



The *Great* Canadian  
Catholic Hospital History Project

Documenting the legacy and contribution of the  
Congregations of Religious Women in Canada,  
their mission in health care, and the founding and operation of Catholic hospitals.

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Projet de la *Grande* Histoire  
des hôpitaux catholiques au Canada

Retracer l'héritage et la contribution des  
congrégations de religieuses au Canada,  
leur mission en matière de soins de santé ainsi que la fondation et l'exploitation des hôpitaux catholiques.

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**St. Joseph's Hospital and Home, Guelph, 1861-1918:  
The Accommodation of Religion, Medicine, and Social Service**

by  
Sheri Leigh Cockerill

A Major Research Paper Presented to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of Guelph.  
In partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Master of Arts April 2002.

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Advisors:  
Professor Terry Crowley Professor Gilbert Stelter

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## Introduction

Growing out of the Roman Catholic desire for institutional completeness at a time of profound religious antagonisms, St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence was established in Guelph in 1861. Operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph but observing gender distinctions by having male physicians and male trustees, the hospital and House of Providence emerged over the subsequent decades as accepted community facilities. This acceptance was due to St. Joseph's accommodation to growing state influence in the area of medicine and social service. Eventual reciprocity between governments and local Catholic communities allowed the Sisters of St. Joseph to expand their operations in 1862, 1877, and 1895. They modernized the hospital and separated its functions more fully from those of the House of Providence. By 1918 St. Joseph's was an integral part of the city of Guelph, serving both the Catholic population and the larger populace.

In the mid - 1800s, Roman Catholics desired to provide more than religious services, they wanted to attain institutional completeness. This was displayed in their opening of schools, hospitals, and houses of providence. Roman Catholics conceived of life as a whole from conception to death. They wanted to educate the young and provide care for the sick, the elderly, and the disadvantaged. To varying degrees, the Roman Catholic Church has long pursued such policies in Europe and in Quebec, but mid-century Canada West was still in the throes of settlement, and most of these facilities remained to be put in place. During the process of Roman Catholic institutional establishment and expansion, accommodation became a two-way street. The community gradually came to acknowledge the validity of St. Joseph's services through government grants provided initially in 1876, 1877, and 1878, but Roman Catholic officials and laity also came to see their task as providing medical and social services in a larger sectarian manner rather than on the basis of religion alone. This accommodation was intimately related to growing state influence in these realms that derived from funding and state regulation of such facilities, largely through inspection. Accepting the accommodation of the Roman Catholic provision of services to the population, the government of Ontario and such municipalities as Guelph implicitly altered the idea of the state as monolithic.

Governments in the province came to understand that services might be provided through Catholic institutions in the same manner that education was delivered through two different systems, the one public and the other Catholic, while both served public purposes. These developments allowed St. Joseph's to adapt to those changes that transformed hospitals in the late nineteenth century in order to expand in line with the growth of the city. As the community of Guelph grew to become a city St. Joseph's Hospital and

House of Providence also grew and developed to become a respectable institution through the accommodation of religion, medicine and social services.

Henry Sigerist, in *An Outline of the Development of the Hospital*, traced three stages in hospital evolution. In the first stage, institutional care of the sick originated in European poorhouses, guesthouses, and jails. In the second stage, from the thirteenth century, hospitals emerged as medical institutions but limited their care to the indigent and dependent sick. The third and final stage was the development of the modern hospital that began in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The House of Providence at St. Joseph's has roots in Sigerist's first stage as a poor house, but the hospital originated in Sigerist's second stage, opening as a home for the indigent and dependent sick.

This research paper is a study of the accommodation of religion, medicine and social services in the development of St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence, Guelph. This paper looks at the history of St. Joseph's hospital and House of Providence as it unfolds through Sigerist's three stages of hospital evolution.

Today, hospitals are central to health care, but the small Ontario hospital of the nineteenth century was very different. These first hospitals evolved from charities whose chief concern was the moral well-being of their destitute patients. A government scheme for welfare beyond the provision of simple relief or a provincial hospital insurance plan had yet to be established. The lack of social services was most apparent in the first stage of St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence's development. The House of Providence and the hospital opened as one institution yet the majority of the people cared for in the early years of St. Joseph's were the indigent and the dependent.

The hospital at St. Joseph's actually originated in Sigerist's second stage of hospital evolution the period where medicine became important. Although in the beginning the hospital served mainly the indigent, by the third stage it was serving a larger portion of society. As medicine progressed and became more scientific the hospital modernized to accommodate the new standards in health care. By the late nineteenth century the advances in scientific medicine and the development of a Board of Health complicated the development of institutional health care in Guelph.

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<sup>1</sup> Morris J. Vogel, *The Invention of the Modern General Hospital Boston 1870-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1980), 1-2.

St. Joseph's in reaching the third stage of development was forced to build additions and purchase modern equipment to meet new government standards and changing public expectations about health and social services. In all three stages of hospital development problems associated with religion had to be tackled. When the hospital and House of Providence opened in 1861 there was animosity between the Catholics and the Protestants. The hospital and House of Providence would have to adapt and be prepared to serve people of all religions in order to survive. Administered by the Sisters of St. Joseph as a charitable institution to aid the poor, the elderly, the dependent and the sick, the hospital and House of Providence evolved to meet the religious, medical and social standards of nineteenth century Guelph.

### Sources

Politics, religion, social conventions and the medical requirements of the community as well as individuals involved with the hospital had a significant impact on its evolution.<sup>2</sup> In "The Social Transformation of the Hospital" (1992), Mark Cortuila determined that the Canadian hospital was largely shaped by the evolution of the urban community and that hospital historiography has generally disregarded the importance of the community.<sup>3</sup> Hospital historiography deals with such subjects as changes in medicine, the transformation of the secular hospital, and gender in relation to medicine, but it seldom broaches the subject of religion. Religion itself is often seen in either hierarchical or popular expression but seldom in relation to medicine.

The sources for this history are wanting in personal accounts. Personal documents would have allowed us to know the individuals most directly involved in the evolution of the hospital - the patients. To my knowledge there are no remaining letters or diaries to enlighten us as to the individual patients' circumstances prior to or after entering St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence. Personal accounts of patients at St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence would have added immensely to the social history of this paper.

Personal accounts are deficient but the medical associations, regulatory bodies, and medical journals reveal social assumptions of the period. An impression of public perceptions was obtained through local newspapers, municipal and provincial committee meetings and records of religious and charitable groups. Inmate/patient registers and logs as well as hospital financial records have provided invaluable

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<sup>2</sup> 2 Mark Cortuila, "The Social Transformation Of The Hospital In Hamilton: 1880 -1917," (Ph.D. diss., University of Guelph, 1992) 3.

<sup>3</sup> 3 Cortuila, "The Social Transformation Of The Hospital In Hamilton: 1880 -1917," 3.

information. Hospital financing, support services, and the nursing school records have also provided important sources to this history.

The primary sources are extremely fragmented and few records remain of patient care. Proper hospital records did not begin until 1877. Most of the writing has been in house by the Sisters, often from the double minority perspective of women and Catholics. The registers kept by the Sisters detailed who entered the hospital and home. They recorded when someone arrived at the hospital, their name, age, address, religion, place of birth, and occupation. The registers also included a column for the date of death or departure from the hospital. Intermittently, comments referring to the patients' mental or physical state were included. Knowledge about patients is limited to what the nuns recorded in these registers. Clearly, the Sisters of St. Joseph knew more about their patients than what is recorded in the registers, but this information remained with them.

St. Joseph's Catholic cemetery is located next to the hospital and House of Providence. Information regarding a deceased patient's date of birth and next of kin is found on the grave marker. When St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence was established in the mid nineteenth-century it was of utmost importance to the Sisters of St. Joseph that dying patients receive their last rites by a Catholic priest and were given a proper funeral. This provided the faithful for a good death in the church with its rites of extreme unction.

### The Community Context

The religious environment of mid - nineteenth century Guelph is pivotal in understanding the establishment of St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence. Roman Catholics led by local rector and Jesuit priest Johannes Holzer established St. Joseph's Hospital and home in Guelph in 1861 amid sectarian conflict that poisoned personal relations and sometimes flared into collective violence. Such antagonisms were influenced by attitudes inherited from the British Isles, but they were further exacerbated through ethnic antipathies relating to heavy Irish Catholic immigration beginning in the 1840s and continuing up to the financial panic of 1857. Conflicts between the Orange and the Green in Ireland were replicated in the new environment. Roman Catholicism in Canada West (Ontario after 1867) assumed a heavy Irish hue where ideas of ultramontanist laid the basis for broader church organization and the creation of a larger infrastructure in the form of sectarian educational, medical, and social service facilities. In the midst of assaults on their religion and themselves, Roman Catholics created a panopoly of institutions that the Protestant majority in the colony and in Guelph initially resisted.

The diocese of Toronto was set up in 1841 to meet the educational, health and spiritual needs of the large Irish, Roman Catholic immigrant population of Upper Canada. In 1842 Monseigneur Michael Power was named the first bishop of Toronto. Power tried to establish institutions and develop education by inviting religious orders such as the Jesuits to come to his diocese.

As the Catholic population increased in the province, so too did the frequent brawls between Protestants and Catholics. In October 1843, Guelph's Catholics lit bonfires on the public square to celebrate the release from prison of the Irish Reform leader Daniel O'Connell. The very next night, in a presumed act of retaliation, St. Bartholomew's Catholic Church mysteriously burned to the ground, leaving the town's Catholics without a place for services.<sup>4</sup> This discouraging incident led the Governor-General, Lord Metcalfe, to issue a proclamation in an effort to end the increasing number of incidents between the Catholics and the Protestants in Canada West

Whereas on the night of Thursday, the tenth day of October, now last past, the Roman Catholic Church, in the County Wellington, of our said Province, was destroyed by fire, and there is reason to suspect that the said fire was not occasioned by an accident, but was the work of an incendiary or incendiaries; now know ye, that a reward of fifty pounds, of lawful money of our said province, will be paid to any person or persons not being the actual offender or offenders, who will give such information as will lead to the discovery and conviction of the said crime, and a free pardon will be granted to any accomplice therein giving such information.<sup>5, 6</sup>

No one came forward to claim the reward and no arrest was ever made in the Church fire.

Irish Catholic immigration increased in the years leading up to and following the great famine of 1847. Toronto was inundated with Irish famine immigrants, but communities such as Guelph received large increases as well. Irish Catholic institutions grew and Irish Roman Catholics were more visible. The tensions between new immigrants and settlers were apparent throughout the colony. In 1847 Bishop Michael Power along with a few priests administered to the needs of the Irish famine immigrants. As a result, Power became ill and died of cholera. His early death left Toronto without a bishop for the next three years.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Leo A Johnson, History of Guelph 1827-1927 (Guelph: Historical Society, 1977) 220-221..

<sup>5</sup> Toronto, British Colonist, (November 15, 1844) quoted in Leo A Johnson, History of Guelph 1827-1927 (Guelph: Historical Society, 1977) 120-121.

<sup>6</sup> C. Acton Burrows presents a different version in Annals of the Town of Guelph, (1877) 49., "This Church stood until 1846, when on the night when the news was received of the liberation of Daniel O'Connell, the Irish residents became so enthusiastic, that they lighted large bonfires on the hill, and some of the sparks falling on the roof. The church was burned down."

<sup>7</sup> Murray Nicolson, "The Growth of Roman Catholic Institutions in the Archdiocese of Toronto, 1841-90," in Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society 1750-1930 Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz, eds., (Montreal & Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press 1993), 152-167 .

The rivalry between the Catholics and the Protestants peaked in Guelph in 1847 when on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, Charles Coghlin, a Catholic, was charged with the murder of a Protestant, Richard Oliver. Previous clashes between the families of these two men had often resulted in court cases. The magistrate of Guelph, Doctor William Clarke, known as a Tory and a supporter of the Orangemen, had always found in favour of the Oliver's. As a result, the Irish Catholics in Guelph were not supportive of William Clarke and his legal decisions.<sup>8</sup> Clarke rejected the pleas from Catholics to convert the charge of murder to manslaughter, so that Coghlin's sentence could be reduced to life in jail. In the end Clarke had Charles Coghlin executed for the murder of Richard Oliver. After the execution there were many disturbances in town. Within two weeks of Coghlin's death the Wellington Mill owned by Doctors Orton and Clarke was burned to the ground, apparently as a retributive act. Rewards were offered for the culprits but as in the church fire, no one was ever charged.<sup>9</sup>

Bishop Michael Power's successor was Armand Francois-Marie de Charbonnel who became bishop of Toronto in 1850. Charbonnel picked up where Power left off in developing ecclesiastical institutions and initiating the action to strengthen Catholicism in Upper Canada.<sup>10</sup> As Murray Nicolson stated in *Creed and Culture*, Charbonnel knew that he had to salvage the remnants of the ill-adjusted, socially deprived Irish laity by providing for their religious, social and educational needs.<sup>11</sup> Having trained in Europe Charbonnel was aware of the social work instituted by the St. Vincent de Paul Society. He knew the effectiveness of combining religion with service to the poor. In 1850 Bishop Charbonnel insisted that the Diocese of Toronto be divided into three areas: Toronto with six counties and 40,000 Catholics; Hamilton with eight counties (including Guelph in Wellington) and 22,000 Catholics; and London with nine counties and 10,000 Catholics.<sup>12</sup> Bishop Charbonnel would prove that two additional bishops meant an

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<sup>8</sup> Johnson, *History of Guelph 1827-1927*, 120-121.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 121-127.

<sup>10</sup> J.M.S. Careless, *The Union of The Canadas The Growth of Canadian Institutions 1841-1857* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited 1967), 177

<sup>11</sup> Murray Nicolson, "The Growth of Roman Catholic Institutions in the Archdiocese of Toronto, 1841-90," in *Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society 1750-1930* Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz, eds., (Montreal & Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press 1993), 159.

<sup>12</sup> John W. Keleher, "The Reverend Father John E. Holzer, S.J." *Historic Guelph The Royal City XX VI*, (August 1987): 53-55.



increase in clergy, schools, churches and religious institutions.<sup>13</sup> This increase in a Catholic presence may have contributed to a rise in altercations between Catholics and Protestants.

Due to the increase of violent Catholic/ Protestant altercations, the mid-850s came to be known throughout Canada as the ‘fiery fifties’.<sup>14</sup> An example of the conflict in Guelph was seen in July 1856, when the Guelph Militia were called out to rescue Orange Lodge members. The Orangemen were ambushed by Catholics as they returned from a twelfth of July afternoon picnic to the east of Guelph in the village of Rockwood. The Orangemen were held captive in the village hotel where they had sought refuge. The conflict ended with Kelly, a Catholic, being arrested and later found guilty of assault and sentenced to a prison term.<sup>15</sup> These incidents were not isolated to Guelph; this kind of occurrence was common enough in Canada West. There were similar riots involving Protestants and Catholics in Toronto during 1857 and 1858.<sup>16</sup>

Immigrants had brought their religious intolerance with them to Canada. Even the presence of clergy raised animosities. In response to Bishop Power’s request for more priests to serve the rapidly expanding population, Father Johannes Holzer was to be sent to Guelph’s neighbouring County of Waterloo in 1848. Within a few years Holzer was ordered to Guelph. Debra Nash-Chambers included a comment made by a biographer of Father Holzer that “the activities and successes of Father Holzer aroused the enmity of the Orangemen and they sent him threatening letters. They made no secret that they would bum his church and school.”<sup>17</sup> To prepare for an attack, a cannon was placed in the steeple of St. Bartholomew’s Catholic Church and several hundred Catholics answered Father Holzer’s call for defence against an anticipated Orange riot. The Catholics were prepared for an altercation with their rivals, but for reasons unknown the

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<sup>13</sup> Murray Nicolson, “The Growth of Roman Catholic Institutions in the Archdiocese of Toronto, 1841-90,” in *Creed and Culture: The Place of English-Speaking Catholics in Canadian Society 1750-1930* Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz, eds., (Montreal & Kingston, McGill-Queen’s University Press 1993).

<sup>14</sup> Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, eds., *Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press 1996) 296-297; J.M.S. Careless, *The Union of The Canadas The Growth of Canadian Institutions 1841-1857* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited 1967), 183-198.

<sup>15</sup> Debra L. Nash-Chambers, “In the Palm of God’s Hand? The Irish Catholic Experience in Mid-Nineteenth Century Guelph,” *The Canadian Catholic Historical Association*, 82 (June 11 & 12, 1984): 82.

<sup>16</sup> Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin eds., *Concise History of Christianity in Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press 1996) 298.

<sup>17</sup> Archdiocese of Hamilton: Papers of the Guelph Mission quoted in Debra L. Nash-Chambers, “In the Palm of God’s Hand? The Irish Catholic Experience in Mid-Nineteenth Century Guelph,” *The Canadian Catholic Historical Association* (June 11 & 12, 1984): 82

Orangemen decided to retreat.<sup>18</sup> The 1850s were contentious years for the rival Catholics and Protestants in Guelph and Wellington County.

The Protestant-Catholic conflict of mid-century was derived greatly from inherited antagonisms. The “Papal Aggression” controversy in England during the late 1850s developed in response to Pope Pius IX’s restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. The Papal Aggression spread across the Atlantic to Canada.<sup>19</sup> The Vatican had proclaimed a full Catholic hierarchy with territorial ties for England. Protestants became furious. In fear of these developments, voluntarists and radicals formed the Anti-Clergy Reserves Association in Toronto in 1850. Later, this became the Anti-State Church Association.<sup>20</sup> The Protestants main objections to the Catholic religion were the domination of the clergy, and the Catholic allegiance to the Pope, whom they considered a foreign ruler.<sup>21</sup>

### Ultramontanism and Protestantism

Catholics in Canada also borrowed their beliefs from Europe through the implementation of ultramontanism, an alternative world-view that initially rested on identification with Irish ethnicity.<sup>22</sup> Ultramontanism acclaimed the authority of the pope and supported the view that the state should be subordinate to the church, especially in issues of education and social welfare.<sup>23</sup> By the mid-nineteenth century, ultramontanism was the reform view of British North American Catholicism. Ultramontanes held the view that the Catholic Church was a complete society that subsumed all aspects of the lives of the faithful. Public institutions such as schools, hospitals and orphanages were to come under the security of the church. The role of the state was to provide funding and support to the church.<sup>24</sup>

Jesuit Johannes Holzer found himself drawn into the local controversy when a series of Guelph newspaper articles and public lectures challenged the Roman Catholic faith. Irish Catholics petitioned him to act on their behalf, but Holzer was reluctant to respond. He wrote to Father Tellier,

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<sup>18</sup> Debra L. Nash-Chambers, “In the Palm of God’s Hand?” *The Irish Catholic Experience in Mid-Nineteenth Century Guelph*, The Canadian Catholic Historical Association. (June 11 & 12, 1984): 82-83.

<sup>19</sup> Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz, eds., Creed and Culture, xiii.

<sup>20</sup> J.M.S. Careless, The Union of The Canadas The Growth of Canadian Institutions 1841-1857 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967), 175.

<sup>21</sup> Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin eds., Concise History of Christianity in Canada, 296-297.

<sup>22</sup> Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin eds., Concise History of Christianity in Canada, 358-359.

<sup>23</sup> Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz, eds., Creed and Culture, xv.

<sup>24</sup> Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin, eds., Concise History of Christianity in Canada, 358-359.

We have trouble, but not from the quarter you might think, rather from the Catholics themselves. Many are dissatisfied and wrote to me to accept the challenge of other ministers or at least lecture against them in the Market Hall. I said, "If I were Cardinal Wiseman himself, I would not degrade myself so much, as no good is ever accomplished by such controversial disputes." But still they say if only we had a priest to confound them, and to lecture against them.<sup>25</sup>

On the advice of another Jesuit priest, Father Marechal, Holzer did finally write a reply to the debate as an official of the Roman Catholic Church. Holzer wrote to a friend regarding the response he received from his letter. "The Catholics received it quite well and some in town said I had pulverized their bigots with my letter. The Protestants are quieter ever since."<sup>26</sup>

Father Johannes Holzer and the Sisters of St. Joseph established St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence in 1861. The community was divided in response to the Catholic institution. In the same year that St. Joseph's opened the town's residents started making plans for their own Guelph General Hospital. The religious environment of the community is displayed in a political letter written by the local Tory candidate and magistrate, Dr. William Clarke. In writing to Prime Minister Macdonald in 1867, Clarke stated that he was doing what he could to get the Catholic vote but that it was difficult because of the violent Orangeism which persisted in his area.<sup>27</sup> There were no violent altercations as in years previous to the opening of the hospital, but it was still apparent that the two religious groups were antagonistic, especially in politics where Protestants tended to hold the majority of prominent positions locally. The power of the Protestant town council is displayed in 1872 when an application was made to grant the use of the main portion of the Exhibition building to the Sisters of St. Joseph's Hospital for a picnic on 24 June 1872. A majority of the council decided to refuse the application with no explanation. In a few days a mass meeting was held with councillors at which the inactions were strongly condemned and a resolution passed asking them to rescind their resolution.<sup>28</sup> This incident reveals how mutual antagonisms continued to be played out in Guelph.

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<sup>25</sup> 25 Father Holzer to Father Tellier, 9 December 1859, quoted in F. Theodorus Fleck S.J. A Sketch of Labours of the Society of Jesus in the Western Part of the Province of Ontario, Guelph Parish File, Jesuit Archives, Regis College; also quoted in Mary Rae Shantz, "The Irish Catholics in Guelph: 1827-1861 A Study of Ethnic Group Identity," (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1986), 107.

<sup>26</sup> 26 Fr. Holzer to\_, 1860, quoted in F. Theodorus Fleck SJ. A Sketch of Labours of the Society of Jesus in the Western Part of the Province of Ontario, Guelph Parish File, Jesuit Archives, Regis College; also quoted in Mary Rae Shantz, "The Irish Catholics in Guelph: 1827-1861 A Study of Ethnic Group Identity," (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1986), 107.

<sup>27</sup> Debra L. Nash-Chambers, "In the Palm of God's Hand? The Irish Catholic Experience in Mid-Century Guelph," The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, (June 11 & 12, 1984): 85.

<sup>28</sup> Acton C. Burrows, The Annals of the Town of Guelph, (Guelph: Herald Steam Printing House, 1877), 151.

The struggle for power between Protestants and Catholics continued well into the nineteenth century. In planning the St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence picnic in June 1874, St. Joseph's directors and the senior Jesuit, Father Loyzance, got pulled into a dispute. They had made plans to allow horse racing and wheels of fortune at the June picnic.<sup>29</sup> As an agricultural community horse racing had always been a popular sport in Guelph as horse farms surrounded the city. Guelph was even chosen for the Queen's Plate in 1864.<sup>30</sup> However, the advertising of these planned events for St. Joseph's fundraising picnic provoked a poignant letter to the editor of the Guelph Mercury from a Presbyterian minister in clear opposition to gambling. W.S. Ball, wrote that the "Romish Church was allowing the end to justify the means." The letter was an attempt to embarrass the authority of the Roman Catholic leadership.<sup>31</sup> Loyzance countered with his own letter to the editor of the Guelph Mercury in which he announced the cancellation of the horse racing at the upcoming picnic.<sup>32</sup> Due to religious power struggles the popular community event was cancelled.

Catholic fund raising and celebrations always seemed to create a ruckus. In July of 1877, the Guelph town council accepted an official invitation to the laying of the cornerstone for the Church of Our Lady Immaculate. The new Roman Catholic Church had been constructed to encapsulate the old St. Bartholomew's church. As part of the ceremony, a papal delegate attended the grand occasion. The attendance of council at the ceremony upset Guelph's Protestants. They responded by calling a public meeting where they denounced the municipal council members for accepting invitations to attend the festival in a public rather than a private capacity.

Although the Rev. Alexander Dixon of St. George's Anglican Church had not been present at the public meeting, he sent a letter to the editor of the Guelph Mercury, which acclaimed the conduct of the furious public and denounced the allegedly brazen behaviour of the councillors.<sup>33</sup> Dixon's letter was just one of many that the Irish-born clergyman wrote over the next ten years as the defender of the rights of

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<sup>29</sup> Debra L. Nash-Chambers. "In the Palm of God's Hand? The Irish Catholic Experience in Mid-Nineteenth Century Guelph," The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, (June 11 & 12, 1984): 79-80.

<sup>30</sup> Gerald J. Stortz, "Arthur Palmer: Founder and First Rector of Saint George's Anglican Church Guelph," Historic Guelph The Royal City, XXV, (Aug. 1986): 62.

<sup>31</sup> Debra L. Nash-Chambers. "In the Palm of God's Hand? The Irish Catholic Experience in Mid-Nineteenth Century Guelph," The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, (June 11 & 12, 1984): 79-80.

<sup>32</sup> Debra L. Nash-Chambers. "In the Palm of God's Hand?" (June 11 & 12, 1984), 79-80.

<sup>33</sup> Debra L. Nash-Chambers. "In the Palm of God's Hand ?" (June 11 & 12, 1984), 86.

Protestants.<sup>34</sup> Denominational rivalries were profound in Guelph but these rivals also assumed the distinct hue of an Irish quarrel.

The increase of Irish immigrants to the area especially after the Great Famine created the need for institutions. In the midst of all this conflict Guelph's Catholics were promoting the development of churches, schools and the hospital and House of Providence.

### The First Stage of Hospital Evolution: The Development of Social Services and Charity in Guelph

The establishment of institutional care for the sick and the indigent was deemed necessary by most social standards by the mid-nineteenth century. Guelph was founded in 1827 by John Galt of the Canada Company. The first settlers to this community were labourers, who worked for the Canada Company along with craftsmen and independent businessmen. Guelph saw rapid periods of development between 1831-1834, and again between 1840-1845.<sup>35</sup> This led Guelph's residents in 1845 to create the Wellington District Benevolent Association. Its founding members hoped that it would be a remedy for the increasing number of people who had demonstrated a need for charitable assistance.<sup>36</sup> At its annual meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1849, the Wellington District Benevolent Association demonstrated the extent to which relief was deemed necessary.

... thirty-four cases of widows, and sixty-three of their children...have shared in your benevolence; ...the late tide of emigration brought many whom various adversities have made very poor and helpless; these and the common misfortunes to which the labouring class is constantly exposed, will ever render a relief fund indispensable;...<sup>37</sup>

Residents who subscribed to the Relief Committee gave five shillings a year to the Wellington District Benevolent Association. The membership lists and the amount of each donation were printed regularly in the local newspapers. At each annual meeting, a Relief Committee was elected to determine whether or not each applicant was worthy of aid.<sup>38</sup>

The building of railways throughout the province during the 1850s meant growth for the town of Guelph. Prominent landowners and businessmen promoted a railway line from Guelph to Toronto. In 1851 Guelph town council voted unanimously to purchase shares in the railway to Toronto, and on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 86.

<sup>35</sup> Johnson, History of Guelph, 39.

<sup>36</sup> Nash-Chambers. "In the Palm of God's Hand?" (June 11 & 12, 1984), 68.

<sup>37</sup> Johnson, History of Guelph 138.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.138-148.



1851, the Act incorporating the Toronto-Guelph Railway Company was passed by Parliament.<sup>39</sup> For area businessmen the railroad meant commercial security.

In 1850, the Relief Committee applied to the municipality of Guelph township for aid. The township responded with a grant of twenty pounds. After the Wellington District Benevolent Associations annual meeting in May 1850, their name was changed to The Guelph Township Benevolent Association (hereinafter referred to as the GTBA).<sup>40</sup> In 1851 the township was again asked to contribute to the association but it declined.

In 1851, it was explained that the twenty pounds from the township of Guelph would be assessed upon the taxable inhabitants of Guelph, and that relief would only be appropriated to those within the town limits.<sup>41</sup> The association's name was again changed this time to the Guelph Town Benevolent Association. This name change was significant because the Committee was making it known that from this point forward they would be accountable only for the town of Guelph and not the surrounding districts of Wellington and Waterloo County. Clearly, members of the GTBA found that they could not afford to assist the needy people outside of Guelph.

The 1852 Annual Report concluded that,

... the voluntary principle of this locality is not adequate to the support of the aged and infirm, much less to the additional relief of those who through sickness, misfortune, and emigration, are constantly dependent upon charity...<sup>42</sup>

Voluntary donations alone were not enough to maintain the number of impoverished that relied on the Guelph Township Benevolent Association for aid. The GTBA could not support the dependent sick. They were developed as only a temporary measure to assist the needy with relief. The 1852 report in its conclusion recommended that town council should continue assisting the GTBA. The GTBA was no longer a voluntary organization for it had become dependent on municipal funds.<sup>43</sup> Apparently the need for outdoor relief had become an accepted practice for the people of Guelph.

When the railway boomed during 1853-1856 commercial life in Guelph increased. This new prosperity attracted new immigrants who made their homes in Guelph. The increase in people, manufacturing and

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<sup>39</sup> Johnson, History of Guelph 146-151.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 138-148.

<sup>41</sup> Wellington County Archives. Guelph Council Minutes, Feb.11, 1852.

<sup>42</sup> Johnson, History of Guelph 138-148.

<sup>43</sup> Johnson, History of Guelph, 138.

commercial life exerted pressure on the existing services. The town infrastructure had developed in commerce and buildings, railways and roads. Commercial security meant population growth, especially in the labouring population. As the population of Guelph grew so did the visibility of the needy as there was an increase in the indigent, elderly and sick.

Charitable workers were in demand. As priest of St. Bartholomew's Roman Catholic Church in Guelph Father Holzer found that the demands on him increased. Father Holzer wrote, "I am overpowered with work because of the railroad in attending the sick calls all day and all night. The railroad men give us very much to do."<sup>44</sup> It was inevitable that the population increase would put pressure on individuals and voluntary, municipal and charitable associations to attend to the needy.

Although Guelph was still primarily a community dependent on its surrounding countryside, by 1855 it had reached town status with 3,000 residents.<sup>45</sup> The following year Guelph was incorporated as a town.<sup>46</sup> By the early 1860s the population of Guelph had doubled during the past five years to nearly 6,000.<sup>47</sup> Industry continued to grow and the town now had a number of well-established businesses such as mills, foundries and hotels.<sup>48</sup> The need for institutional health care in this prospering town had become apparent.

### **The Formation of St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence**

The idea of St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence, Guelph was initially conceived of by Father Johannes Holzer of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). Holzer was born in Austria in 1817 and entered the Jesuit Order at Graz, Austria in 1835. From there Father Holzer made his way to New York.<sup>49</sup> In 1847 Bishop Michael Power of Toronto persuaded the Jesuit Superior in New York, Clement Boulanger, to send two priests and a brother to care for the German settlers in his diocese at Wilmot (St. Agatha) and New Germany (Maryhill) in Waterloo County. Father Holzer being fluent in the German language was

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<sup>44</sup> Fr. Johannes Holzer (Oct. 19, 1852). "Papers of The Guelph Mission," Archdiocese of Hamilton quoted in Debra L. Nash-Chambers, "In the Palm of God's Hand? The Irish Catholic Experience in Mid-Nineteenth Century Guelph," The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, (June 11 & 12, 1984): 75.

<sup>45</sup> Johnson, History of Guelph, 190.

<sup>46</sup> Historical Atlas Publishing Co. Historical Atlas of the County of Wellington, (Toronto: Historical Atlas Publishing Company, 1906) 4.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 4.

<sup>48</sup> "Advertisements," Guelph Weekly Mercury, 13 May 1864.

<sup>49</sup> John W. Keleher, "The Reverend Father John E. Holzer, S.J." Historic Guelph: The Royal City, XXVL (August 1987): 51.

one of the priests chosen to go to Waterloo County. Father Holzer arrived in Maryhill in 1848, and worked to build a new Catholic church.<sup>50</sup>

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of January 1852 Father Holzer and two additional priests and a brother were sent from Maryhill to Guelph. The area north of Guelph had a large Irish Catholic population and a severe shortage of priests. These three Jesuits were to attend the missions north through Wellington, Grey and Bruce Counties.<sup>51</sup> This was an extensive area for the Jesuits to minister and they were plagued by hardship and disease. One of the priests Father Matoga, a Pole, was responsible for the area north of Guelph. In just the first couple of years Father Matoga died of diphtheria. The third priest, Father Ritter, left the Order.<sup>52</sup>

Father Holzer's goals for Guelph were demonstrated in 1859 when as the first Superior at Guelph, he wrote to a friend relating that the bishop, "mentioned also that it might be the case that after 50 years, the country being more thickly populated, Guelph should be created into a bishopric."<sup>53</sup> This fascination with the development of Guelph as an episcopal see shaped how Holzer and future Jesuits would deal with the community.

After being in Guelph for seven years Father Holzer understood the essential need for institutional health care for the sick and indigent. The Roman Catholic priest started making plans for a permanent structure in 1859 when he purchased 25 acres of land on the northwest part of town next to the Catholic cemetery from a man named Hussey.

Land registry records show that two years later on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 1861 Reverend John Holzer bought another 15 acres of land.<sup>54</sup> This second parcel of land was bought from James Wallace and was situated in the township of Guelph on the limits of the town next to the first parcel of land Holzer bought on a street

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<sup>50</sup> Reverend Theobald Spetz, CR., DD., Diamond Jubilee History of the Diocese of Hamilton with A Complete History of the County of Waterloo 1856-1916, (The Catholic Register and Extension, 1916) 58-60.

<sup>51</sup> Spetz, History of the Diocese of Hamilton, 58-59.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 60.

<sup>53</sup> F.Theodorus Fleck S.J. A Sketch of Labours of the Society of Jesus in the Western Part of the Province of Ontario, Guelph Parish File, Jesuit Archives, Regis College: quoted in Maxy Rae Shantz, "The Irish Catholics in Guelph: 1827-1861; A Study of Ethnic Group Identity," (MA Thesis, University of Guelph, 1986), 105.

<sup>54</sup> Wellington County Archives. Township of Guelph, Lot number 12 Division A in the 4<sup>th</sup> Range, Bargain & Sale# 17072. 29 Oct. 1861.

that became known as Hospital Street (now named Westmount Road).<sup>55</sup> This land was intended for the Catholic hospital.

Both town and farm lots near the site were available for rent from the Catholic Church.<sup>56</sup> Guelph's Irish newcomers immediately began building near Division Street that approached the intended hospital site in this section of town known as St. David's Ward.<sup>57</sup> Father Holzer's land acquisitions altered the location of Guelph's Catholics. Previously Catholics had been segregated in St. Patrick's ward located in the southeast section of town.<sup>58</sup>

In 1861 Father Holzer traveled to Hamilton to see Bishop John Farrell to request a new Catholic hospital for Guelph. The Bishop agreed with Holzer that Guelph did indeed require such a facility. The bishop passed the request along to the Reverend Mother M. Martha, Superior General of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton Diocese. The bishop had requested her help in the form of three sisters from the Sisters of St. Joseph to open a new mission at Guelph in 1861.<sup>59</sup> As the Community at Hamilton had been established for only ten years, it was not very large and this would be an opportunity to expand it.<sup>60</sup> After conferring with Advisors, the Superior General decided to make the trip to Guelph to see what would be required for a hospital and House of Providence. According to Sister Lawrence,

When Reverend Mother returned from her first visit to Guelph she realized that the Sisters to be assigned must be compassionate, physically strong and very zealous. She selected Sister Antoinette to be the first superior and administrator. Her companions were to be Sister Ignatius and Sister Alphonsus. The Sisters could be forgiven for having some misgivings when they received the news. This was new work for them, but it could be an adventure and Obedience had asked them to do it so they hastened to prepare themselves.<sup>61</sup>

Holzer had promised to seek additional aid from the people of Guelph for furnishings, food, and money, and the Reverend Mother was assured that her Sisters would be appreciated and welcomed in the community.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> John W. Keleher, "The Reverend Father John E. Holzer," Historic Guelph The Royal City. XXVI, (1986-1987): 48.

<sup>56</sup> Nash-Chambers, "In the Palm of God's Hand?" 75-76.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 75-76.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* 75+.

<sup>59</sup> Judy McVittie, "St Joseph's: 125 Years of Service" Short History, Puslinch Pioneer, 11 (1986): 4.

<sup>60</sup> Sister Lawrence. 100 Years of Service 1861- 1961 Anniversary booklet printed for St Joseph's Hospital and Home, (Guelph: Sisters of St. Joseph 1961) 9.

<sup>61</sup> Lawrence. 100 Years of Service 1861-1961 9.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 9.

Holzer met Sisters M. Alphonsus Cashon, Antoinette Ogg and Ignatius Pigott at the train station in Guelph. He took them to the site he had chosen for the hospital. The meagre two-story, stone building commonly referred to as the “Gate House” was unsophisticated, but it fulfilled its utilitarian role and reflected the moderation of the Jesuit order.<sup>63</sup> Sixteen hospital beds were already set up in the house.<sup>64</sup>

The constant strife between the majority Protestants and the minority Catholics encouraged the development of Guelph’s Catholic hospital and House of Providence in 1861. In 1861 the population of Guelph had reached 5,140, of whom less than a quarter were Roman Catholics.<sup>65</sup> The hospital and House of Providence began as a means to preserve and promote religion well attending to the needy. Jesuits, Sisters and the bishop of Hamilton worked to promote religion through the development of social institutions. All knew that the Catholic hospital would preserve and promote Catholicism.

The three Sisters had no previous nursing experience. They would have to learn through practical experience. The first patient was Michael Millaley who had burned both hands. After Millaley had healed he befriended the Sisters and assisted them, collecting the daily mail and driving the “Phaeton,” a small basic buggy pulled by one horse.<sup>66</sup> Millaley was the first of many patients who stayed on at the institution to assist the Sisters in the progression of the hospital during the 1860s.

The first St. Joseph’s Hospital and House of Providence was unlike the formal institutions we know today. In 1861 spiritual care was just as important as physical care and the Sisters cared for the indigent and the sick in Catholic surroundings. The Sisters of St. Joseph administered a small, religious hospital where nuns and priests, rosaries and bibles were commonplace. Catholic symbols and icons were an ever present part of this establishment with crucifixes and portraits of the pope and statues of Mary and Joseph. In the beginning the Jesuits and the Sisters of St. Joseph worked closely to provide Catholic charity.

Jesuit Father Holzer remained in Guelph until 1864 when he suffered a paralytic stroke and was sent to Hotel Dieu in Montreal for treatment.<sup>67</sup> He did not return to Guelph until 1873, staying only until 1875

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<sup>63</sup> See Appendix A for the sketch of the first building.

<sup>64</sup> Lawrence. *100 Years of Service 1861-1961*. 9.

<sup>65</sup> Acton C. Burrows, *The Annals of the Town of Guelph* (Guelph: Herald Steam Printing House. 1877), 118-119.

<sup>66</sup> Compiled by the School of Nursing Staff. *History of St Joseph’s Hospital and School of Nursing Guelph Ont.*, Unpublished booklet. (Guelph: Sisters of St. Joseph, 1940) 15

<sup>67</sup> Obituary of Father Holzer, *Papers of the Guelph Mission*, Archdiocese of Hamilton. Photocopy.



before heading back to New York.<sup>68</sup> Father Holzer's twelve consecutive years were progressive years for the development of Guelph's Roman Catholic institutions.

From 1861 until the early 1900s the Fathers of the Society of Jesus cared for the spiritual needs of the Catholic patients, the staff of the hospital and the inmates of the Hospital and House of Providence.<sup>69</sup> The Jesuits had always maintained a philosophy of *homines pro aliis*, or "men and women for others".<sup>70</sup>

### The Sisters of St. Joseph

The Jesuits and the Sisters of St. Joseph had complementary fundamental principles which emphasized charity and aiding the less fortunate. Together the two Catholic organizations began the city's first charitable hospital. The Sisters of St. Joseph were founded in seventeenth century France by six women and Father Medaille of the Society of Jesus in response to the spread of Christianity. In 1851, the Quebec based, Sisters of St. Joseph opened 'The Nelson Street Orphanage' (also known as the Sacred Heart Orphanage) in Toronto.<sup>71</sup> By 1857 the Sisters had also opened a House of Providence in Toronto.<sup>72</sup>

The Sisters of St. Joseph spread their Order in the areas surrounding Toronto. In 1852 three sisters went to Hamilton. Initially they took care of orphans but then the cholera epidemic of 1854 hit, followed by a typhoid outbreak, and the Sisters cared for the ill in a temporary hospital made out of station sheds. By 1856, St. Joseph's Convent at Hamilton became their Mother House and the Sisters' permanency was secured.<sup>73</sup>

From 1857 the Sisters' work in Ontario blossomed as they became involved with all aspects of social work and education. The Toronto congregation grew to become six congregations in the communities of

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> In 1931 the Diocesan Clergy took over the care of the Parish of Our Lady Immaculate in the city of Guelph with Father O'Reilly as pastor and three assistant priests.

<sup>70</sup> Fordham University, "The Jesuit Tradition.," <<http://www.fordham.edu/jesutrad/mdex.html>> September 2000.

<sup>71</sup> Terrence Murphy and Gerald Stortz, eds., Creed and Culture. 162.

<sup>72</sup> Stephen A Spiesman, "Munificent Parsons and Municipal Parsimony: Voluntary v. Public Poor Relief In Nineteenth Century Toronto," Michael J. Piva, ed., A History of Ontario: Selected Readings, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd.1988), 64.

<sup>73</sup> John Murray Gibbon. Three Centuries of Canadian Nursing (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada, 1947) 134.

Hamilton, London, Peterborough, Pembroke, Sault Ste. Marie and Toronto.<sup>74</sup> In 1861 the Sisters of St. Joseph from the diocese of Hamilton instituted and developed St Joseph's hospital and home in Guelph.

Ontario historians have largely overlooked the study of women in nineteenth century Catholic Institutions. The Sisters of St Joseph were engaged in both teaching and social service. The Congregation was joined by a constitution, but it operated as a series of decentralized administrative units organized along diocesan lines. Each diocesan community had its own local superior and novitiate. The communities were joined by their constitution but each mother-house operated independently of the others. The diocesan bishop oversaw the Sisters' spiritual and temporal activities while the local superior had the final say as to how her community was to carry out the order's mandate of Christianity and service to others. The sister superior balanced the needs of her bishop and diocese with her community and decided where the Sisters would give service: parish schools, academies, hospitals, orphanages or other charitable institutions.<sup>75</sup>

The Sisters of St Joseph also founded hospitals in London in 1868 and Hamilton in 1890.<sup>76</sup> In Ontario, there were 96 hospitals by 1910 of which 16 were staffed by religious nursing sisterhoods, including 6 by the Sisters of St Joseph.<sup>77, 78</sup> Toronto, being the largest centre, had twelve of these hospitals. The Sisters of St. Joseph eventually established hospitals at London, Hamilton, Chatham, Peterborough, Toronto, and Pany Sound as well as Guelph.<sup>79</sup> The Sisters' mission statement has remained relatively unchanged throughout the years:

We promote the dignity of all persons, especially the poor and marginalized, and work to alleviate the causes of poverty and oppression. In all we do, we strive to heal broken relationships, reconciling and uniting people with one another and with God.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Sisters of St. Joseph. "Sisters of St. Joseph, Hamilton, Mission Statement." <<http://www.sjhcs.org/cs-j-history.htm>> July 2000.

<sup>75</sup> Ruby Heap and Alison Prentice, ed.s., Gender and Education in Ontario: An Historical Reader (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1991), 273+.

<sup>76</sup> Sister Winnifred McLaughlin "The Effects of Regionalization on Four Catholic-Sponsored Acute Care General Hospitals." (MA Thesis, University of Toronto Thesis 1978) 54.

<sup>77</sup> John Murray Gibbon. Three Centuries of Canadian Nursing, (Toronto: The MacMillan Company, 1947) 182.

<sup>78</sup> The other religious orders running hospitals were: 4 by the Sisters of Providence, 4 by the Grey Nuns and 2 by the St. Joseph Hospitallers of the Hotel Dieu of Montreal.

<sup>79</sup> Gibbon. Three Centuries of Canadian Nursing. 182.

<sup>80</sup> Sisters of St Joseph. "Sisters of St. Joseph, Hamilton, Mission Statement," < <http://www.sjhcs.org/cs-j-history.hun> >, July 2000.

The development of institutional health care would prove complicated for the Sisters. The accommodation of religion, medicine and social service in the establishment of a small town hospital provided impediments that had to be overcome. The Sisters in administering St. Joseph 's hospital and home in Guelph proved to be adaptable and multifaceted in serving the sick, the aged, and the indigent of all religions.

### Social Services

In Guelph institutional care of the sick originated in St. Joseph's House of Providence. The House of Providence was comparable to the poor houses in Europe in providing a home for the indigent and the sick. Responsibility for the poor rested in the hands of philanthropists and religious communities such as the Sisters of St. Joseph.<sup>81</sup> There was no alternative form of health care or social welfare in mid-nineteenth century Guelph. In times of need residents had to rely on family and friends for assistance.

In mid-nineteenth century Ontario the care of the sick was very basic with the primary focus being the alleviation of pain, where possible. The nineteenth - century hospital was seen as a place of death, and surgery often meant amputations rather than healing. People feared hospitals; for many it was a place of last resort, and those hospitals with the provision of spiritual ministry were just providing another preparation for death.<sup>82</sup>

Good medical treatment was considered home treatment, and sickness was endured in the home among family. Before the establishment of hospitals doctors would go out to visit patients. They even performed surgical procedures in the family home.<sup>83</sup> Any room could be transformed into an operating room by pulling up carpets and washing down walls. The only necessity was a kitchen so that water could be boiled.<sup>84</sup> Those unfortunate people who did not have the support of their family or a home did not receive medical treatment.

In the 1860s much of society still believed that the need for institutional care in a facility, such as the House of Providence, meant a breach in family responsibility. The nineteenth-century family was

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<sup>81</sup> Dennis Guest, The Emergence of Social Security In Canada, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 15.

<sup>82</sup> Guest, The Emergence of Social Security In Canada. 15.

<sup>83</sup> Morris J. Vogel, The Invention of The Modern Hospital Boston 1870 - 1930, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 1.

<sup>84</sup> Vogel, The Invention of The Modern Hospital Boston 1870 - 1930, 1.

expected to defend against public dependency. Society felt that relief should not be given to anyone who could otherwise be supported within his or her own family.<sup>85</sup> Individuals were responsible for their own health care and anyone depending on aid was considered a disgrace in nineteenth century Canada. Dennis Guest in *The Emergence of Social Security in Canada*, commented on the dependence of the poor:

Poverty was common enough in colonial times but to be dependent upon public-for private charity was quite another matter. Dependency carried with it the despised label of pauper' and was widely regarded as a sign of personal failure if not moral obloquy.<sup>86</sup>

These attitudes worked against the acceptance of public responsibility for the poor and the development of institutional care. Communities were unlikely to support hospitals and poor houses when they considered families responsible for their own health care and believed that poverty and dependency were signs of personal failure due to a lack of morals.

The Sisters of St. Joseph as a religious body were able to help the poor without the same societal issues of moral failure and dependency as a government run institution because they expected something in return from those they attended. The Sisters were giving a hand up to the needy but it came with the expectation of an exchange. Those who accepted the Sisters' help were expected to follow the rules of the house, which were Catholic. The Sisters of St. Joseph were teaching Christian morals and social standards to everyone under their care. Society knew that the Sisters ran a charitable institution. This was seen in a different light than a government owned and operated institution paid for through tax dollars. It was an exchange where the Sisters provided food and shelter in return for the acceptance of a life of Christianity.

By the later part of the nineteenth century the Sisters were learning to accommodate religion, medicine and social services. St. Joseph's evolved toward Sigerist's third stage through assuming the character of a modern hospital. Institutional changes as well as changes in demeanour prepared for the rise of St. Joseph's as more of a medical institution and less as an instrument of social and religious control. At the end of the century the affluent became more likely to enter the modern St. Joseph's Hospital once it had learned to adjust and was no longer overtly used for conversions and social control. Additionally, the development of social and medical attitudes helped reshape the hospital. The basic elements of human life - birth, death and illness - were now medical elements that were attended to in the hospital.<sup>87</sup> The idea of the family as the primary supporter had faded. By the end of the nineteenth century religion and charity had become integrated with new forms of medical care. The Sisters of St. Joseph had adjusted their

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<sup>85</sup> Richard B. Splane, Social Welfare in Ontario 1791-1893, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1965), 69-70.

<sup>86</sup> Guest. The Emergence of Social Security in Canada 14 -15.

<sup>87</sup> Vogel, The Invention of the Modern General Hospital Boston 1870-1930. 3-4.

Catholic intent while emphasizing medical care in their hospital and House of Providence. The people of Guelph now had reliable institutional health care.

### The House of Providence

In keeping with Sigerist's theory in the development of the hospital, St. Joseph's House of Providence was born in the first stage of hospital evolution, where the hospital, being more medically focused, began in Sigerist's second stage. Initially the hospital and House of Providence were developed together as one institution. In establishing a hospital and House of Providence together in 1861 Catholic officials and the Sisters of St. Joseph thought of both medical practice and care for unfortunates in the same light. Both were objects for Christian charity. Changes in medicine in the late nineteenth century increasingly separated the hospital and House of Providence. Their separation by 1895 signalled the arrival of modern medicine in the medical facility of St. Joseph's.

Canada adopted its social welfare system from England. In the mid-nineteenth century consensus held that poor relief was primarily a family responsibility but that otherwise it should be handled at a local level. Furthermore, humanitarian almshouses or even relief in people's homes were only for the "worthy" poor. The "unworthy" poor, those judged deficient due to causes such as intemperance, were left to their own devices. Houses of Industry, sometimes known as workhouses, were developed in England as a way to deal with those individuals who were deemed able to work but were unwilling to do so. By placing these people in houses of industry it was hoped that the able-bodied would learn the habits of industry and offset the cost of their own keep.<sup>88</sup> Almshouses were developed for the worthy poor, and the old and the sick, while apprenticeships were established for the children of the poor. However, in an effort to keep the poor tax to a minimum, these three groups the unworthy poor, the worthy poor and poor children - came to be looked after in the umbrella institutions of Houses of Industry.<sup>89</sup> Therefore the government houses served all those people who were judged in need of correction as well as those judged in need of compassion as one and the same. They were all expected to go to houses of industry. The Upper Canada statutes of 1836-1837 outlined who would be accepted in the house of industry.

All poor and indigent persons who are capable of supporting themselves, all persons who are incapable of supporting themselves, all persons able to work and without any means of maintaining themselves, but who refuse to or neglect to do so, all persons living a lewd, dissolute, vagrant life or exercising no ordinary calling or lawful business sufficient to procure an honest

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<sup>88</sup> Guest, The Emergence of Social Security in Canada, 10.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 10.



living, all such as spend their time and property in Public Houses to the neglect of their lawful calling.<sup>90</sup>

The statute exemplifies how society felt about the poor but it does not differentiate between the different categories of the poor. There was no display of compassion but rather a degree of scorn for the needy.

Similar to the poor houses in England, all houses of industry in Ontario attempted to eliminate the undeserving poor by making life in the institutions as demanding as possible. The house was to be attached to a farm, so that male residents might have employment on the farm, while the women worked at domestic chores in the house.<sup>91</sup> The idea was to keep inmates working and keep costs down by operating an industrial farm. Inmates were to earn their keep at the house of industry it was not a place for idlers.

In 1853, the township was given authority to pass poor relief bylaws, but the rate of taxes for that purpose depended on the agreement of a majority of taxpayers. A revision of the Municipal Corporations Act 1858 dropped the proviso about taxpayer agreement.<sup>92</sup> County councils now had the authority to grant outdoor relief to the resident poor and provide grants to charitable institutions. The town of Guelph did not establish its own house of industry. However, the Sisters of St. Joseph opened their House of Providence three years after the municipal corporation Act revision.

When St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence Guelph opened in 1861 the sixteen beds filled quickly as it served as a home for those requiring any measure of assistance, as a local hospital, and as the Sisters' residence.<sup>93</sup> With few exceptions the inmates of the House of Providence, especially in the beginning, were dependent children, young women and the elderly. Originally three Sisters opened the hospital and House of Providence but by the end of the first year there were five Sisters running St. Joseph's. Within the first year St. Joseph's constantly became filled to capacity and the Sisters found that they needed a larger accommodation for their patients.<sup>94</sup> Through the recognition and acceptance of the local people the Sisters had proved the necessity of the hospital and House of Providence in Guelph.

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<sup>90</sup> Richard B. Splane, Social Welfare in Ontario 1791-1893 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965) 71.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* 69+.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* 69+.

<sup>93</sup> St. Joseph's Hospital and Home. "Our History, St. Joseph's Hospital and Home, Guelph."

<<http://www.sjhh.guelph.on.ca/our-history.htm>> Sept.2001.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

An Act of Parliament incorporated the hospital in 1862 and a new building was erected. The new larger building was made of local limestone and topped with a tower holding a bell that rang out the Angelus three times a day.<sup>95</sup> The new three-storey building maintained two floors for medical accommodation, while the third floor, in keeping with the Sisters charitable intentions, was for the care of the aged and the mentally handicapped.<sup>96</sup> The 1862 building increased the number of beds from sixteen to forty. The former hospital and House of Providence known as the “Gate House” became the new residence for the five sisters and was now referred to as the “Upper House.”<sup>97</sup>

In 1866, the United Provinces of Canada passed the Municipal Institutions Act, making it mandatory for all counties with more than 20,000 people to build a House of Industry and Refuge within two years. Those counties who did not meet the population requirement were obligated to combine with bordering counties to establish a joint institution. In 1868 incorporated villages were added to the types of municipalities authorized to give relief to needy persons. The mandatory clause was now removed for the establishment of houses of industry and it was up to individual municipalities whether they wanted to establish their own house of industry.<sup>98</sup>

St. Joseph’s Hospital and House of Providence was the only alternative in Guelph for the indigent, the sick the elderly or the disabled for nearly fourteen years. It was not until 1875 that the Guelph General Hospital officially opened. The General was supported by means of subscriptions and the ladies of the city furnished the hospital.<sup>99</sup> It was a medical facility not intended to provide for the indigent in the way of a poor house or house of industry.

The Sisters of St Joseph opened the House of Providence in the town of Guelph but the surrounding communities of Arthur, Elora and Fergus in Wellington County had not yet established a county house for their poor. In 1873 Wellington County discussed a proposal recommended by Dr. George T. Orton to attach a House of Industry to the Guelph General Hospital while it was being built on the edge of Guelph

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<sup>95</sup> St. Joseph’s Hospital and Home. “Our History, St. Joseph’s Hospital and Home, Guelph.” <<http://www.sjhh.guelph.on.ca/our-history.htm>> Sept.2001.

<sup>96</sup> See *Appendix B* for copy of photograph of second building.

<sup>97</sup> Compiled by the School of Nursing Staff. History of St Joseph’s Hospital and School of Nursing, Guelph (Guelph: Sisters of St Joseph 1940) 5.

<sup>98</sup> Splane, Social Welfare in Ontario 1791-1893, 97+.

<sup>99</sup> Compiled by The Hospitals Division of The Department of Health, The Hospitals of Ontario: A Short History (Toronto: Herbert H. Ball 1934) 46.

and still had adjoining land. Nothing ever came of Dr. Orton's idea.<sup>100</sup> Eventually, in 1876, more than fifty acres of land was purchased for \$2,500 in the settlement of Aboyne midway between Elora and Fergus for the proposed Wellington County House of Industry and Refuge.<sup>101</sup> The completed House of Industry opened 1 November 1877. It was a multi-purpose institution that functioned as an orphanage, a refuge and an old age home. The manner in which it was run provides a startling contrast with St. Joseph's House of Providence.

The county house of industry would accept only those signed in by the proper authority. The proper authorities were "the reeve, deputy-reeve or two justices of the peace who could commit vagrants and such idle lewd and dissolute persons as outlined in the Municipal Act "<sup>102</sup> It is difficult to know what role the inmate played in his or her own committal to the house of industry. Some may have approached the reeve to request admission to the house of industry.

In his first annual report, the first inspector of the Wellington County House of Industry, John Beattie of Fergus, asserted that the House of Industry and Refuge was for the "deserving poor of our own County." He emphasized that there were already 53 inmates in a building built for 65, and he made it clear that less desirable inmates were being committed.<sup>103</sup> Beattie did not want the House of Industry to house the "undeserving" poor. He felt too many people were taking advantage of the institutions benevolence.<sup>104</sup>

Life at the house of industry was governed by 16 rules, set out in county by-law 263. These rules appear to be for the protection of the people running the public institution. At this time in Ontario there were few options for a large and diverse section of society. The house of industry accepted everyone from the physically impaired to the mentally impaired to the socially maladjusted. A glimpse at a couple of these rules gives us an impression of nineteenth-century life in the Wellington County House of Industry and Refuge.

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<sup>100</sup> Steve Thorning, "The Political Debate and Division Behind the House of Industry National Historic Site," Fergus-Elora News Express, 15 July 1998.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> "Wellington County House of Industry and Refuge", File A994.27 Wellington County Archives, Fergus.

<sup>103</sup> Historical Atlas Publishing Co., Historical Atlas of the County of Wellington, (Toronto: Historical Atlas Publishing Company, 1906) 35.

<sup>104</sup> "Wellington County House of Industry and Refuge", A994.27 Wellington County Archives, Fergus.

Some inmates were considered prisoners and kept in solitary confinement.<sup>105</sup> Rule 14 seems more appropriate for penitentiaries, stating that “Every person previous to admission as an inmate of the house shall be subjected to examination and search by the Keeper, or one of his assistants.”<sup>106</sup> Inmates also had to receive permission to leave the institution to seek employment or to live with family. Inmates were expected to work for their keep.”<sup>107</sup> Since the House of Industry insisted that able-bodied inmates work, it was known locally as the workhouse for the poor. Rule 15 stated that, without written permission of the Inspector, or by consent of the keeper upon good cause shown “No visitor shall have admission to the House on the Sabbath.”

The House of Providence administered by the Sisters of St. Joseph at Guelph also had rules for their patients that were included under general regulations for the hospital as well.<sup>108</sup> The Sisters of St. Joseph administered the House of Providence as a religious institute under the tenets of Christian charity. The residents of the House of Providence were also expected to work if they were physically able but it was not a prerequisite for their acceptance into the house. Visitors at the House of Providence were allowed every day and patients could request a clergyman.<sup>109</sup> As far as the means of the institution permit, St. Joseph’s regulations in 1895 read, “the poor are received gratuitously. Patients of any religious denomination are admitted to this institution, and all are treated with equal kindness and care.”<sup>110</sup>

After the establishment of the county house of industry, published sources documented admissions there and in the Catholic facility.<sup>111</sup> The admission registers documented the inmates’ place of residence and their length of stay at the institution.<sup>112</sup> The total number of inmates at the House of Providence in 1878 was 69. Of this number, 36 were discharged within the year and 33 remained as inmates; 34 were

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<sup>105</sup> Ken Seiling, “Wellington County House of Industry Papers 1977”, Wellington County Archives, Fergus.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Rules and Regulations of The St. Joseph’s Hospital, c.1895, St. Joseph’s Hospital Archives, St. Joseph’s Archives, Guelph. 8.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. 6-7.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. 6.

<sup>111</sup> Evidence for minutes taken from Mr.Langmuir, The Inspector of Asylums, Prisons, and Public Charities in his annual report, for the official year ending 30 September 1877.

<sup>112</sup> Wellington County Council Minutes, 17 January, 1878, “Guelph Hospitals,” Wellington County Archives, Fergus.

admitted to the House from the town of Guelph; 26 from the County of Wellington; and 9 from other counties .<sup>113</sup>

The House of Providence registers for the 46 years from 1861 to 1907 admitted forty per cent of its inmates from Wellington County, while thirty-one per cent were from Guelph and twenty nine per cent were from other counties in Ontario.<sup>114</sup> Even though the house of industry had opened in 1877, Wellington county residents were still coming to St. Joseph's House of Providence for charity.

The attitudes of the Sisters, concerning religious concerns, is evident in a private note to the Bishop where the Sister Superior referred to the Wellington County House of Industry and Refuge. "As there is a County refuge the council will not recognize our House of Providence as they otherwise would", the Superior wrote, "They instructed me to send anyone who wished to Fergus (The House of Industry), but, My Lord, you know why we hesitate to send our poor there."<sup>115</sup> The Sister Superior objected to the visible scarcity of Roman Catholic services and the ideology of the public institution that the deserving poor were to work for their keep. The house of industry had a Roman Catholic priest available to inmates by request only and a resident Protestant clergyman who conducted services in the institution only on alternate Sundays.<sup>116</sup> Since religion was not a category of data recorded at the House of Industry and Refuge, it is difficult to establish the Catholic-Protestant ratio. The lack of church services and the lack of visibility of a priest at the government institution would suggest that it was not very accommodating to those of the Catholic faith.

As much as the Sister Superior at St. Joseph's may not have wanted to send the poor to Fergus there were times she had to do just that. In a letter addressed to D. Brocklebank Arthur, Ontario, one of the sisters explained that they were just too full at St. Joseph's to take another resident. The patient, an elderly man, would have to go to the house of industry in Fergus.

I am instructed by Mother Martina to write you regarding Mr.\_ who was placed in our hospital July 4th He is a helpless old man but does not require hospital care. The House of Providence being overcrowded we cannot accommodate him there. You will oblige him [and] us very much

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> House of Providence Registers 1861-1907, St. Joseph's Health Centre Archives, Guelph.

<sup>115</sup> St. Joseph's Hospital/ St. Joseph's House of Providence Annual Report 1908, Guelph Parish File, Diocese of Hamilton Archives, Hamilton.

<sup>116</sup> Wellington County Council Minutes, June 1896, "Report of the Inspector of The House of Industry," Wellington County Archives, Fergus.

by having him transferred to Fergus. I am sorry that we have to do this but want of room forces us to it.<sup>117</sup>

With the exception of three individuals, all those admitted to St. Joseph's in 1878 were Roman Catholics.<sup>118</sup> During the first forty years of St. Joseph's House of Providence 1861-1907, the majority of inmates were Catholic. Forty-six per cent of the inmates during this time were also Irish, while only eight per cent was English.<sup>119</sup> Therefore the majority of inmates at the House of Providence were not only Catholic, but also Irish Catholic. These statistics reveal the nature of Irish immigration in nineteenth-century Ontario.

Although the House of Providence was a home for people of all ages, fewer young persons were admitted and they stayed for shorter periods of time. The average age of all people admitted from 1861 to 1907 was 55 years.<sup>120</sup> Destitution accompanied old age. This was related to increasing medical problems associated with advancing years.

The difference between the number of male and female inmates in 1878 was hardly worth noting with 35 males and 34 females.<sup>121</sup> There was however an overall increase in male admissions from 1861 to 1907. Of the 1,992 records studied 54 per cent were male and 45 per cent female.<sup>122</sup> This difference may be attributable to women marrying or finding domestic work, or having greater familial supports.

The House of Providence was like the House of Industry and Refuge in that farm property was a source of revenue. The House of Providence maintained a garden and kept some livestock. The farm must have been quite successful because it was the largest source of income for the House of Providence. Sales of surplus produce, hay, grain and livestock offset the costs of salaries for maintenance staff and wages for doctors. The Sisters who were also the nurses received no wages.

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<sup>117</sup> Letter to D. Brocklebank, Esq. Arthur, Ont. from St Joseph's Hospital, File 911.160.001, St. Joseph's Health Centre Archives, Guelph.

<sup>118</sup> Wellington County Council Minutes, "Guelph Hospitals," 17 January 1878, Wellington County Archives, Fergus.

<sup>119</sup> Register for the House of Providence 1861-1907, St. Joseph's Health Centre Archives, Guelph.

<sup>120</sup> Register for the House of Providence 1861-1907, St. Joseph's Health Centre Archives, Guelph.

<sup>121</sup> Wellington County Council Minutes, 17 January 1878, "Guelph Hospitals," Wellington County Archives, Fergus. Evidence for minutes taken from Mr. Langmuir, The Inspector of Asylums, Prisons, and Public Charities in his annual report, for the official year ending 30 September 1877.

<sup>122</sup> Register for the House of Providence 1861-1907, St. Joseph's Health Centre Archives, Guelph.

Government income, once it began accounted for less than one quarter of the total revenue. This left the Sisters with the task of acquiring additional funds. Funding for the hospital came from government grants, fund raising, bequests and anonymous donations. The Sisters also held an Annual Ladies' Day in which they raised money through the selling of flowers and a variety of planned activities. Another popular fundraiser was the field days with races and baseball games held at the Ontario Agricultural College. Collections were also taken annually at the Church of Our Lady to help pay for indigent patients.<sup>123</sup>

The Wellington County Council Minutes 1878 provide an example of the receipts and expenses of St. Joseph's House of Providence.

<u>Receipts for the year</u>		<u>Expenditures for the year</u>	
Province of Ontario	436.66	For Food of all kinds	1717.39
Municipal Aid	200.00	Clothing and Furnishings	561.95
From Inmates	441.00	Fuel, Light, and Cleaning	134.19
Income from Property	000.92	Salaries and Wages	120.00
From all other sources	812.56	Repairs	47.00
		Other expenses	399.47
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>\$2891.14</b>	<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$2980.00</b>

The Sisters continually looked for sources of revenue to keep the House of Providence viable. Announcements were placed in the local paper for aid,

The Sisters of St. Joseph would feel very grateful to anyone sending them men's or women's cast off clothing of any kind for the use of the poor under their charge in the House of Providence. Also they will be glad to receive old pieces of cotton or linen in small or large pieces for the use of the sick in the hospital. Parties having anything of the kind will do a kindness by dropping a postal to the Sisters and a messenger will be sent for them.<sup>124</sup>

The Sisters of St. Joseph also went door to door seeking donations for the House of Providence to supplement the provincial grants, the farm revenue and the small income collected from the inmates.

Extant brief history papers written by the Sisters of St. Josephs say that the Sisters often found supplies diminished and placed their trust in Divine Providence and prayed.<sup>125</sup> The Sisters recorded narratives of their divine faith. One account recounted how milk had run out at the hospital and House of Providence and it seemed that all avenues for help to buy more were exhausted. Sister Superior urged her Sisters to pray and ask St. Joseph for assistance. Later that afternoon a cow was found grazing on the hospital

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<sup>123</sup> Letter to Fr. (illegible). Nov. 10, 1912, St. Joseph's Health Centre Archives, File 911.160.001, Guelph.

<sup>124</sup> Lawrence, 100 Years of Service 1861-1961, 9.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid . 10.

property. The Sisters tried to find the owner of the cow but failed. In the end they kept the cow and their need for milk was fulfilled .<sup>126</sup>

Another narrative recorded by the Sisters told how they found themselves without wood for cooking and heating. They prayed and that day a cord of wood was anonymously delivered to the hospital and home. There were other stories of bills that would come due with no resources to pay them and unexpectedly an envelope would be found with just enough money to cover the bills.<sup>127</sup> These stories demonstrate the Sisters' faith in God as well as their faith in the people of Guelph. The Sisters depended on the charity and benevolence of the local people of Guelph to help them sustain their benevolent institution.

The anecdotes from the House of Providence demonstrate the financial hardships of the Sisters in their work of medicine and social welfare. The leading difficulty for the administration of all religious and public hospitals was the lack of available money to properly administer these institutions. Canadian pioneers understood all too well the hardships of poverty and disease. In the nineteenth century there was no public health system to help the victims of poverty or disease. Canadians depended on their families and friends to assist them in their suffering.

### The Second Stage of Hospital Evolution: Public Monies

While St. Joseph's House of Providence was still providing for the indigent by the early 1870s, St. Joseph's Hospital was beginning to emerge as more of a medical institution. From the 1830s a Protestant-Catholic dichotomy in the organization of charitable institutions had become evident.<sup>128</sup> Denominational and ethnic diversity had worked against the development of any publicly funded and church-sponsored welfare system. This meant that hospitals and houses of providence run by religious organizations such as the Sisters of St. Joseph initially received no government funding. Therefore the hospital and the House of Providence had to be maintained from sources within the Catholic organization such as fundraising, donations and bequests. The public and religious hospitals worked for many years at trying to build their finances. Eventually at the end of the century the provincial government became involved and sponsored Ontario's public and private health institutions.

After just three years in Guelph serving the sick and the indigent the Sisters were troubled by a serious lack of financial resources and the threat of closure that confronted the Board of Directors of St. Joseph's.

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>128</sup> Splane, Social Welfare In Ontario 1791-1893, 5-6.



In 1864 Father John Archambault, who was the parish priest at Guelph, wrote Bishop Farrell in Hamilton advising against the closure of St. Joseph's.<sup>129</sup> In his letter Archambault clarified that the Sisters were well liked and suggested that they receive assistance so that the running of the institution could be carried out more efficiently.<sup>130</sup> There is no record to explain how the sisters managed during this difficult period. Presumably the bishop provided financial assistance to the Sisters at Guelph. They would not be eligible for a provincial grant for ten more years.

It was not until 1874 with the passing of the Charity Aid Act intended for houses of industry and refuge that St. Joseph's House of Providence received assistance from the government. Under the Act provincial funds of up to \$4000 were granted to assist charitable institutions. The Inspector for the Province, T.F. Chamberlain, reported on St. Joseph's House of Providence, specifically to the cost of their land and buildings, to determine their eligibility for a grant through the Charity Aid Act.<sup>131</sup>

The provincial grant given to St. Joseph's through the Charity Aid Act ignited protests that public funds should not be considered for a purely Catholic institution.<sup>132</sup> The accommodation of religion in the hospital and home was an ever-present problem concerning St. Joseph's. The Guelph General Hospital was ineligible for provincial funds under the Charity Aid Act as it was a public hospital and not a charitable institution. No comparable funding was assured at this time for public institutions under the Municipal Act.<sup>133</sup> Therefore the Guelph General relied on sympathetic grants from the town of Guelph, while the Sisters of St. Joseph were denied the same town grants due to their physical location fourteen feet outside the town limits.<sup>134</sup>

County councils had been permitted to provide aid to benefit the impoverished in their community since the late 1850s. In 1875, the same year the Guelph General opened, the County of Wellington provided

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<sup>129</sup> Spetz, Diamond Jubilee History of the Diocese of Hamilton, 239.

<sup>130</sup> Letter from Father Archambault to Bishop Farrell 23 March 1864, Papers of the Guelph Mission, Archdiocese of Hamilton quoted in Debra L. Nash-Chambers, "In the Palm of God's Hand? The Irish Catholic Experience in Mid-Nineteenth Century Guelph," The Canadian Catholic Historical Association, (1984):78.

<sup>131</sup> Deborah Carter and David J. Wood, "Poor Relief and the County House of Refuge System in Ontario, 1880-1911," Journal of Historical Geography 18, I, (1992): 442.

<sup>132</sup> Nash-Chambers, "In the Palm of God's Hand?" (June 11 & 12, 1984): 80.

<sup>133</sup> Splane, Social Welfare in Ontario 1791-1893, 99-102.

<sup>134</sup> McVittie, "St. Joseph's: 125 Years of Service", 11 (1986): 10.

them a public grant of \$500. In the following year the County granted \$600 to the Guelph General.<sup>135</sup> It was not until 1877, the same year that the House of Industry and Refuge opened in Fergus, that Wellington County Council allocated St. Joseph’s Hospital and House of Providence a grant. Thereafter council continued to give yearly grants.<sup>136</sup> The Sisters gratefully accepted the county grants and learned to adapt to the limitations set on them by their location.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 1877, the Inspector of Asylums, Prisons and Public Charities paid a visit to St. Joseph’s Hospital and House of Providence. By this time the addition matching the 1862 building had already been completed.<sup>137</sup> The Inspector recorded the total receipts and expenses for St. Joseph’s Hospital for the year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 1877.<sup>138</sup>

<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Expenses</u>	
From Province of Ontario	1094.07	Maintenance of the hospital	3152.53
From Municipalities, as a grant	400.00	For building an addition	3671.00
From paying patients	218.25		
Income from property	446.00		
Subscriptions, donations, etc.	167.50		
Other sources	435.40		
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>\$3361.22</b>	<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$6823.53</b>

By 1877 the province of Ontario was the largest contributing source of revenue for St. Joseph’s. The grants from the Charity Act were based on the average stay for each inmate at the House of Providence during the year. In 1877 the average stay was 153 days, and the collective stay of the entire House of Providence inmate population equalled 10,616 days. This meant St. Joseph’s was entitled to a government grant of \$743.12 for 1878.

Allowance for 10,616 days at 5 cents per day	530.80
Supplementary aid, 2 cents per day	212.32
<b>Total aid for 1878</b>	<b>\$743.12</b> <sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Sister’s of St. Joseph, “Rules & Regulations of the St. Joseph’s Hospital,” (Guelph: Mercury Steam Printing House, 1935), St. Joseph’s Health Centre Archives; The Guelph Evening Mercury and Advertiser, Wednesday 20 July 1927 : 85.

<sup>136</sup> Sisters of St. Joseph, “Rules and Regulations of the Sisters of St. Jospheh”, c 1895, St. Joseph’s Health Centre Archives.

<sup>137</sup> See Appendix C for 1877 building addition.

<sup>138</sup> Wellington County Council Minutes, “Guelph Hospitals,” 17 January 1878, Wellington County Archives, Fergus.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

In 1879 an Order-in-Council limited the Charity Aid Act so that it would only provide patient aid for 270 days.<sup>140</sup> Therefore if the patient required care for the full year the institution would not receive funding for 95 of 365 days.

The Guelph General and St Joseph's felt the financial squeeze at the end of the nineteenth century as they both sought more money. In 1894 in response to a request from the hospital boards the county and city councils visited the Guelph General Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence.<sup>141</sup> During council's visit to the General Hospital, Mr. Goldie made a plea for more money on behalf of the institution. When council toured St. Joseph's the same day Father Kavanagh also put in a request for money by asking for "a little more if possible." The hospitals were feeling the pinch of available resources.

At this time St. Joseph's was planning for their new 1895 building that needed the community's support for constructing and furnishing a modern structure. During council's tour of St. Joseph's, Father Kavanagh stated that while it was true that the hospital was under Catholic auspices, no one was refused admittance, and there was no proselytizing.<sup>142</sup> Apparently Father Kavanagh was worried that St. Joseph's would not receive additional support. Councillors Peebles and Perry, who were included in the tour, stated that they personally were not averse to larger grants for the hospital but believed that their constituents, who were not acquainted with the extent of the work of charity, had to be regarded to some extent.<sup>143</sup> These councillors used the excuse that their constituents were uninformed and that this limited the possibility for an increase in city or county funds to St. Joseph's.

In 1895 an amendment was introduced to the Charity Aid Act stating that no aid would be paid for paying patients, irrespective of the length of time for which a hospital may have previously received such aid. More restrictions came in the following year when another amendment to the Act reduced the period of payment made available for indigent patients from 270 days to 120 days.<sup>144</sup> The House of Providence continued to receive indigent patients but there was no guarantee they would be reimbursed for their care.

The grants made to each hospital were from a fixed sum on a per capita basis. This was a problem as the number of hospitals sharing the grants increased from 18 in 1897 to 55 in 1902. The increase in hospitals

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<sup>140</sup> The Hospitals Division of the Department of Health, The Hospitals of Ontario, 18.

<sup>141</sup> "Visiting the Hospitals" The Guelph Mercury, Friday Evening Paper, Jan. 26. 1894.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> The Hospitals Division of The Department of Health, The Hospitals of Ontario, 18.

was discussed at the first meeting of the Ontario Hospital Association held in 1904. As a result of this meeting the government decided to pay fifty cents per day for public ward patients for an indefinite stay in hospital.<sup>145</sup>

In 1912 the City of Guelph paid St. Joseph's seventy cents per day for all indigent patients who were admitted by the mayor, while the County granted forty-nine and a half cents per day per patient.<sup>146</sup> In this same year the Charity Aid Act was consolidated and revised under the title of "The Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act." For the first time, the responsibility of the municipalities in respect to indigent patients was set out with aid limited to a *per diem* rate of \$1.00.<sup>147</sup> Although the *per diem* rate was established in 1912, it was not actually dealt with until 1917 when an order-in-council fixed the rate at only .30 cents per day, but the maximum indigent rate payable by the municipalities was raised to \$1.25.<sup>148</sup>

Paying patients and grants from the municipalities and the province were the basic revenues of institutions for the sick and indigent. The higher fees paid by private patients largely offset any excess in the per diem cost for indigents over the municipal and provincial contributions.<sup>149</sup> St. Joseph's often found itself overextended and had to borrow money.<sup>150</sup> By 1897 the Sisters had borrowed at least \$12,000 from Ontario Mutual Life along with other smaller loans from local priests and friends.<sup>151</sup>

The competition for available money was an ever - present problem for the two city hospitals and the house of industry in Fergus. The Sisters of St. Joseph wrote to James Beattie, the county clerk in Fergus, with a list of indigent patients from the county of Wellington. They noted that they had failed to get the necessary certificates for an elderly couple from the township of Guelph who had been "brought in by Mr. Carter and admitted with the understanding that the Institution would receive some recompense for their care.",<sup>152</sup> In the same letter the Sisters of St. Joseph also requested some financial assistance for the care

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<sup>145</sup> W. G. Cosbie, Toronto General Hospital 1819-1965 (Toronto: MacMillan 1975) 120.

<sup>146</sup> Letter to Dr. Bruce Smith, Inspector of Hospitals from St. Joseph's, 15 Feb. 1912, File 911.160.001, St.

Joseph's Archives, Guelph.

<sup>147</sup> The Hospitals Division of The Department of Health, The Hospitals of Ontario 19.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. 19.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. 19.

<sup>150</sup> "Board of Director's Minutes, January 28, 1897," Clarica Insurance Company. (Waterloo: Board of Director's Minutes, January 28, 1897).

<sup>151</sup> "Interest Paid on Loans 1897" File 886.220.002, St. Joseph's Health Centre Archives, Guelph.

<sup>152</sup> Letter to James Beattie, Esq. County Clerk, Fergus from St. Joseph's Jan. 31, 1912, file 911.160.001, St. Joseph's Health Centre Archives, Guelph.

of a young lady from Arthur who had tuberculosis and no money to pay for her own care.<sup>153</sup> The Sisters were required to have certificates signed by those with authority to admit indigent patients or the county would not reimburse them.

The Sisters constantly found themselves defending their institutional costs for patient care. In 1912 they wrote to the Guelph city clerk regarding the daily rate for indigent patients .

. . . Until Feb.1, 1912 we were asking seventy cents a day but the General Hospital having raised the rate we did the same. According to the Amendment in the Charity Aid Act passed by Provincial Parliament in 1912 Hospitals are allowed to charge one dollar daily but the Management of our Institution is satisfied with the same rate as is allowed to the General Hospital. <sup>154</sup>

The Sisters were trying to recover costs. They were not demanding top dollar they merely wanted equal treatment by the city. As a hospital and House of Providence for all persons they were entitled to the same recompense as that received by the Guelph General Hospital. Just four years later the Sisters had to write to the City again. This time their letter was addressed directly to the Mayor.

By an Act of the Provincial parliament the Hospitals are allowed to collect one dollar a day from municipalities for indigent patients. For a short time in 1913 this was given us by the City but finally was cut down to eighty cents per day. Understanding that a rebate has been given to the General Hospital and feeling that a like consideration will meet our appeal we hereby petition for twelve months as the enclosed statement shows. <sup>155</sup>

The Sisters were doing their best to assure that the city of Guelph was fair in their distribution of funds.

The Sisters fought for funds to administer their institution but they also fought for the rights of their indigent patients. In 1916 another letter went out to the Mayor and the Finance Committee of the city of Guelph.

On two occasions within the last 6 mos. we have written requesting artificial limbs for a male patient. In your reply you state if the County Council would agree to pay one-half the cost you would recommend that the City Council pay the balance. This is not a matter for this Institution. The City is responsible to us for the support of this man as it was the City that placed him in the institution. It is urgent that something be done immediately toward purchasing limbs for this man, otherwise we will have to request the City to make provisions for him elsewhere. <sup>156</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Letter to James Beattie, Esq. County Clerk, Fergus from St. Joseph's Jan. 31, 1912, file 911.160.001, St. Joseph's Health Centre Archives, Guelph.

<sup>154</sup> Letter to J. Moore City Clerk from St. Joseph 's July 21, 1912, file 911.160.001, St Joseph's Health Centre Archives, Guelph.

<sup>155</sup> Letter to the Mayor and Finance Committee City of Guelph from St Joseph's July 13, 1916, file 911.160.001, St. Joseph's Archives, Guelph.

<sup>156</sup> Copy of Letter from Sister Martina to Mayor Nov. 20, 1916, file 911.160.001, St. Joseph's Archives, Guelph.

Neither the city nor the county wanted to be held financially responsible for this man.

### The Third Stage of Hospital Development: The Modernization of the Hospital 1877 and 1895

The third stage of Sigerist's concept of hospital evolution was the development of the modern hospital. The public's growing acceptance of social welfare and hospital care created the need for an addition to St. Joseph's in 1877. The Sisters of St. Joseph were raising funds for the new \$4,000–\$5,000 addition.<sup>157</sup> The Guelph Mercury, 7 June 1877, advertised the upcoming St. Joseph's charity picnic to take place on June 21<sup>st</sup> at the Exhibition grounds. It was a community event to raise funds for the cost of St Joseph's new hospital addition. Tickets to the picnic were twenty-five cents and admission for children was half-price.<sup>158</sup>

The growing urban population, government operating grants, and fund raising by the sisters made the 50 by 36 foot matching stone addition possible. The number of beds thereby increased from sixteen in 1861 and forty in 1862 to 77 beds in 1877. The entire size of the new hospital and the 1862 hospital was 100 feet across the front and 36 feet deep. The architect for the 1877 addition was John Hall Jr. who had designed and built many of the buildings that characterized Victorian Guelph.<sup>159</sup> This new addition exemplified the growing public acceptance of institutional health care in Guelph.

By 1892 St. Joseph's required another addition. In 1894 the "Upper House," also known as the old Gate House, was torn down, and the stone was used in the foundation of the new hospital, completed on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 1895.<sup>160</sup> The old buildings of 1862 and 1877 became the House of Providence.<sup>161</sup>

The number of patients had increased and they were staying longer. As the elderly stayed for longer periods the beds were becoming continuously occupied. A new hospital was an expensive venture; the Sisters could not afford to finance an addition let alone a new building. Bishop Dowling of the Hamilton diocese agreed to oversee the financing, but he wanted the building planned and constructed right

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<sup>157</sup> "Guelph's Progress. Building Operations, 1877." Guelph Evening Mercury 14 November 1877.

<sup>158</sup> "Charity Pic-Nic" Guelph Weekly Mercury & Advertiser, Thursday 7 June 1877, 1.

<sup>159</sup> Gilbert A. Stelter, "The Carpenter / Architect and the Ontario Townscape: John Hall Jr. of Guelph," Historic Guelph XXX (September 1991): 4-21.

<sup>160</sup> See Appendix D for copy of photograph of 1895 building.

<sup>161</sup> McVittie, "St. Joseph's: 125 Years of Service," 11(1986): 6.

away.<sup>162</sup> The cost of the construction was \$38,027.<sup>163</sup> The Mutual Group provided St. Joseph's Hospital with a loan for five thousand dollars just one month after it opened.<sup>164</sup>

The official opening of the new hospital was well documented in the local paper. Guests included many prominent members of the community. The Guelph Daily Mercury and Advertiser, 16 October 1895, reported the formal opening of the new hospital.

The St. Joseph's Hospital adjoining the city, under the care of the Sisters of St. Joseph, was formally opened and dedicated with solemn religious services on Tuesday morning followed by a reception and inspection of the building by a number of our citizens and other invited guests .... the opening of this large, elegant and perfectly equipped Institution was naturally looked upon with deep interest, not only by those more immediately connected with it, but by the community generally, for whose benefit irrespective of creed, colour or nationality its doors are now thrown open ...<sup>165</sup>

The exterior of the new hospital was made of white brick with cut stone trimmings. It was built in the Romanesque architectural style that was prominent at the time in both Europe and North America.<sup>166</sup> This pavilion style promoted by Florence Nightingale consisted of a large building on spacious grounds in order to increase ventilation and reduce contagion. Pavilion hospitals were V-shaped two-story structures devised to maximize fresh air and sunlight.<sup>167</sup> This style had evolved from the miasmatic theory of infection that held that disease was transmitted by polluted air.

In the late nineteenth century hospitals were transformed from centres for the indigent to larger sophisticated health institutions. Hospitals now looked toward patients who paid as an important source of revenue.<sup>168</sup> As they became more reliant on this revenue to offset costs of scientific medicine, they adjusted the charitable developments to attract the wealthy.<sup>169</sup> Scientific medicine took priority over indigent care. The number of doctors increased and the hospital services expanded. The new St. Joseph's featured large open wards and many windows. The buildings were heated with hot water by Gurney's

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid 6.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid 5-6.

<sup>164</sup> The Mutual Group 1895, Clarica Archives, Waterloo Mutual Life Assurance Company Investments. Mortgages, 1877 -1911, Mutual of Life Archives, 1 volume, 81.13 .21.

<sup>165</sup> "St Joseph's Hospital" The Guelph Daily Mercury and Advertiser, 16 October, 1895.

<sup>166</sup> The brick of the 1895 building is referred to as white; it is actually buff or cream coloured. I believe it was referred to as white as opposed to red brick.

<sup>167</sup> Cortuila, "The Social Transformation of the Hospital in Hamilton: 1880-1917," 137-138.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid 181.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid 186.

“Double Crown” boilers, and the electricity was supplied by the Guelph Electric Light and Power Company.<sup>170</sup> Patients were demanding fireproof buildings, elevators and individual telephones. The hospital constructed private rooms and granted special privileges to entice paying patients to the hospital. This necessary shift in focus to attract the middle and upper classes is seen with the addition of private rooms in the St. Joseph’s Hospital built at the end of the nineteenth century.

In the modern hospital, physicians required operating rooms and diagnostic equipment such as laboratories and x-ray departments. Private rooms were furnished by the citizens of Guelph and the surrounding communities. Benefactors from the surrounding communities included Bishop Dowling of Hamilton, Reverend Father Cosgrave’s parish of Fergus, Reverend Father Healey’s parish of Acton, as well as private donations from Elora, Georgetown and Oustic.<sup>171</sup> There were also many more benefactors from Guelph. St. Joseph’s Hospital and House of Providence tended to the needs of the sick and dependent not only from the population of Guelph but from the surrounding counties as well.

The Roman Catholic religion was still a part of St. Joseph’s and so the new building included a chapel. Sisters Vincent, Philip and Winnifred wrote to Bishop Dowling on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 1895 asking to have the cross canonically erected in the chapel. Bishop Dowling delegated Father Kavanaugh to erect and bless the cross.<sup>172</sup> Religion was omnipresent at the official opening of the new building of St. Joseph’s Hospital and House of Providence. Bishop Dowling made a speech to the crowd gathered for the opening of the new St. Joseph’s Hospital in 1895.

They would always be welcome to St. Joseph’s at any time or on any occasion. The institution was in no ways sectarian in its operations. It was open to all classes, irrespective of color, creed and religion, and all were made welcome within its walls. Every patient had the right to his or her own physician and minister without any interference.<sup>173</sup>

The bishop went on to say that some people had a false idea of the Catholic hospitals, but when they came to know them they were the best friends of these institutions.<sup>174</sup> The Inspector of hospitals, Dr. Chamberlain, stated that out of forty-one hospitals in the province, Catholics managed fifteen without sectarianism. “The management of their hospitals was alike with that of the Protestant, in constitution, medical staff, etc.” Chamberlain went on to say that if they were not up to a certain standard they would

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<sup>170</sup> Guelph Electric Light and Power Company Papers, 1895. SJA.

<sup>171</sup> The School of Nursing suor: History of St. Joseph’s Hospital and School Guelph, 1940, 9.

<sup>172</sup> Letter from the Mother Superior and the Sisters of The Community of St Joseph’s Hospital to Thomas Joseph Dowling Bishop of Hamilton, and his response. SJA.

<sup>173</sup> “St Joseph’s Hospital” The Guelph Daily Mercury and Advertiser, 16 October 1895.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.



not get the government grant as it was passed based on the number of patients in the institution. Chamberlain saw that wealthy families were sending their relatives to the hospitals for better treatment when they were sick and he believed this spoke well for hospitals.<sup>175</sup>

The *Guelph Mercury* in 1895 also recorded a speech given by Mr. Gibson where he mentioned the difficulty of raising the money for the new hospital. For the capital expenditures, religious communities had to rely on their own resources, private subscriptions and municipal aid.<sup>176</sup> Gibson went on to say that a few years ago he could count the number of hospitals on the fingers of one hand, but now there were hospitals in all of the cities and most of the towns. He thanked the government for the aid given to these institutions. In his conclusion Gibson turned to the hot topic of religion and he spoke of the Catholic / Protestant relations by stating that a very considerable number of Protestants were patients of Catholic hospitals and vice versa. Gibson summed it all up by voicing that he believed the question was whether hospitals of whatever nature were doing the work they were designed for and filling a needed want in the province. He stated that they were.<sup>177</sup>

#### Impediments to the Hospital and House of Providence: Water, Fire, and Disease

St. Joseph's learned to survive through the accommodation of religion, medicine and social services while at the same time having to cope with the inherent hindrances of the period. Throughout hospital additions and the expansion of services the Sisters of St. Joseph had to cope with the effects of natural hazards such as contaminated water, fire and disease. These impediments added to the Sisters' work while at the same time these same difficulties also gave them an opportunity to prove their charitable intentions by accommodating religion, medicine and social services.

Fire proved to be a threat to St. Joseph's Hospital and home. The first incident happened at just past four o'clock on the morning of January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1882 when a fire alarm was sounded from the City Hall and from the bells of the Roman Catholic Church. It was reported that smoke could be seen from a large fire to the west of the city. When the fire brigade reached the Exhibition grounds they learned that the fire was at St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence. The reel company returned to the fire hall, as they knew that there was no water supply at St. Joseph's Hospital to pump. The more useful hook and ladder truck continued on to the hospital where they found that the large barn adjacent to the hospital was engulfed in

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

flames.<sup>178</sup> Upon arrival the firemen discovered that there was no hope of saving any of the barn or its contents. By five o'clock that morning the fire had burned itself out and the building was left in ruins. The barn itself was covered by insurance from Scottish Imperial for \$1,000.<sup>179</sup> However, all of the barn's contents were destroyed and none of them was covered by insurance.<sup>180</sup> The cause of the barn fire has remained a mystery. The Guelph Daily Mercury attributed the cause of the conflagration to either the tramps that sometimes found shelter in the barn or an incendiary.<sup>181</sup>

The Sisters had to replace the barn's contents. Before the week was out they had begun to raise funds. Public fundraising events were advertised in the local paper. The first event to be held in aid of St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence was a lecture to be held at the Church of Our Lady. The Reverend A. Vasseur, a Jesuit of the Chinese Mission, was planned to lecture on the Chinese empire. The admission price was twenty-five cents.<sup>182</sup> A second lecture was held at city hall on February 15<sup>th</sup> 1882. The lecturer was Mr. Phillips Thompson and the topic was The Irish Land Question.<sup>183</sup> The Sisters wasted no time in raising the funds to have their farm restored.

A second fire occurred at St. Joseph's in 1912. This time the fire was in the hospital and House of Providence building. Sister Marcelline discovered the fire and immediately ran to tell Mother Superior who called the fire brigade. The eventful journey of the fire brigade to the fire scene was recounted in a short hospital history.

The fire chief driving a team of horses had to swerve off the Elora road to avoid a streetcar on Division Street. The tongue of the sleigh had snapped in two and so they were helpless. A cutter occupied by Mr. A. Barber was right behind, and the two chemical tanks were put into this, while the chief who was thrown over the dash board, but luckily escaped unhurt, also got in and was driven to the scene of the fire.<sup>184</sup>

It is a wonder that the firemen arrived at all. Once at the scene the fire chief found that the cause of the fire had been defective wiring between the floor and the ceiling above the coalbunker. The Sisters and the

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<sup>178</sup> "Barn Fire" The Guelph Daily Mercury and Advertiser, 31 January 1882.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> The contents of the barn were: 8 horses, 7 cows, 7 pigs, a large quantity of poultry, 300 bushel of potatoes, 400 bushel of turnips, 100 bushels of peas, 3 tons of hay, 13 loads of straw, 12 bushels of seed wheat, a double cutter, 5 sets of harness, harrow and plow, reaping machine (belonging to Thomas Kelly), and a set of wool picking tools (belonging to John Gilfoy).

<sup>181</sup> "Barn Fire" The Guelph Daily Mercury and Advertiser, 31 January 1882.

<sup>182</sup> "Lecture" The Guelph Daily Mercury and Advertiser, 6 February 1882.

<sup>183</sup> "The Irish Land Question" The Guelph Daily Mercury and Advertiser 11 February 1882.

<sup>184</sup> The School of Nursing Staff; "History of St. Joseph's Hospital and School of Nursing," Guelph, 1940, 35-37.

firemen worked together to restrict the fire to a small space by saturating the floor with water. When the fire had been put out the firemen praised the Sisters and the men of the House of Providence for their fast action and help in extinguishing the fire.<sup>185</sup> The danger of fire was compounded at St. Joseph's due to the lack of water.

The Roman Catholic facility was placed at a disadvantage by its location. City water lines did not reach the location, increasing the possibility of the spread of diseases such as typhoid through water and adding costs to the operation. St. Joseph's water came from a spring on the property and was pumped by a windmill to a large tank on the fourth floor of the building. There was no filtering system and so sand was often pumped into the tank along with the water resulting in blocked pipes.<sup>186</sup>

The windmill often failed to adequately pump the water. In an article in the Guelph Mercury, Sister Isadore reminisced about the number of pails of water she carried from the spring on St. Joseph's property when the old windmill failed to pump an adequate supply of water into the tank.<sup>187</sup> St. Joseph's Hospital administrators approached city council about the water problem and Council agreed to lay the water mains if the hospital paid \$1,500 towards the cost of the work.<sup>188</sup> The Sisters agreed and the water mains were installed solving the Sisters water problem.

Fires and contaminated water were dreaded but nothing was more feared than an epidemic. Epidemics were a major concern for all Canadian communities including Guelph in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Three major epidemics hit the town: the 1837-1842 cholera, 1847-1852 cholera again and Spanish Flu in 1917.<sup>189</sup> A smaller diphtheria epidemic hit Guelph in 1888 but it caused such concern in Toronto that a government inspector arrived to interview the Mother Superior regarding hospital facilities for the care of these patients.<sup>190</sup> The hospital expanded temporarily with each new onslaught of cholera and typhus.<sup>191</sup>

Some of the earliest doctors at St. Joseph's were Dr. H. Howitt, Dr. Herod, Dr. L. Brock, Dr. T.A Keating, and Dr. Orton and these were the first doctors to diagnose epidemics in Guelph.<sup>192</sup> Annual

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid 38.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid 12.

<sup>187</sup> "Guelph Hospitals" The Guelph Mercury, 1950.

<sup>188</sup> St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence "City of Guelph" file SJA.

<sup>189</sup> The School of Nursing Staff "History of St Joseph's Hospital and School of Nursing," Guelph, 1940, 35-36.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> "Letter to the Sister's of St. Joseph from IE. McElderry," April 2nd, 1906, SJA.

<sup>192</sup> The School of Nursing Staff, "History of St. Joseph's Hospital and School of Nursing," Guelph, 1940.

reports for the hospital from 1888 to 1897 listed the doctor's diagnosis for patients. Some of their most common entries were diphtheria, typhoid fever, cholera and various terms known to describe tuberculosis or lung disease such as phthisis pulmonalis (pulmonary tuberculosis), "hemorrhage from the lungs," and consumption.<sup>193</sup>

Greater cooperation arrived through an understanding that communicable diseases did not respect religious divisions. All faced the same dangers. An increase in the awareness of the infectious quality of diseases required distinct physical arrangements around the turn of the century. The increasing knowledge of the contagious quality of diseases required stricter rules and specific physical arrangements. In an effort to reduce the impact of epidemics the management of St. Joseph's began building isolation cottages in 1905 for patients with infectious diseases.<sup>194</sup> The isolation cottages (also known as the Pest Houses) were completed at St. Joseph's in 1906. A financial statement including the subscriptions to the isolation buildings were included in a letter to the Sisters on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1906 from J.E. McElderry:

On behalf of Father O'Loane, Father Donovan and myself, who have had this matter in hand. I now beg to hand you a statement of all the subscriptions received and the money expended in connection with fitting up and putting into place the St James and St. Roch buildings at St. Joseph's Hospital, Guelph.<sup>195</sup>

The cost of these two isolation cottages was \$2627.34. Donations were accepted in cash, skilled labour and appliances.<sup>196</sup>

The first year the isolation cottages were open 125 patients received treatment with 61 paying nothing.<sup>197</sup> When the flu epidemic hit Guelph in 1910 the City agreed to pay \$3.00 per week, for nine of the patients at the isolation cottages who were unable to pay. This amount was to include the salaries of the two nurses working in isolation. The salary for nurses at this time was \$3.00 per week.<sup>198</sup> With increasing capital building costs, everyday medical and administrative expenditures, and a larger patient base, the Sisters of St. Joseph were under constant financial pressures.

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<sup>193</sup> The School of Nursing Staff. "History of St Joseph's Hospital and School of Nursing," Guelph, 1940. 35-36. Note: From October 1888 to October 1889 the diseases causing death are most often given as: Diphtheria 5, Paralysis 3, Phthisis Pulmonalis (TB) 2, Valvular affection of the heart, Puerperal fever 1, Cancer of the breast 1, Rheumatic arthritis 1, Tumor, 1 Chronic albuminuria 1, Dilated stomach and bowels with paralysis 1, Typhoid Fever 1.

<sup>194</sup> The School of Nursing Staff. "History of St. Joseph's Hospital and School," Guelph 1940. 12.

<sup>195</sup> Letter to the Sister's of St. Joseph from J.E. McElderry, April 2nd, 1906, Guelph SJA.

<sup>196</sup> List of Expenditure with Letter to Sister's of St Joseph from J.E. McElderry, April 2nd 1906, Guelph SJA.

<sup>197</sup> Letter re: Isolation Cottages, file #886.200.001 SJA.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

When the Sisters of St Joseph heard that the City was about to erect an Isolation Hospital at the Guelph General Hospital the Sister Superior sent a letter to the mayor 20<sup>th</sup> March 1911. We the management of St. Joseph's Hospital beg have to submit to your consideration a few facts concerning the care of patients suffering from infectious diseases. For the past thirty years the Institution has not refused admission to those cases when it was possible to accommodate them but the expenditure for the care and maintenance for at least fifty per cent has been defrayed by the hospital. It is our intention to continue this good work but we feel the inability to do so without assistance. As the City is about to erect an Isolation Hosp. and as we have at considerable expense provided for the accommodation of eighteen patients we humbly petition your honorable Body to remunerate us in the future on the same basis as the New Isolation.<sup>199</sup>

The City and St. Joseph's came to an agreement in June of 1911 whereby the city agreed to pay the hospital \$1 .00 per day for each indigent patient suffering from infectious diseases (other than smallpox). This was a large increase from \$3.00 a week in the previous year.<sup>200</sup> The only persons paid for were those sent to the hospital by order of the Mayor, the Relief Officer or the Medical Officer of the City. In the 1911 accord the city agreed to send St. Joseph's Hospital one-fifth of all indigent persons while the other four-fifth's were sent to the new Isolation Hospital erected by the city at the Guelph General Hospital. The city also agreed to pay the hospital \$400.00 per year for the next ten years for the management, building and outfitting of the Infectious Hospital.<sup>201</sup>

With the addition of isolation cottages disease was reduced but not eliminated. There were still 4 cases of typhoid at St. Joseph's from March 1918 to October 1918. Then influenza hit Guelph hard in October of 1918 with 7 influenza patients admitted in that one month alone.<sup>202</sup> Influenza had the potential to be a fatal illness and additional health nurses were called from the province.<sup>203</sup> The city shut down schools, dance halls, theatres, poolrooms, the bowling alley, and Sunday schools until the threat of contamination ad passed.<sup>204</sup> Cholera, typhoid and influenza were the worst epidemics in Guelph.

After the Great War isolation facilities were incorporated into the hospital, causing the isolation buildings to become obsolete.<sup>205</sup> The hospital and House of Providence progressed with modernization and the building additions reflected the changing needs of the community as the people began to depend more on hospital services.

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<sup>199</sup> Letter to Mayor from Sister Superior Mon. March 20, 1911, file 91 1.160.001 SJA.

<sup>200</sup> Letter re: Isolation Cottages, file #886.200.00 I SJA.

<sup>201</sup> Guthrie and Guthrie, Agreement between St. Joseph's Hospital and the Corporation of the City of Guelph, June 1911, Guelph. SJA.

<sup>202</sup> Indigent Patients from City of Guelph, SJA box 911 .200.005.

<sup>203</sup> Jeanette Pearl Grant, "Power Relationships and an Urban Place: A Study of the Sewage and Water Utilities of Guelph, Ontario 1867-1920." (MA Thesis, University of Guelph), 96.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. 96.

<sup>205</sup> "St. Joseph's Hospital" The Guelph Daily Mercury. 15 July 1960.

## The School of Nursing

The final stage of development to the modern hospital included the added feature of a training school for nurses. The modern hospital would need affordable staff to assist with the administering of progressive medicine. A unique feature of the Catholic health and social services sectors was the position held by women religious as managers of nursing schools, albeit in consultation with local priests and the bishop.

They did not challenge the medical profession in the way secular women did. In the hospital they provided care that developed into nursing, but at St. Joseph's it appears to have been slow since Nightingale worked during the 1850s and the Guelph General Nursing School began in 1888.<sup>206</sup> St. Joseph's School of Nursing did not open until 1899. Despite this tardiness, the opening of the nursing school provided additional evidence that the hospital had evolved more fully into Sigerist's third and final stage, the development of the modern hospital that began in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>207</sup>

When St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence opened in 1861 the Sisters received no formal nurse training but rather they learned by experience. In 1897 two nurses, Sister Martina and Sister Leo went to Mercy Hospital in Kalamazoo, Michigan to train as graduate nurses. In 1899 these two Sisters returned to open St. Joseph's Training School for Nurses. Under their instruction there were nine Sisters who graduated from the first nursing program in 1902.<sup>208</sup>

Sister Isadore was among the graduates of the first nursing program in 1902, even though she began working at St. Joseph's in 1892. In an interview in the *Guelph Mercury*, she recalled her nurse training and she remembered that the hospital had few conveniences. Isadore entered the hospital as a young probationer, and during her entire term of training she was on night duty. The hot water was heated in an old-fashioned boiler and four small furnaces were heated by adding coal. Sister Isadore assumed these extra duties along with her regular nursing obligations. Isadore remembered that Mother Martina supervised the operating room training and at that time few instruments were kept on hand in the operating room as it was expected the surgeon would supply his own.<sup>209</sup> Sister Isadore also remembered

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<sup>206</sup> Guelph General Hospital, <<http://www.guelphgeneralhospital.com>>. January 2002.

<sup>207</sup> Vogel, *The Invention of the Modern General Hospital Boston 1870-1930*, 1-2.

<sup>208</sup> McVittie, "St. Joseph's: 125 Years of Service," 11(1986): 8.

<sup>209</sup> "Guelph Hospitals," *The Guelph Mercury*, 1950.

the first appendix operation performed at Guelph was for Miss Lynch who was not permitted to move from bed for six weeks.<sup>210</sup>

In 1901 five more Sisters entered the training school and graduated in 1904. In October 1904, the school began accepting lay nurses for training. The first of these was Mrs. Hanlon, of Northumberland Street, Guelph. Some of Mrs. Hanlon's memories include; the train wreck at Rockwood in 1905, typhoid, the first maternity patient in 1907, and one elderly lady who was always smoking a clay pipe. After graduation, there was little work available for nurses other than private duty nursing in the home. Mrs. Hanlon recalls that during one very hot summer she was asked to go to a home north of Stratford to perform a thyroid operation on an elderly lady living alone in a small cabin.<sup>211</sup> This was the work nurses did in the early 1900s, similar to a doctor making house calls but much more was expected of a nurse for less pay. The uniforms worn by the nurses in the 1904 class were floor length with blue and white stripes, a kerchief and an apron. In 1908 the kerchief was replaced with a bib patterned by Mrs. Orton, Dr. Orton's wife. The length of the uniform was four inches from the ground.<sup>212</sup> Nurses could acquire their uniforms from MacDonald Bros. in Guelph or at the Hospital.<sup>213</sup>

Miss Isabella Myers of Berlin entered the training school the same month as Mrs. Hanlon, 7<sup>th</sup> October 1904. It was not until 1918 that the entire Fall class was enrolled on the same day. It was unusual for women to train for a profession in 1904 and Isabella Myers remembered that everyone tried to discourage her. Another memory of Myers was the little old lady in the hospital with a clay pipe who insisted that Myers stand at the door to warn her of the doctor's approach. After graduation, she returned to Berlin, Ontario, where she did private nursing for mostly maternity or typhoid cases in the House of Providence. There were few nurses in those days, and Miss Myers could only recall one other nurse in the city at that time. Rates were then \$21, and finally reached \$25 per week. Miss Myers even accompanied a patient to Calgary in 1908 and remained there for eight years.<sup>214</sup>

The establishment of a nurse training school at St. Joseph's was a tremendous cost saving measure as student nurses provided a cheap source of labour. The nursing program took three years to complete and students worked twelve-hour days. Only one-half day each month was allotted for free time, and

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> The School of Nursing Staff, History of St Joseph's Hospital and School of Nursing, Guelph, 1940, 41.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid 27.

<sup>213</sup> Letter to Graduate Nurses from Sister Superior Feb. 1, 1913, copy in me 911.160.001 SJA.

<sup>214</sup> The School of Nursing Staff, History of St Joseph's Hospital and School of Nursing, Guelph, 1940, 41-42.

housekeeping duties were considered part of the training.<sup>215</sup> In the beginning there were six subjects taught by six doctors. The subjects taught in these early classes were:

Dr. W.F. Savage – General Medicine and Communicable Diseases  
Dr. A. McKinnon – Anatomy and Physiology  
Dr. I. Lindsay – General Surgery  
Dr. H. Howitt – Obstetrics  
Dr. D. Nunan – Nursing Principles and Symptomology  
Dr. W. I. Robinson– Materia Medica<sup>216</sup>

The first formal graduation exercises were held in 1907. In 1919 the Duke of Devonshire, then Governor of Canada, was present and presented the pins and diplomas at the graduation exercises.<sup>217</sup>

Nursing slowly became conscious of its professional possibilities. In 1908, the Graduate Nurses Association of Ontario, was formed. It later became the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario. The main objectives of this organization were the compulsory registration of nurses and the standardization of training.<sup>218</sup> Sister Victor recorded the philosophy of St. Joseph's School of Nursing,

the belief that man is a rational and social being created by God to serve him on earth and attain eternal happiness with Him in Heaven. These principles include respect for the essential dignity of every man in relation to his eternal destiny. The school endeavours to prepare each student to realize the responsibilities of a professional nurse.<sup>219</sup>

At St. Joseph's School of Nursing women saw an opportunity to develop themselves in a career that was still considered exclusive to women. And even though the position of nurse was subordinate to that of the male doctor, it was still a position of some authority that required specialized training. It was a beginning for women, a way to prove that they were competent in areas other than childrearing and housework. It was a career choice where women would be respected and admired for their good work while earning an income. The Nursing School continued at St. Joseph's for 75 years.

## Conclusion

St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence developed as Sigerist has suggested by following the three stages of hospital evolution. At the same time St. Joseph's advanced by accommodating religion, medicine and social services. Developed by the Jesuits and the Sisters of St. Joseph the hospital and

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<sup>215</sup> St. Joseph's Hospital and Home, St. Joseph's Training School for Nurses 1899-1974, May, 1999. SJA.

<sup>216</sup> The School of Nursing Staff, History of St Joseph's Hospital and School of Nursing, Guelph, 1940,23.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>218</sup> The Hospitals Division of The Department of Health, The Hospitals of Ontario, 288.

<sup>219</sup> Lawrence, 100 Years of Service 1861-1961, 9.



House of Providence provided social services and offered Christians an opportunity to reach more people. At a time when the state provided little in the way of social assistance, Catholics were often the providers of social services.<sup>220</sup> The process of accommodation between public and sectarian institutions such as St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence transformed both Catholic facilities. It also altered the nature of state provision of services and the very nature of government in the province.

After starting on their own for purely religious purposes and then progressively receiving state support, the Sisters learned to accommodate. By 1895 the Sisters were playing a part in Protestant health care. This is seen by the mark of pride in the rules and regulations (c.1895) promulgated for conduct at St. Joseph's. Note the provision, which reads that patients requesting the attendance of a clergyman should give notice to their friends and relatives. This was a provision that attempted to forestall religious conflict. This means that protestant ministers had become accepted within the Catholic institution. Accommodation had produced a compromise: Roman Catholics had a facility where they could face the uncertainties of life and death, but Protestants also gained a hospital and House of Providence where they might be cared for without denial of their religion.

The advancements in medicine made the hospital an essential part of community life. The old ideology of the hospital as a place only for death had passed. The modern hospital of the twentieth century was also recognized as a place for healing. In 1918 and 1919 standards were established to measure a hospital's degree of efficiency.<sup>221</sup> The requirements for standardization were in the interest of both the patients and better medical service. Hospitals were either 'approved,' 'provisionally approved' or 'not approved,' under the new standards.<sup>222</sup> The state inspected the hospitals and houses of providence in order to insure standards of care, but the actual operation and particular details were left to people such as the Sisters of St. Joseph who were not civil servants. In this way the activities of Roman Catholics in establishing such facilities as St. Joseph's Hospital and home insured that the government of Ontario and its municipalities served its populace through various means rather than through a strictly state apparatus. Accommodation proved to be of mutual benefit.

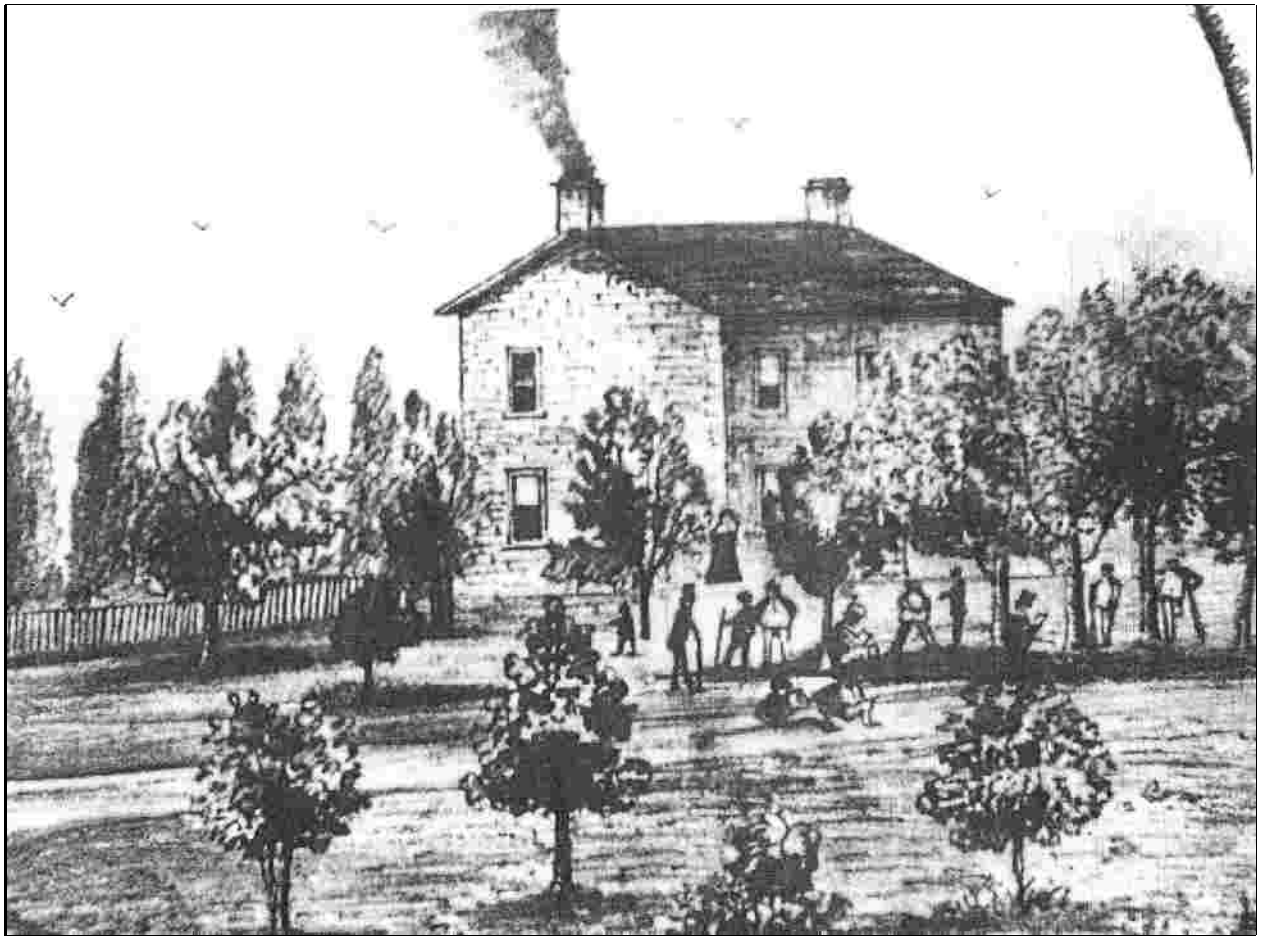
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<sup>220</sup> Terrence Murphy and Roberto Perin ed.s, Concise History of Christianity in Canada, 309.

<sup>221</sup> George Harvey Agnew. Canadian Hospitals 1920-1970 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974) 32-33.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid 33+.

## APPENDIX A



### St. Joseph's Hospital, Guelph ~ The First Hospital

The meagre two-story, stone building commonly referred to as the "Gate House" was unsophisticated, but it fulfilled its utilitarian role and reflected the moderation of the Jesuit order. Sixteen hospital beds were already set up in the house

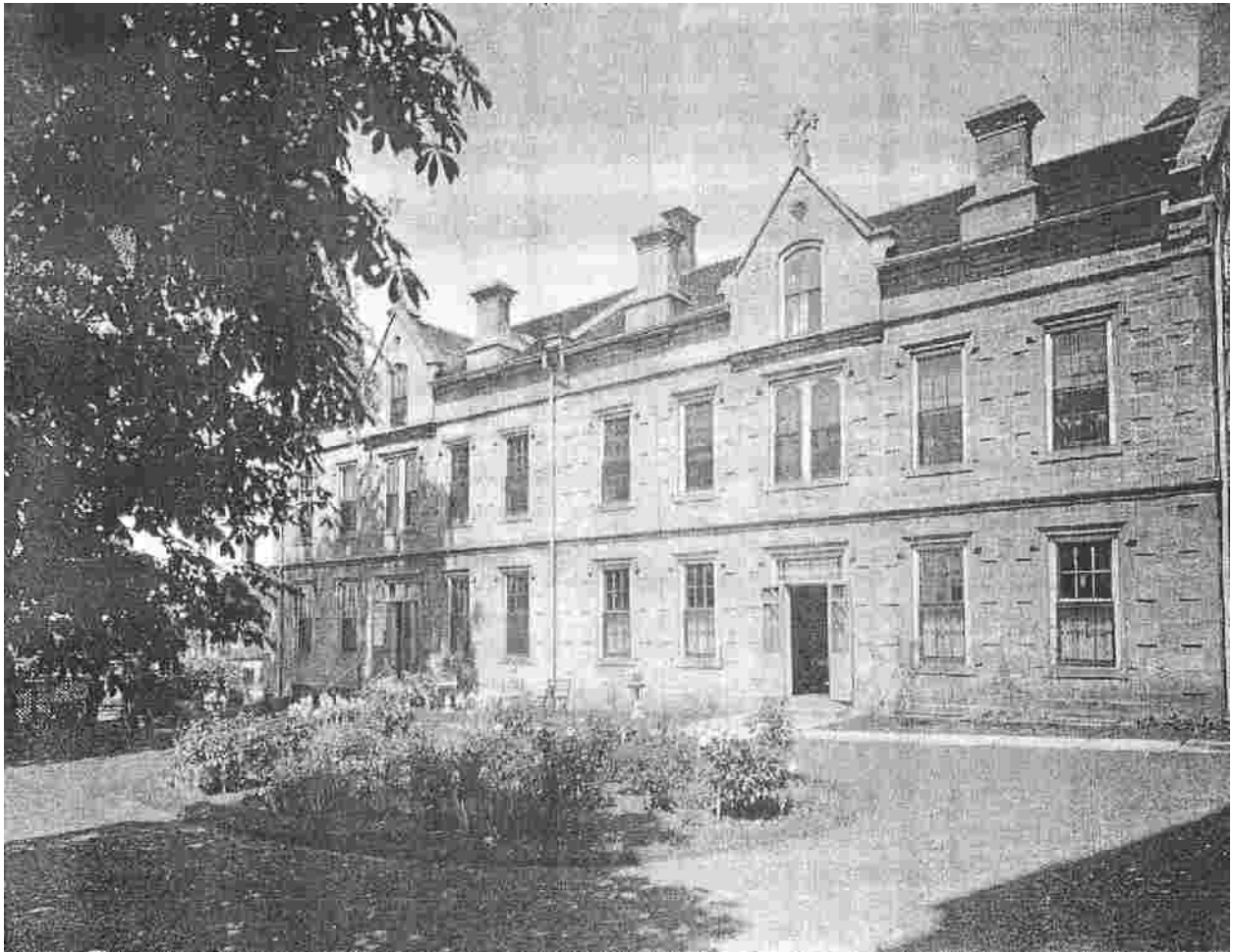
## APPENDIX B



St. Joseph's Hospital, Guelph ~ The Second Hospital

The new three-storey building maintained two floors for medical accommodation, while the third floor, in keeping with the Sisters charitable intentions, was for the care of the aged and the mentally handicapped.

APPENDIX C



St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence, Guelph  
1877 Building Addition

## APPENDIX D



### St. Joseph's Hospital and House of Providence, Guelph

In 1894 the "Upper House," also known as the old Gate House, was torn down, and the stone was used in the foundation of the new hospital, completed on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 1895. The old buildings of 1862 and 1877 became the House of Providence.

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