, the help of the Jesuits,²⁴
and the good dispositions of the people of Fort Benton."

Two Sisters were named to leave for the West. One of them, Sister Marie of the Resurrection, Superior of Winooski, Vermont, was named Superior of the new hospital, while the other was directed to remain in Missoula. The new superior was to be accompanied by another Sister and a helper from Missoula.²⁵ The good Bishop relayed the news to Fort Benton²⁶ June 21, 1886.

An account of the journey from Montreal was not kept but, after stopping in Helena to ask the blessing of Bishop Brondel and to receive the necessary directives for the mission, Sister Mary of the Resurrection, Sr. Mary Wilfred and Anna Magnan of the Third Order traveled to Fort Benton, arriving there July 27, 1886.²⁷ Since the hospital was unfurnished Sister Mary Wilfred went to stay with Mrs. M. A. Flanagan while Mother Mary and Anna Magnan took residence in the home of Mrs. W. J. Power, important Catholics of the region, who rejoiced to have the Sisters with them.²⁸ Mae Flanagan, the daughter of Mrs. M. Flanagan with whom the Sisters stayed recalled that Sister Wilfred was very merry and found time to amuse the children of the family with cut-out dolls and stories even though she was kept very busy with the affairs of the hospital.²⁹

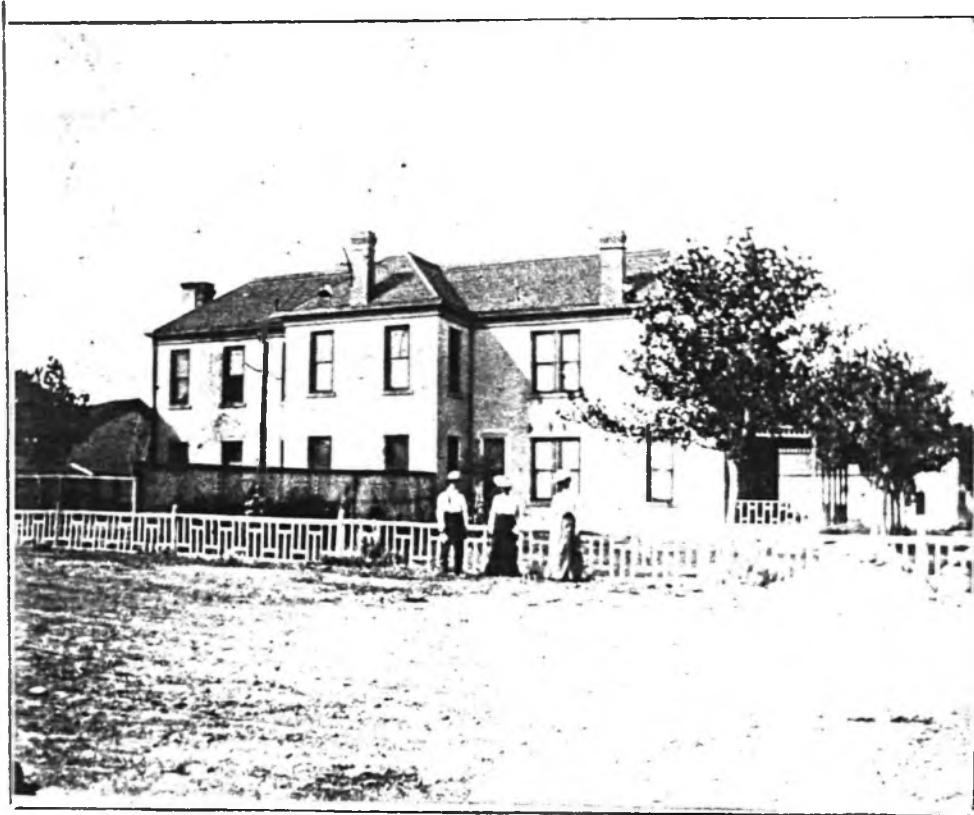
When the religious stopped in Helena to see Bishop Brondel the Sisters expressed the desire of the Community to name

the hospital in honor of the Bishop's patron, St. John the Baptist. But His Excellency asked that the hospital be dedicated under the name of Saint Clare as he had attended the canonization of Saint Clare of Montefalco during his recent trip to Rome. The Bishop also gave the Sisters a book about Saint Clare.³⁰

In the chronicles the Sisters described the hospital as a brick building 86 feet by 44 feet with two stories of twenty apartments. This differs a little from the dimensions of 40 feet by 60 feet given by Bishop Brendel in his letter of January 20, 1885.³¹

A deed signed June 25, 1887 transferred the ownership of lots 6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14, and 15, Block 62 from the Jesuits, Father Cataldo Jesuit superior being the party of the first part, to Sister Mary Superior of "St. Clairs Hospital, Benton, Choteau County, Montana," for the sum of \$5125, paid by Sister Mary.³² This property was deeded to the corporate body of the Sisters of Charity of Providence in Montana in 1909 by Sister Mary.³³

Another deed shows that lots 1,2,3,4,5,16,17,18,19, and 20, Block 62 were originally owned by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Helena.³⁴ On May 24, 1917 the Bishop of Great Falls deeded to Saint Clare Hospital of Fort Benton all of lots 5 and 16 and the south 25 feet of lots 4 and 17 of block 62.³⁵ Still later, in 1931, the Sisters gave all of lot 16 and the southwesterly 25 feet of lot 17, block 62 to the Roman Catho-



Early Picture of St. Clare Hospital
Showing Hospital Before Additions

lic Bishop of Great Falls.³⁶ This last deed was necessary to give sufficient land on which a rectory might be built next to the church. Up to the time the rectory was built the priests boarded at the hospital and used the little house on their property next to the hospital as an office.³⁷ To this day (1957) they take their meals in the hospital.

When the Sisters inspected the hospital building they found it in need of cleaning and furnishing. Though the Sisters could do with little for themselves they wanted to make the hospital fit for their patients, so they set to work with a will, laboring night and day to prepare the rooms for the sick.³⁸

The Sisters modestly comment that they took possession August 5th "after having cleaned our hospital and placed in order our three trunks, a small borrowed table, a chair, a kitchen stove, and two beds, one of which was borrowed."³⁹ No further picture is given of the dirt and poverty of the place but the Sisters who were there in the early days say that the building was very dirty and that the debris had to be shoveled out, a fact which gave rise to a story that the building had been constructed for a hotel or grainery.⁴⁰

Although an edition of the River Press carried the startling statement that "The Sisters, who have come here to remain, belong to the order of Providence, which requires that all work shall be done by themselves,"⁴¹ the charitable ladies of the town helped the Sisters clean and prepare.

More than that, the women also held "sociables" and in August were able to give the Sisters four hundred and forty dollars which was a welcome addition to the hospital fund.⁴²

When all was in readiness, August 11, 1886, the hospital received its first patient, Mr. C.E. McGutcheon, a young twenty-two year old Tennessean employed at the sheep ranch of Greanleaf and Company.⁴³ The young man was suffering with a fever of a type which defied diagnosis but was termed "mountain fever."⁴⁴ He died thirteen days later on August 23, 1886. His death must have been a disappointment to the Sisters but they do not elaborate on it in the chronicles.

The hospital records show a steady stream of patients from Benton, Shonkin, Assiniboine, Big Sandy, Havre, Chinook, Box Elder, Sweetgrass, Blackfoot, Malta, Judith Basin, Lewis-⁴⁵town and even from Winnipeg and other points in Canada. Then, as now, the people admitted had a variety of ailments including biliousness, consumption, bronchitis, hemorrhage, poisoning, rheumatism, measles, alcoholism, typhoid, cancer, erysipelas, fevers, dropsy, scarlatina, wounds, gun shots, frozen feet, sore eyes, broken bones, heart disease, dysentery and many less common.⁴⁶ The sick came from all walks of life. Among them were farmers, laborers, bakers, salonkeepers, cooks, undertakers, barbers, wool growers, cattlemen and shepherds. All nationalities were also represented. Irish was predominate but the Swedes, Canadians, German, Americans, Indians, halfbreeds, Italians, and French came in for their share.⁴⁷

Notes for Chapter IV

1. Letter: Bishop Brondel to Superior General of the Sisters of Providence, July 8, 1884
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Letter: Mother Amable to Bishop Brondel, July 16, 1884
8. Ibid.
9. Letter: Bishop Brondel to Mother Amable, September 20, 1884
10. Letter: Bishop Brondel to Mother Amable, January 20, 1885
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Letter: Mother Amable to Bishop Brondel, April 1, 1885
16. Letter: Mother Amable to Bishop Brondel, July 3, 1885
Bishop Brondel to Mother Amable, July 28, 1885
17. Letter: Bishop Brondel to Mother Amable, March 15, 1886
18. Letter: Bishop Brondel to Mother Amable, March 15, 1886
19. Letter: Bishop Brondel to Mother Amable, April 27, 1886
20. Letter: Bishop Brondel to Mother Amable, May 21, 1886
21. Letter: Mother Godefroy, Assistant General, to Bishop Brondel, May 7, 1886
22. Letter: Bishop Brondel to Mother Godefroy, May 21, 1886
23. Ibid.
24. Letter: Mother Godefroy to Bishop Brondel, June 11, 1886

25. Ibid.
26. River Press, June 23, 1886, pg. 8
27. Chronicles of Fort Benton. Vol. I, p. 1 See Appendix A
28. Ibid., p. 2
29. Interview: Mae Flanagan, Great Falls, May 20, 1956
30. Chronicles of Fort Benton, p. 2. In the Chronicles the name of the Saint is sometimes spelled St. Claire, and in the deed made by Fr. Cataldo in 1887 the spelling is given as Clairs but in a later deed and in the title over the door of the hospital the name is St. Clare.
31. Chronicles p. 2
32. Book of Deeds K, p. 359, Choteau County Court House, Fort Benton, June 25, 1887
33. Book of Deeds, Vol. I, p. 123, Choteau County Court House, Fort Benton, July 19, 1909
34. Book of Deeds , 29, p. 355,
35. Book of Deeds, 19, p. 195
36. Book of Deeds, 41, p. 308
37. Chronicles of Fort Benton. p. 3
38. River Press, August 11, 1886, p. 6
39. Chronicles, p. 3
40. Interview: Sr. Felix of Cantalice and Sr. Mary Aloysia June 14, 1956, Spokane, Washington
41. River Press, August 4, 1886, p.6
42. Chronicles, p.3 see also River Press, August 11, 1886
43. Chronicles, p. 4 See also Hospital Index Book . 1886- Dec. 27, 1912 p.20 and River Press, August 18, 1886
44. Chronicles, p. 4 See also Hospital Index, Hospital Record and River Press, August 25, 1886
45. Hospital Index
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.

CHAPTER V

THE HOSPITAL GROWS

Great was the rejoicing in September 1886 when the mission received more Sisters from Canada. Sisters Mary Pierre and Osman and a member of the Third Order, Mary L. Fiset, brought not only added hands to help with the work but also news from "home."¹

Added help made possible a necessary project. Thus, in October, Sister Mary Peter and Mary Wilfrid left to beg, one going to Fort Maginnis, southeast of Fort Benton and the other to Fort Assiniboine, northeast of Fort Benton.² The chronicler does not comment but it must have taken tremendous courage to travel on a begging tour in strange territory without even the comfort of a religious companion. That Fort Maginnis and Fort Assiniboine were military camps must have added to the apprehension of the beggars. However, the people were kind, if not too rich, and the travelers returned in eighteen days with one hundred and eighty dollars which was used to buy a stove for winter.³ Another one hundred dollars given by Mr. McGuire and his troupe of minstrels was used to help furnish the rooms for patients.⁴ With the county contract of fifteen dollars a week per sick person and the donations the Sisters felt that they could manage.⁵

However, it was a time of consolation before desolation. Every new establishment must bear its share of trials if it is to succeed and St. Clare's proved no exception. First, the Jesuit fathers were called away because of health and the Sisters were left without a resident priest.⁶ They had to be content with Mass once a month and, to make matters worse, the Blessed Sacrament was not left in the church. Next, the winter proved very severe and the expenses were heavy. Coal (when they could get it) was eighteen to twenty-seven dollars a ton and wood was hard to procure. Finally, the county withdrew the two small girls placed in charge of the Sisters and the Sisters had no revenue.⁷ The people did not let them starve. Neighbors and farmers brought the Sisters meat, butter and vegetables and often things were found on the kitchen table without the name of the benefactor.⁸

Spring brought new hope when the commissioners gave a new contract in March for county patients for fifteen dollars a week, though this included washing and clothes.⁹ A still greater joy was theirs when the Bishop came in May, promised to send a resident priest and permitted the Sisters to have a chapel in the hospital.¹⁰

Besides caring for the sick the Sisters made some conversions, taught prayers and catechism to a small boy of nine and taught French to two women and a girl. In that first year, reckoned from June to June, there were six Sisters on mission and they had cared for twenty-one sick, visited fifty

people ill at home, and had given meals to forty-five poor.¹¹
Thus almost all the works of the Community were being carried
on by this tiny new branch in Montana.

The reward of the Sisters uncomplaining faithfulness
came when Father Philbertus Torielli S.J. was named resident
priest on July 19, 1887.¹² Up to that time the Fathers of the
missions in the region took care of Fort Benton and the Sisters
were without Mass and Communion sometimes for months at a
time. This they considered their greatest deprivation.¹³
The joy of the handmaids of Christ was complete when, on De-
cember 20, the dear Lord came to the chapel which had been
prepared to receive Him by the Sisters with the help of do-
nations from the ladies of the altar society in Philadelphia
and from Mr. McCarthy, also of Philadelphia, the brother of
Sister Mary.¹⁴

The people of Fort Benton continued to be generous, giv-
ing donations of money to build a fence, furniture for the
parlor and two milk cows.¹⁵ The resources of the hospital
were sufficient for current expenses and a small surplus was
realized which was applied to reduce the debt.¹⁶ The Sis-
ters continued to care for the sick, visit homes and teach
catechism to the children.¹⁷

St. Clare Hospital received a choice gift in 1889 dur-
ing Sr. Mary Julien's term of office. One evening as the
Superior checked the building and yard she heard a baby's
cry. Investigating, she found a little waif left in the

yard near the bushes. There were no identification marks on the baby's clothes or on the blanket in which it was wrapped. The Sisters joyfully accepted the precious little one as a gift from Mary for it was Mary's month.¹⁸ They dutifully registered the child as admitted to the hospital. The record is:

No. 140, Benton, Rosie Yard, Mulatto, Age 4, Female, Orphan¹⁹

After trying without success to find her relatives the Sisters had her baptized June 9, 1889,²⁰ choosing the name Clara after St. Clare and adding the surname Yard because she was found in the yard. Clara remained with the Sisters though in different houses in the Province until her death sixty-seven²¹ years later.

Bishop Brondel must have been pleased when the Province was erected March 20, 1891 and Mother Mary was chosen as first Provincial Superior.²² The Sisters of Fort Benton rejoiced that their foundress was now their Provincial. Sister Mary Julien had exchanged places with Mother Mary in 1889,²³ coming from Missoula to be Superior of Fort Benton. In that same year Bishop Brondel asked for a mission in Great Falls and Mother Godefroy considered moving the Sisters from the Fort to Great Falls.²⁴ His Excellency preferred to allow Great Falls to wait rather than close St. Clare's.²⁵ However, in 1891 the mission in Benton was again threatened with the possibility of closing. The Sisters and sick had been deprived of the ministrations of a priest for a time and Mother Godefroy, Superior General, felt that if the town could not be supplied with a resident pastor the vocations

of the Sisters would be endangered and the sick might die
without the Sacraments.²⁶ In answer to her letter Bishop
Brondel sent a brief message, "Letter received. The Rever-
end Father Monroe will reside in Benton."²⁷

Thus the little hospital remained to carry on its work
and to add to the glory of the Community. When the Mother
House celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1893 the small
"daughter" could participate in the joy of the occasion and
look with satisfaction on the work accomplished. From the
founding of the hospital to September 1893 four hundred and
forty-eight patients had been given care, the number increas-
ing from thirteen the first year to seventy-nine per year.
The visits to the sick in their homes were one-hundred sixty-
eight, the most recorded in any year since the foundation.²⁸
As an expression of gratitude and to carry on the tradition
of the Mother House, a meal was served to the poor and a trid-
uum was held, Father Follet, the new pastor, preaching it.²⁹

From the time the Sisters had been permitted to have
the Blessed Sacrament in the hospital the "chapel" had been
in a small room but now remodeling was done and a suitable
chapel built. Reverend Father Carol Follet offered Mass
there on June 1, feast of Our Lady of Providence.³⁰

Although the Sisters had been teaching catechism since
their arrival in 1886 they had not formed a real "Sunday
School" until, at the urgent request of Father Follet, they
took charge of twenty children for the year 1896 to 1897.³¹

The years 1898 and 1899 were made unusual by the death in the hospital of two priests. December 29, 1898 Reverend Father Demanez, pastor of Lewistown was thrown half dead 15 feet from the train on which he had been riding, about four miles from Benton.³² He was brought to St. Clare's and on his arrival he asked for the priest. Unfortunately Father J. C. Pudenz, pastor since November, was absent. However, Father Demanez said that he did not have to confess as his conscience was in peace. He prayed until he expired about 1 o'clock on the morning of December 30. Dispatches had been sent to Big Sandy and to Great Falls asking for a priest but the priest arrived at 3 o'clock, two hours after Father's death.³³

A coroner's inquest regarding the death of Father Demanez was held at the court house January 4, 1899 with a number of railroad men present as witnesses. A verdict of accidental death was returned.³⁴

Reverend Father Werdein of Anaconda was sent to replace Father Demanez in Lewistown but, after he reached Benton, bad roads delayed him and he came to the hospital February 12, 1899 to remain for a few days. Rheumatism and grippe kept him at the hospital for a month. On March 17, Father Pudenz had to leave for the missions. That same day Father Werdein suffered a heart attack and died about 7 o'clock in the evening.³⁵ Both Father Werdein and Father Demanez were buried in Fort Benton, the only priests buried there.

By 1899 Saint Clare Hospital had grown too small and



St. Clare Hospital, Fort Benton

a new addition was begun. At the cost of \$2000 three private rooms, two wards and a porch were built and a sewer system was constructed which enabled the hospital to add some indoor toilets, bath tubs and sinks. The attic was renovated too to accommodate patients.³⁶ But even the extra room given proved too little with the increase of sickness that seemed to come with railroad construction in 1900. In the months of February and March the hospital had not less than sixty patients.³⁷

One evening at nine o'clock four sick men were brought in but the only vacant place was the chaplain's refectory which, at the time, was not in use. The Sisters brought their own beds and mattresses there and the four sick men were accommodated. At 10 o'clock the Sisters went to Mrs. T. Darling's home where they were made welcome for the night.³⁸ This happened not once, but several times, different friends being asked to harbor the Sisters. At one time the Sisters slept for an entire month at the neighbors!³⁹ Truly the Sisters had cause to praise the famed hospitality of Montana.

"Going to the neighbors" was not the only inconvenience that the sick caused the Sisters. Sometimes the Daughters of Charity had to curtail prayer and meditation to render service to the sick poor. The task of laundering alone was no small item. The Sisters had to wash all clothes by hand in laundry tubs, rubbing on a board. Water for the clothes was boiled in a large boiler which had to be placed on the

stove each time. After washing, the clothes would be put outside to dry but in winter they would freeze and the Sisters would have to gather them and take them to the third floor to dry.⁴⁰ The county patients who did not need care during the night were housed on third floor too! Since the patients had to be fed, cooking must continue three times a day, not stopping for washing or canning or such necessary but less vital chores.⁴¹ The hospital owned two stoves, one for the patients and one for the kitchen.⁴² Therefore, when canning was in process the Sisters had to do it in the evening after the meals had been served. They stayed up until 2 o'clock in the morning to can.⁴³ After such work they could sleep anywhere, even on the floor!⁴⁴ Added to this they busied themselves making fancy work to sell for things needed in the hospital. In winter when they sewed their hands became so numb they kept a pan of water on the kitchen stove and dipped their stiff fingers from time to time.⁴⁵ Amid all the hardships and fatigue they were happy to be able to relieve suffering humanity and they repeated more than once that they "loved their holy vocation."⁴⁶

During the year the Sisters again experienced the great trial of the deprivation of Mass and Communion because the Reverend Father J. C. Pudenz, who was acting as chaplain, was obliged to go to his missions for two weeks at a time during each month.⁴⁷ Frequently, in order to assist the dying, telegrams would have to be sent to recall the priest. The Sis-

ters grieved that the centenary of the birth of their foundress, Mother Gamelin, had to be observed without Mass and Holy Communion.⁴⁸

Perhaps because of these trials the little joys of family life were more keenly appreciated. Thus there was heartfelt rejoicing when Mother Charles of Providence, a welcome visitor from the Mother House, arrived with Sister Clare of the Cross in April 1900. Sister Clare, Lucy O'Reilly was the first one to enter the Institute of Providence from Benton. She entered in Missoula, made her novitiate at the Mother House in Montreal and was professed on March 28, feast of Our Mother of Sorrows.⁴⁹

Sister Clare, now a jubilarian residing at St. Thomas Home in Great Falls, has often told the story of her vocation.⁵⁰ She had been educated in the East, her father being an officer in the army, but had come with her parents to homestead on a ranch at Shonkin, a short distance from Fort Benton. The only girl,⁶¹ she was a bit spoiled, the pride and joy of her parents. However, the dear Lord wanted her and permitted an infection of the eye to be the means of claiming her for His own. For treatment of the infection Lucy had to go to the hospital⁵¹ much against her wishes, but she fell in love with the Sisters and when the time came for her to go home she thought of excuses to stay until seven weeks had passed and she simply had to return home. When she reached her home she was very lonesome and wrote to the Sisters telling

them how she missed them. Her mother found the note and accused her of loving the Sisters more than she loved her home. After some pleading this favored child was sent to school in Missoula where her determination to enter grew stronger. Her parents, hating the sacrifice, objected for a time but finally yielded. Fort Benton had given its first vocation.⁵²

Other occasions for joy and renewal of fervor were provided when Bishop J. B. Brondel came to confirm in the parish or to visit and whenever the higher superiors of the Institute came to give encouragement and advice.⁵³

The definitive approbation of the Constitutions, the rule of the Sisters, called for a truly big celebration even in little St. Clare. Three days, October 28,29,30, 1900 were given to special prayer and rejoicing and the chapel was suitably decorated for the occasion.⁵⁴

The First Friday of June 1901 was a very special day as the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for the first time in the history of the hospital.⁵⁵ This was repeated on the feast of the Sacred Heart. This privilege was made possible by the presence of Father J. H. O'Brien who had come to our hospital from Anaconda for a complete rest and convalescence.⁵⁶ The Sisters were most grateful.

1901 had more than one "first" for the hospital. During the year the project of installing a modern boiler and heating system was completed, a milk-house,refrigeration system

and laundry were constructed and the house was entirely wired with a modern electric lighting system.⁵⁷

However, the year was not without its trials. In September heavy rains coming down the hillside caused the cellar to be flooded, engulfing the boiler room as well. All night the Sisters and hired men worked to empty the water. Even with the aid of pumps another day was needed to clear the cellar. The damage was about four hundred dollars, a large sum for the hospital. The loss of a cow added to the trial.⁵⁸ After the cellar and boiler room were repaired a stable and barn were constructed for the horse and cows. But tribulations brought blessings for two "collections" or begging tours brought in five hundred dollars and many donations were made for the chapel which was enlarged.⁵⁹

The renovation of the chapel was completed just at the right time for, in 1902, for the first time in the history of the diocese the forty hours devotion was permitted in all private chapels. It was held in October in the hospital chapel and was the occasion of renewal of Faith among the patients,⁶⁰ many of them receiving the Sacraments.

Notes for Chapter V

1. Chronicles of Fort Benton Vol I. p.3 See Appendix C
2. Ibid., p. 3 Fort Maginnis was a small post located in the center of the cattle country of Montana in 1880. It was intended as a means of protection for miners in the Judith mountains and ranchers and settlers against Indians who came down from Canada. It was located a short distance northeast of the old mining town of Gilt Edge. Fort Assiniboine, an important post near Havre, was built in 1879 to keep watch over the Blackfeet and guard against the return of Sitting Bull. It was the largest and best equipped military post in Montana until the military left in 1911.
3. Ibid., p. 3
4. Ibid., p. 4
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 5
8. Ibid., p. 5
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 7
12. Ibid. See Appendix D
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 8
15. Ibid., p. 11
16. Ibid., p. 11
17. Ibid.
18. Great Falls Leader, March 14, 1956 also Interview with Sr. Amelia, Sacred Heart Hospital, Spokane, June 15, 1956
19. Hospital Index 1886-1912, p. 28

20. Ibid.
21. Great Falls Leader March 14, 1956 also personal knowledge of the writer.
22. Chronicles of Fort Benton, p. 12
Chronicles of Sacred Heart Academy 1891, Missoula, Mont.
23. Files of Mt. St. Joseph, Spokane, Washington, Provincial House.
24. Letter: Mother Mary Godefroy, Sup. Gen., to Bishop Brondel, July 10, 1888
25. Letter: Bishop Brondel to Mother M. Godefroy, July 21 1888
26. Letter: Mother M. Godefroy to Bishop Brondel, January 23, 1891
27. Letter: Bishop Brondel to Mother M. Godefroy, January 30, 1891 See Appendix E and D
28. Chronicles of Fort Benton p. 20 See Appendix E
29. Ibid., p. 20
30. Ibid., p. 24
31. Ibid., p. 28
32. Ibid., p. 36 See also Hospital Records 1886-1900
33. Ibid.,
34. River Press, January 4, 1899 Though a verdict of accidental death was returned the people of Fort Benton still believe that Fr. Demanez was murdered. The account of the inquest has been destroyed so efforts to solve the mystery have been unsuccessful. Tombstones were erected over the graves of both priests in 1956.
35. Chronicles p. 36
36. Ibid., p. 40
37. Ibid., p. 41
38. Ibid.
39. Interview: Sr. Annanias, St. Clare Hospital, Fort Benton, May 27, 1957

40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Chronicles p. 41 The Sisters did have to sleep on the floor, at times, for want of other places and once, when the Sisters went to the neighbors Sr. Fridolin, staying to nurse the sick, fixed her bed in a tub.
45. Interview: Sr. Jerome Emmelian, St. Clare's Hospital Fort Benton, May 27, 1957
46. Chronicles p. 42
47. Ibid., p. 43
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid. , p. 44
50. Interview: Sr. Clare of the Cross, St. Thomas Home, Great Falls, Montana, December 1956
51. Hospital Records 1886-1900
52. Interview with Sr. Clare of the Cross.
53. Chronicles of Fort Benton, p. 45
54. Ibid., p. 46
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., p. 47
58. Ibid., p. 50
59. Ibid., p. 54
60. Ibid., p. 56

61. Sr. Clare of the Cross was born in Youngstown, New York. She had an older sister, Katherine, and two other sisters who died in infancy. Katherine married Robert Moore, a drummer of Battery B stationed at Fort Monroe, Virginia, but when the Battery moved she moved with her husband to Rouses Point, New York. Thus when Mr. and Mrs. O'Reilly moved west Lucy (Sr. Clare) was the only girl. Her uncle owned a farm near Benton and Sr. Clare's two brothers, Ted and Charles, worked there until the family moved out. The uncle had chosen land adjoining his farm for Sr. Clare's father, Terrance, and, though the land was not productive, the family made there home there.



MOST REV. MATHIAS CLEMENT BENIHAN, D.D.
BISHOP OF GREAT FALLS

Born Oct. 6, 1854

Consecrated Sept. 21, 1904

Installed Nov. 9, 1904

by

Most Rev. Alexander Christie

Archbishop of Oregon City

1929-Celebrated Diamond Jubilee of Birth

Golden of Priesthood

Silver of Episcopacy

Resigned Jan. 13, 1930

Elevated to rank of Archbishop

Died in native Iowa Aug. 19, 1943

CHAPTER VI

PROVIDENCE WILL PROVIDE

The Community and Fort Benton paid homage to a new diocesan head when Mother Hilarion, Provincial, Mother Mary of the Resurrection, Sister Gaspard and Sister Alderic, Superior of Fort Benton, arrived in October for the installation ceremony of Bishop Mathias Lenihan which took place in St. Ann Church, Great Falls on November 9, 1904.¹

In January the new bishop was guest of St. Clare Hospital when he came to install Reverend Father McCormick as resident pastor and chaplain of the hospital.² During his stay the bishop baptized a young man and a young lady, patients in the hospital. Later, in May, in a pastoral visit he confirmed two adults who were also patients.³

Pecuniary difficulties threatened the hospital when the contract for county patients was withdrawn for a time in 1904. Although the Sisters did not feel that they could accept the poor for the reduced rate of \$8.50 per week they preferred to trust in Divine Providence rather than to close the hospital.⁴ Providence, not to be outdone, sent them a boarder in the person of Miss Katherine Connolly, a charitable woman who devoted her life to work for the Church and the poor. She not only paid board but she made donations which helped



MOTHER MARY SULLIVAN
Superior of Fort Benton 1888-1891
Provincial Superior 1893-1903
Provincial Superior 1908-1910
Superior General 1910-1922

MOTHER HILARION
Provincial Superior 1903-1908



the Sisters to continue their good work.⁵

For a few years life went on at an even pace. The hospital had patients enough, but not too much surgery was done as a skilled surgeon was lacking. This want was supplied in 1908 when Dr. E. M. Porter joined the staff of St. Clare's.⁶ The number of surgical patients increased immediately and an era of prosperity seemed to be in the offing.

With the new surgeon came the need for a surgery. Thus in 1909, after twenty-two years of existence a new foundation was constructed under the hospital. the interior was completely renovated and a room for a small modern surgery was added on the south side of the house.⁷ It was badly needed as the Sisters had had to scrub and prepare the parlor whenever the Doctor called for surgery.⁸

Unfortunately the high expectations were not realized for the Doctor soon brought a grievous trial to the hospital.

Dr. Porter settled in the town and became very active in its affairs as accounts in the paper testified.

Dr. E. M. Porter has purchased the lots at the corner of Bond and Main Streets and will use the property as the site for a new residence to be built as soon as the weather conditions are favorable. 9

In the City Primaries Dr. E. M. Porter was elected delegate to the city convention. 10.

Dr. E. M. Porter of this city has been appointed contract physician for the Great Northern Railroad, his district covering that portion of the line between Havre and Great Falls. 11.

The car of Dr. E. M. Porter will be entered in the auto race in Great Falls. It is a 30 horsepower Petrel run by James E. Mitchell. It won 2nd money at the North Montana State Fair. 12

He seemed to like Fort Benton and according to the citizens who knew him he was considered a good doctor and was well liked by Fort Benton.¹³

Be that as it may, some misunderstanding occurred between the Doctor and the Sisters over treatment to be given a baby.¹⁴ The baby died, the only child of the Allen Grays of Fort Benton,¹⁵ and the Doctor accused the Sisters of negligence in carrying out his orders.¹⁵ The quarrel led Dr. Porter to establish his own hospital, called the Fort Benton Sanitarium,¹⁶ and the Sister's main source of revenue, the contract for the county patients, was given to the new hospital.¹⁷

The town took sides and the paper carried a long article extolling the merits of the Sanitarium.

A recent addition to the public institutions of this part of Montana is the Fort Benton Sanitarium which is now in operation and which is receiving liberal patronage from citizens who are on the sick list. It is a strictly business institution not connected in any manner with any Church or religious order and is intended to stand on its merits as a place where sick people will receive the best medical care and attention.

The sanitarium is owned by an incorporated company with a capital stock of \$20,000 to which a large number of residents of this city and other parts of Chouteau county have subscribed. The company acquired the well known Wetzel residence building and has converted it into one of the best appointed and most competent sanitariums in Montana. It has been renovated and refurnished throughout with new furniture and other appointments having been purchased from a Minneapolis firm which deals exclusively in hospital supplies. The Sanitarium has accommodations for about 35 patients and additional rooms will probably be provided at an early date.

The sanitarium occupies what is considered the best residence site in Fort Benton. It was selected by W. S. Wetzel, one of the earliest residents for building a palatial home and was regarded by himself and others as the most desirable location that could be chosen.

Situated on rising ground at the foot of the big butte, it commands a view of the entire town with its numerous groves of trees and the Missouri river winding its way round the bend. The premises include a beautiful sloping lawn, surrounded by ornamental and shade trees and is an ideal recreation ground for those recovering from sickness.

The sanitarium is in charge of Miss Rebecca Kenyon of Cincinnati, Ohio, a trained nurse of experience and good business ability who is assisted by a corps of competent help. The attending physician Dr. E. M. Porter is a physician and surgeon of more than local reputation who has been remarkably successful in his practice since locating here a few years ago. The charges are based upon location of the room and its appointments and are as reasonable as those of any similar institution in the state. 18

Some of the people of the town actually signed a petition directed against the Sisters but many who signed declared later that they had been ignorant of its contents and had believed it to be a petition to keep the Hospital and Sisters at Benton. 19

In January 1910 seventeen county patients were moved to the Porter Hospital from St. Clare's. Grief was manifested by patients and Sisters. Two old men who had been with the Sisters from the foundation of St. Clare's refused to transfer and the religious did not force them to go but once again trusted in Providence to provide for them. 21

Providence did provide for the Sisters in an unusual

way. An orphanage was in the process of construction in Great Falls and this work, dear to the heart of Bishop Lenihan, was entrusted to the Sisters of Providence. However, until the building was ready to receive the orphans temporary quarters had to be found for them. While waiting for the new building in Great Falls, the section of the Fort Benton Hospital that had been used for the county patients was renovated and made ready to accommodate twenty-five orphans. Sister Jane de Chantal and Sister Marceau arrived on February 22²² 3rd with the children.

Immediately the sympathetic interest of the public was aroused and the work received support and commendation from all. A secular teacher was engaged to carry on classes for the children and the little ones continued their work as if they were to be permanent residents. The orphans also filled a role in the parish church, edifying all by their reverent attitude and pious manner of praying.²³

The presence of the children necessitated changes in the hospital, a class-room was fitted out from some of the unoccupied rooms, a dining hall was prepared near the kitchen and the Sisters were happy to bear the inconvenience of the narrow quarters to help along the comfort of the orphans.²⁴

In the small town of Benton two factors were at work, one favored the Sisters, the other, with its criticisms and derogatory actions sided with the protestant hospital. For a time the hostile element had the upper hand but during this time the Sisters went on quietly and perseveringly in spite of reduced numbers of patients and decreased revenue. They

kept the hospital open and by their silence and kindly ways slowly broke down the opposition. The Bishop assured Mother Mary Antoinette, Superior General, that the trouble was a "tempest in a tea-pot"²⁵ and should not cause her undue worry as he felt Mother Julien, the Provincial Superior, knew all about it and could handle it.²⁶

His words proved true though it was sometime before the opposition to the hospital was conquered. A dint in the attitude of dislike was made when a baby whose mother had died in the Fort Benton Sanitarium was brought to the Sisters by the relatives who, though Catholics, had looked with disfavor on the St. Clare Hospital and had given their allegiance to the Porter Hospital. The baby was graciously accepted and was given every care. In a small town it does not take long for news to spread and this act of charity caused a stir especially among some whose minds were ill-disposed toward the hospital.²⁷

January 23, 1911 the orphan guests left for Great Falls to be housed in the new St. Thomas Home. The Sisters were sorry to see the youngsters go as the little ones had claimed the affection of all.²⁸ Their departure left something of a void in the house but this was soon to be filled.

About the time the orphans left Doctor James Murphy came to Fort Benton to practice in the hospital.²⁹ His ability as a medical man and a surgeon was well established before he came to join forces with Doctor F. W. Cotton, a friend, and at once the number of patients began to grow.

Rooms which had served for the county patients had to be renovated and prepared for private patients.³⁰

An epidemic of small-pox broke out in Benton in March 1911 and the Sisters were asked to accommodate as many patients as they possibly could. This they did by preparing an isolation hospital in the quarters that had been at the disposal of the orphans with one Sister in charge of the department. The house was placed under the protection of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Sisters trustfully accepted the patients brought to them. Not one Sister or nurse fell a victim to the dread disease.³¹ Best of all, during this time there were many conversions, especially of lapsed Catholics and an entirely new spirit of good-will toward the hospital permeated the entire town and surrounding settlements.³²

However, there was still question of closing St. Clare's because the Fort could not well support two hospitals and since the contract for the county patients, from whom the Sisters had received most of their revenue, had been taken from the hospital the General Council considered that it would be better to close the hospital and make use of the Sisters in other establishments.³³

The Sisters in Benton started praying earnestly that a way to continue the work would develop and in January 1912 they applied for the county contract.³⁴ In spite of opposition this was granted them.³⁵ The number of private patients increased also because of the devotion and excellent medical

care given by Dr. J. Murphy who had become quite popular with the people.³⁶

During the difficult years Judge W. Tattan, Mr. J. Sullivan, Mr. C. W. Morrison and Mr. G. Overfield stood by the Sisters. Reverend W. P. Phelan, the pastor, was also a kind and true friend.³⁷

By the end of 1912 it was found that more patients had been admitted than in previous years in spite of difficulties and once again life resumed its even tenor.³⁸ The Sisters made an annual retreat, generally in Missoula. This was a real event because they were so often deprived of Mass and Communion in their own mission. Another source of joy was the visit of the Provincial Superiors and the Mother General or one of her assistants. The Sisters continued to instruct the children in religion and prepare them for First Holy Communion, often providing lodging for the children who lived too far away.³⁹ Gifts of money or produce were received frequently to help with the expenses of the house. Renovation and remodeling continued as needed to keep the hospital in fit condition. In 1913 the community room and parlors were separated into private rooms and the chicken coop was completely remodeled into rooms for the patients who were increasing daily.⁴⁰

Even with the added rooms the hospital soon became too small and in 1916 a wing was constructed on the north side of the hospital. A two-story laundry with a solid foundation that could accommodate the heating plant and rooms on the

second floor to be used as sleeping quarters for Sisters and nurses were other welcome additions.⁴¹

When the United States mobilized for war in 1917 the hospital was affected. Construction was delayed because of the lack of material and transportation; recruits were taken which handicapped the builders; but the real trial came when Dr. J. F. Murphy, staunch support of the hospital, was called to military service.⁴² After his departure many of his patients went elsewhere.⁴³

Once more the hospital began a struggle for existence. A begging tour among the surrounding farmers was started and brought in provisions of food.⁴⁴ Mr. N. Murkle, President of a coal firm in Belt, after visiting the hospital cancelled his bill for a carload of coal purchased by the Sisters.⁴⁵ Father Phelan appealed to the generosity of the parishioners who responded with donations for the chapel and hospital.⁴⁶

The following were some of the outstanding donations:

3 windows	Louis Beezer, Seattle
1 marble balustrade	M. J. Beezer, Seattle
1 sanctuary light	A. Odor, Fort Benton
1 statue of Sacred Heart	Dr. J. F. Murphy
2 pictures	Beezer & Bros, Seattle
1 crucifix for altar	Mrs Rose Kelly, Fort Benton
2 pedestals for statues	Mr. McCrea, Great Falls
\$ 200.00	Joseph Schultz, Big Sandy
200.00	Jere Sullivan, Fort Benton
100.00	W.T. Sullivan, Fort Benton
100.00	Mr. Lehn, Genou, Montana
25.00	Dr. C.F. Bassow ⁴⁷

In January 1918 Mother Mary of the Resurrection, founder, arrived with Sister Victor to make a collection in favor

of the hospital. She realized the sum of \$677.80, showing not only her ability to plead but the esteem in which the people held her. They had not forgotten the Sister who did so much to establish St. Clare's.⁴⁸

The practice of giving a badge of the Sacred Heart to each patient, especially the most serious cases produced many consoling conversions. Souls were stirred to repentance, death was accepted with increased resignation, and often prejudices were broken down and patients were urged to study and learn more about the Catholic faith.⁴⁹ Striking conversions were made every year but the recounting of them will form a chapter by itself.

Influenza made its appearance in the community in October 1918 but the Red Cross organized and only the most serious cases were brought to the hospital.⁵⁰ Two lay nurses and four Sisters contracted the disease but Mother Zenaide, Provincial Superior, sent two Sisters, Sr. Felix of Cantalice and Sr. Georgia, from Missoula to help so that the sick would be given the necessary care.⁵¹ Seventy cases were received during the month. Of this number nineteen died. During November sixty cases were received and seven died. All those who died were protestants who had the happiness of conversion. "It seems as though," writes the chronicler, "the good God sent the epidemic in order to garner a rich harvest of souls."⁵²

Another foundress returned to visit in May when Sister Mary Wilfrid came from Canada on a tour to establish the title, the extent of the property and the location of the buildings

of each house in the province.⁵³ Dr. Murphy returned too in
1919.⁵⁴

Gratitude to the Sacred Heart was shown October 7 when the hospital observed the solemn consecration of the house and personnel to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Mass was said in honor of the Sacred Heart and at 7 P.M. Father P. W. Phelan delivered an appropriate talk taking as his theme, "Learn of Me because I am meek and humble of Heart."⁵⁵ Sr. Didier, Superior, read the Act of Consecration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament followed.⁵⁶ The Sisters were to need confidence in the Sacred Heart in the years to come.

In common with all farming communities the success or the failure of the crops affected the economy of the town. Another year of drought, the 3rd consecutive year, with a resultant crop failure brought a financial slump which was seriously felt by the hospital. Although the prospects looked forbidding the Sisters trusted in Providence because they felt that the hospital was needed for the Faith.⁵⁷ Friends were willing to come to their assistance and after Sunday Mass, October 3, 1920, a meeting was called of all the principal men of the parish to talk over plans to help the hospital in its financial difficulties. A debt of \$19,000 had to be met and the monthly receipts were not sufficient to meet the current expenses.⁵⁸

During the hard times of the war and after, the hospital had not closed its doors to any patient whether he could pay

at once or had to defer payment. As a result, a sum of \$18,000 due from patients was found on the books.⁵⁹ After holding two other meetings to discuss the question the decision was made that a form letter with enclosed bill would be sent out to every person who owed any amount to the hospital, stating the financial difficulty and urging payment to be made.⁶⁰ A few answers came but nothing of real value was done. The hospital continued to struggle on for some years until December 26, 1922 when the situation became still more desperate with the failure of the Benton State Bank in which the hospital lost \$656.90, a comparatively small sum but large for the hospital at the time.⁶¹

The dry-land farmers who had come from the East and had settled on acre after acre of land that had no irrigation, suffered a complete loss of their harvests. Pushed to an extremity of poverty they packed their belongings and trekked further west, leaving behind them all their unpaid bills. St. Clare's hospital had never refused admittance to any of these farmers, therefore, when they left the hospital's loss ran to thousands of dollars.⁶² However, the annalist says, "As Sisters of Charity of Providence, we wrote these off, trusting that Divine Providence would recompense us in the years to come."⁶³

When His Excellency Bishop Lenihan came to confirm the children of Fort Benton in 1923 he used the occasion to lay before the parishioners the dire need of the hospital and to appeal to their generosity in giving help.⁶⁴ He headed the

list of donors with \$100 but he did not stop with a donation. On his recommendation a parish meeting was held during which it was unanimously decided that, since the hospital served all the citizens of Benton and the surrounding territory both Catholic and Protestant, all should be made aware of the condition of the hospital.⁶⁵ A circular letter was prepared and sent out to all the people of the town inviting them to a meeting to devise some means to help.⁶⁶

October 11, 1923 a meeting attended by the principal business men of the town was held in the Benton Court House. Lawyer F. E. Stranahan who presided gave an eloquent and effective talk after which two committees of three men each were named. One committee was to bring immediate help by soliciting contributions throughout the country and the other was to take charge of collecting the accounts overdue the hospital.⁶⁷ When the subject of closing the hospital was broached the men were unanimous in refusing to allow the Sisters to leave.⁶⁸

Divine Providence also came to the aid of the Sisters. After the death in Helena of Mr. T. Power, a wealthy man who had made most of his fortune in Fort Benton, it was learned that St. Clare's had been willed \$5000.00. As the Sisters would not receive this amount until all the business of the estate would be settled and since the need for money and supplies was so pressing, one of the employees of the Power Mercantile in Benton, Mr. Joseph Bartley, asked and obtained permission for the grocery department to furnish

the hospital at once with supplies the value thereof to be deducted from the amount given in the will.⁶⁹

When the second bank of Benton closed on January 12, 1924 the Sisters lost only \$18.00 as they had been warned before and had used the small amount of money they had had deposited.⁷⁰ However, with the closing of the bank all hope of help through the two committees died. Very little had been done by either committee as it was almost impossible to collect old bills or to solicit contributions.⁷¹

Money troubles were not the only sorrows which afflicted the personnel of the hospital. February 4, 1922 Reverend Fr. Phelan was stricken with phlebitis⁷² in the left leg and Doctor Murphy prescribed a complete rest in bed. The parish was without Mass February 5 but Reverend Fr. Benedict Seethaler and Reverend John Hennessy, pastor of St. Joseph Church in Plentywood, came on the 6th to visit Fr. Phelan. Fr. Hennessy remained two days and on February 12th Fr. Joseph Pollack from St. Thomas Home arrived to say Mass. He returned on the 18th for the funeral service of Mrs. W. Morrison, then Fr. M. J. Colgan was delegated to remain at Benton during Fr. Phelan's illness. Finally, Fr. Phelan felt strong enough to offer Mass the morning of March 9th but that evening he was stricken with pneumonia from which he never recovered. On the same day Reverend Fr. McCormick came to replace Fr. Colgan with the intention of remaining at Fort Benton. Before the change could be made both priests were stricken with influenza and

73
 ordered to bed by the doctor. Three days later, on the evening of March 12th Fr. Phelan felt that he was dying and asked the Sisters to send for Reverend Fr. William A. Shepherd S.J., pastor of St. Jude Church, Havre, Montana, to administer the last sacraments. Fr. Shepherd arrived about 8:30 that evening, heard Father's confession, gave him Holy Viaticum and anointed him. The next day at 9:30 in the evening with the three priests who were in the house giving him absolution Fr. Phelan breathed his last.⁷⁴ The hospital had lost a true friend.

Solemn Requiem Mass was chanted in the Immaculate Conception Church with Rt. Rev. T. O'Brien, Vicar General of the diocese presiding. The Mass was celebrated by Rev. J. J. Carroll, Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Miles City. Rev. W. R. O'Sullivan was master of ceremonies, Rev. B. Seethalier and Rev. H. Pratchner deacon and subdeacon, Rev. T. Sheehy, incense bearer. Rev. Frs. T. Hennessy, Francis Shevlin, Patrick Sheehy, John Leahey, Tim O'Shea, Anthony Ciscisman, Joseph Pollach, M. J. Colgan, John Mollyneux and E. C. Hanna were in the sanctuary. The office of the dead which preceded the Mass was chanted by Frs. Pollach and Leahy and the absolution was given by Fr. M. T. O'Brien. The remains were interred in the Catholic cemetery but later they were moved to Great Falls.⁷⁵ Father was the third priest to die in St. Clare's hospital.

In a little over two years the annalist recorded the death of a Sister, the first to die in Fort Benton.⁷⁶ Sister

Reine Marguerite had been sent to St. Clare's because it was hoped that the dry climate and the "country air" would help her to recover her strength. However, on September 19, 1924 Sister seemed to be growing so much weaker it was thought best to have the last Sacraments administered. Her own sister, Sister Odelard remained with her for several days when she rallied for a time. In October she again received the last Sacraments and, assisted by the prayers of the Sisters and the repeated absolutions of the priest, she gave back her soul to God, October 27, 1924. Her body was buried in the Community plot in Mount Olivet cemetery in Great Falls.⁷⁷

The "Grim Reaper" struck again as death came suddenly to Dr. J. F. Murphy, December 12, 1924.⁷⁸ During the thirteen years he had exercised his profession at St. Clare's he had shown himself most devoted and charitable. It had been largely due to him that the hospital had been able to keep its doors open during the life of the Fort Benton Sanitarium. The Sisters felt his loss most keenly.

After the death of Dr. Murphy the hospital was without a surgeon until June 1925 when Dr. Evon L. Anderson came to inspect the hospital with a view to establishing a practice in Fort Benton.⁷⁹ He was favorably impressed and came in July to make his home in Benton. After thirty-two years he is still with the hospital and is one of its most loyal helpers.

While being principally occupied with caring for the sick, the Sisters found time to continue teaching catechism to the children who came to Sunday school. After Bishop O'Hara organized vacation schools in 1931 the Sisters of the

hospital gladly welcomed the Sisters from the schools who came to teach each year during the summer months.⁸⁰ Since school lasted daily for four weeks it would have been impossible for the hospital Sisters to undertake the task of combining nursing and teaching but they could and did help the Sisters who were assigned to teach.

One of the first "schools" in Benton was marked by a rather unusual occurrence. Sister Clare of the Cross, Superior of St. Joseph's Academy, Sprague, Washington came with her companion Sr. Mary Carmel to devote time and energy to teaching "religious vacation school"⁸¹ Three Protestant ministers of the locality organized religious courses of study that lasted for two weeks at the same time that the Sisters conducted classes for the Catholic children. Both groups carried on their instructions in the public school, Catholics on one side of the building,⁸² Protestants on the other!

Meanwhile the affairs of the hospital prospered. The contract for the county patients was renewed yearly but the terms were increased to two dollars a day for each patient plus extra payment for surgery, laboratory and X-ray.⁸³

An epidemic of pneumonia and gripe in 1932-33 increased the number of sick to such an extent that the Sisters had to look for new places to put the patients.⁸⁴ The Sisters refectory was turned into a six bed ward and the Sisters used the community room for a dining room.⁸⁵ A little later the office of the Superior, the parlor and every possible corner were made available for the sick. Even so, the Sisters were afraid that

they would have to refuse patients because of the lack of room but there was always one bed for the latest arrival. Sometimes entire families were hospitalized. Up to forty-eight patients were admitted in one day—too many for the small hospital.⁸⁶ In spite of the fatigue occasioned by the increased demand of work God took care of the health of the Sisters and the secular nurses.⁸⁷

Throughout the years of the hospital's existence Saint Joseph was kept busy by the Sisters. Once in 1932 recourse was had to him to calm the winds which were causing the chimney of the heating plant to sway and to threaten the quarters of nurses and Sisters. The continued violence of the wind made the work of stabilizing the chimney very dangerous but Saint Joseph was equal to the task and, after his aid was invoked,⁸⁸ the wind stopped. The good saint was often called on to take care of the finances of the house too and sometimes he chose strange ways of doing it. In 1933, during the financial depression an urgent petition was addressed to Saint Joseph as the funds were low. As if in answer to prayer the U. S. government organized the Choteau County Emergency Relief Board.⁸⁹ Through this board the poor and destitute who could receive no assistance from the county because they owned some property were able to procure help from the Relief Bureau. Every two weeks they could receive provisions and coal. Through this project many families were assisted and the money that the Sisters received for the sick poor was a Godsend for the hospital.⁹⁰ Providence, through the prayers of Saint Joseph had provided again.

Notes for Chapter VI

1. Eastern Montana Catholic Register, Dec. 3, 1954, p. 14
Chronicles Fort Benton p. 60
2. Chronicles of Fort Benton p. 61
3. Ibid., 68-69
4. Ibid., 63
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid., 71
7. Ibid., 72
8. Ibid.
9. River Press, March 4, 1909
10. River Press, March 31, 1909
11. Ibid., April 23, 1909
12. Ibid., September 1, 1909
13. Interview, Miss Nora Harber, Fort Benton, May 27, 1957
14. Interview, Sr. Felix of Cantalice, Spokane, Washington,
June 14, 1956
15. Interview, Miss Nora Harber, Fort Benton, May 27, 1957
One story of the affair is that the Doctor wanted the Sisters to keep the baby in the kitchen near the stove to keep it warm and the Sisters objected. This would seem improbably until it is recalled that the hospital had only two stoves, one for the patients and one for the kitchen.
16. Chronicles of Fort Benton p. 73
17. Ibid., p. 74
18. River Press, March 9, 1910
19. Letter: Bishop M. C. Lenihan to Mother M. Antoinette
October 12, 1909
20. Chronicles of St. Clare Hospital, Fort Benton, p. 74
21. Ibid.

22. Ibid., p. 75
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Letter: Bishop M.C. Lenihan to Mother M. Antoinette
October 12, 1909
26. Ibid.
27. Chronicles of St. Clare Hospital, Fort Benton, p.77
28. Ibid., p. 79
29. Ibid., p. 81
30. Ibid., p. 82
31. Ibid., p. 83
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid., p. 85
34. Ibid., p. 87
35. Ibid. After the county contract was given to the
Sister's hospital the Fort Benton Sanitarium gradually
lost its prominence. Dr. Porter desired to take further
study in New York and went there in 1916. The Sanitar-
ium was closed and when Dr. Porter returned to Montana
he settled in Great Falls. April 1917 Drs. E. M. Larson
R. B. Durnin, P.F. Kearney and E.M. Porter joined to
found the Great Falls Clinic. Through the years the
Clinic has grown until in 1957 it has a staff of 35
doctors and occupies a large, modern building at 1220
Central Avenue.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., p. 88
38. Ibid., p. 90
39. Ibid., p. 93
40. Ibid., p. 97
41. Ibid., p. 102
42. Ibid., 120

43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., p. 123
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid., p. 123-4
47. Ibid., p. 125
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., p. 131
51. Ibid., p. 131
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p. 135
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., p. 140
56. Ibid., p. 140
57. Ibid., p. 143
58. Ibid., p. 150
59. Ibid., p. 154
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid., p. 155
62. Ibid., p. 159
63. Ibid.,
64. Ibid., p. 162
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid., p. 164
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., p. 163

70. Chronicles of St. Clare's Hospital, Fort Benton p. 167
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid. p. 148
Hospital Records 1922 Father was admitted February 4, 1922, had phlebitis, pleurisy, and pneumonia. Died March 13, 1922. Born in Virginia City, Nevada
73. Chronicles p. 149
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid., p. 149-154
76. Ibid., p. 169
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid., p. 174
79. Ibid., p. 175
80. Ibid., p. 206
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid., p. 207
84. Ibid., p. 209
85. Ibid.,
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid., p. 210
88. Ibid., p. 208
89. Ibid., p. 210-11
90. Ibid.
91. Index 1886-1912, pg. 204, Number 2889, August 4, Mrs. Allan Gray, age 22, Protestant, Fort Benton, Obstetrics, discharged August 15, 1909. This reference is found for Mrs. Gray, no mention is made of a baby

CHAPTER VII

GOLDEN BELLS

A fitting celebration by clergy, Sisters and townspeople marked the fiftieth anniversary of St. Clare Hospital in 1936. When the Sisters had arrived the evening of July 27th 1886 their first act had been to offer a hymn of thanksgiving. This event had its echo in the hymn of Christ the King chanted after the solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament which opened the jubilee celebration on July 27, 1936. His Excellency Bishop Joseph M. Gilmore of the Helena Diocese officiated at the Benediction, in the absence of Bishop O'Hara of Great Falls. Since Fort Benton had belonged to the Helena diocese when the hospital had been founded, it was fitting that Bishop Gilmore should give the blessing that opened the anniversary celebration.

At 7:30 the same evening a civic reception organized by prominent men of the city was held on the lawn of the hospital. Mr. James A. Smith, mayor of the city offered the congratulations of the citizens of Benton. Mr. G.C. Schmidt acted as toastmaster and presented the speakers for the evening. Doctor Evon L. Anderson who had been closely connected with the hospital for eleven years gave a short, historical resume of the progress of the hospital since its foundation. He spoke

of the work that had been accomplished in spite of the periods of distress and poverty. In concluding he asked the audience to continue to support the hospital, thanking them for their fine cooperation in the past. The second speaker of the evening, His Excellency, Bishop Joseph M. Gilmore recounted the major events of early Benton days, stressing the zeal of the first missionaries to the Northwest and making special notice of the fact that "that which these pious missionaries did on that first night, we have done this evening, raising our hearts in thanksgiving toward God."²

The citizens gave a purse of \$535.00, money raised through solicitation by the women of Benton, Highwood, Geraldine and Big Sandy. The Benton High School Band supplied the music for the evening.³

July 28, at 10 o'clock A.M., a Solemn Pontifical Mass was offered with His Excellency Bishop Edward J. Kelly of the diocese of Boise as celebrant assisted by Reverend B. Regan, arch-priest, Reverend Anthony Csisman, deacon, Reverend Ferdinand Schilowski, subdeacon, Reverend J. Sheehan of Helena, deacon of honor, Reverend J. Schulte of Choteau, subdeacon of honor, Reverend C. Foley, master of ceremonies, Reverend E. Eagan crozier-bearer and Reverend Patrick , C.M.Cap., crossbearer. Bishop Joseph M. Gilmore gave the address while Bishop O'Hara of Great Falls, Bishop Vehr of Denver Colorado, Monsignor Di-neen of Billings and Reverend F. Gregory Smith of Denver were present in the sanctuary. About 30 priests attended the fes-

tivities. Music for Mass and Benediction was provided by the Sisters of Columbus hospital and the choir of St. Thomas Home. Sr. Rose of Jesus⁴ accompanied playing on a Hammond organ loaned for the occasion by the Great Falls recording studios. Sister Martna of Bethany directed the singing.⁵

A noon banquet was served at the Rectory hall to honor the guests and friends of the hospital. Open house was held from two to four and the celebration closed with a special banquet for visiting Sisters at 4 o'clock.⁶

A review of the progress of the hospital up to 1936 brought out the fact whereas the cost of the original building had been about \$12,000 the estimated value of house and lots in 1936 was about \$35,000 with equipment worth \$12,000. The 15 bed capacity had been increased to 45 while an up-to-date surgery, X-ray, laboratory and maternity had been added. From a start of 21 patients admitted in 1886-7 a total of 504 patients had been reached in 1935 with an additional 482 coming to the hospital as out-patients for dressings, X-ray work, laboratory and various treatments. From the date of its founding there had been 13,856 patients admitted to the hospital and 1,146 births had been recorded.

During the first years there were usually four Sisters at the hospital but the number had increased to nine plus graduate nurses, orderly, engineers and maids. Of the three Sisters who came to Fort Benton in 1886 two were living in 1936, Sister Mary Wilfrid in Montreal and Sister Anna Magnan in St. Ignatius

Montana. Mother Mary, the first Superior had died in 1928. The first fifty years had seen 13 different superiors in charge of the hospital; Mother Mary of the Resurrection was the first and Sister Mary Ignatius was the present administrator.⁷

Providence had blessed the house with many joys and many sorrows.

Notes for Chapter VII

1. Chronicles of St. Clare's Hospital, Fort Benton, p. 241
2. Ibid., p. 242
3. Ibid., p. 242
4. Ibid., p. 243 Sr. Rose of Jesus was one of the first babies cared for in the hospital. She was brought there from Fort Assiniboine by her father when she was only three weeks old. As she grew older she was placed in Sacred Heart Academy and developed her God-given talent for music. She has composed Masses and other music. The Benediction music for the jubilee was her composition.
5. Chronicles p. 243
6. Chronicles p. 244
7. Review given to Sisters from copy in files in Fort Benton hospital See Appendix A, C, E

CHAPTER VIII

FRUITS OF APOSTOLIC LABORS

From the first the Sisters felt that the harvest of souls brought back to God was sufficient reason for the existence of the hospital. The practice of giving a badge of the Sacred Heart to each patient led to many conversions.

The first conversion is recorded in May 1888 when a man 45 years old who had not made his First Communion was instructed and received Communion. Another, in the same year, who was brought in on St. Patrick's day had been away from the Sacraments so long he could not remember when he had last been in Church. He had to be taught his prayers. At first he said that he was too old to begin again but finally he learned his prayers and from that time on said them every day.

On January 16, 1889 a Protestant who was ill was baptized. He received his First Communion on January 19 but it was also his Viaticum. Later, a girl who had lived a bad life became ill and after two months at the hospital made her confession. She died suddenly due to hemorrhage. Shortly after, a negro who was a fallen-away Catholic came to the hospital. He was in danger of death and the priest was absent. Recourse was had to prayer and the next day a missionary came unexpectedly, heard his confession and prepared him for death. God is truly

a God of mercy.²

In November 1889 when a paralytic was converted and received Communion he became an ardent defender of the Faith and a lover of the rosary. Another convert was made when a Frenchman who had been away from the church for many years became ill. At first he refused the sacraments but later after accepting a medal of the Immaculate Conception and a scapular he made his confession and received Communion.³

Each year saw more conversions. In 1891 an Indian of the Chris tribe came to the hospital when he was dying of T.B.. Since he could not speak any language except the Indian dialect a relative who spoke French stayed and interpreted for him. Thus he was instructed and baptized before he died. Another woman consumptive embraced the faith with her child of 18 months. She died two days later. A Canadian patient, a lax Catholic, was brought in unconscious. After recourse was had to prayer he became well enough to make his confession and receive Communion.⁴

The first Friday of each month was a day of special devotion and special blessing, but sometimes the Lord chose Community feast days to reward the Sisters by a conversion for which they had been praying. In 1893 on the 3rd Sunday of September, feast of our Lady of Sorrows(this feast is on September 15 now) a patient who had been away from the Church for twenty-five years received the Sacraments. Again on the 23rd of September, the feast of Mother Gamelin, foundress of

the Sisters of Providence, a patient who had been away thirty-two years received the Sacraments.⁵

Another outstanding conversion is recorded in 1897 when a judge of the district court who had led a most dissipated life and who for many years had neglected his duties as a Catholic attempted suicide and was brought to the hospital. He received the grace of conversion and through the kindly care and attention of the Sister nurse recovered health of body as well as health of soul.⁶

Not all conversions were lasting, however. Once when Sister found that a man in dying condition was a lapsed Catholic she telegraphed to Great Falls for a priest because the pastor of Fort Benton was absent. The priest came on the first train and the man made his peace with God but returned to his old life when he left the hospital.⁷

Such a case was the exception for there were conversions of many lapsed Catholics who became practical Catholics when God saw fit to restore them to health. Since the hospital was without a chaplain much of the time telegrams had to be sent to recall the chaplain or contact a neighboring priest but very few patients died without the priest.

During the year of 1910 the Sisters thanked God for six conversions, five of them of lapsed Catholics, one of a person with no religious affiliation. This latter had had to be isolated because of his serious and disgusting illness. His Sister nurse was so kind and attentive in spite of his condi-

tion that he expressed a desire to find out the motives that inspired her in her care of him. She gave him books to read on the Catholic faith and had the happiness of having him baptized. He died surrounded by all the consolations of the Faith.⁸

One old pioneer, 85 years of age, Mr. W. Graham was a staunch Scotch protestant when he entered the hospital. In the early days he had served as a guide for Rev. Father P. De Smet S.J. whom he admired greatly. The respect and admiration engendered at that time prepared the way for his conversion. Thus it was not long before grace triumphed and he was baptized. The remainder of his life was spent in a most edifying manner and when he died September 18, 1911 his last words were prayers.⁹

Among the many conversions noted in 1913 three are outstanding. A free Mason, Mr. I. Wilson had the happiness of being baptized a few hours before his death which was the result of pneumonia. A lady, Mrs. McClean, who had been brought to the hospital by mistake(she had desired to go to the Sanitarium) had to undergo a serious operation. Her husband was most unhappy that she should be in the Catholic hospital for both were protestants, but she saw the Hand of God in the mistake. She asked for instruction and later was baptized by her own choice the evening on which she died. A young consumptive, a Methodist, Mr. M. J. Elderman, came in a dying condition. He said that he had great confidence in the prayers of the

Sisters and often asked them to pray by his bedside while he repeated after them the aspirations and prayers they offered. He died while reciting the Act of Contrition with so much fervor¹⁰ for the Sisters felt that he had made a perfect act of love.

In 1914 there were no outstanding conversions. The annualist notes that, "It was the first year in our history that such a thing occurred."¹¹

However, 1915 brought its quota of conversions. A Mr. M. Joyce, a very sick man who had been a great care to all his relatives and who had for a number of years neglected his religious duties, died after a long illness during which he received the Sacraments and edified all around him by his patience and submission during the last days of his illness. A nurse who had been employed in the hospital was baptized Dec. 7, 1915 in the hospital chapel. The germ of her love for the Catholic faith was sown in her heart during the years that she had been a student nurse at Columbus Hospital, Great Falls, twelve years earlier. She was a Baptist and owing to the opposition of her family and friends she had postponed her baptism until she felt that she could no longer resist God's grace. She made her First Holy Communion on Dec. 8, feast of Our Lady.

Some conversions were accomplished only after many prayers had been offered. Such was the case of young Mr. Thomas Hulehan, 29 years old, who was afflicted with typhoid fever. He was a baptized Catholic but had never practised and was seem-



ST. CLARE HOSPITAL
Fort Benton, Montana
Established in 1886 by
The Sisters of Charity of Providence
Showing 1952 Addition



ingly indifferent to his state. Grace finally won and before he died he went to confession and received the Sacraments of the Church, dying a peaceful death.¹³

In March 1916 Mr Gust Hait, A Lutheran staunch in his belief, but suffering from a repugnant and dreadful cancer of the head was finally convinced of the truth of the Catholic faith, received baptism and died after receiving the last Sacraments.¹⁴

At times the race was close. A young 16 year old girl, suffering an acute attack of appendicitis was driven in from her home thirty-five miles away and survived only long enough to be instructed briefly and to receive Baptism before death.¹⁵

At other times the struggle was long. A patient, Mr. Daniel Smith who had been in the hospital for two years finally, after wearing a badge of the Sacred Heart, found all his prejudices and ill-will toward the Sister and religion-in-general broken down, made his abjuration, received Baptism and made his First Communion. He received Communion a number of times before he died on the 29th of September, the feast of Saint Michael, 1917.¹⁶

The Holy Infant was given a real birthday present in the soul of one He loved by the baptism Dec. 24th of Mrs. R. G. Marx, a woman distinguished for her education and musical talent who had been an ardent admirer of the Catholic religion since her childhood. She was the daughter of a Baptist minister but her final conversion was the result of her marriage with a prominent and fervent Catholic and a two weeks' illness

in the hospital.¹⁷

Adolphe Gayette a young French-Canadian was admitted in 1917. He had given up his religion but during his stay in the hospital he helped the Sisters, making many things for them. This gave them a chance to speak of God to him, though he refused to discuss religion. Finally, his conversion was achieved and during the time he remained in Fort Benton he was fervent.¹⁸

The influenza epidemic of 1918 was a means used by God to bring many souls to the true Faith. Several became Catholics shortly before death. About the same time one of the county patients E. J. Schwartz who had been asked to wear a badge of the Sacred Heart became quite ill with the flu. He had refused to speak of God but as a result of wearing the badge he asked to be instructed and to be baptized when he was well. "It was edifying to watch him studying the catechism, learning it word for word while he peeled the potatoes in the kitchen where he was a helper," relates the annalist.¹⁹ He kept his book before him so that he could read and study while he worked. On the eve of the first Friday of February 1919 he was baptized and he made his first Holy Communion the next day. He became a most fervent Catholic.

Two of the 80 year old county patients died within a short time of each other. One a blind paralytic, Mr C. Forbes, was a staunch Episcopalian whose minister would visit him frequently. Toward the end however, as the man's condition

became more and more repugnant, the minister ceased his visits. It was then that one of the Sisters gave the sick man a badge of the Sacred Heart to wear. He cherished it and before he died he asked to be baptized in a religion whose Sisters were so kind and charitable. He received baptism with devotion and died soon after. Mr. W. M. Willard, was near death with gangrene. He professed an admiration for the Catholic religion and when told of his condition accepted his cross with docility. He asked to be baptized and received the sacraments.²⁰

Babies, young men, old men, women, Protestants and lapsed Catholics continued to swell the hospital's list of conversions. A man suffering from a malignant cancer who had been abandoned by his relatives was brought to the hospital as a county patient. The Sister nurse, in spite of the repugnant condition of the malignancy gave him every care not only for the body but for his soul also. She pinned a Miraculous medal to his bed and in a very short time he asked to be instructed and had the happiness of being baptized two weeks before he died. He expressed his gratitude to all for the great happiness that was his.²¹

Suffering and isolation brings remorse and often opens the heart to the grace of repentance. During a weeks stay at the hospital in 1932, Mrs. Paul Kalenick, whom the chaplain visited regularly, listened to the morning and evening prayers recited every day by the Sisters and came to a realization of her condition as a fallen-away Catholic. On her return home she and

her husband had their marriage blessed.²²

During the epidemic of flu in 1933 many who came to the hospital had just time to receive the Sacraments and make their peace with God. Those who recovered returned to their religious duties. The Sisters confided their dying cases to the Sacred Heart and His Blessed Mother and were not disappointed.

Such was and still is the history of the hospital. Each year souls were brought to God, some after an absence of 80 years, some at birth. Surely the good God blessed the work of the Sisters.

Notes for Chapter VIII

1. Chronicles of St. Clare Hospital, Fort Benta p. 6
2. Ibid., p. 8 & 9
3. Ibid., p. 10
4. Ibid., p. 17
5. Ibid., p. 20-22
6. Ibid., p. 33
7. Ibid., p. 33
8. Ibid., p. 77
9. Ibid., p. 86
10. Ibid., p. 99
11. Ibid., p. 103
12. Ibid., p. 107
13. Ibid., p. 109
14. Ibid., p. 119
15. Ibid., p. 121
16. Ibid., p. 124
17. Ibid., p. 119
18. Ibid., p. 133
19. Ibid., p. 134
20. Ibid., p. 200
21. Ibid., p. 207
22. Ibid., p. 207

CHAPTER IX

LATER YEARS

A good friend and kind father left when Bishop O'Hara was named administrator of the diocese of Kansas City, Mo. In June 1939.¹ However, the new Bishop, Bishop William J. Condon, who came October 1939, was well known to the Sisters as he had directed a parish in Spokane where many of the Sisters had been "on mission" in Sacred Heart Hospital.²

In more recent years many improvements were made and much equipment was added.³ But St. Clare kept up-to-date not only in equipment but also in the training of its personnel. In 1942 Sr. John Chrysostom, Sr. Peter of Avila and Sr. Jerome Emilian received certificates showing that they were prepared as qualified radiologists. For this certificate they passed the examinations at Great Falls under Dr. J. D. Hitchcock, radiologist.³

The war years brought many problems but, as is usual in Montana, problems brought friends. A shortage of nurses caused the ladies of Benton to offer their services, while another group of women prepared surgical supplies, mended and sewed.⁴ The American Legion Auxilary of Big Sandy and Geraldine joined with the group of Benton and made over five hundred hospital garments.⁵

A committee of Volunteer Nurse's Aides for Choteau⁶ county, Montana met in 1942 and organized a course for aides. The committee which consisted of representatives of hospitals, public health organizations, medical division of O.C.D. and lay members was responsible for the selection, enrollment and instruction and placing of women volunteering for the Nurses' Aide Corps. An intensive eighty hour instruction course was given to the aides to fit them for duties in the hospitals and health agencies.⁷ Practical work was given by St. Clare Hospital and the aides were prepared to assist the graduate nurses by undertaking a number of necessary hospital⁸ duties.

In 1943 two young Italian prisoners of war interned in Fort Missoula were secured to help with the sick.⁹ Thus, by securing help where and when it was available the Sisters were able to continue their service to the sick.

One of the benefactors, Margaret Phelan, died in the hospital February 9, 1944 at the age of 70. She had lived at St. Clare's for about twenty-five years and had given a yearly donation. Her brother, Fr. William Phelan, was pastor and chaplain when she first came with her mother from Iowa. Father died in 1922 and his mother died in 1928.¹⁰

Penicillin, a new drug, was administered for the first time in the hospital April 1944 to Donald Bradley, son of highway patrolman and Mrs. Glen Bradley of Great Falls. When the boy was operated on for a badly ruptured appendix a

generalized peritonitis condition existed that made recovery doubtful.¹¹ Dr. E. L. Anderson secured permission to use the drug and it was flown by air from Chicago. Its use produced good results.¹²

St. Joseph school of nursing of Lewistown, Montana, assigned a senior cadet nurse to St. Clare's for the last six months of nurses training. This was permitted under the Bolton Act which provided for the training of nurses for the armed forces for governmental and civilian hospitals, health agencies and war industries through grants to institutions providing such training. The students enrolled under the act formed a reserve to replace the graduate nurses called into the armed services.¹³ Thus cadet nurses who had completed their nursing education were made available to designated hospitals or agencies for six months of service, preceding their State Board examinations.¹⁴ The state board approved St. Clare Hospital to receive senior cadet nurses on assignment of a training school. The cadet nurse program gave an all expense scholarship covering complete nurses training. The nurses helped maintain hospital care for the sick and injured on the home front.¹⁵ Of course the Nurses Aide Corps classes were continued, conducted by Mrs. Grace Jasper R.N., for the cadet nurses were not too numerous. The aides who completed the first course were given certificates in a graduation exercise May 11, 1944.¹⁶

May 1944 also brought a pleasant surprise with the wel-

come present of the bequest of two hundred and fifty dollars from the estate of Mr. Henry J. O'Hanlon who died in 1942 at Chinook, Montana. Mr. O'Hanlon was a resident of Fort Benton when the St. Clare Hospital was erected in 1884 and was one of its most ardent supporters and benefactors. His name is also on the subscribers list to the hospital fund published in the local press December 14, 1882. On visits to the hospital he often spoke of Mother Mary of the Resurrection and of Mother Mary Julien the first two superiors of St. Clare Hospital.¹⁷

With their usual generosity the people of Fort Benton answered an appeal for volunteers to have their blood typed at the hospital for the future use of patients needing blood transfusions. The donors were to be called as needed.¹⁸ Thus Fort Benton could be said to have a walking blood bank.

January 1945 brought the start of a long-hoped-for project. Mrs. John Harris Sr. gave one hundred dollars to start an elevator fund.¹⁹ Later Mrs. Louise F. Hanford of Fort Benton and Mr. W. Sullivan of Square Butte each sent one hundred dollars for the fund.²⁰ The three-story hospital had been handicapped indeed without an elevator.

The Sisters also had cause to be thankful when Dr. J. S. McDede came in July to be associated with Dr. E. L. Anderson.²¹ who had been carrying on alone for many years.

When Fort Benton celebrated its centennial August 25, 1946 a solemn high Mass was sung in the open on the hospital porch. Father Henry B. Pratschner, pastor, was celebrant,

Father Whalen, deacon, Father Martin Werner, subdeacon, Father Maurice F. Corrigan S. J., master of ceremonies. The choir of Columbus Hospital and of St. Thomas Home sang the Mass and his Excellency, Most Reverend William J. Condon, Bishop of the diocese, addressed the faithful.²² The Bishop spoke of the progress of the Church in Montana and paid tribute to the self-sacrificing nursing Sisters and to the cooperation of the people of Fort Benton.²³ The Church could indeed claim a place in the history of Benton.

An occasion to express gratitude to Mother Gamelin was given the Sisters in October 1947 when twins born at home two months prematurely were brought to the hospital. They were normal except for their weight but in two days the weight dropped one pound. Since the girl was lethargic she was placed in an incubator with a relic of Mother Gamelin. The next morning the boy was weak and lethargic so he was likewise placed in an incubator. The Sacred Heart and Mother Gamelin were invoked and the babies grew stronger, finally becoming well enough to leave the hospital.²⁴

In August 1947 the existence of St. Clare Hospital was threatened for one more time in its life when the State Hospital Advisory Council in Helena, Montana decided to rank Fort Benton hospital as an emergency clinic. If such a thing happened patients needing hospitalization would have to go Great Falls or to Havre a distance of 50 or 60 miles. Sister Gonzalve, Superior, Sr. Mary Ignatius, Superior of Columbus

Hospital in Great Falls, and Dr. E.L. Anderson of Fort Benton pleaded the case in Helena and were successful in having the hospital ranked as a Rural Hospital.²⁵

Not too many outstanding or "different" events occur in the life of a small hospital but St. Clare's buzzed with excitement August 18, 1948. On that day Sister Joseph Aimee and Sister Tarcissus of the Blessed Sacrament, returning from "home visits" in Canada were in a train wreck. Since their car was unharmed they were able to help the injured in the other cars until the physicians arrived. They were highly commended for their work and gained friends for the Catholic Sisterhood.²⁶

Every year the State Board of Health inspects the hospitals to insure that they keep up to standard requirements. Thus, in August 1948, Miss M. V. Young, consultant for the State Board of Health of Montana, made the annual visit to ascertain whether or not the hospital was following the prescriptions of the Board. Her report was favorable.²⁷ On September 22nd Miss Daisy Prentice of the State Board of Health inspected the maternity department. She was pleased with its condition and the improvements which had been made. It was always a pleasure for the Sisters to know that, in spite of difficulties, they were able to meet the demands of the State.²⁸

In March the American Legion installed a Frigidaire in the hospital to be used to preserve any quantity of blood which might be called for from the Blood Bank in Great Falls.²⁹ The Sisters were very grateful.

Old friends departed in May, 1949 when the trees, planted³⁰ by the foundress Sisters, in front of the house were cut down. But another and much more valuable friend was lost (or rather changed his residence for a more lasting home) when Father Pratschner, pastor of Fort Benton, died on May 25, 1950 after an illness of four weeks. Bishop W. J. Condon was celebrant for the Solemn Requiem Mass offered in Fort Benton. Monseigneurs Dineen, Schuster and Donovan and 38 priests recited the Office of the Dead and attended the Mass.³¹

A new idea for the good of the hospital was adopted in Fort Benton in 1951 when certain people suggested that donations of money be made to the hospital on the death of relatives or friends instead of flowers for the grave.³²

On July 1, 1951 occurred one of those joys of religious life that increases fervor. Father E. Paquette, pastor of Geraldine and confessor to the Sisters of Fort Benton returned from Rome where he was present at the beatification of Pope Pius X. He gave the Sisters a talk on the Holy Land and then gave to each one a pair of beads and a medal from Jerusalem and a relic of Marie Goretti.³³

Repairs were made to the hospital and an apartment was built in the annex for the family of the engineer in 1952.³⁴ But plans were also made to give St. Clare's a real face lifting.³⁵ Since the proposed elevator shaft would have to be placed outside the hospital it was decided to build an addition large enough to relieve cramped quarters and provide for the

elevator. The plans would put a new complete front on St. Clare Hospital. The addition would be three stories and be joined to the front of the old edifice. First floor would house the office of the Superior and procurator with an additional record room, laboratory, parlor, lavatory and shower. The Sister's community and two guest bed rooms with bath would be placed on second floor while third floor was planned to provide private rooms for the Sisters with bathrooms (not individual) showers and two lavatories. The former Community room was to be made into rooms for patients.³⁶ Construction was started in the summer and by December 15th the Sisters could move into their new quarters.³⁷ The Sisters used the new community room on December 25th but the elevator was not finished until March 30, 1953.³⁸ All was in readiness for open house on Hospital Day, May 12, 1953.³⁹

Mr. W. P. Sullivan of Square Butte sent two thousand dollars for the elevator fund, Mr Fritz Worrell donated forty dollars and other donations at Christmas amounted to four hundred and seventy-nine dollars.⁴⁰ Still other donations were received in 1953. Mrs. Mildred B. Hunt requested that money given for flowers be turned to the hospital, a sum of one hundred and sixty-two dollars.⁴¹ Mr. Philip A. O'Connell of Great Falls gave five hundred to help in the construction. Mrs. Anna L. O'Rielly gave fifty dollars. Thus donations both large and small helped finance the structure.⁴²

During the same year Reverend Bernard Geisen, pastor,

who had received faculties from the Servite Fathers of Chicago, installed the Via Matris in the chapel of the hospital. Thus another dear desire was realized.⁴³

Sorrow came on the heels of joy when Reverend Father D. E. Paquette, the loved friend of the Sisters, was admitted as a patient with heart and lung condition October 24, 1953.⁴⁴ He died on the 28th⁴⁵ although the Doctors and nurses did all in their power to prolong a life that they considered so valuable. His funeral took place in his parish church of Geraldine. The Sisters went from Fort Benton and from Great Falls to sing the Mass of Requiem.⁴⁶

Frequently the annalist notes that donations were received in gratitude for care given. Thus on May 9, Mr. Phillip O'Connell gave five hundred dollars; in December he gave another two hundred and fifty and in January he gave four hundred pounds of beef, all in gratitude for care given to his mother.⁴⁷ Mr. Thomas Bronec of Geraldine gave one hundred in gratitude for the kindness shown to his wife during her stay in the hospital.⁴⁸ Mr. James Barnes of Big Sandy gave twenty-five dollars in appreciation of the attentive care given to him by the Sisters.⁴⁹ Such donations were a great encouragement for the religious.

During the Marian year, 1954, many loving acts were performed in Mary's honor by religious and laity throughout the world. Fort Benton was no exception. On May 16th Mary, Queen of May was honored by the ceremony of a Living Rosary in the

Immaculate Conception Church . The Sisters of St. Clare Hospital formed the first decade, the Nagengast family made a complete second decade, the Ladies of St. Ann the third decade, the OYS the fourth and the Sodality the fifth. Each person in the decade recited the Hail Mary as a candle was placed before a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary while, at the same time, a light was turned on in the crown over the statue. At the end of the Rosary Mary's crown was complete. The whole ceremony was devotional as well as colorful and impressive.⁵⁰ In honor of the Marian year the Superior also cancelled the accounts of poor patients to the sum of \$1910.⁵¹08

If the Sisters kept cool during the summer of 1954 they could thank Norah Harbor, an outstanding benefactor, who donated an air conditioner for the community room.⁵² Since the Montana sun beats unmercifully on Benton the gift was more than welcome.

Another most welcome donation was received June 16 when the hospital was the grateful recipient of \$5000 from the estate of Mr. W. P. Sullivan, a benefactor who had already given much during his lifetime.⁵³

When the Great Northern Railroad was extended through Montana the station for Fort Benton was built about a mile from the town. This proved an inconvenience for the townspeople but particularly so for the Sisters. Taxi service was almost non-existent and the carless nuns had a real problem when they had to cover the distance from ^{the} station to the hospital. Therefore, in May 1955 permission was given to

purchase a car. The choice made was a new 4 door Plymouth sedan, celestial blue with cream top. The cost, with the discount of \$350.00 given by the Power Moter Service, was \$2100 with an additional 29.25 for the license.⁵⁴ The Sisters felt that the service the car would give would be worth the expense.

A telephone call the morning of May 22, 1955 notified the hospital personnel that the Rexall Drug store had collapsed. Since the doctor's offices over the drug store were destroyed the doctors asked to use the emergency dressing room of the hospital to receive out-patients. This was granted until new quarters were constructed for the physicians.⁵⁵

In 1956 St. Clare's could boast of an outstanding record. Since the hospital opened 29,342 patients had been cared for and 2,387 babies had been ushered into the world. The number of patients had increased to over 500 a year, the highest year being 1950 when 577 patients were admitted.⁵⁶

The hospital handles emergency and outpatients. It has a bed capacity of 42 plus 6 bassinets. It affords patients the facilities of physical therapy, oxygen therapy, X-ray unit, basal metabolism, electorcardiogram, inhalation apparatus, laboratory, surgery and medical care.⁵⁷ Meeting all standards it is a member of the following organizations: American Hospital Association, Montana Hospital Association, Catholic Hospital Association, Montana Catholic Hospital Association, American Nursing Association, Montana Nurses' Association and the District Nurses' Association.⁵⁸

Notwithstanding the excellent work done by the small hospital and the constant repairs to the building the structure was found unsafe by a city inspector in 1957 and was condemned. The Sisters at first decided to close but after consulting the Bishop who pointed out the great good accomplished and the numerous conversions the Superiors agreed to undertake the construction of a new, smaller hospital.

The new building will be located on the back of the present site and "will face on St. Charles Street with the main entrance on 15th Street."⁵⁹

"St. Clare's new hospital will be one story of masonry construction with a brick exterior and concrete floor slabs. There will be a partial basement for storage. The building will be fireproof throughout. The present boiler house and laundry building will be retained and connected to the new hospital."⁶⁰

The plan provides for a separate wing for nursing home patients and separate nursing units for medical-surgical and maternity rooms. The maximum capacity will be 32 beds with an ordinary provision for 27 beds. Operating and delivery rooms will be at the end of a separate wing which will also have facilities for out-patient treatment and diagnostic needs. Oxygen will be piped to all rooms and hospital and delivery room areas will be air-conditioned. A main kitchen with dietitian's office and dishwashing room, storage rooms and other facilities are included in the plan. A new boiler and an emergency electric plant will be provided.⁶¹ The cost

is estimated to be \$427,000 of which \$210,000 will be raised in Choteau County. A federal government grant of 40 per cent of the total cost will complete the amount needed.⁶²

After the new building is completed the original 75 year old building will be torn down. The 1952 convent-office addition will be retained and after remodeling will serve as a convent. It will be connected to the new hospital by a passageway.⁶³

The old must give place to the new but it will close a long chapter in the life of the hospital when the historical structure is demolished. The story of the hospital has been one of joy and sorrow, of giving and of loving, of doing and not counting the cost, but now it will start on a new phase, it will begin another story, a sequel, which will show forth the same care, devotion and generosity as the old but will be fresh and new and ready to challenge the world.

Notes for Chapter IX

1. Chronicles of St. Clare Hospital, Fort Benton p. 255
2. Ibid., 259
3. Ibid., p. 270 See Appendix F
4. Ibid., p. 268
5. Ibid., p. 273
6. Ibid., p. 274
7. Ibid., p. 274
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., p. 277
10. Ibid., p. 283
11. Ibid., p. 284
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 285
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p. 286
18. Ibid., p. 288
19. Ibid., p. 290
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., p. 306
22. Ibid., p. 308
23. Little Journal of Providence 1946, August 25, (Montreal 1946)
24. Chronicles of Fort Benton Hospital, p. 317
25. Ibid., p. 317

26. Ibid., p. 322
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., p. 323
29. Ibid., p. 325
30. Ibid., p. 326
31. Ibid., p. 330
32. Ibid., p. 337
33. Ibid., p. 341
34. Ibid., p. 345 See Appendix F
35. Ibid., p. 348
36. Ibid., p. 348
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., p. 349-350
41. Ibid., p. 351
42. Ibid., p. 351-353
43. Ibid., p. 354
44. Ibid., p. 358
45. Ibid.,
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., p. 364-370
48. Ibid., p. 286
49. Ibid., p. 288
50. Ibid., p. 363
51. Ibid., p. 364

52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., p. 365
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid., p. 365-367
56. Eastern Montana Catholic Register, May 9, 1956 See Appendix E
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Eastern Montana Catholic Register, September 4, 1957
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.

APPENDIX A

BIOGRAPHIES OF FOUNDRESSES

MOTHER MARY OF THE RESURRECTION

Mother Mary of the Resurrection was born Cathryn McCarthy in the parish of St. Patrick of Rawdon, Province Quebec, Canada, September 3, 1846. She graduated from a high school conducted by the Sisters of Notre Dame when about eighteen years of age, taught for a few years and entered the Providence Novitiate November 10, 1871.

Not much is known concerning her early years. The family lived in Philadelphia for a time and Mother possessed a command of both English and French. Her directions to the Sisters during her term as Provincial of the Montana Province prove her to have been a master of penmanship and grammar. Her accounts were very exact.

Mother Mary was built to be a "mother" to a community for she was tall and big boned, a woman as large as her heart which showed a great capacity for the love and understanding of others. The Community must have seen the qualities of leadership in her for, after laboring thirteen years in Winooski, Vermont, the Mother House, St. John of God's and in Burlington, she was sent to Winooski as Superior for four years and from there received the appointment to be foundress and Superior of the mission in Fort Benton, Montana. She served



Mother Mary of the Resurrection
Foundress of Fort Benton
First Superior of Fort Benton 1836
First Provincial of St. Ignatius
Province--1891



Sister Mary Wilfrid
Foundress of Fort Benton



Sister Magnan--Coadjutrix
Foundress of Fort Benton

as Superior of Sacred Heart Academy, Missoula in 1888 to 1891; became the first Provincial when the Province was erected in 1891 though she still held the office of Superior; went to Great Falls to Columbus Hospital as Superior in 1893 to relieve Sr. Mary Julien who had been Superior there; was named Superior of Fort Benton August 24, 1894 (her "condition of exhaustion" motivating her change); was called to Missoula to be the first mistress of novices when the novitiate was erected , which post she held from April 28, 1901 to October of the same year when she was named for Benton. In 1903 she returned to Sacred Heart Academy, Missoula to do the work that she loved most, the work she considered a Divine Trust, a precious treasure, the work of visiting the poor.

By physical standards she was not beautiful (except for her large, merry, dark eyes) but she possessed those qualities of soul which make true and lasting beauty. All who knew her are fond of telling of her kindness, gentleness, forbearance and Christ-like charity. Mrs. James P. Mansfield of Great Falls who, as young Katherine Sullivan, helped Mother collect in the Fort Benton territory, when asked for Mother's outstanding quality answered, "Oh charity, of course. She had Christ's own charity. Her house was a happy home, the Sisters and employees were a happy family. She did everything well, was a wonderful nurse, an excellent cook. She never refused anyone but placed her trust in Divine Providence."

During the twenty-five years that she visited the poor in Missoula she became almost an object of veneration, loved by poor and rich. Everyone felt it was an honor to help Mother Mary. On her part Mother was ready to suffer any inconvenience or humiliation to help her darling poor. She made it a practice of visiting those in better circumstances to obtain an alms which she would give to some needy family but the more fortunate would feel blessed by her visit. Of course, begging was not all pleasant. Once, when she visited a merchant he spat at her and told her that that was what he would give her. Sr. Felix, who was with her at the time, said that Mother smiled and answered quietly, "That is for me, now give me something for my poor." The man, edified by such humility, gave a donation. Another time finding a family so poor that they had to sit on boxes for want of chairs Mother Mary begged sufficient chairs for them. A few days later when she again visited the family she found them still sitting on boxes—they had sold the chairs to obtain money to go to the show! Mother's big heart knew how to sympathize and forgive and she could laugh merrily at the "joke" when she told it to the Sisters.

Her love for poverty was akin to her love for the poor. She collected crusts of bread for her portion at meal time and she walked to save car fare. She washed and mended all garments given to her for the needy for she would never hear of giving any article of clothing which was not neat and

presentable. This meant back-breaking work, rubbing each piece by hand, even heavy underwear, but she understood the hearts of those she served. She remembered human dignity. She saw Christ in each person. One had only to need her help to claim her love.

When the s_treetcars came to Missoula the Sisters, hoping to relieve some of the fatigue of walking, asked for a free pass for her. This was refused but Mother Mary kept on, counting as nothing the many weary steps tramped for her beloved poor. Perhaps she preferred to walk, for on her trips she "told" her rosary constantly and was so wrapped in the Presence of God that she seemed to be almost unconscious of the world around her.

Even when out "collecting" in the country or in other cities her rosary was her constant companion and her recollected demeanor edified those who saw her. Her love of God made her considerate of those who accompanied her and of those with whom she came in contact. Once when traveling with a young girl she insisted on giving her own blankets to the child because she feared the "little one" would be cold.

Although deeply religious and saintly Mother Mary was a merry saint fond of playing tricks and interested in everything in the Community. The students always gave her a special invitation to their plays and activities because they could count on her to come and to enjoy the performance.

Her merry laugh contributed much to the joy of a Community recreation.

Mother loved her Community and all of its practices therefore she was present at all the common exercises. She did not ask privileges or expect courtesies which could have been hers by right of office or of age. Although her work often made her late for meals she would say apologetically, "I guess I'm a little bit late," and then serve herself with soup if the young Sisters were not quick enough to notice her and serve her. Community prayer she said with the others, kneeling up straight for the full time.

Her obedience was so perfect that her Superiors had only to suggest and their wish was carried out with as much faithfulness as a command.

In 1923 she went to Montreal to celebrate her golden jubilee with the others in her class but returned to Missoula to continue her work for a few more years. In 1926 the Community felt that it was too hard for her to continue begging and visiting therefore she was recalled to the Mother House to devote her remaining years to prayer and more intimate union with her Divine Master. Withdrawn from the active service of God in the service of His poor she longed to be united with God Himself. She had not long to wait. She died in 1928.

SISTER MARIE WILFRID

Marie Aurelie Perreault was born at Notre Dame, Montreal, daughter of Antoine Perreault and Comitille Cheret. Her father was a general contractor, a man of means who could give his eleven children a good education. Marie attended the school of the Sisters of the Congregation until she graduated at the age of seventeen, well versed in scholastic subjects, household work and music.

After graduation the young girl sought admission in Providence novitiate, entering September 8, 1876. When she made profession July 21, 1878, she was given the name of Sister Marie Wilfrid and sent to the Rocky Mountain Missions where she worked in the different missions until she was recalled to Montreal in 1905. She was noted for her joy and for her observance of the rule. When she went to Fort Benton at the opening of the hospital she had to stay, for a time, in the house of Mrs. Flannagan. The Flannagan children remember her for her gaiety and cheer.

The hospital for incurables was the scene of her labors from 1905-1917 when she returned to revisit Montana and to help establish title to the property of the houses opened in Montana. Her next assignment was to the hospital in Cartierville where she served the sick, sewed and made vestments and altar linens.

Sister celebrated her golden jubilee in 1928. Six

years later she entered the infirmary where she remained until her death on May 6, 1937.

SISTER ANNA MAGNAN

Anna Magnan, the third foundress of St. Clare's Hospital, Fort Benton, was born at L'Epiphanie Province Quebec, Canada, September 14, 1864, the daughter of Presque Magnan and of Mathilde Rivet. Hers was a religious home which gave three priests to the Order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and a daughter to the religious of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Because of the number of priests in the family her home was granted the privilege of a chapel.

After the death of the mother the oldest girl in the novitiate of the religious of the Congregation of Notre Dame sacrificed the convent and became mother to her brothers and little Anna. A few years later the sister died and the father had to fill the office of both mother and father to his small daughter.

Mr. Magnan was an architect, as were two of Anna's brothers thus it was natural for them to take Anna with them to the place of construction where she learned carpentry, plumbing and engineering. Her father also taught her many devices of architects.

At twenty years of age she entered the novitiate of Providence, December 16, 1884. After her entrance she

went to the kitchen in the Mother House where she worked until she left her homeland to go to Fort Benton, July 1886. In Benton she cooked and helped with the housework in the hospital until 1890 when she was transferred to the Academy in Missoula where her talent as an expert mechanic, painter, carpenter, and architect was used to good effect. She made the altar, the pews in the Academy chapel (they are still in use) and planned the Sisters' infirmary.

She never learned to speak English very well but mastered it sufficiently to instruct the men who worked for her. She was a licensed engineer and the men that she trained obtained licenses as carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and mechanical engineers.

When the Sacred Congregation decided that the Sisters of Providence would have to disband the Third Order or allow the girls to become part of the Community by taking vows Anna Magnan chose to stay with the Community. She made profession January 5, 1895. Her employment did not change, she still helped with the general cleaning, took care of the cows, the chickens and the garden, made butter, painted and gave service in the carpenter shop, the laundry and the bakery. Always dignified, polite and humble she was liked by all.

When Sister Magnan's health began to fail in 1924 she was taken from the heavy work in the Academy and sent to Holy Family Hospital, St. Ignatius, Montana to care for the

Sister's refectory. She also had in her charge the care of the corridors, the stairs in the Sister's department, the community room and the regulation bell but this work was not exacting and left her much free time which she spent in praying.

God, however, wanted her to give Him still more and He asked the sacrifice of her memory and of her sight. She spent the last five years of her life on a hospital bed, the ultimate oblation for one so active. Her soul went to God on a Saturday, September 9, 1950. She was buried in the land of her adoption in St. Ignatius, Montana.

APPENDIX B

NAMES OF SUBSCRIBERS

T. C. Power & Brothers\$500.00	Gus. Senieur. . .	.\$ 25.00
I. G. Baker & Co.	500.00	W.B. Settle . . .	25.00
Collins, Duer & Co. . . .	300.00	James McDevitt . .	25.00
Jno. W. Tattan	250.00	John Hunsberger .	25.00
Murphy, Neel & Co.	150.00	M.D. Chambers . .	25.00
T.A. Cummings	100.00	H. Brinkman . . .	25.00
W.C. Wetzel	100.00	H.P. Brooks . . .	25.00
Atkisson & Keedler. . . .	100.00	Hershberg & Nathan	25.00
Jno.J. Healy	100.00	W.S. Stockings . .	25.00
J.J. Donnelly	100.00	W.H. Buck	25.00
First National Bank . . .	100.00	John Keenan . . .	25.00
Choteau Club	60.00	H.J. O'Hanlon . . .	25.00
Peter Fox	50.00	W.E. Early	25.00
Kennedy & Kelly	50.00	A.C. Johnson . . .	25.00
Edward Dunne	50.00	River Press . . .	25.00
M.A. Flanagan	50.00	F.C.Roosevelt . . .	25.00
Jos. Sullivan	50.00	Clark Tingley . . .	25.00
Jere Sullivan	50.00	Tingley Bros. . . .	20.00
Patrick Murphy	50.00	J.C.Bourassa . . .	20.00
Richard Nee	50.00	Buck & Hunt . . .	20.00
J.R. Wilton	30.00	J.W. Wheelock . . .	20.00

A.A. DeLorimier	\$20.00	D.G. Browne	\$10.00
Griffith & Caldwell . . .	20.00	J.H. Green	10.00
J.C. Bothine	20.00	Jas. Werrick	10.00
A.P. Sample	20.00	L.H. Lombard	10.00
G.W. Payne	20.00	Bowers & Harris . . .	10.00
Holland & Hackle	20.00	W.A. Cameron	10.00
Barney Tierney	20.00	Peter Smith	10.00
Patrick Whalen	20.00	Jas. Bartley	10.00
Mrs. H.B. Holt	20.00	R.S. Culbertson	10.00
John H. Evans	20.00	Wm.H. Todd	10.00
M.L. Lynch	15.00	W.J. Kennedy	10.00
Wm. Foster	15.00	Ed. Kelley	10.00
Malcom Morrow	15.00	Dennis Finnegan	10.00
E. Trombly	10.00	Mrs. Dena Murray	10.00
W.S. Baker	10.00	Rosa Parker	6.00
G.L. Hagin	10.00	Daniel Kelly & Co. . . .	5.00
Joseph Atkinson	10.00	Mrs. Leah Ward	5.00
Bullet & Martin	10.00	John Wilson	5.00
Joe Jellica	10.00	Higgins & Ayers	5.00
F. Combs	10.00	Fritz Asterhans	5.00
J.A. Kanouse	10.00	Geo. W. Sheridan	5.00
W.G. Jones	10.00	Wm. Roberts	5.00
Waterman & McIntire . . .	10.00	Chas Crawford	5.00
James A. Yore, Jr. . . .	10.00	Daniel Dutro	5.00
Oliver Pichette	10.00	H. Kleinschmidt	5.00
W. J. Minar	10.00	David J. Price	5.00

Charles Peterson	\$5.00	Wm Scanlan\$5.00
Thomas Goff	5.00	L. House	5.00
H.P. Rolfe	5.00	C.W. Merrill	5.00
Sing Lee	5.00	W.W. Allen	5.00
Quong Lee	5.00	P. Macdonald	5.00
N. Authier	5.00	D.O. Eevens	5.00
C.L. Spencer	5.00	Daniel Kelly	5.00
A. Okerman	5.00	George Appleton	5.00
W.P. Wren	5.00	D.C.McDaniel	5.00
J.E. Wilson	5.00	Jack Fawcett	5.00
W.A. Kelly	5.00	John H. Gamble	5.00
Thomas Flannegan	5.00	A. Godfrey	5.00
F. Strong	5.00	R. Brennan	5.00
Thos. P. Aspling	5.00	Ben McMahon	5.00
August Wolstead	5.00	S.L. Kelly	5.00
C.M. Lanning	5.00	M.S. Worley	5.00
J.H. Caldwell	5.00	J.M. Powers	5.00
W.O. Yard	5.00	J.A. Gareau	5.00
W.E. Clark	5.00	John Kieber	5.00
Ed Flint	5.00	Cash	5.00
F.W. Buchson	5.00	R. Payne	5.00
Ah Chee	5.00	J.D. Wolf	5.00
John Lalonde	5.00	W.B. Rossman.	5.00
John Foy	5.00	Howell Harris	5.00
W.J. Winners	5.00	T.B. Curtis	5.00
S.J. Kline	5.00	D. Amiolt	5.00

John Collins	\$5.00	Abe Townsend	\$2.50
John Ambrose	5.00	Julius Falke	2.50
Joe Niquitte	5.00	Duke Dutrielle	2.50
E.S. Amiolt	5.00	Chas Becknell	2.50
Jack Connelley	5.00	Sam Spalding	2.50
Geo.W. Houck	5.00	Frank Burg	2.50
W. H. Courtney	5.00	C. Peters	2.50
Chas Roth	5.00	J.S. Galbraith	2.00
Fayette Hall	5.00	S. Billedoux	2.00
J. Jackson	5.00	A.J. Scott	2.00
Jennie Russell	5.00	S.A. Cameron	2.00
Mrs. Atherton	5.00	E.S. Smith	2.00
C.R. Fowler	5.00	Norris Gray	2.00
Goe. L. Overfield	5.00	E.J. Neverau	2.00
I.F. Churchill	5.00	W. H. Thomas	2.00
Joseph Conrad	5.00	John R. Girard	2.00
Goe. B. Wright	5.00	John Borrowman	2.00
Neil McIntyre	5.00	J.M. Comegys	2.00
A. Moeisberger	5.00	Geo Bennett	2.00
A E. Rogers	5.00	Jas Burns	2.00
R. Pfaedtner	5.00	J. Densmorer	2.00
J. N. Ethier	4.00	Geo Hodge	1.00
Louis Remeier	3.00	P. Pappan	1.00
Hop Lee & Sing Sing	3.00	Thos Ticnor	1.00
Chas Thomas	3.00	O.Stigers	1.00
W.A. Bailey	3.00	S. Hodge	1.00

Ed. Thayer	\$1.00
C.S. Brown	1.00
B.L. Powers	1.00
C.A. Dean	1.00
C.B. Thompson	1.00
C.H. Keeney	1.00
M. McNaught	1.00
J. M. Rosier	1.00
Ben Lapayre	1.00
O.A. Parson	1.00
Josephine	1.00
Annie Sims	1.00
Georgie	1.00
Girtie Anderson.50

APPENDIX C

SISTERS ON MISSION

YEAR	NAME	PRESENT RESIDENCE
FOUNDRESSES	Mother Mary of the Resurrection, deceased Sister Marie Wilfrid, deceased Sister Anna Magnan, deceased	
1886	Sister Mary Peter, deceased Sister Osman, deceased Sister M.L. Fiset, deceased	
1887	Sister Oswald, deceased	
1888	Sister Mary Julien, deceased	
1891	Sister Faustin, deceased Sister Fridolin, deceased	
1892	Sister Eloise Latour Sister Jacques Kisai, deceased	Mt. St. Joseph Spokane
1893	Sister Hiltrude, deceased	
1895	Sister Mary Alodie, deceased	
1896	Sister Albina	Mt. St. Joseph
1897	Sister Anselme, deceased Sister Fournier, deceased Sister Bonifilus, deceased Sister Bean, deceased Sister Engerbert, deceased	
1898	Sister Mary Arman, deceased Sister Aldric, deceased (Superior in 1900) Sister Euphemie, deceased	
1899	Sister Felix of Cantalice (deceased). Sister Mary Celine, deceased	
1901	Sister Victor, deceased Sister Mary Elias Sister Guyard, deceased	

1904	Sister Mary Louis, deceased Sister Mary Francis, deceased (Superior) Sister Eugene of Tivoli	Mt. St. Joseph
1905	Sister Louis d'Anjou, deceased Sister Michael Ange Sister Mary of the Assumption Sister Catherine of Ricci, deceased Sister Ignatius of the Sacred Heart, deceased	
1908	Sister Mary Columba, deceased	
1910	Sister Jane de Chantal, deceased (Superior) Sister Marceau, coadjutrice, deceased	
1911	Sister Seraphie, deceased Sister Ananias	St. Clare Hospital
1912	Sister Fridolin, deceased	
1913	Sister Reginald Sister Clotilde, deceased Sister Mary Gabriel	Mt. St. Joseph Columbus Hospital Great Falls
1914	Sister Gertrude de Neville, deceased	
1915	Sister Latour	Mt. St. Joseph
1916	Sister Germain, deceased (Superior) Sister Darie Sister Victor of Alexandria, deceased	Colfax
1917	Sister Bernard de Parma	Immaculate Heart of Mary, De Smet, Idaho
1918	Sister Georgia Sister Angeline de Valence Sister Perreault, deceased	Mt. St. Joseph Provincial Assistant
1919	Sister Placidie Sister Aloysia Sister Mary Gertrude Sister Didier, deceased,	Mt. St. Joseph St. Patrick Hospital Missoula
1920	Sister Gerald Mary Sister Mary Irena	Mt. St. Joseph
1921	Sister Claude of the S.H. Sister Mathias	Columbus Hospital

1922	Sister Gonzalve, (Superior) Sister Alfred	Long Point, Montreal Fort Benton
1923	Sister Genevieve of Providence Sister Ange of Peace	St. Ignatius Montreal
1924	Sister Mary Aglae, deceased Sister Sara Landry	Mt. St. Joseph
1925	Sister Anthony of Jesus deceased Sister Tarcisius	Sacred Heart Hospital Spokane, Washington
1926	Sister Peter of Avila Sister Mary Dolores Sister Anthony Arynsta	Mt. St. Joseph St. Patrick Hospital
1927	Sister Jerome Emiliane	St. Patrick Hospital
1929	Sister Louise Madeleine Sister Joseph des Lys	Columbus Hospital St. Ignatius
1930	Sister Mary Aurea Sister Alphonse Gabriel Sister Louis Marcel	Mt. St. Joseph St. Thomas Home Providence Hospital Wallace, Idaho
1931	Sister Louis Cyprien Sister Pacomius, deceased Sister Margaret Eleanor Sister Alphonse Omer	Sacred Heart Hospital " " "
1932	Sister Denis of the S.H. (Superior) Sister Amadee Marie Sister Jerome Emiliane	Columbus Hospital Colfax (Superior) St. Patrick Hospital
1933	Sister John Eudes	Sacred Heart Hospital
1934	Sister Rose de Lima Sister Mary Aurea	
1935	Sister Mary Amedee Sister Genevieve of Providence	
1936	Sister Servule of Rome Sister Joseph Aime	Mt. St. Joseph St. Patrick Hospital
1937	Sister Flora Monica	

1938	Sister Laurentia, deceased Sister Alfred Sister Reginald Sister Berthold	Fort Benton
1939	Sister Annette	St. Patrick Hospital
1940	Sister Mary Eugenie Sister Ananias	Sacred Heart Hospital
1942	Sister Alphonse of the S.H.	Sacred Heart Hospital
1947	Sister Helen of Troy	St. Ignatius
1950	Sister Joan Marie Sister Henry Napoleon	St. Ignatius
1952	Sister Mary Amedee Sister Monica Mary	St. Ignatius
1953	Sister Julien of Egypt	
1954	Sister Victor of Alexandria, deceased Sister Mary Ellen Sister Louis Marcel	St. Thomas Home Wallace Hospital
1955	Sister Bernadette Dolores	St. Joseph Home

SUPERIORS AND TERMS OF OFFICE
OF FORT BENTON

Sister Mary of the Resurrection	1886-1888
Sister Mary Julien	1888-1891
Sister Amedie	1891-1894
Mother Mary of the Resurrection	1894-1898
Sister Euphemie	1898-1900
Sister Aldric	1900-1904
Sister Mary Francis	1904-1910
Sister Jane de Chantal	1910-1916
Sister Germain	1916-1919
Sister Didier	1919-1925
Sister Alexis of Providence Correction	1925-1931
Sr. Denis of the Sacred Heart	Aug. 24, 1932-1934
Sr. Mary Ignatius	1934-1940
Sister John Chrysostom	1940-1943
Sister Mary Ignatius	1943-1946
Sister Gonzalve	1946-1951
Sister Joseph Arthur	1951-1954
Sister Mary Ubald	1954-1956
Sister Marciana	1956

APPENDIX D

CHAPLAINS

YEAR	NAME
1886	The Jesuit Fathers of the missions
1887-1890	Reverend Philbertus Tornelli, S.J.
1890-1892	Reverend F. Monroe S.J.
1893-1898	Reverend Carol G. Follet
1898-1900	Reverend Joseph C. Pudenz
1900-1901	Reverend J. H. O'Brien
1901-1902	Reverend Peter M. Gallagher
1902-1903	Reverend J. H. O'Brien
1903-1904	Reverend Peter M. Gallagher
1904-1906	Reverend Thomas M. McCormack
1907-1910	Reverend John Hennessy
1910-1922	Reverend W. P. Phalen, came in April, called home after a month by the ill- ness of his mother, returned in Novem- ber
1922	Reverend J. Colgan replaced while Father Phelan was ill March 1-24 Father Phelan died March 13, 1922
1922-1925	Reverend Edward Curran
1925-1931	Reverend John Finucane
1931-1940	Reverend Anthony Csicsman

YEAR	NAME
1940-1945	Reverend M. J. O'Sullivan
1945-1946	Reverend Martin Whalen
1946-	Reverend Martin Werner
1946-1950	Reverend Henry Prachtner
1950-1951	Reverend F.B. Schilowski
1951-1954	Reverend Bernard Geisen
1954-	Reverend Leo Janson
1898	Reverend Father Demanez was killed in a train accident and buried in Fort Benton
1899	Reverend Father Werdein on his way to replace Father Demanez died of a heart attack and was buried in Fort Benton

APPENDIX E

STATISTICS OF THE HOSPITAL

YEAR	SISTERS	PATIENTS	MEALS	VISITS IN HOMES	NIGHT WATCHES	DEATHS
1886	3					1
1887	6	24	45	50		
1888	5	24	68	50	51	11
1889	5	60	72	72	23	0
1890	5	65		27	49	0
1891	4	75	10	30	77	0
1892	5	95	18	112	66	0
1893	5	79	34	168	68	0
1894	12	86	150	25	150	7
1895	5	83	18	17	90	4
1896	6	97	20	7	45	1
1897	6	85	165	11	85	7
1898	5	125	85	13	65	7
1899	6	176	135	187	214	13
1900	8	341	241	38	395	10
1901	9	266	265	75	450	15
1902	7	131	70	90	500	11
1903	7	114	30	82	360	6
1904	6	115	40	88	365	6
1905	7	164	105	40	425	12

YEAR	SISTERS	PATIENTS	MEALS	VISITS IN HOMES	NIGHT WATCHES	DEATHS
1906	7	130	30	45	340	9
1907	6	328	50	40	310	15
1908	6	154	90	2	450	
1909	6	175	78	27	428	6
1910	6	170	78	428	428	6
1912	6	20	260	5	490	8
1913	6	40	295	42	515	17
1914	7	300	285	12	367	22
1915	8	320	300		369	16
1916	9	315	140		365	13
1917	9	37	55	15	365	27
1918	10	646	55	15	450	27
1919	10	704	25	25	365	42
1920	9	594	135	10	365	14
1921	10	479	18	18	390	18
1922	10	320	100	59	403	14
1923	9	296	308		378	13
1924	9	260	75	3	419	8
1925	9	278	3	2	365	9
1926	10	285	11	2	365	11
1927	10	268	40	1	365	12
1928	10	310	40	23	365	27
1929	10	324	85	26	365	13
1930	10	406	46	12	365	11
1931	11	453	120	22	365	19

YEAR	SISTERS	PATIENTS	MEALS	VISITS IN HOMES	NIGHT WATCHES	DEATHS
1932	10	365	165		365	13
1933	8	383	55		365	27
1934	8	496	75		365	10
1935	9	504	115	2	730	21
1936	9	428	139	21	739	23
1937	9	436	178	2	393	13
1938	9	447	220	7	495	25
1939	8	649	327	12	631	31
1940	8	588	86	10	730	31
1941	8	528	100	2	730	19
1942	9	498	20	2	736	26
1943	9	583	26	55	730	14
1944	9	519	30	186	739	24
1945	9	625	25	2	746	30
1946	9	593	12	24	746	18
1947	9	514	30	24	746	20
1948	11	536	40		743	26
1949	12	536	78	14	732	16
1950	11	547	235	2	734	26
1951	10	503	156	28	730	29
1952	8	567	120	52	763	23
1953	9	478	130	3	732	33
1954	11	479		1		
1955	11	477				26

APPENDIX F

HOSPITAL IMPROVEMENTS, REPAIRS, ADDITIONS

- 1887 Ostensorium and ciborium donated by Mr. McCarthy of Philadelphia. Furnishing for the chapel donated by ladies altar society of Philadelphia.
- 1888 Fence built around the grounds, financed by small donations
Two milk cows given to hospital
Furniture obtained for parlor
- 1892 Debt paid
Statue of B.V.M. given by A. De Lormier
Ice house and milk house built
- 1895 Suitable chapel built
- 1897 Gold chalice and ciborium donated by Mr. and Mrs. T.C. Power
- 1899 New addition started in May. 3 private rooms, 2 wards for 18 persons, a porch, a sewer system, modern toilets, 3 bath tubs and sinks. Attic was made into a ward.
- 1900-1 Oct. 15 to Jan. 16 boiler installed and a modern heating system completed, milk house, refrigerator system installed, laundry constructed, house wired with modern electrical lighting system
- 1901 Flood in September caused damage to boiler room. Cellar and boiler room repaired, stable and barn built, altar enlarged, statue of Our Lady of Seven Dolours and two statues of angels installed.
- 1908 New foundations constructed under house, Interior renovated
Room for a small modern surgery constructed on south wing of house.
- 1913 Frigidaire system renovated
Chicken house built
Porch made into rooms for the Sisters.

- 1914 Community room and parlors separated to make private rooms
Chicken house remodeled into rooms, gave 5 extra rooms.
- 1917 New boiler
New wing on north side of hospital for maternity ward and chapel, addition of a story to the first story.
Two story laundry with a solid foundation that could accommodate the heating plant and had rooms on the second floor to be used as sleeping quarters for the Sisters and nurses.
- 1919 Community room remodeled
- 1920 Roof of chapel completely repaired, interior re-decorated.
- 1921 System of steam heat installed
- 1925 Victor X-ray installed
Laboratory completed
- 1927 Room remodeled and refurnished by the King's Daughters
- 1928 Electric-infra-red lamp for treatments donated by Dr. J. Kaulbach
- 1929 Surgical electric lamp donated by Dr. C.F. Bassow
New steam boiler
- 1930 New electric sterilizer
- 1931 Electric refrigerator installed in diet kitchen
Automatic electric refrigerator installed in kitchen
- 1932 Sisters refectory converted into a 6 bed ward for patients
- 1935 Bacteriological incubator for laboratory
New community room
Automatic stocker
- 1938 New obstetrical table
- 1941 American Electric Sterilizer 16 X 36
2 American Electric Water Sterilizers
Electric toaster and electric calendar for kitchen
"Model" R 39 Diagnostic Rayon X
Incubator for babies

- 1941 6 individual bassinets
24 screens
special electric lights in maternity
stretchers
furniture
electric potato peeler
- 1940 Modernized kitchen with new equipment
- 1942 Model 57 Heidbring Aero-tent for oxygen therapy
percision all metal hot air sterilizer used for the
laboratory drying operations, sterilizing instruments
and glass
Hypertension frame for fractured spine
New castless fracture equipment
Leitz Clinical Photo-Electric Colorimeter for blood
chemistry
Standley Baumanomelic blood pressure machine
Special anesthesia stretcher
Mobil X-ray unit purchased by Dr. Anderson and kept
at the hospital
Ice-cream machine
- 1943 X-ray department improved by a developing room,
cassette pass box and film storage bin.
8 private rooms made on 3rd. floor
Patients rooms, diet kitchen, stairs were painted
Lingerie chute installed
1 electric bath
Electric still installed to supply needs of surgery
and laboratory for distilled water (Barnstead)
Meat and vegetable slicing machine
Resuscitator and inhalator purchased by Dr. Anderson
for benefit of citizens of Choteau county and patients
Dr. Anderson, Red Cross and Firemen gave donations
- 1944 Americanaire Ultra-violet Air sterilizer installed
in nursery to destroy air born bacteria
Vertical wall-mounted cassett holder installed in
X-ray
- 1945 Concrete walk replaces board walk
- 1946 Extractor for laundry
New roofing
- 1947 New mangle and washing machine for laundry
Electric wires replaced and incased in house
- 1948 Frigidaire installed by American Legion for blood
from blood bank in Great Falls

- 1951 Fire escape on building from 3rd floor to ground
- 1952-3 Complete new front, stucco, added to building for offices, parlor, laboratory, lavatories, baths, sleeping quarters, community room.
Elevator installed
- 1953 New E.K.G. Sanborn Viso Cardiette
Porto Lift
Ice-cube machine
Iceless Oxygen tent
- 1955 Car purchased, Plymouth 4 door sedan
- 1954 New pews in chapel
- 1956 Ford Foundation grant of over \$16,000

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

- Archives, Providence Mother House, Montreal 24, Quebec, Canada
- Archives, Provincial House, Mount St. Joseph, Spokane 4, Washington.
- Book of Deeds, Vols. 19, 29, and 41, "K", Choteau County Court House, Fort Benton, Montana.
- Chronicles, St. Clare Hospital, Vol. I, Fort Benton, Montana
- Chronicles, Sacred Heart Academy, Vol. I, Missoula, Montana
- Circulars of the Superior General, 1870 to 1884, Providence Mother House, Montreal 24, Quebec, Canada.
- Hospital Records, St. Clare Hospital, Fort Benton, Montana
- Index Book, St. Clare Hospital, 1886-1912, Fort Benton, Montana
- Little Journal of Providence. Vol. 25, 1928, Vol. 49, 1950, Vol. 36, 1937, Providence Mother House, Montreal 24, Quebec, Canada
- Register of Baptisms, Marriages, Confirmations and Deaths, Vol. I, 1880-1900, Church of the Immaculate Conception, Fort Benton, Montana.
- Supplement of the Circulars, 1895, Providence Mother House, Montreal 24, Quebec, Canada

SECONDARY MATERIAL

- Abbott, Newton Carl, Montana in the Making, Gazette Printing Co., Billings, Montana, 1931
- Bancroft, Hubert Howe, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft Vol. 31, History of Washington, Idaho and Montana, 1845-1889, San Francisco, History Co., pub., 1890
- Bell, W.S., Old Fort Benton, Helena, Montana, 1909

SECONDARY MATERIAL

- Bischoff, William N., S.J., The Jesuits in Old Oregon, The Caxton Printers, LTD., Caldwell, Idaho, 1945, pgs.234
- Blanchard, Mother Mary Antoinette, The Institute of Providence in Oregon, Providence Mother House, St. Catherine St. East, Quebec, Canada, 1949
- Bradley, Lt., Lt. Bradley's Journal, "Affairs at Fort Benton" Historical Society of Montana Contributions, Vol. 3, 1900
- Bradley, Rt. Rev. Cyprian, O.S.B. & Kelly, Most Rev. Edward, D.D. History of the Diocese of Boise 1863-1953 2 vol., Caxton Printers, Ltd., Caldwell, Idaho, 1953
- Briggs, Harold Edward, Frontiers of the Northwest, A History of the Upper Missouri Valley, D. Appleton, Co., Inc., N.Y., 1940
- Burlingame, Merrill G., The Montana Frontier, State Publishing Co., Helena, Montana, 1942
- Chittenden, Hiram Martin, American Fur Trade of the Far West, Francis P. Harper, N.Y., pub. 1902
- Davis, William L., S.J., A History of St. Ignatius Mission, C.W. Hill Printing Co., Spokane, Washington, 1954
- De Smet, Peter, Western Missions and Missionaries, A Collection of Letters, P.J. Kennedy, N.Y., 5 Barclay St. N.Y.
- De Voto, Bernard, Across the Wide Missouri, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1947
- Fuller, George W., History of the Pacific Northwest, Alfred A. Knopf N.Y., 1941
- Garraghan, Gilbert J., S.J., Chapters in Frontier History, Bruce Publishing co., Milwaukee, 1934
- Garraghan, Gilbert J., S.J., The Jesuits of the Middle United States Vol. II, America Press, N.Y., 1938
- Historical Society, Montana Historical Society Contributions, Vols. 3,9, and 10, Helena, Montana, 1900
- Hofen, Leroy R. and Rister, Carl Coke, Western America, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950

- Howard, Joseph Kinsey, Montana, High, Wide and Handsome,
New Haven Yale University Press, 1943
- Kenton, Edna, editor, The Indians of North America, Harcourt
Bruce & Co., N.Y., 1927, vols. 1 & 2
- Laveille, E., S.J., The Life of Father De Smet. S.J., P.J.
Kennedy and Sons, N.Y., 1915
- Lyons, Sister Letitia Mary, Francis Norbert Blanchet and the
of the Oregon Missions, 1838-1848, Catholic University
of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1940
- O'Hara, Edwin V., Pioneer Catholic History of Oregon, St.
Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, New Jersey, 1939
- Palladino, Lawrence B., S.J., Indian and White in the North-
west, A History of Catholicity in Montana, 1831-1891,
Wickersham Publishing Company, Lancaster, Pas., 1922
- Price, Con, Memories of Old Montana, Highland Press, Hollywood,
California, 1945
- Raymer, Robert George, Montana the Land and the People, Vol.I,
Lewis Publishing co., Chicago, 1930
- Stout, Tom (editor) History of Montana, Its Story and Biography,
Vol. I, American Historical Society, Chicago, 1921
- Stuart, Granville, Forty Years on the Frontier as seen in the
Journals and Reminiscences of Granville Stuart, ed.,
by Paul C. Philips, Vol., I & II, Arthur H. Clark Co.,
Cleveland, 1925.
- Vestal, Stanley, The Missouri , Farrar and Rinehart Inc.,
New York, 1945
- Winther, Ascar Osburn, The Great Northwest, Oscar Osburn
Winther, Alfred A. Knopf N.Y., 1952

NEWSPAPERS

- The Great Falls Leader , March 14, 1956
- Eastern Montana Catholic Register , December 3, Jubilee
Edition, 1954
- River Press, Fort Benton weekly, All issues from 1880 to 1936
and August 21, 1946

PAMPHLETS AND PERIODICALS

Great Falls, Clinic, published by the Great Falls Clinic,
Great Falls, Montana

Montana Magazine of History, Winter, 1955

Harber, Nora E., Our Fort Benton of Yesterday and Today,
River Press, 1936

Point, Nicholas, "An Early Missouri River Journal", Mid-
America Review New Series, Vol. II, 1931, Illinois
Catholic Historical Society 23 No., Franklin St.
Chicago, Illinois



ARCHDIOCESE OF OMAHA

The Chancery

100 NORTH 62ND STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68132

December 11, 1987

Sister Margaret LaPorte, S.P.
Sisters of Providence Provincial Admin.
9 East Ninth Avenue
Spokane, WA 99202

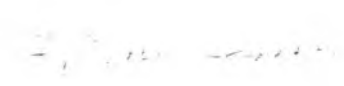
Dear Sister Margaret:

I have searched our records and I find no information relative to Father H. J. Camp. I also consulted the "History of our Archdiocese" and can find no reference to him either.

I am sorry that I cannot be of help in locating information relative to Father Camp.

May God bless you.

Sincerely yours,


Father Eldon J. McKamy,
Chancellor

85TH ANNIVERSARY OF SERVICE

Saturday, Sunday Ceremonies Recall History
Of Institution Begun Here August 11, 1886

1971

St. Clare hospital, long a Fort Benton institution, and operated since August 11, 1886, by the Sisters of Charity of Providence, will observe its 85 years in this city this week end.

The anniversary festivities will commence on Saturday, September 18, at 5:30 p. m. with a Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated by Bishop E. B. Schuster, of Great Falls. Concelebrants of the Mass will be Father Robert Fox, Fort Benton, and Father Carl Erickson, Geraldine. A banquet for the bishop, mayor, county commissioners, members of the governing board, advisory board, medical staff and Sisters will follow at 8:30 p. m. in the hospital conference room.

On Sunday a tea will be given between the hours of 1 and 3 p. m. for the visiting Sisters and residents of the Fort Benton community and the surrounding area. St. Clare Hospital Auxiliary will host the tea, Barbara Gilbert is chairman.

Sisters returning to Fort Benton for the 85th anniversary celebration include Sister Suzanne Coriveau and Sister Marciana, former administrators. Other Sisters who have previously served in St. Clare hospital and who will share in the anniversary festivities are Sister Alfred, Sister Louis Cyprien, Sister George Victorin, Sister Helene, Sister Louis Marcel, Sister Thomas Marie, Sister Louise Magdalen, and Sister JoEllen Shannon. Governing board members will be present in Fort Benton for the two days will be: Sister Ethel Richardson, provincial superior, Sister Claudia, provincial counsellor, and Sister Loretta Marie, provincial treasurer.

The hospital, which dates back to territorial days, actually was planned four years before its start. Seeing the need for a hospital, Fort Benton residents had raised \$5,500 for a "Sister's hospital" estimated to cost \$10,000 by December of 1882, and a contract let a few months later was for \$12,000.

With the building constructed, Fort Benton residents contacted Catholic authorities for Sisters to operate the hospital, and in 1884 Bishop Brondel, recently appointed for the diocese of Helena, wrote to Mother Amable, superior general of the Daughters of Charity, asking her to open a third in the diocese of Helena at Fort Benton, where the people had built a hospital worth \$12,000. The building was in the same block as the church and the bishop declared himself willing to make the deed in favor of the Sisters for the hospital portion. In January, 1885, Bishop Brondel wrote expressing gratitude that Fort Benton had been accepted. However, Mother Amable was unable to send the Sisters at the time, although the property was accepted in May 1886.

Sister Marie of the Resurrection, superior at Winooski, Vermont, was named superior of the new hospital. She was to be accompanied by a Sister and helper from Missoula. When they stopped in Helena to see Bishop Brondel, the latter asked that the hospital be dedicated under the name of St. Clare of Montefalco, whose name he had attended previously in Rome.

The Sisters arrived in Fort Benton July 27, 1886, taking charge of a building described as of brick, 86 by 44 feet, with two stories of twenty apartments. The Sisters commented that they took possession "after having cleaned our hospital and placed in order our three trunks, a small borrowed table, a chair, a kitchen stove and two beds, one of which was borrowed."

August 11, 1886, the hospital received its first patient, C. E. McCutcheon, 22, from Tennessee, employed at a sheep ranch, suffering from what was diagnosed as "mountain fever" (probably Rocky Mountain spotted fever). He died 13 days later. In their first year there were six Sisters on the mission who had cared for 21 sick, visited 50 ill in their homes and had given meals to 45 poor. By September, 1886, the total patients had risen to 448. Six years later a new addition with three private rooms, two wards and porch were built, and the attic renovated for patients.

Though St. Clare hospital had found times difficult in the hard times of the 1920s and 1930s, its golden jubilee on July 27, 1936, found the hospital a 45 bed institution from its original 15, with a total of 13,856 patients and 1,146 births in the half-century. In August of 1947 the existence of the hospital was threatened when the state hospital council decided to rank it as an emergency clinic, but appeals of the staff and residents resulted in having the decision changed to a ranking of a rural hospital. In 1952 a complete new front was added, to be remembered by many local people, with an elevator a chief feature.

Notwithstanding the continuous efforts of staff and townspeople to provide the most modern equipment possible, and the excellent work done with patients, the state inspector found the structure unsafe in 1957 and that it would have to be vacated after 1959. The Sisters at first decided to close and move from Fort Benton, but after consulting the bishop decided to undertake the construction of a new, smaller hospital.

A hospital advisory board of townspeople organized one of the biggest fund raising drives in Fort Benton history, with hundreds of residents from every section of the county helping out. The goal of \$200,000 was very nearly attained before construction ever started.

exceeding the \$178,000 federal grant made. The Sisters of Charity of Providence provided the remainder for the \$447,000 hospital. Maximum bed capacity at the time of building was 40.

Ground was broken on June 29, 1958, and the hospital was dedicated on September 23, 1959. The old hospital, a landmark for three quarters of a century, was torn down in October, 1959. In December of 1960 a new nurses' residence was completed on the site of the old hospital. At the time of their 75th anniversary in 1961, the total of patients in the third 25 years had nearly equalled that of the first half century. St. Clare received a certification last December for the high level of hospital management based on standards adopted by the Montana Hospital Association in 1969.

The order represented by the Sisters who operate St. Clare first sent members in 1864 to St. Ignatius Mission, St. Patrick's hospital in 1873, and to St. Clare in Fort Benton in 1886. They began service to Columbus hospital in Great Falls in 1894. So the Sisters of Charity of Providence has been in this state since Montana became a name on the map.

Three Sisters who arrived in September are regarded by the Mother House as being foundresses of Fort Benton hospital. Since they were not the first ones who opened the hospital I did not regard them as foundresses when I did the work on Fort Benton. Now I am adding a bit about their lives. (1990)

Sister Osmanne

Sister Osmanne (Marie Lucie Sara Lamy) came when St. Clare Hospital was in existence only three months. She endured the poverty and the struggles of the mission for six years. In 1892 she was named for the Academy in Missoula and there she spent most of her life.

For many years she had charge of the orphans and boarder girls. She also taught drawing in the academy and had charge of the church and the sacristy of the convent.

In 1913 she became ill and finally had to go to St. Patrick Hospital where she died the morning of October 13th. She was fifty years old.

Sister Marie Pierre

Sr. Marie Pierre was named Denise Beaugrand dit Champagne. She was born and raised in Canada but spent most of her religious life in the "far missions".

She came to the Hospital St. Clare in Fort Benton in September 1886. Two years later she was named for the St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula. In 1892 she was given charge of the mission as Sister Servant, a post which she occupied until her return to Canada. In that day and age the Superior was called Sister Servant.

She did not speak English very well and was timid but she had great charity and was esteemed by those who knew her. The writer of

the article in the community publication said that she practiced the virtues and kept the rule. She was understanding and kind to the Sisters. After she had been Superior of St. Patrick for five years she was assigned to Wallace. Sr. Mary Eupheme replaced her as superior. However she returned from Wallace shortly as she was suffering much. She was found to have cancer and not much could be done for her. When a Jesuit priest counselled her to prepare for death she replied that if she had to live her life over again she would not do anything different!

She was recalled to the Mother House in Montreal where she died May 2, 1897, being only forty seven years old, of which twenty seven were spent in religion.

Sister Mary Louise Fiset

Sister Mary Louise Fiset was a member of the Third Order when she came to Fort Benton with Sisters Osmane and Marie Pierre. She worked in Montana until 1903 when she was recalled to the Mother House where she worked for three years in the kitchen.

When the Hospital of the Incurables, recently opened, was in need of service in the culinary department Sister Fiset was chosen to fill that office. When Spanish influenza was ravishing the country Sister had a severe attack, resulting in complications from which she never fully recovered. However she continued to work without complaint.

March 15, 1923 the Hospital was enveloped in flames. She helped to evacuate patients and in the stress and excitement of the time she overdid herself and collapsed. She was taken to the Mother House, was cared for and stayed ^{There} hoping to regain her strength and to return to the Incurables. Such was not to be.

She died May 24, 1922 on the feast of Our Lady of Good Help.

the article in the Little Journal (Community publication) tells us that she practiced the virtues and kept the rule. When she became ill a Jesuit priest counselled her to prepare for death. She replied that if she had to live her life over again she would not do anything different.

She was found to have cancer and was called back to the Mother House in Montreal. She died May 2, 1897 being only forty seven years old, of which twenty seven were spent in religion.

Sister Osmanne

Sister Osmanne (Marie Lucie Sara Lamy) and Sister Marie Pierre (Denise Beaugrand dit Champagne) came to Fort Benton in September 1886. M.L. Fiset came with them. In a way they could be considered foundresses of Fort Benton hospital even though Mother Mary of the Resurrection, Sister Mary Wilfred and Sister Anna Magnan had opened the hospital in July.

Sister Osmanne^{came} when the St. Clare Hospital was in existence only three months. She endured the poverty and the struggles of the mission for six years. In 1892 she was named for the Academy in Missoula and there she spent most of her life.

For many years she had charge of the orphan and boarder girls. She also taught drawing in the academy, ^{and} had charge of the church and the sacristy of the convent.

In 1913 she became ill and finally had to spend time in St. Patrick Hospital where she died the morning of October 13 She was 50 years old.

Sister Marie Pierre

Sr. Marie Pierre was named Denise Beaugrand dit Champagne. She was born and raised in Canada but spent most of her religious life in the West. She came to Fort Benton in September 1886, and was named to the Hospital of St. Patrick in Missoula in 1892 as Superior. She did not speak English very well and was timid but she had great charity and was esteemed by those who knew her. According to accounts in the LITTLE JOURNAL she practiced the virtues of the Institute and followed the rule.

When she became ill and was told to prepare for death she she responded that if she had to do it over again she would not do anything different.

She was found to have cancer and was called back to the Mother House in Montreal. She died May 2, 1897 being only forty seven years old of which twenty seven were spent in religion.

