



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.



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.

The Bold Journey: 1943-1993: An Alberta History of Catholic Health Care Facilities and of their Owners,

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The Bold Journey

1943–1993



**An Alberta History
of
Catholic Health Care Facilities
and of their
Owners**

Edited by Patricia O'Halloran

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the religious congregations who envisioned the "Bold Journey" and who, through their great patience, zeal and courage established the health care facilities portrayed here.

Acknowledgements

The Catholic Health Association of Alberta acknowledges with deep gratitude

the religious congregations and St. Michael's Extended Care Society who have searched their archives to provide us with their history, and who have given their time and attention to the faithful reproduction of this material;

Kathy Petruk of Mundare and Dawn Philipoff of Edmonton who spent long hours typesetting drafts, amendments, corrections, and the final copy;

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Florence Gour, who was one of the first to work on this project and who invested much energy and enthusiasm;

And the religious congregations who provided the major funding for this project.

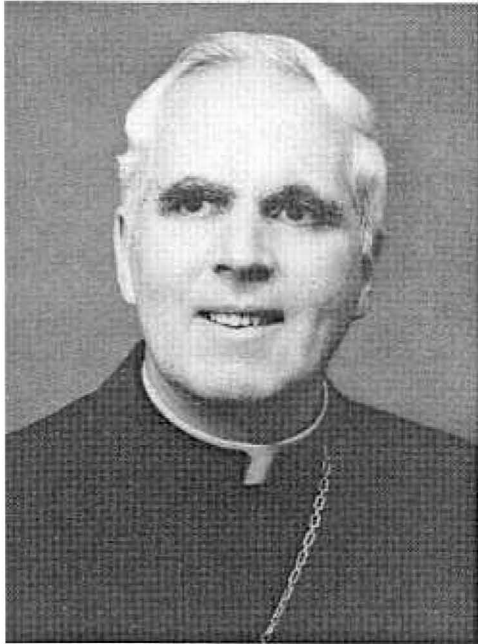
Introduction

The 50th Anniversary of the Catholic Health Association provides us with the opportunity to honour our roots through this publication. The following historical accounts of the establishment of Catholic Health Care in Alberta flows from the lived experiences of various religious congregations of women and the St. Michael's Extended Care Society.

Established by the Grey Nuns in St. Albert in 1863, Catholic Health Care has been a mainstay of Alberta life for over 125 years.

The pioneering stories included in this book highlight the courage and wisdom of various groups of women religious. Motivated by their desire to make real the healing love of Jesus through health services for all; the remarkable stories included here, awaken in us the essence of Catholic Health Care in Alberta.

The Catholic Health Association of Alberta hopes that through the publication of these pioneering stories, all Albertans will be enriched and inspired to continue, no matter what the cost, the "Bold Journey".



Please accept my sincere congratulations on the initiative that you and the Association have undertaken in producing this book to honor the congregations of women religious who accomplished so much in the area of health care in this Province.

We take so much for granted. We presume that universal, highly professional and compassionate health care was always provided in this country. When we are faced with the reality that such has only been the case since our recent past, only then, do we begin to realize the enormity of the contribution made to our society by the pioneers, our communities of women religious. We presume so easily that governments have always provided health care through our taxes.

Long before governments became highly involved, who provided the financial resources? Who took the great risks? Whose presence made it possible that today we may have Catholic hospitals in our midst?

How much we take for granted!

May the book help all of us to realize with a profound degree of reality, of gratitude, and of awe, the stupendous service given so generously by these blessed women. To them we owe much.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. N. MacNeil', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

J. N. MacNeil
Archbishop of Edmonton

December 9, 1991



Thank you kindly for informing me that on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of C.H.A.A. you have plans to publish a book on the history of religious congregations who have contributed so much to the health care in Alberta from the very beginnings of the creation of this Province of Canada. And I am more than honoured to be able to include in this book my tribute to these pioneers in health care.

One of the missionary tasks entrusted to the Church of God is to provide the sick and the suffering loving care and healing in the spirit of our Lord Jesus. And the most appropriate way of doing this through the provision and maintenance of Catholic health care facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes. Voluntary Catholic health care institutions, serving the sick, the suffering and the dying have in most cases been in the hands of different religious congregations of women who dedicated their whole lives in bringing this loving Christian care to the sick, suffering and dying individuals that were entrusted to them. And our Alberta hospitals were so much more efficient and greatly appreciated by the public because they were administered and served by dedicated and loving religious personnel.

So on behalf of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton, I wish to express our sincerest appreciation and thanks to all those numerous religious persons that fulfilled this most important task of the Catholic Church in hospitals and nursing homes with true Christ-like spirit of love and care to all those less fortunate people in the field of health. May the good Lord reward them with continued blessings in all their present undertakings to bring the health care in Alberta even to higher levels in witness to the dignity of human life and to God's love in the healing process.

Myron Daciuk, OSBM
Bishop of Edmonton Eparchy

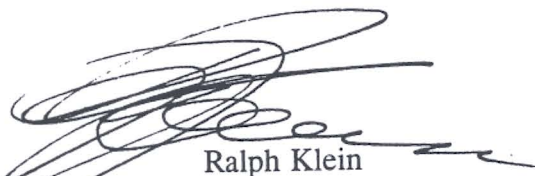


**MESSAGE FROM PREMIER KLEIN
TO THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA**

On behalf of the Government and people of Alberta, I would like to thank the Catholic Health Association for its 50 years of service to Catholic hospitals, their patients, and staff.

You have added a welcome dimension to our healthcare system through your Christian perspective, one which is valued greatly. I consider your relationship with the Government of Alberta to be a partnership -- one where we both work to provide healthcare and maintain the strong involvement of Catholic voluntary organizations in delivering services.

The story of Catholic hospitals is a story of how Alberta was settled and our growth as a society. All of you work so hard in the Catholic Health Association of Alberta and its member organizations are to be commended. I wish for you another 50 years of success.



Ralph Klein

February 1993



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH

As Minister of Health, I would like to congratulate the Catholic Health Association of Alberta on the occasion of your 50th Anniversary.

The vast advances in medical technologies, as well as the changing needs of society, have had a large impact on the delivery of health services since the Catholic Health Association's inception fifty years ago. New medications and diagnostic tools, technological advances and improved physical surroundings have all contributed to the health system we enjoy today. What has remained constant, however, is the need to provide these services with caring compassion. I recognize the commitment your Association has made to fulfil the health needs of all involved, both past and present.

The Catholic Health Association, with its dedicated membership, has always played an important role in the delivery of health services in Alberta and I look forward to the continuing contribution of the Association for many years to come.

Please accept my sincere best wishes for a joyful celebration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shirley McClellan".

Shirley McClellan
Minister
Alberta Health



On behalf of the Alberta Healthcare Association and its members, I am honoured to congratulate the Catholic Health Association of Alberta on its 50th Anniversary. Our health care system owes much to the work of the orders such as the Grey Nuns, the Sisters of Misericordia and others. Without their charitable and often unsung efforts, Alberta's health care system would not have grown to become what it is today - among the world's finest.

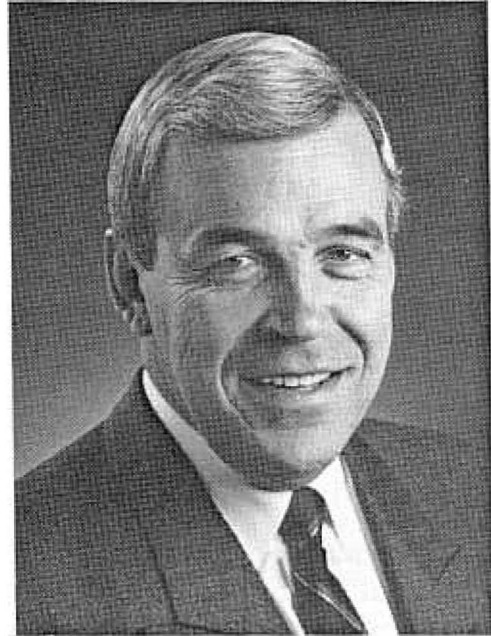
During the past 50 years, AHA and CHAA have worked hard to make Alberta's health care system grow. Together, our organizations strive for excellence in care and the CHAA continues to play an important role in the development through member input and representation on the AHA Board of Directors.

As our health care system enters a new and exciting era, may AHA and CHAA continue to work together to build an even better future for all Albertans. Best wishes from the Alberta Healthcare Association for the past - and next - 50 years.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lucille Moyer".

September 15, 1992

Lucille E. Moyer
Chairman - Board of Directors
Alberta Healthcare Association



As Minister of National Health and Welfare, I am pleased to express my appreciation and sincere good wishes to the Catholic Health Association of Alberta (CHAA). This book, recording the histories and many accomplishments of the CHAA congregations, is a unique and proud undertaking. It is very encouraging to see such outstanding examples of sharing and community involvement.

I commend the hard work and dedication of all the member congregations of the CHAA in providing health services and facilities in Alberta. Your 50 years of commitment and devoted care has greatly enhanced the quality of life for many Canadians.

Congratulations on your achievements and I wish you continued success with your numerous challenges in the future.

B. Bouchard
Minister of National Health and Welfare



CHAA 50th Anniversary

Message from the CHAC

It is with gratitude and joy that the Catholic Health Association of Canada offers this message in recognition of the contribution made to health care in Alberta by religious congregations: gratitude for the leadership shown by them in so many ways, and joy that the Catholic Health Association of Alberta will be celebrating that leadership on the occasion of its 50th anniversary as an association.

It seems that two very current events say something for this recognition and celebration. The first is the recently concluded Summer Olympics. Descriptions of the Olympic spirit and of many athletes included such words as courage, dedication, perseverance, hard work, and personal best. These are the same quality words that certainly describe the leadership of the religious congregations that pioneered health care in Alberta. Whereas motivation of these women religious was singular: they were courageous persons for others - especially the sick, the powerless, and the poor - following the example of Christ. These leaders were all gold medal winners and CHAA is celebrating their achievements.

The second current event - though very different - also relates to the celebration. Recently several national organizations or committees relating to the place of women in Canadian society drew considerable attention in the media. We cannot look back at health care in Alberta over the past 50 years, and more, and not be immensely impressed with the leadership role of women belonging to the religious congregations. They saw a need - to provide health care in small and large communities - and set their talents, skills and prayers to the task. They were not alone. They were astute in soliciting and securing the collaboration of many lay women and men. The names of many bishops and priests form part of that history of collaboration with these women

in their work for others. All in all long before there were organizations advancing the place of women in society, these religious were leaders in society and in the Church. Indeed their method of working was a model of the People of God collaborating long before we retrieved that vocabulary in the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

Gratitude and celebration go together. May all who celebrate the 50th anniversary of CHAA be mindful of the debt owed to these women religious, the faithful pioneers of health care in Alberta.

Reverend Everett MacNeil
President
Catholic Health Association of Canada

Daughters of Wisdom

The Congregation of the Daughters of Wisdom had its beginning on February 2, 1703, in Poitiers, France, when Fr. Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort clothed seventeen-year-old Marie Louise Trichet in an ash-grey homespun dress with contrasting white linen kerchief and coif, the peasant dress of that era.

Louis Grignon was born on January 31, 1673, of middle class parents in Montfort-la-Cane, Brittany. From his earliest years Louis was a pious child. As soon as his younger brothers and sisters were old enough, Louis taught them about God and led them in praying the rosary.

After three years in the parish school, Louis attended the Jesuit College in Rennes from 1685 to 1693. During his college years it was evident that Louis was no ordinary youth; though he did not associate easily with others, he succeeded well in his studies, spent much time in prayer, and often served the poor.

In the autumn of 1693, at the age of twenty, Louis was on his way to Paris to attend the Seminary of St. Sulpice. In a new suit and with thirty francs in his pocket, he walked the two hundred miles to Paris. The journey took between eight and ten days. On the way he gave his money to a beggar and exchanged clothes with another. He arrived in Paris ragged and penniless, yet he trusted that God would care for him as He had done on his journey. He had only one ambition - he wanted to be a priest and serve the poor. When he was ordained on June 5, 1700, he did not accept the benefice offered him, but spent the first year of his

priesthood feeling his way towards the apostolate to which he felt called.

Marie Louise Trichet, born May 6, 1684 in Poitiers, was the fourth child in a family of eight children. Though her parents belonged to the middle class, they were by no means rich. However, they were people of deep faith who took the education of their children seriously. As she advanced through adolescence she felt the call to religious life, yet she could not ask her parents to provide the dowry required.

In May 1701, the itinerant Fr. de Montfort arrived at the General Hospital¹ in Poitiers, asking to say Mass in the chapel. (At this time the hospital was without a chaplain.) Both patients and personnel were captivated by this tall, gaunt, sunburnt priest with noble, yet ascetic features. A petition was sent to the Bishop of Poitiers, requesting that Fr. de Montfort be appointed chaplain at the hospital. The Bishop hesitated, but gave his consent later. In November 1701, Fr. de Montfort took up residence in the hospital.

The hospital was overcrowded with 400 men, women and children. The children were sometimes taught a trade, while the adults were kept busy with manual work; the very old and the infirm, a miserable tribe poorly fed, shabbily dressed, and haphazardly cared for, were huddled in close quarters. Fr. de Montfort set about to ameliorate conditions there. He borrowed a donkey, and with two stout wicker baskets suspended from the beast's back, collected food for the inmates. Either he or

someone else begged for scraps from inns and the homes of the rich to make soup that would make the coarse, dry bread more palatable.

Montfort selected a small number of women among the inmates; and wherever he could gather them, he spoke to them about the love of God, the joy of serving one's neighbour, and devotion to the Mother of Jesus. These women were not "nuns", Montfort regarded them as "leaven" in the dough. The Bishop and the Hospital Board approved of this group, and the directress of the hospital gave them a special room which Montfort named "Wisdom".

Marie Louise Trichet met Montfort at the hospital. When she told him of her desire to be a religious, he promised her that she would be a religious, and suggested that she come to work at the hospital. As there was no vacancy on the staff, and Marie Louise could not enter as a pauper (as she was willing to do), the Board, not wanting to lose such a good prospect, suggested to the directress that she needed a helper. Thus in January, 1703 Marie Louise entered the hospital as aide to the directress; there she worked long hours at menial tasks.

Marie Louise joined the "WISDOM" group. There Montfort tried her mettle. He bought some grey homespun to make a special dress for Marie Louise to set her apart from other women. On February 2, 1703 Montfort invested Marie Louise in her distinct habit. She became the first Daughter of Wisdom.

From that time until his pilgrimage to Rome in the spring of 1705, when he went to consult Clement XI regarding his apostolic call, Montfort was at the General Hospital, off and on. After his return from Rome, Montfort followed the advice of the Holy Father that "there was work enough in France to satisfy Montfort's zeal."



Founder: St. Louis-Marie de Montfort

After the Rome pilgrimage Montfort began to preach missions in various dioceses in Western France. However, he did keep in touch with Marie Louise from 1707 - 1713 by letter or short visits. In 1713 Catherine Brunet, a voluntary worker at the hospital, was accepted as a novice to be trained by Marie Louise. In 1714 Catherine received the habit to become the second Daughter of Wisdom. While Montfort was working in the diocese of La Rochelle, he decided that La Rochelle would be the place to develop his little congregation. In March, 1715

Marie Louise and Catherine moved to La Rochelle to operate a school for the poor. Montfort wrote the "RULE" for the Daughters of Wisdom that same year. As he handed the "RULE" to the two professed Sisters, he told them that he foresaw in God's plan a "seed bed" of Daughters of Wisdom. Soon two young women from La Rochelle joined the congregation.

While preaching a mission at St. Laurent-sur-Sèvre, Montfort died on April 28, 1716. Sometime before his death, he had suggested that Sisters Marie Louise and Catherine return to the General Hospital at Poitiers, leaving direction of the school for the poor to the other two Sisters who were from La Rochelle. This suggestion was carried out.

In 1719, Sr. Marie Louise established the Mother House at St. Laurent; she faced many difficulties, but once established there, the congregation grew. When Sr. Marie Louise died on April 28, 1759 Daughters of Wisdom had spread through the West of France in thirty-five establishments.

Like other French religious congregations, the Daughters of Wisdom endured great hardships during the Revolution of 1789-1799, and at the end of that troublesome time they numbered only 261. In the Nineteenth Century the number rose from 483 to 3400. In the Mid-Twentieth Century numbers peaked at over 5,000. Later, as in many other congregations, numbers have fallen.

On July 20, 1947 Louis Marie de Montfort was canonized; on July 10, 1990 Marie Louise was declared "venerable".

Towards the end of the Nineteenth Century persecution forced many religious to leave France. When the Company of Mary (Montfortian priests also founded by St. Louis de Montfort) were exiled from St. Laurent in 1800, they sought refuge in Holland. A number of Daughters of Wisdom shared their exile. In 1883, the Company of Mary turned its attention to the Province of Quebec where they accepted charge of the agricultural orphanage being

established at Notre Dame des Lacs, northwest of Montreal. On August 20, Fr. Boucher arrived with five Montfortian Brothers; in September three orphans appeared. Seven Daughters of Wisdom joined the Montfortians there in September 1884.

From this modest beginning, the Daughters of Wisdom opened houses in Ontario and Quebec. At the beginning of the Twentieth Century they ventured into Western Canada; their first essay was keeping house for Bishop Orth of Victoria (1904-1906). Later, on October 8, 1908, six Daughters of Wisdom arrived in Red Deer to establish St. Joseph Convent as a boarding school.





Our Lady of the Rosary Hospital up to 1932



Original Our Lady of the Rosary Hospital - Now Sisters Residence

Our Lady of The Rosary Hospital, Castor (1911-)

In September, 1910 as a temporary measure, the quickly growing town of Castor opened Belleview, an eight-bed hospital with a staff of two. The townspeople soon asked for a religious congregation to establish a larger hospital. Fr. Lucien Leconte, P.S.M., the parish priest, obtained five Daughters of Wisdom to build the bigger hospital. Construction began on July 27, 1911, and patients from the other hospital were moved into the unfinished building on November 1, that year.

The Town of Castor provided a grant of \$3,000.00 to help pay for the proposed \$12,000.00 structure; it also exempted the property from taxation. In return for this donation, the Sisters were asked to care for indigent patients from the town, free of charge.

Moreover, the Sisters would not publicly solicit subscriptions in the town for two years.

On October 2, 1911, three French Sisters - Polixène (Superior), Marie-Victoire, and Séraphique - and two Canadians - Srs. Cécile and Clara - arrived in Castor. All in their twenties, they were young and willing to undertake their difficult mission. The townspeople had gathered at the station to welcome the Sisters. Two automobiles were waiting to take them to the hospital.



Our Lady of the Rosary Hospital, 1911

The Trip From Ottawa To Castor

For four long days the Sisters journeyed by train from Ottawa to Calgary. The first lap of the journey, Ottawa to Winnipeg, was in day coach. To while away the time the travellers contemplated the autumn landscape that flashed by; they prayed and enjoyed the food provided by the Sisters in Ottawa. There was gaiety as they joked about "castor" the French word for beaver. What kind of place could they be going to? They withstood the hardship of sitting up all night as they tried to get what sleep possible, their "paquets" nearby.

In those days, when a Sister had her "obedience" she made a "paquet" of her few belongings. Wrapping a piece of canvas round her clothes, slippers, and some books of piety, she made a rectangular parcel which she sewed up with stout thread, often making "pig's ears" at the corners for easier handling.

On the second morning the train stopped in Winnipeg for two hours; as the Sisters, baggage in hand, stepped down from the train, a man, somewhat unkempt in appearance, came up to them, hat in hand and invited them to the French Restaurant for a cup of coffee. Three Sisters followed him and two remained to guard the baggage. When the man noticed that two Sisters were guarding the baggage, he took their place. It was not merely a cup of coffee the "kind host" had ordered, but a French breakfast! While the Sisters were eating their breakfast, a workman discretely slipped a dollar into Sr. Clara's hand to help pay for their dinner.

In Winnipeg, before the Sisters resumed their trip west, Bishop Legal contacted them and arranged for a change of train and sleepers as far as Calgary. He and his companion, Fr.

Leduc, travelled on the same train; during the day they visited the Sisters, and chatted about the West and what the Sisters would do there.

During their trip across Canada the Sisters noted that people had great respect for the most robust Sister, insisting on giving her first place everywhere. They wondered why Sr. Victoire was getting all the attention. Later they found out - the people thought that she was the Superior!

At Calgary the Bishop and his companion bade the Sisters good-bye. As they had to change trains, the Sisters took advantage of the time at their disposal to visit their Sisters who had lately arrived in Calgary to form a community in that city. After a short visit with their Sisters, the travellers continued their journey to Red Deer where they spent the next day with the Red Deer Community, who had arrived there three years earlier. The following day the Sisters for Castor boarded the train for Lacombe with transfer to the branch line running east as far as Castor. When they arrived at Castor it was raining, but the Sisters were warmly welcomed by the townspeople.

Great was the Sisters' disappointment to discover that the building was not yet finished; the west wing was merely a roofed-over basement, which housed the kitchen and its ancillary rooms. In the main building the floors were unfinished, stairways were still in skeleton form, and radiators littered the hallways.

The Castor women provided a sumptuous meal for the Sisters in the basement on a make-shift trestle table covered with a fine linen cloth and napkins to match. Beds had been prepared: three in the future operating room and two in the tiny emergency next door.

The cold kept the Sisters awake the first night. At three in the morning they gathered round the small stove in the basement and made coffee to

warm themselves. Pioneer life was a challenge to all who came West! The Sisters were no exception; here they were without resources, in an unfinished building lacking a furnace! They looked around - there was a small cupboard with a few dishes, the small kitchen stove standing amid wood chips, piles of earth and basement debris - all borrowed (they found out later). During their first month in Castor, with rope and bucket, they drew rusty water from the well. Surrounded by workmen from seven in the morning to six in the evening, the Sisters were busy preparing for the opening of the hospital.

However, they were soon to separate. When the head nurse at Belleview Hospital came down with typhoid fever, the town fathers asked for two Sisters to care for the sick until the new hospital opened. Sisters Séraphique and Cécile were to tend the eight patients there. And when another case of typhoid broke out, Sr. Marie-Victoire went to the country to minister to that patient.



*Sr. Clara de St. Honoré, one of the founders of
Our Lady of the Rosary*

On October 29, the hospital was blessed by Fr. Leduc, O.M.I., who represented Bishop Legal. At 10:00 am, the blessing of the building preceded the solemn high Mass which was celebrated in one of the wards. The choir was accompanied by organ, violin and cello. Fr. Leconte was eloquent as he told how the new hospital would benefit everyone. He also announced that the proceeds of the collection would go to the hospital. The forty dollars collected helped to furnish a room.

The civic reception began at 2:00 pm. The Sisters were at the door to receive Mayor Hugh Smith and Councillors Dillon and Locke of Castor, as well as Drs. Lyons and McPherson, and others. After touring the hospital, everyone assembled again in the ward used for Mass. Speakers, each in his own way, told how happy they were to have a hospital directed by Sisters. There were generous offers to equip the hospital: furniture for three rooms and the nursery; a washing machine for the laundry; and two cows to supply milk. Others promised potatoes and vegetables. The Town sold some furnishings to the Sisters very cheaply.

On November 1, the hospital was finished far enough to receive the six patients from Bellevue; and by November 6, the number rose to fifteen! One room was completely finished; so, to accommodate the workmen, the Sisters moved patients from room to room and floor to floor. For the first two months there was no running water.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty the Sisters faced was learning the language of the country. Only Sr. Cécile could speak English, so she had to interpret for the others. She made rounds with the doctors, answered the telephone, went to the parlour, and shopped. When Sr. Clara, the cook, shopped for groceries, she had Sr. Cécile make a list of items needed. She then went to the store, and presenting her list said, "Mother asks ..."

As early as the second week of November, Fr. Leconte wrote to the Provincial of the Daughters of Wisdom in Ottawa, saying that the Sisters were overworked. A cook and a laundress were needed. Before Christmas the Sisters were so fatigued that one after the other they had to take time off for bed rest.

After caring for the sick and cleaning their rooms, Sr. Polixène would go to the laundry to scrub the soiled linens. By mid-January she was in bed with a high fever and severe headaches. It soon became evident that she was gravely ill. The two local doctors were called to her bedside and they found symptoms of "galloping consumption" in the last stages. Her condition worsened and the doctors gave her only a few hours to live.

Sr. Polixène was anointed at ten o'clock in the evening. By two in the morning all signs of approaching death were visible. The Sisters had gathered round her bed to recite the prayers for the dying. The following day Sr. Polixène seemed worse. She was paralyzed so she could not swallow even a little water.

Prayers were offered asking for her cure; even the Protestants had public prayer for her in their churches. The Sisters prayed to their founder, Blessed Louis de Montfort, for their Superior's recovery.

Then the time came when Dr. McPherson declared Sr. Polixène dead; she heard the Sisters round her discussing how they were going to clothe her for burial. Meanwhile Sr. Polixène was going through agony and despair as she thought, "If I could only manage to move some part of my body, I could let them know I am still alive." In desperation she tried to make a move but couldn't. At a last saving moment she was able to pull her hands apart! When this happened there was great consternation around her. Sr. Polixène was still alive; the doctors said it was a miracle.

Slowly Sr. Polixène recovered to direct Our Lady of the Rosary Hospital for another ten years, before going to St. Justine's Hospital in Montreal as Superior there.

The help came from the Provincial House in Ottawa. Sr. Dulcidie arrived on January 19, 1912 and took over the kitchen work from Sr. Clara, who then became the regular night nurse. On February 12, Sr. Paul came to give a hand with the laundry.

For the first months the Sisters had been sleeping in the basement, but with the arrival of the last two Sisters, a change was necessary.

Early in 1912, Fr. Leconte arranged for a carpenter to make bedrooms on the unfinished third floor. More space was converted into dormitories in the spring of 1913, when the Sisters asked to take in young boarders for a few weeks to prepare them for first Holy Communion.

During the spring months of 1912, the Hospital was without a maintenance man, so early in the morning the Sisters, armed with pick and shovel, went to the garden plot to break the virgin soil. The work was laborious. When the hour for early morning Mass arrived, the Sisters were dead tired; yet, in the fall the garden yielded an abundant harvest.

The same spring, Fr. Leconte helped the Sisters finance some farm buildings: a cow shed, a chicken coop, and a pig sty. From parishioners he obtained a cow, a dozen laying hens, and two little pigs. One morning the priest arrived at the hospital with a box containing a mother hen and eleven chicks. He had set the hen himself, and wanted to surprise the Sisters.

In the beginning, lack of money to meet obligations was a constant problem facing the Daughters of Wisdom. In September the Mother House sent \$2,000.00 to pay outstanding

debts. When the Sisters organized a raffle, merchants generously provided good prizes at the "Draw" in November, \$400.00 was realized. With this Sr. Polixène was able to pay part of the three-year insurance policy, and take care of urgent needs.

In those days it was customary for religious congregations to collect for their works of charity. The Bishop allotted territory in which such an institution could solicit funds. To eke out their modest revenues the Sisters canvassed their area of Castor along the C.P.R. Line. Success of the annual collections varied from year to year.

July 12, 1913 was chosen for the annual collection. Le Marquis de Soucy drove Srs. Séraphique and Clara in his automobile to construction camps some fifty miles east on the railway line. The Sisters were hoping to have a successful collection for the hospital, but luck was not with them. The car stalled in the middle of the prairie! While the Marquis went to get another car, the Sisters spent three hours, unsheltered in the broiling sun. That was long enough to transform them into "redskins". The second car also broke down, and the Sisters had to stay at a hotel waiting for a third car. Then they arrived back at Castor the second day, they were poorer than when they left by ten dollars!

Tired, but not discouraged, the Sisters were determined to return when the roads were good. The second attempt was fruitful. It realized \$168.00, \$51.00 of which was in promises. Later Pierre de Soucy lent the Sisters \$800.00 with interest at 6% to tide them over a hard time.

In 1913, the Sisters opened Bethlehem Private School in the little church the Lutheran Congregation had outgrown. A small monthly fee was charged for pupils from the town - boarders paid \$10.00 a month for board and tuition. Sr. Marguerite taught boys and girls,

aged four to seventeen, the rudiments of English and French, and the elements of the Catholic Faith. Income from the boarders provided for the personal needs of the Sisters.

For some reason Our Lady of the Rosary Hospital failed to get the regular government grant for patient care. People often paid their bills in kind: garden produce, eggs, butter, cuts of meat, and even a load of coal. With crop failures, many people could only give promissory notes when they left the hospital. As this was a new country with a floating population, a good number of these notes were never honoured. Also, two small hospitals had been established nearby, reducing the number of patients in the Castor Hospital to a daily average of six.

By the end of 1914 prospects were brighter; enrolment in the school rose, as did admissions to the hospital. About this time Alphonse Pache, a French-speaking Swiss, became the "handy-man" for the hospital and grounds. In the spring of 1915, in addition to the usual vegetable garden, flowers and trees were planted. By fall the garden yielded abundantly. In adapting to the ways of the country, the Sisters filled their storeroom with jars and jars of rhubarb, canned beans, as well as preserved apricots, peaches, and pears from British Columbia, bought in the local stores.

In 1916, the first government grant was received, at the rate of \$1.50 per day for paying patients, and \$2.50 for those unable to pay. In January, 1918 Bethlehem School became a publicly supported separate school, renamed "Theresetta". The first lay nurse to come on staff was Louise Faucher. From that time lay staff worked in the hospital with the Sisters.

The Twenties brought other changes. The unfinished wing was completed, giving the Sisters a Chapel, a Community Room, private rooms and dormitories. Carrying patients up or



Food Service

down the broad stairway was frequent and difficult. Sr. Lucia, Administrator from 1922 to 1936, decided to make a change. An extension on the south end of the hospital was planned. The "latest model" elevator was installed in 1930, and still functions in 1992. Like the rest of the people, the Sisters weathered the hungry thirties, the years of dust storms and "Bennet Buggies".

Some notable changes for the hospital occurred in the forties. Early in that decade hospital



Sr. Hedwidge, Nurses, Dr. Foster

districts throughout the rural area of Alberta were formed with definite boundaries. Preliminary to forming a hospital district in the Castor Area, a hospital board was named on October 9, 1944. The plebiscite, held in December, favoured the establishment of a hospital district for Castor, whereby the hospital would receive payment at the rate of \$1.50 per day for patients in ward occupancy through municipal taxation. About the same time a contract with the Department of Public Health was signed; the hospital was to receive \$2.85 per day for maternity cases in ward accommodation.

In the late Forties, wells and sewage system at the hospital were giving trouble. However, at the end of the decade the Town of Castor

installed a waterworks system, and the hospital was fully connected to the town mains.

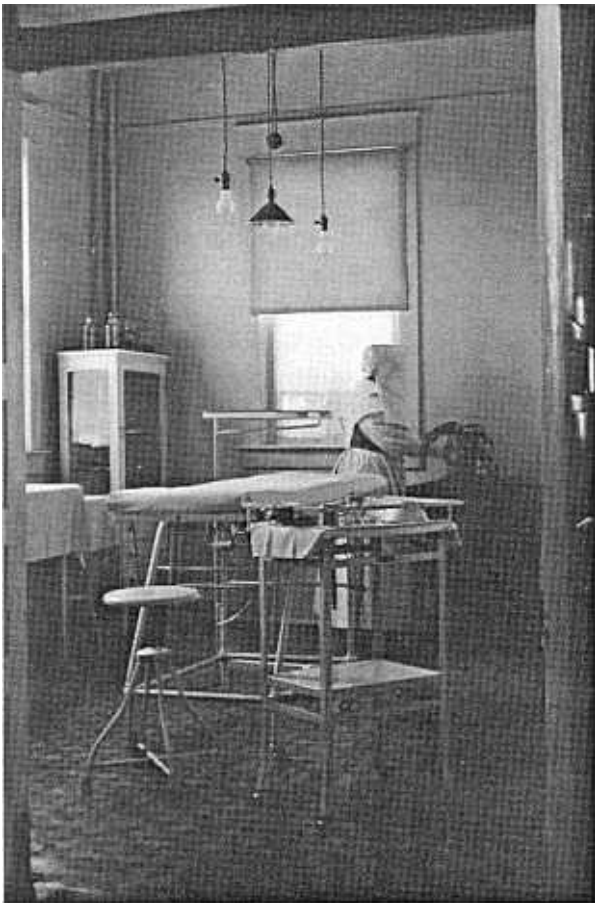
A Ladies' Auxiliary was founded in 1949. This organization has been active in supporting the hospital; over the years it has supplied the hospital with equipment not covered by the annual budget.

The Fifties brought other changes. Beginning in 1954, four nursing aide trainees at a time came to Our Lady of the Rosary Hospital for a ten-week period of practical experience. During the years that this practice continued, these students helped ease the work load on the floors.

For some time it had been evident that a bigger and more modern hospital was needed to serve the area of Castor. An Advisory Board was formed to petition the Honourable J.D. Ross, Minister of Public Health for authority to build a new hospital, with promise of a \$30,000.00 grant for construction and equipment. The Architectural Firm of Diamond and Clark, and Northgate Construction Company, both of Edmonton, were awarded contracts on January 3, 1961.

On July 31, 1961 Fr. J.J. O'Halloran blessed the site for the hospital and Dr. Foster turned the first sod. Excavation and the pouring of cement began immediately. So well did the work progress, that on May 30, 1962 the new hospital was officially opened. Moving into the new hospital was gradual. One by one, kitchen, general office, storerooms, and surgery were moved. Finally, on July 25, the beds arrived and two days later patients were admitted.

At this time, on medical staff were Drs. Cousineau, Kaye and Foster. Gradually they were replaced by others, some from foreign countries. Surgery was performed in the hospital as long as both a surgeon and an anaesthetist were available.



Operating Room



Turning of the Sod by Dr. G.E. Foster - July 31, 1961



A group of Sisters in the late fifties - Front Row: Sr. Helen Baier, Sr. Claire Charlebois, Sr. Gertrude Spruyt, Sr. Anne Patrick; Back Row: Sr. Denise de Jesus

The original hospital was put to new uses. For the new hospital it provided space for storage, workshops, medical records and meeting places. The Sisters' living quarters were expanded, as they got the use of the second floor, as well as the surgery, pharmacy, X-ray and sterilization areas.

In 1979, the hospital was incorporated under the name of "The Corporation of Our Lady of the Rosary Hospital, Castor", with a formal Board responsible for all hospital activities.

In 1983, a formal Pastoral Care Program was established in the hospital. A Daughter of Wisdom was hired to coordinate the program, both in the hospital and in the community.

The office staff began to work with computers in 1986. Ordinarily, medical and maternity cases are cared for in Castor; when extraordinary care is required patients are sent to larger hospitals in Stettler, Red Deer, Calgary or Edmonton. Lab and X-ray is a combined department, staffed by qualified personnel.

Of late there has been a call for "Extended Care" in Castor. In 1987, the Hospital Board applied for an addition to the hospital for Extended Care Beds. Approval for the extension was given in March, 1988. After countless meetings with the Consultants IBI Group, and the Department of Public Health, a contract was signed in August, 1990 with the Architectural Firm, Valerie & Douglas Wilson of Edmonton, to work on the plans for an addition to the hospital.

The Daughters of Wisdom are happy to know that the people of Castor will be cared for in their own surroundings.

POSTSCRIPTS

From a Letter to Mother General

"Father Leconte and his confrère have a charming simplicity. The former activates the hospital by his presence; the latter has begged vegetables and brought them to us. Can you imagine coming into our refectory-community, looking around, then going out with a pail to draw water, or to get coal?"

Give Him H'Air

One time in the early days when surgery was being performed, Sr. Hedwige, the anaesthetist, called out, "Give him h'air, give him h'air." The surgeon looked at his balding patient, and under his breath said, "He WOULD be surprised if I did."

Community Spirit

Within today's staff, community spirit is alive. During the Town of Castor's annual Winterfest Weekend, hospital staff were seen out sculpting and participating in the Trade Fair. The townspeople anxiously awaited the completion of our ice sculpture as our first-ever sculpture, a fellow undergoing a painful injection with a huge hypodermic needle, brought memories and laughs.

In 1992, serenely sculptured in ice and snow, was Our Lady of the Rosary standing on guard at the hospital named for her. She promotes the attitude of Christian caring that is found within.



Our Lady of The Rosary Hospital - Today

Les Filles de Jesus (Daughters of Jesus)

The Congregation of LES FILLES DE JESUS (Daughters of Jesus) was born from the fire of that Love which Jesus came to kindle on earth. Founded in Brittany, France in 1834, it had been nurtured by the great spiritual renewal which had penetrated society in France from the Seventeenth Century on.

The Congregation of the Daughters of Jesus was first conceived in the mind and in the heart of a zealous and humble parish priest, Reverend Pierre Noury. Pious and knowledgeable, he was a poet of the people. Two years after his ordination to the priesthood in 1767, he was named pastor of a small parish in Brittany called Bignan. Sensitized to the needs of his flock, he conceived of a project which could serve the spiritual as well as the temporal needs of the people of Bignan and the surrounding districts.

In 1792, the French Revolution had forced him into exile in Spain and Portugal. In 1801, after nine long years of banishment, he returned to France exhausted by deprivations of all kinds, and faced by impending death. He confided his plans to two pious ladies of his parish. Mr. Noury died on July 25, 1804.

Mr. Noury's project might well have stopped there had not his successor, Reverend Coeffic, become fascinated by it. In 1829, he called Perrine Samson to Bignan from the village of Colpo. Her willingness to serve marked the beginning of a wonderful adventure of love. By 1831, she had gathered a few companions around her, and on November 25, 1834, with four others, she made her religious vows. The

five young women committed themselves entirely to the service of God and of the Church in the poor. Thus, thirty years after Mr. Noury's death, his dream became a reality.

The foundress, who took the name of Mother Sainte Angèle, was able to send fifteen Sisters to the surrounding towns and hamlets. The spiritual worth of the Community was being recognized by the entire population.

The early years of the Congregation witnessed a rapid expansion. Yet, after fifteen years, grave internal difficulties threatened its existence. But God had His own plan and had already chosen the one who was to save the Order from imminent disintegration. She was Mother Marie de St. Charles, elected Superior General in 1846, at the age of twenty-six. She served in that capacity for thirty-eight years, until her death in 1884. She gave the Congregation a new impetus, a renewed vitality and endowed it with a corporate structure.

Prosperity and peace prevailed within the Order until 1901 when, with the rise to power of Emile Combes as President of the Executive Council of the French Government and the Minister of Education, religious persecution soon prevailed in all its rigour.

In spite of numerous requests made by the Superior General to the Minister in Paris, eighty of the schools administered by the Daughters of Jesus were closed within forty-eight hours, and more than four hundred religious Sisters were expelled from their convents.

From all parts of Brittany, the dispossessed Sisters, in small groups, arrived at the Mother House at all hours of the day and night. They had to be sheltered and fed, and relocated at once. The Superior General, Mother Marie de Ste. Blandine sent letters to the British, Belgian, Canadian and American Bishops exposing the deplorable situation of their Sisters in France.

Meanwhile, Most Reverend Emile Legal OMI, Bishop of the St. Albert Diocese in Alberta, well aware that the Sisters in France were being chased from their works of mercy, decided to send Father Alphonse Jan OMI to Brittany to solicit from the different Orders some Sisters for the Canadian West. And so it was that ten Sisters left France, accompanied by Father Jan on October 1, 1902. They sailed the Atlantic Ocean, crossed Canada on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and pulled into Calgary on October 19, 1902.

Four Sisters remained to serve at the Bishop's Residence in St. Albert: Sister Marie St. Elzéar, Sister Marie Ste. Créscence, Sister Marie Ste. Florine, Sister Marie Edwidge; three Sisters went to work at the Seminary also in St. Albert: Sister Marie St. Pierre Nolasque, Sister Marie St. Audry, Sister Marie Cécilien; and three were sent to St. Joachim Mission in Edmonton: Sister Marie Adéline, Sister Marie Ste. Angésile, Sister Marie St. Enéour.

In the months that followed, Sisters continued to arrive in Canada; some remained in Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; by 1905, some thirty-six Sisters had come to Western Canada and were now serving in Calgary, Edmonton, St. Albert, Morinville, Lac La Biche Mission, Pincher Creek, and in Lewistown, Montana, U.S.A.

In 1950, the one hundred twenty-three Daughters of Jesus living in the Alberta Religious Province were found in hospitals in Pincher Creek, Alberta; Lac La Biche, Alberta;

Lewistown, Montana, U.S.A.; and in schools in Pincher Creek, Alberta; Lac La Biche Mission, Alberta; Morinville, Alberta; Beaumont, Alberta; Picardville, Alberta; Vimy, Alberta; Plamondon, Alberta; as well as St. Joseph's Seminary in Edmonton.

The Order flourished in the West until the early 1970's, when due to lack of personnel and other reasons, the hospitals were handed over to lay administration, and eventually sold. Nonetheless, several Sisters continued to serve in these hospitals for many more years.

Boarding schools were also closed around this time and some Sisters continued to teach in schools, mainly in rural areas, while others directed their efforts to Parish Ministry.

Now, in 1990, some sixty Daughters of Jesus are still present in Edmonton, Calgary and several other towns across Alberta, serving the parishes and communities as they continue to live from the fire of that love that Jesus came to kindle on earth.

St. Vincent's Hospital, Pincher Creek (1924-1975)

Going back through historical notes from the Archives Department at the Provincial House of the Daughters of Jesus in Edmonton, we read:

"Since 1904, upon request of Fr. Albert Lacombe OMI, some Sisters from the religious order of Les Filles de Jésus (Daughters of Jesus) lived in their convent close to where they owned and operated a school which was functioning satisfactorily in the town of Pincher Creek. Their reputation for efficiency and thoroughness was undoubtedly a factor which contributed to the decision of Father Léandre Pilon OMI, the parish priest, and the village authorities to request that the Sisters open a Hospital in that locality."

Mr. T. Lebel of St. Michael's Parish in Pincher

Creek had wished for several years to sell his property to a religious order so the Sisters could open and administer a hospital for that town. He saw his dream come true when the Daughters of Jesus purchased his beautiful private home, offered to them for \$10,000.00.

In September of 1924, four Sisters, who would be founders of the Hospital, came to dwell with their Sisters at St. Michael Convent, while the Lebel Mansion was being converted into St. Vincent's Hospital. They were:

Sister Marie St. Vincent de Paul, Superior and Administrator; Sister Marie Patricia, a Registered Nurse; Sister Marie Prudentienne, a Nurse's Aide; Sister Marie St. Eutrope, for the Dietary Department.



Lebel Mansion before it became St. Vincent's Hospital

The Memorial Cottage Hospital, which had been built in 1902 and dedicated to the memory of the Boer War Soldiers, who never returned to Pincher Creek, had closed its doors since 1920. Bed linen and furniture from that first hospital were offered for St. Vincent's Hospital with the condition that should the sisters leave before five years, they pay \$1,000.00 to the town.

The official opening was slated for November 19, 1924. This was preceded by an emergency admission on October 29 of Mrs. Jean Levesque, a mother to be, necessitating nursing attention as she gave birth to twin boys on that day.

The first doctors to practice medicine in St. Vincent's were Dr. G.A. Dubuc, Dr. L. Walkey, and Dr. J. Gillespie.

From the first days of its existence, all patients (regardless of race, age, sex, colour or creed, national origin, political or religious affiliation, marital status) were daily visited by the Oblate Fathers of St. Michael Parish and by Ministers of other denominations. Several times, the Sisters stayed up around the clock with the sick, the dying patients and their families. In fact, the Sisters were on call twenty-four hours a day; days off or holidays were unknown. This devotedness aroused the sympathy and generosity of the people in the town and surrounding areas, and they organized different activities to help the Sisters. A Women's Auxiliary existed as early as 1927. The international missionary spirit brought from France also existed in America. Pincher Creek and area patients were cared for by French, Irish, English, Acadian, Quebec and Alberta-born Sisters.

In those early years, there existed less categorization of hospital functions. A nurse was also a pastoral assistant, a mid-wife, as the need arose, replacing a Doctor when necessary even to plaster of paris cast applications. Gradually there developed a dietary,

housekeeping and purchasing department, one Sister took on the work of hospital seamstress. Even the tasks of the maintenance man were not neglected in his absence. A Sister inhalation-therapist and anesthesiologist arrived. Pharmacy and Physiotherapy Departments were set up.

Several constructions and renovations took place in 1926-1927, 1930-1931, 1935, and 1940; resulting in additions and alterations to the Sisters' living quarters, the Chapel, the contagious ward, the maternity unit and the laboratory department. Finally in 1950, a new wing was constructed, bringing the Hospital capacity to 72 beds and 8 newborn basinsets. St. Vincent's now included Medical, Surgical, Obstetrical and Pediatric departments; a Newborn Nursery, Laboratory, X-ray, Inhalation and Physiotherapy units, as well as a Medical Records Department. The Contagious Ward, in the Old Hospital Area, became home for eight or so pensioners, as Pincher Creek did not have a Nursing Home. After serving for some time as a "Seniors' Nursing Home", this area became the residence for Certified Nurses' Aides who were sent to St. Vincent's from Edmonton and Calgary for the practical part of their courses.

At that time, St. Vincent's had an associated Medical Clinic with five Doctors working in partnership, Dr. Lorne B. Collins being Chief-of-Staff. Another Physician, Dr. J.R. McCrimmon had his own office. A Radiologist came in regularly from Lethbridge; and a Dental Surgeon, who had his office downtown, also had admitting privileges. High medical moral standards were respected by a Christian Medical Staff. Not only the patients' physical, cultural, psychological, socio-economic and spiritual needs were met, but their whole families became the object of the Sisters' care and concern. The patients knew this and appreciated it.

St. Vincent's Hospital has always kept medical records for each patient, including old admission and discharge ledgers. The ledgers proved of

much value as the medical records from September, 1924 to April, 1938 were lost due to a flooded basement. Today's Medical Records Department has all the patients' records from April, 1938 to December, 1958 under the serial system of numbering. In December 1958, it was decided to adopt the unit system of numbering. This unit system, with its counterpart of permanent patient index file, has been used from 1958 to the present.

In 1960, an R.N., Sister Henri-Maria (Thérèse Desnoyers) obtained her status as R.M.R.L., Registered Medical Record Librarian, at the General Hospital in Edmonton, and afterwards many new procedures were set up. These have proven to be of much value. Each re-admitted patient's record is automatically drawn and made available for the present attending physician. Monthly statistical and comparative reports on the work done in the Hospital are supplied to those entitled to receive these. This is another function of the Records Department, as are the year-end reports.

As for the outpatients, a centralized unit system was also established for the efficiency of each patient's attending physician, and the benefit of the patients.

The Medical Records Department of St. Vincent's joined the P.A.S. (Professional Activity Study, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A.) in July, 1965. Henceforth, each record was coded with as many codes as necessary to give a clear picture of all medical disease and/or surgical procedures necessitating the admission. Hospitals within the area whose Records Departments became satellites of St. Vincent's are from Cardston, Claresholm, Crow's Nest Past, Vulcan and Carmangay.

Several young women from the above hospitals studied the theory of Medical Records Department procedures through correspondence courses, and did their practical work at St.

Vincent's Medical Records Department, obtaining their "Accredited Medical Records Technician" status, and then moving on to the larger hospitals, easily obtaining work in this field.

In the spring of 1966, St. Vincent's Hospital received a provisional accreditation from the Canadian Council on Hospital Accreditation. This was largely due to the fact that the Council's Surveyor was satisfactorily supplied with any and every statistical report requested from the Medical Records Department. The records were well written and well kept; a Medical Records and Medical Audit Committee had been set up. The Hospital also had an efficient Disaster Plan and a functional Fire Safety Program.

In August of 1967, full accreditation was granted after necessary physical plant renovations were completed. The Sisters were happy to have reached this material goal; nonetheless, they remained well aware of the priority of their presence in Pincher Creek - had they not come for the love of God and suffering humanity? From this love flows the ability and possibility to see Christ in everyone and honour His Sacred Humanity. The Sisters had learned early to make theirs this Charism of the Founders of the Order. However, they were well aware of their dwindling numbers.

Sister Administrators over the years were: Sister Marie St. Vincent de Paul, Sister Ste. Rosalie Marie, Sister Marie Théosébie, Sister Marie de la Providence, and Sister Marie St. Omer (Sister Elizabeth Royer).

On January 24, 1969, the Sister Administrator resigned. There were still ten Sisters in hospital work and/or parish functions. Mr. Oliver Haigh, who had been hired as Hospital Administrator on February 14, 1969, took his position on April 1, 1969.

On January 30, 1973 the Sisters' Provincial Council, the Hospital Board and the Hospital Medical Staff held a meeting to decide on the future of St. Vincent's Hospital. By August of the same year, the Sisters retained the ownership of the Hospital which became a Calgary Diocesan Administration debit for two years.

On December 2, 1975, St. Vincent's Hospital became a government owned property named Pincher Creek Health Care Centre. Two Sisters remained on staff. One was in nursing until March 24, 1976, and the other in the Business Office until February 5, 1978. From February, 1978 to 1980, the Sisters worked as Pastoral Assistants with the Care Centre and the Parish.

On June 18, 1979, the Calgary Diocese bought the Convent, to be used for a Retreat and Prayer

House. On June 16, 1980, the Daughters of Jesus left Pincher Creek permanently.

St. Vincent's Hospital, later called the Pincher Creek Health Care Centre had stood on the hill serving residents of Pincher Creek and surrounding areas for 59 years; these had taken their toll.

A new building - the Pincher Creek Municipal Hospital - was finished for 1983. It is a one storey, 68 bed (6 crib nursery) modern, spacious facility with centralized Nurses' Station and Intercom System, located just on the outskirts of the town, towards Pincher Station.

St. Vincent's, that is the Lebel Mansion part, has become an Historical Site - a fitting finale for the Mansion on the hill.



Hôpital St. Vincent de Paul, Pincher Creek, Alberta

St. Catherine's Hospital, Lac La Biche (1937-1973)

What became St. Catherine's Hospital, was first built as a railway-owned hotel for tourists, completed in 1916. MacArthur Inn stood majestically in a picturesque area close to the lake.

Unfortunately, the hotel functioned for only two years. Those were the war years, transportation was difficult, and a tragic misfortune (a tourist group drowning), all contributed to the Hotel's closure. But for twenty years the railway station agent and his family dwelt in part of the Inn and were the caretakers of the building.

For a number of years, the Pastor and parishioners of St. Catherine's Parish dreamed of the possibility of obtaining Sisters to take over the Hotel and converting it into a Hospital. After consultations and discussions with the Provincial Superior of the Daughters of Jesus, who were already established at Lac La Biche Mission, and with the Archbishop of Edmonton, Most Reverend John Hugh MacDonald, the Sisters decided to purchase the Inn.

Early in October, 1937, five Sisters accompanied by Mother Marie de Ste. Zénaïde, the Provincial Superior, arrived in Lac La Biche and took possession of the Inn. Sister Aurélie



Founding Sisters - Les Filles De Jesus (Daughters of Jesus) - Left to Right: Sr. Marie Ste Darie, Sr. Marie Rose Ursule, Sr. Aurélie, ?, Sr. Marie Emile Joseph, Sr. Marie Claudia

Marie, a Registered Nurse, was the Superior of the new Community; Sister Marie Emile Joseph and Sister Marie Rose Ursule were Nursing Assistants; Sister Marie Claudia was in the kitchen and Sister Marie St. Darie was in the laundry. Sister Marie Blanche, a Registered Nurse, came to join them within a month.

Renovations and alterations were begun immediately in order to transform the building into a workable hospital facility. On November 4, 1937, a cross was erected on the tower of the building, which was henceforth called St. Catherine's Hospital. The first Mass was celebrated on November 25, 1937. The Hospital, a seventeen-bed facility, with one Doctor, Dr. Quesnel, and two Registered Nurses on staff, was ready to start operating. The official blessing of the transformed building was performed on March 15, 1938, by the Pastor, Fr. Meehan, who had been delegated by the Most Reverend J. H. MacDonald, Archbishop of Edmonton.

St. Catherine's Hospital was founded for the purpose of caring for the sick and injured of Lac La Biche and surrounding district, which included small towns and villages, several Indian Reserves and Métis Settlements. Being a Catholic Institution, owned by the Daughters of Jesus, its philosophy reflected the aim of the Congregation: To honour the Sacred Humanity of Christ by imitating His virtues, especially His Love. This implies belief in the dignity of each individual human being regardless of age, race, creed or colour; involves the treatment of the whole person, including his physical, cultural, psychological, socio-economic and spiritual dimensions. Care of the sick is seen as the extension of Christ's mission of mercy, and as such is an integral part of the work of the Church.

On December 7, 1937 the first patient, Mrs. J. Woronchuk of Normandeau, was admitted, and on December 29 the first baby, Agnes Catherine Desjarlais, was born in the Hospital. By the end of 1937, eleven patients had been discharged.

These patients were the beginning of the thousands of others who would be cared for in this Institution. The number of patients being nursed at the Hospital grew to 274 by the end of 1938.

By October, 1939, two years after the arrival of the Sisters, another Doctor, Dr. Charles Lefebvre, had come; the number of Sisters working at the Hospital had doubled; and ten more beds had been added to the facility.

By 1951, it became evident that the existing facility, which by now had thirty beds and eight bassinets for newborns, was too small and the Order began looking into the possibility of expanding.

The new wing of St. Catherine's Hospital was blessed on October 6, 1955, by Bishop Philippe Lussier of St. Paul, Alberta, and officially opened that same day by His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, J.J. Bowlen. The transfer of furnishings and of patients took place a few days later on October 11.

Lac La Biche area now had a well functioning general hospital with fifty-seven beds and fourteen bassinets, with Medical, Surgical, Pediatric, Obstetric and Outpatient Departments. Records show that the Hospital operated at full capacity most of the time. In January 1957, there were two Doctors, Dr. W.J. Cadzow and Dr. A. Brindsmead, and six Registered Nursing Sisters on staff. The personnel had increased to fourteen Sisters who were assisted by fifteen employees to aid in the caring for the seventy or so patients.

About sixty-five Sisters who came from either France, England, Ireland, Quebec, the Maritimes or who were born in Alberta, served in various capacities throughout the years. Their objectives: to provide the best possible care to all patients, to cooperate with Physicians, Nurses and all concerned in promoting good health, and to treat all employees with justice, won them the respect and admiration of the people. Because



Front view of St. Catherine's Hospital, facing the lake

of their commitment and devotedness to maintain high medical and moral standards, their presence was recognized as a source of inspiration and confidence.

Many different Sisters functioned as Hospital Administrators between 1937 and 1968; Sister Aurélie Marie, Sister Marie Théosébie, Sister Rosalie Marie, Sister St. François Xavier, Sister Marie Joséphine de Jésus, Sister Marie de la Providence and Sister Marie Catherine Aurélie.

In 1968, due to lack of personnel and other factors, it was decided to hire a lay administrator. From 1968 to 1973, a Board of Governors which consisted of the Provincial Superior, Sister Cécile Dupuis, and her Council, and the Hospital Administrator, carried the administrative responsibility of the Hospital.

The Hospital Administrators during this period were G.B. Phillips, J.P. Veillet and J. Huckstep, and an interim administrative team consisting of Sisters Lucy Sheehan, Claire Bilodeau and Marguerite Bellefontaine.

Due to the limited number of Sisters and the increasing red tape of hospital administration, the Sisters relinquished ownership and management of the Hospital at the end of June,

1973. The Board of Governors was replaced by a Regional Board which took over the Hospital. In October, 1973 the Hospital became known as the Lac La Biche General Hospital. Several Sisters continued to work at the Hospital until 1983. Others continued in para-medical fields as Public Health Nurses, visiting in Senior Citizens' Homes or caring for the sick and elderly in their homes.

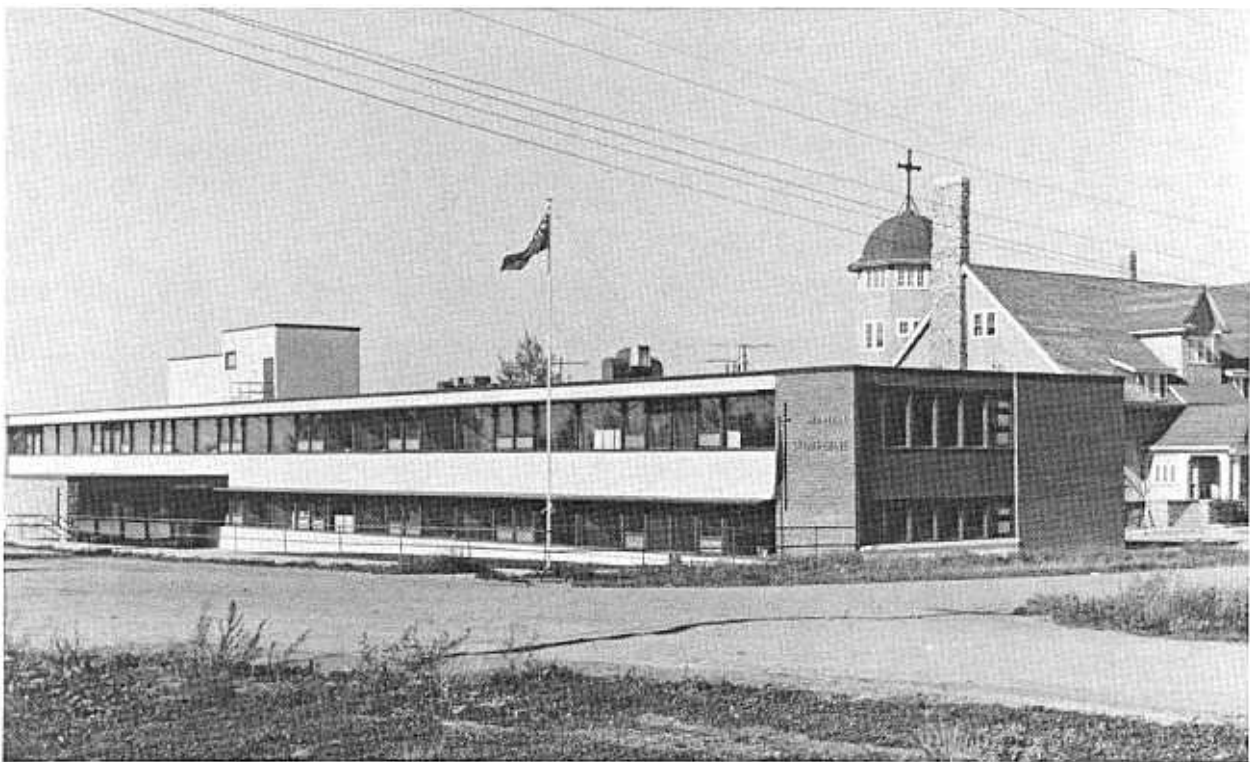
October 23, 1981 was marked by the sod-turning ceremony for a new hospital in Lac La Biche. The new hospital, the Dr. W.J. Cadzow Hospital, was blessed and then officially opened by Hon. Dave Russel, Minister of Health, on October 6, 1983.

The opening of this new facility marked the closing of what had been St. Catherine's Hospital. The wing that had been built in 1955 was demolished and the original building, the Inn, was declared an Historic Site to be used for community cultural and social activities.

The MacArthur Inn was being gradually restored to its original stature when the building went up in flames due to a short circuit, on Thursday, April 21, 1988, marking the end of an era for the Lac La Biche area.



Rear view of St. Catherine's Hospital



St. Catherine's Hospital - New Wing Completed in October, 1955



Mère de la Nativité (Marie-Rosalie Jetté). The foundress of the Misericordia Sisters was born in Lavaltrie Parish, east of Montréal, on January 27, 1794.

Photo By John Gilpin

Misericordia Sisters

The foundress of the Misericordia Sisters was Mère de la Nativité. She was born Marie Rosalie Cadron on January 27, 1794, in the Lavaltrie Parish, east of Montréal. As a child she was known for her special concern for members of her family and the community. This was shown by the care she provided for her younger sister Sophie and in her visits to the poor during difficult times. On October 7, 1811, she married Jean-Marie Jetté, and they settled on her parents' farm. In 1819 Rosalie, by then the mother of four children, took an abandoned child into her own home. This foreshadowed the work she would do on a much wider scale in later years. The family, now with six children, moved to a new farm in 1825 but unforeseen debts forced their relocation to Montréal two years later.

Her involvement led her to become increasingly concerned about the welfare of unwed pregnant young women. She located homes where they could stay during their pregnancy and made sure that each newborn baby was cared for. Her concern was shared by Ignace Bourget, Bishop of Montréal, who asked her in the spring of 1845 to implement his plans for a religious community, structured upon her piety and zeal, which would concentrate on meeting the needs of this particular group of people.

Rosalie agreed to the Bishop's request and, at age fifty, she commenced a second career which would affect not only Montréal but also the social development of a number of other North American cities, including Edmonton.

Despite the disapproval voiced by Rosalie's family and by society in general, the St. Pélagie Hospice was a success. This was indicated by

the ever-increasing number of young women who sought the assistance of the institution, and by the evolution towards a religious life for Rosalie and her associates. Their religious community was constituted as the Soeurs de Miséricorde (Misericordia Sisters) on January 16, 1848, in a ceremony conducted by Bishop Bourget. After its formation, Rosalie Jetté adopted the religious name of Mère de la Nativité. At her own request she was not elected as the first Mother Superior, preferring to carry on with her work without the administrative duties this position involved.

From 1848 to 1889 the work of the Sisters was focused on the needs of the unwed mother-to-be rather than on the long-term care of children, who continued to be transferred to the Grey Nuns' orphanage. The St. Pélagie Hospice thus became a maternity hospital almost immediately after it opened. Its development as a maternity care institution was assisted by Dr. Eugène-Hercule Trudel, who was a pioneer in his own right in the development of obstetrics in Canada.

Rosalie Jetté, Mère de la Nativité, died on April 5, 1864, having fully achieved the goal of creating an institution to minister to the spiritual and material needs of unwed pregnant young women.

The Sisters opened their first hospital building specifically dedicated to maternity care in Montréal on April 20, 1887. The main floor housed a private hospital which operated for three years and was then converted into apartments occupied by women boarders. The remaining space provided dormitories and medical wards for the unwed pregnant women as well as the nurses' residence.

The expansion of the Misericordia Sisters beyond the confines of Montréal began in 1878 when, at the request of the Bishop of Ottawa, the first mission was established in his city. This was followed by the creation of missions in New York and Winnipeg in 1887 and 1898 respectively. The fourth such mission to be established was in Edmonton, North-West (later spelled Northwest) Territories, in 1900.

In March 1900 Reverend Father Albert Lacombe, O.M.I. acting for Bishop Grandin officially asked for the establishment in Edmonton of a hospital administered by the Misericordia Sisters. In April, Father Leduc went to Montréal to complete the negotiations with the Superior General and her Councillors.

In the agreement, signed on April 27, 1900, the Misericordia Sisters agreed to supply four Sisters "with their trousseau and a few small gifts that they will receive from charitable souls for their Edmonton Mission" and one nurse. In return the St. Albert Diocese agreed to see to the housing and maintenance of the Sisters until they were self-sufficient.

Following the successful completion of these negotiations, Sister St. François D'Assise, Sister St. Laurent, Sister Ste. Rose de Lima, and Sister St. Frederic were selected to be the foundresses of the Edmonton Mission along with Miss Mary Jane Kennedy, a nurse from their Ottawa House. The Mother Superior, Sister St. François D'Assise, was at forty-two the oldest member of this group. Before coming to Edmonton she had served in the New York and Ottawa missions. The youngest was Sister St. Frederic who at twenty-five was beginning her works of charity. Later the same year, this group was joined by Sister St. François de Sales.

The five women were accompanied by Father Hippolyte Leduc as they travelled from Montréal on the Canadian Pacific Railway to Calgary and then to Edmonton on the Calgary and Edmonton

Railway. Their trip west was paid for by the St. Albert Diocese. They arrived at the Strathcona Station at approximately eight o'clock on the evening of Tuesday, May 29, 1900. From the station they crossed the North Saskatchewan River to the General Hospital where they were accommodated for the next three days by the Grey Nuns. Because the building acquired by Bishop Grandin for the future Maternity Hospital required renovations, the Sisters and the nurse moved into a house, located at 9937 - 110 Street, across from the present day location of St. Joachim's Church. The conditions which confronted the Misericordia Sisters of Edmonton were similar to those faced by Marie Rosalie Jetté when she opened the St. Pélagie Hospice, in Montreal, fifty-five years earlier.



Misericordia Sisters - Jeanette Gauttier and Sr. Rose-Aimée Roy, 1989

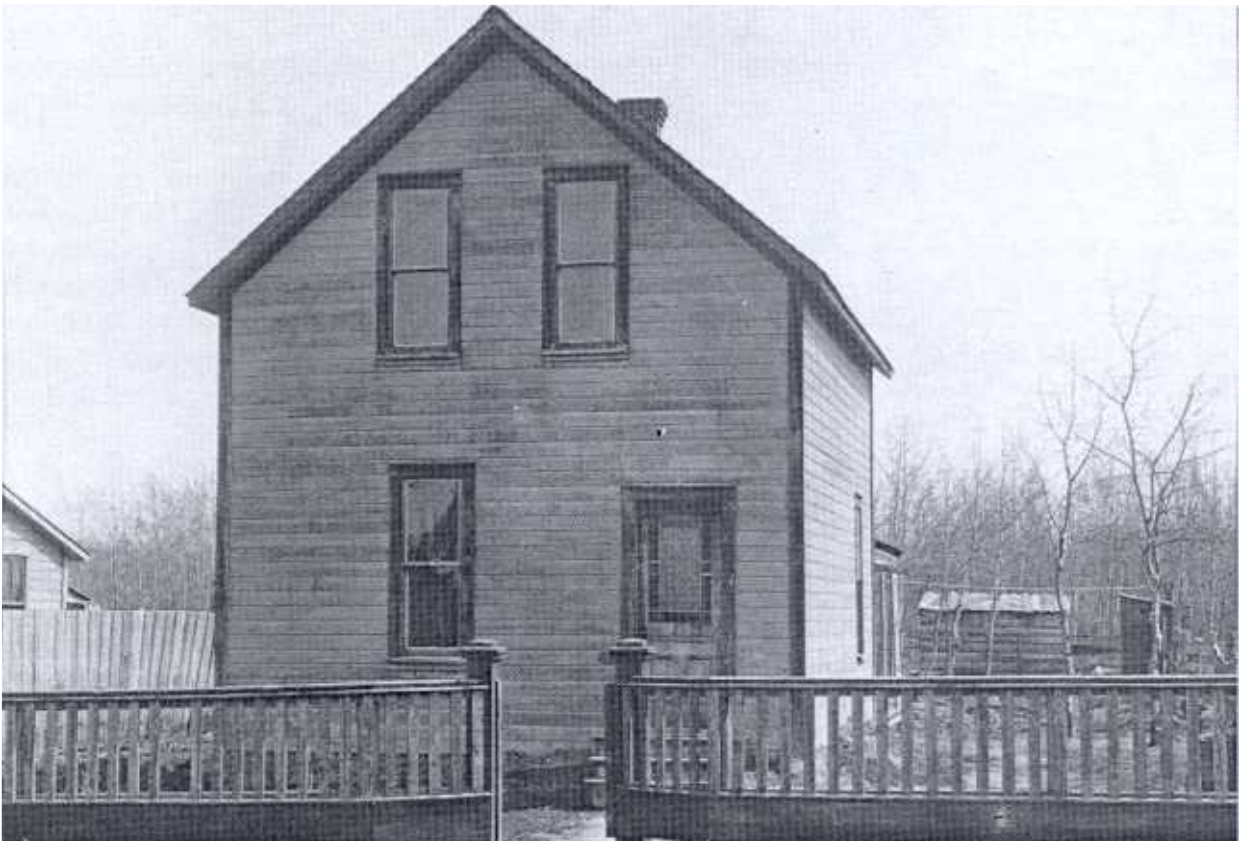
***Misericordia
Hospital,
Edmonton
(1900-)***

The history of the Edmonton Misericordia Hospital began in 1900 with the arrival in Edmonton of four members of the Montréal-based Misericordia Sisters and a nurse from the Community's House in Ottawa. On August 29, they opened a small maternity hospital in a converted warehouse in the Oliver District.

This property was adjacent to the road (trail) which connected Fort Edmonton and St. Albert, and in close proximity to the existing Catholic

Community. These were no doubt contributing factors when a location was chosen. It would be noted that "the city", referred to in the first letter to the Superior General, was approximately ten blocks of bush away.

"At last, we are starting to move", was the entry in the chronicles for August 27. This expressed the Sisters' relief at their relocation to the new Maternity Hospital on the southwest corner of 98 Avenue and 111 Street. On that day their



This residence was occupied by the Misericordia Sisters from June 1 to August 28, 1900. It was located at 9937-110 Street across from St. Joachim's Church.

neighbour, Mr. Joseph Lachambre, transported their chests and suitcases by wagon while the Sisters gathered all they could carry and walked the two and one half blocks to their new residence. They spent their first night in the new hospital on August 29, 1900. The relocation was completed two days later when the chickens were moved. "It was a little funny," noted the chronicles, "to see us walking along the road with each of us carrying four chickens in our hands."

For the next five and one half years this building would be the focus for the lives of the Edmonton Sisters because it served as their residence as well as a hospital, boarding house, and orphanage. The chronicles do not provide a description of the building. The Sisters were apparently as unconcerned with their surroundings as they were concerned with the spiritual and physical health of their patients and boarders.



The Maternity Hospital of the Misericordia Sisters, 1900

The Maternity Hospital of the Misericordia Sisters was a specialized institution designed to meet the needs of unwed mothers-to-be and their babies. In this role it served to complement Edmonton's first hospital, the Edmonton General, built five years earlier.

Over the next five years, approximately two hundred patients would be admitted and treated at the hospital. Contrary to expectations, however, the majority of these patients were not unwed pregnant young women for whom the hospital had originally been created. The patients included married women and some men. The Maternity Hospital became a hospital offering general medical care soon after it opened. This trend was formally recognized on March 21, 1904, when the General Council of the Misericordia Sisters in response to what it described as "the needs of the country" authorized the Sisters of Edmonton to "welcome all kinds of patients in their hospital."

In addition to soliciting support from the community at large, the Sisters also appealed to the municipal government. A request for the remission of their taxes was sent to the Mayor and the Town Council on November 26, 1903. In their letter, the Sisters noted that they had "undertaken to supply a much needed institution of charity, namely, - A Refuge for the Unfortunate, Maternity Hospital, Orphans' Home, and ... without any adequate help on the part of the patients we receive, or from any one else depending entirely on public charity." The Town Council was partially sympathetic to their situation and agreed to remit the \$31.50 in taxes owed on the lots south of 98th Avenue.

The Sisters were not, however, entirely pre-occupied by the day-to-day operations of their hospital. Since this building was only a temporary facility, they also had to attend to the long-term project of planning and constructing a

new building. Between 1900 and 1902 sites in both Strathcona and Edmonton were considered. As an inducement for the hospital to be constructed on the south side of the river, the Strathcona Town Council offered to provide a grant from year to year for the operation of the institution. The amount, which was to be at the discretion of the Council, was to be deducted from hospital taxes. No documents have been found which would indicate that Edmonton was chosen. In 1902 the General Council of the Misericordia Sisters authorized the purchase of a site in St. Joachim's Parish located immediately north of the first hospital. In November of 1902, sixteen lots were purchased and an additional four lots were purchased the following year.

The planning of their new hospital began in March 1904 when its construction was authorized by the General Council. A St. Boniface, Manitoba architect, J.A. Senecal was chosen to design the building.

On March 19, 1906, the Sisters moved to the new hospital located on the west side of 111th Street between 98th and 99th Avenues. This move represented the fulfilment of six years of planning and effort by the St. Albert Diocese, the General Council of the Misericordia Sisters in Montréal, and, above all else, the small group of women who came to Edmonton in 1900.

By 1920 the Sisters had raised sufficient funds on hand to begin construction of a new crèche and on June 28, 1920, the General Council gave its permission. The new crèche did not take the form of a new building but rather as a third floor addition to the original power house and laundry constructed in 1914. This was a one storey addition which ran the full length of the building. It was designed by Edmonton architect, A.M. Calderon. The total cost of the addition was \$13,000, of which \$10,000 was already on hand.

The ultimate solution to the space problem was found in 1922 when the Sisters began the construction of an addition on the north facade of the 1906 structure which would more than double it in size. The Sisters had wanted to construct this addition as early as 1912 but were prevented from doing so by a lack of funds. Their request to the City of Edmonton in 1912 for a grant had also been refused. The addition, designed by Edmonton architect Edward Underwood, was consistent with the design of the original structure. The extent to which this

addition complemented the original 1906 structure would suggest that the Sisters had the construction of a building this size and design in mind as early as 1905.

On August 1, 1923, the official ceremonies marking the completion of the first major addition to the Misericordia Hospital were held. In contrast to the other milestones in the development of the hospital, this event was marked by an elaborate public ceremony which included speeches by church and civic



dignitaries, public tours of the new wing, and a garden party, as well as a dinner for an estimated 500 guests. The importance of this event was also indicated by the coverage it received from the local press in general and in particular by the *Edmonton Journal* which carried an extensive article in its August 2, 1923 issue.

Speakers for the occasion included His Honour Mayor J.J. Duggan and His Grace Archbishop H.J. O'Leary who noted that, "... a little band of devoted women, angels in black, who left their homes and kindred to give their lives to the service of suffering mankind, arrived in the City of Edmonton and planted the seed, of which we behold the splendid fruit." He went on to contrast the humble beginnings of the Sisters with the new wing of the hospital which was almost twice the size of the 1906 structure.

In addition to pointing out the importance of the institution in the context of the history of the Misericordia Sisters, he also noted that it was part of a Catholic tradition which extended back to the work of Montpellier in France who was responsible, in his view, for the development of the modern day concept of a hospital. The Archbishop was, however, quick to reassure those present that despite the fact that it was a Catholic institution, "There was no distinction of creed, race or politics when it concerned a patient." He concluded his remarks by pointing out that the hospital, which was provided at no cost to the City of Edmonton, was "entirely built through the enterprise of the Sisters and was therefore all the more worthy of the public's whole-hearted support."

In terms of the overall operation of the hospital, maternity care continued to be emphasized. This was evident during the celebration of National Hospital Day in May 1930. The Misericordia Hospital was the first Edmonton

hospital to organize a local celebration of this event. National Hospital Day was dedicated to the memory of Florence Nightingale and was observed in many parts of Canada and the United States. The Misericordia's celebration took the form of a tea during which many mothers whose children had been born in the hospital were the guests of the Sisters and nurses.

In the 1920's, the student nurses continued to work twelve hour shifts from seven to seven with time off for lunch and dinner if they were on days. The program emphasized practical training with time off to attend lectures given by the various instructors in the nursing school. Each student nurse was permitted one half day off per week. This free time, however, could be interrupted if lectures were scheduled. The student nurses were paid at the rate of \$5, \$6, and \$7 per month if they were first, second, or third year students respectively. In addition to the wages, the students received free room and board as well as free medical care.

Throughout the period the Sisters continued to supply the administrative personnel for the overall operation of the institution. They were the individuals who had to meet the challenge of operating the institution with minimal assistance from the civic and provincial governments through the difficult times of the 1920's and 1930's. According to information compiled from the Alberta Catholic directories by the Archdiocese Archives, during the period from 1939 - 1941, there were twenty-six Misericordia Sisters at the hospital.

When the construction of the first major addition to the Misericordia Hospital since 1923 was announced in June of 1939, the events leading to World War II had already begun to unfold. By January 1940 when the maternity wing was completed, Edmonton was once again involved

in a war which would dramatically effect its development. Unlike World War I, however, World War II had a number of positive economic benefits for the city which were derived from Edmonton's role as a military training centre and as the base of operations for the Alaska Highway, the Canol Oil Pipeline Project, and the Northwest Staging Route.

The maternity wing was officially opened on January 20, 1940. The fact that the first wing to be constructed after 1923 was devoted to maternity care reflected the continued priority which this type of medical care had for the Sisters. This \$140,000 addition was located north of the existing building. It was designed by the Edmonton architectural firm of Rule and Wynn, and was constructed by Poole Construction, also of Edmonton. This wing was constructed of reinforced concrete faced with glass brick to match the main structure. While the colour of the brick and its height may have been similar, the overall design of the building was a dramatic departure from the mansard roof and other architectural details of the 1906 and 1923 portions of the institution.

The response of the Misericordia Hospital to the post-War oil boom began in May 1950 when a new \$500,000 extension to the front entrance was announced. In their statement to the press, the Sisters noted that, "Edmonton's increasing population and an increased demand for the best in patient care had made the move necessary." This east addition was designed by the same firm which designed the maternity addition, Rule, Wynn and Rule. Besides adding more beds to the hospital, the addition would, according to a hospital spokesman, "allow for division of the Misericordia Hospital into specialized departments such as orthopedic, surgical, medical, urological, and others in accordance with the latest methods of hospital arrangement." This reorganization did not affect

the system of segregating patients according to sex, a tradition which had been the standard practice since 1906. This new addition also provided for admission and discharge offices to be moved to the ground floor. Construction began in July 1950 and the official opening took place on June 8, 1952. Each floor of the four-storey wing was identical with the exception of the lower floor which contained the administrative offices. This was the first part of the hospital to have "automatic elevators". Other new features as described on June 9, 1952 in the *Edmonton Journal* included "the attractively painted walls and the bright linoleum which replaced the dull greys and whites of most hospitals." The private wards all had separate bathrooms while the semi-private wards had one washroom for every two rooms. A kitchenette, nurses' chart room, and utensil room were located on each floor.

In 1955 the Sisters completed another addition which was designed by the same architect and constructed by the same contractor. This west wing, which was built at a cost of \$760,000, plus the two previous additions, brought the total beds for the hospital to 440 from the previous total of 175.

The physical transformation of the hospital during and after World War II was evident in all aspects of the institution. The nursing school was expanded in terms of its size and the facilities which were provided for its operation. These changes made it a more identifiable unit within the overall operation of the hospital. The evolution to recognition of the importance of classroom instruction was aided by the greater utilization of graduate nurses and a larger household staff. This permitted the school to be less of a labour pool for the operation of the hospital. The most important symbol of this change was the new residence facility constructed in 1949.

The new residence was officially opened on April 3, 1949, during a ceremony attended by 3,000 people according to estimates made by the *Edmonton Journal*. The Misericordia Hospital School of Nursing was now consolidated into one separate building for the first time in its history. Prior to the completion of this structure, student nurses had been housed in the residence constructed in 1936 as well as a portion of the ground floor of the main building. All facilities except the living room were available in the new building. Amenities included lounges on all four floors, a main sitting room on the ground floor, a chapel and a large recreation room in the basement where

plant and the laundry. Because of the inadequate nature of this facility, it was closed in November 1959. The decision by the Sisters to close the nursery and concentrate on the welfare of the unwed pregnant young women also reflected the fact that new attitudes favoured the placement of children in foster homes rather than in institutions. The placement of these children was being handled by city and provincial child welfare agencies. These children were no longer wards of the hospital but of the City and Province. The closure of the crèche brought an end to sixty years of service to orphans in the city.



Misericordia Hospital circa 1950

classrooms and a science laboratory were located.

After the war, the services provided to unwed mothers-to-be and abandoned children were reorganized with the creation of the Misericordia Hospital Welfare Centre. This new centre was under the direction of Sister St. Frances Cabrini who had come to Edmonton in 1955 after having obtained a diploma in social work from the University of Montréal. Of immediate concern to Sister Cabrini was the construction of new facilities to replace the existing crèche (built in 1920) which was on the third floor of the power

The closure of the crèche in 1959 was an indication that the older portions of the Misericordia were becoming not only unsafe but unserviceable. An even more dramatic indication of this situation came in 1964 when the boiler in the power house blew up.

Changes occurred in the senior management of the institution. The overall direction of the hospital had been the responsibility of the Sister Superior who had two assistants. In 1955, a Lay Advisory Board was created as the first step in the evolution of an entirely new administrative structure. Stanley H. McCuaig

served as its first chairman. One of the first issues dealt with by the Advisory Board was the need to get better facilities for the social service department. While approval was still required from Montréal for major expenditures, this board played a role in assisting the Sisters in dealing with the Provincial Government.

The Advisory Board made the recommendation that the Sisters hire an executive director to assume the duties of hospital administrator which had up to this time been the responsibility of the Mother Superior. In November 1966, George P. Van was appointed Executive Director of the hospital and Sister St. Guy, who had been Mother Superior since 1961, returned to Montréal. Sister St. Guy was succeeded by Sister Rose-Aimée Roy who was the last person to hold the position of Mother Superior in Edmonton. Sister Roy became the Assistant Executive Director in the new administration but retained her role as head of the Community of Sisters. Van's appointment marked the first time that a layman had held the position of administrator in an institution operated by the Misericordia Sisters. "The appointment of a non-religious administrator marks a policy change," commented Sister St. Guy in an article which appeared in the *Western Catholic Reporter* on November 24, 1966. Sister St. Guy commented further that this decision was made primarily because of the "increasing complexity of hospitals and hospital construction." The Sisters were thus anxious to have the best professionally trained and qualified people to run their projects. Mr. Van, who had served as assistant administrator at the hospital since March 1965, represented the type of new hospital administrator which the Sisters were anxious to co-opt in their efforts to meet the challenges of the Post-War Era. He had served as a hospital consultant before coming to Edmonton. In addition to his duties at the hospital, Mr. Van also lectured in administration at The University of Alberta.

The Sisters' interest in wanting to upgrade their facilities and the Alberta Government's willingness to assume certain financial responsibilities with respect to the construction of a new building led to the announcement in May 1961 that the Misericordia Sisters were completing purchase of fifty acres of land in the Town of Jasper Place. In a joint announcement, Dr. J. Donovan Ross, Minister of Health, and Sister Superior Marie Bernadette outlined plans for a major medical and social service complex for the site. It was anticipated that the site would include an active treatment hospital, a nursing school, auxiliary hospital, and a hostel for unwed pregnant young women. The first building planned for the site was the hostel. The Department of Public Works was responsible for the construction of this \$300,000 facility which was to be called Pineview Home. Upon its completion in 1962, it was leased to the Sisters for a five-year period and was administered separately from the hospital. Pineview Home, which contained thirty-eight beds, was under the direction of Sister St. Frances Cabrini who was assisted by two other Sisters. The opening of this institution provided the Sisters with a new opportunity to once again pursue the objectives which had brought them to Edmonton in 1900. The young women lived at the home until the time came for the birth of their child. Then they were taken to the Misericordia or to a hospital of their doctor's choice.

With the commencement of construction, history was repeating itself. The first Maternity Hospital opened by the Misericordia Sisters in 1900 had also been on the outskirts of Edmonton. The size of the new Misericordia Hospital in comparison to this first building was a dramatic demonstration of the growth of the institution and the community it served. It also demonstrated the continued ability of the women to meet the challenge of providing quality health care to residents of Edmonton and District.

The move of the hospital to west Edmonton had been anticipated for close to a decade. It finally took place in July 1969. Months in advance of this date, the necessary planning was underway to ensure that "M" day, as it was referred to by Charles Gravett, would be properly executed with minimal inconvenience and risk to the patients. This event was unprecedented in the history of the Misericordia Hospital. Furthermore, Executive Director Gravett, in an article written by Dona Harvey of the *Edmonton Journal*, suggested that, "We may be the first hospital in Canada to pull up stakes and move to the other side of a city." The implementation of this plan began on July 4 when the hospital discontinued admitting any new patients except for maternity and emergency cases. Those patients who were well enough to be discharged were sent home while other patients were sent to the Glenrose in order to reduce the number which would have to be transferred to the new complex. Appropriately enough, the last patient to come to the old Misericordia Hospital for treatment was an unwed mother-to-be in labour. She arrived at 4:00 am on July 18, the day set for the transfer of all remaining patients and was taken to the new Misericordia Hospital for immediate attention. Her child, who was born a couple of hours later, was the first birth at the new hospital. This event was an important reminder of the reason which had brought the Misericordia Sisters to Edmonton in 1900.

The new Misericordia was an eight-storey building constructed at a final cost of \$21 million. It opened with a capacity of 555 beds and 100 bassinets compared to 440 beds and 69 bassinets for the old hospital. The new hospital was part of a medical complex which included an eleven-storey tower for the School of Nursing, a utility services building, a twenty-room Sisters' Residence Wing, and a Chapel. In designing the new hospital, emphasis was placed on saving time and labour.

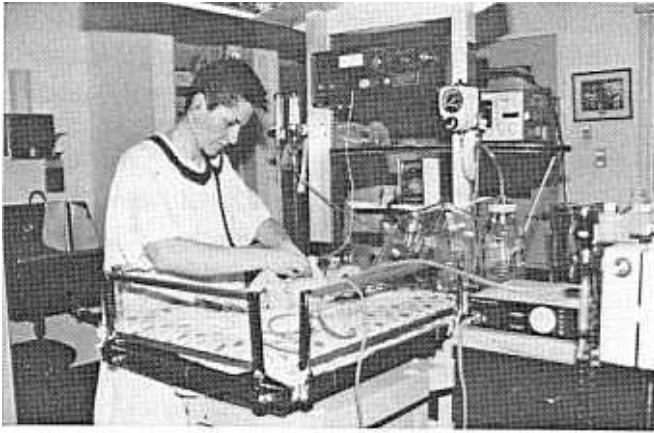
The size of the new Misericordia Hospital and its interior design were only two aspects which distinguished it from the old building. Other differences included the size of the staff, which increased from 653 to 1,032 by 1970.

By 1971, the Sisters had moved from their residence wing to an apartment. The two Misericordia Sisters who continued to work at the hospital remained in Edmonton for a year before they left for the Misericordia Hospital in Winnipeg.

In addition to the personnel problems to be overcome at the new hospital, the new building also had various deficiencies which were dealt with by the administration. In 1975 the hospital filed a \$10 million law suit against the people and firms associated with the hospital's construction. Given the failure of the legal proceedings to resolve the situation, a \$22



Peter Watson (l) receives a congratulatory plaque from CHAA's President, F.M. Pals, on the opening of the South Wing, 1991.



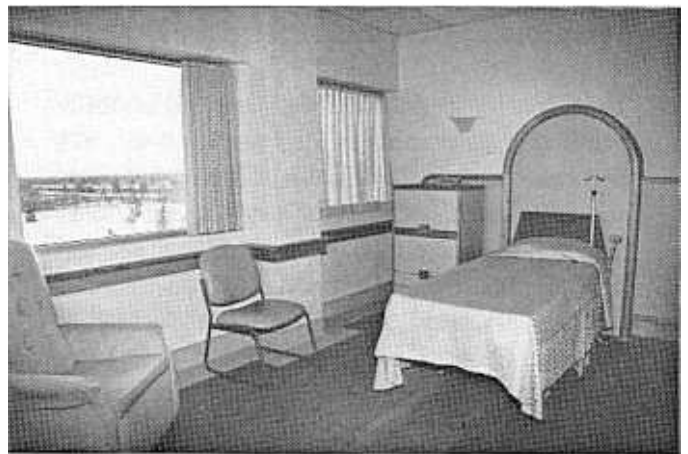
Intermediate Care Nursery

million program to deal with the problems identified in the suit and funded by the Province of Alberta was begun in 1980 and finished in 1984. In addition to repairs to the building's structure, various systems including the nurse call and fire alarm systems were improved.

Other highlights at the Misericordia in recent years include the establishment of a Palliative Care Program in 1988. A major strategic planning process was also initiated in 1988, along with the setting up of a task force to study the attitudes and values of all hospital staff, with the findings published as *Corner Stones for Change*. In 1989 the Geriatric Rehabilitation Unit, an Adolescent Treatment Unit and a Lithotripsy Unit were some of the highlights. The return of the Pineview Building, the establishment of a partnership with Jasper Place High School, and the kick-off of the Misericordia Financial Appeal were other significant events inaugurated in 1989. Early in the same year construction was begun on the new South Wing, in the open area south of the existing building. The new wing will centralize a variety of outpatient services, along with new operating theatres, labour and delivery, and related areas. The South Wing cost \$28 million

and opened in the spring of 1991. The year 1990 saw the celebration of the Misericordia's Ninetieth Anniversary. A great variety of moving and colourful events marked the anniversary year. Sister Jeannette Gauttier, who used to be on staff, came from Montreal to bring congratulations from the Motherhouse of the Misericordia Sisters.

Other 1991 highlights included the decision to undertake a radically new approach to the governance of the hospital. It is known as the Total Quality Improvement approach to management. It is characterized by a flatter organizational structure, the de-centralization of authority, and the wide utilization of consensual decision-making skills. Pretty well all of the management staff have attended five-day training programs to enhance their problem-solving skills. Most of the hospital's front-line staff have attended similar three-day programs, and there has been a noticeable increase in teamwork within the institution. Nineteen ninety-one also saw the launching of another very significant new venture for the Misericordia, a partnership with the Grey Nuns and Edmonton General Hospitals. There has always been close cooperation between the Misericordia Sisters and the Grey Nuns. In 1848 the babies born to unwed mothers at the Misericordia were cared



Birthing Room

for by the Grey Nuns

In 1900, when the Misericordia Sisters arrived in Edmonton, they stayed with the Grey Nuns until their residence was ready. This spirit of collaboration within the one health care ministry has now been given a formal, legal blessing.



Misericordia Hospital showing new South Wing - 1991

St. Michael's Extended Care Society

St. Michael's Nursing Home, Edmonton (1983-)

The Beginnings

St. Michael's Extended Care Centre was first conceptualized in 1974 when Dr. Melety Snihurowych, M.D. and Very Reverend Dr. Mykhailo Sopulak discussed the possibilities of developing a nursing home for Ukrainian seniors. Guided by a philosophy of care demonstrated by other Christian-based health care facilities, they formulated a plan which would place a special emphasis on the cultural needs of the Slavic community. Two years later, in 1976, St. Michael's was incorporated under the Societies Act of the Province of Alberta.

The name, St. Michael's, was adopted from the Archangel Michael, one of God's chief princes, captain of the heavenly host and protector of soldiers. The major reason for choosing St. Michael's as the name of the facility, was based on the belief in eastern Europe, including Ukraine, that St. Michael concerned himself with the care of the sick and elderly.

Subsequent to incorporation, the late Arthur Arnold, a professional engineer, drew up plans for the facility. The facility included provisions for therapeutic services, a chapel, modern cafeteria, and a generous amount of developmental space in the basement. In 1980, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care provided funding for 95% of the capital costs for St. Michael's Nursing Home. At this time, Most

Reverend Bishop Neil Savaryn donated 2.5 acres of land which enabled the Society to meet its requirements for the cost-shared project. In August of 1981, the ceremonial sod-turning and Official Blessing took place. Construction began the following month with Bergman Structures Ltd. as the General Contractor.

The Long Term Care Sector

In November of 1982, a study of auxiliary facilities was completed. As a result, a proposal was drafted and presented to the Alberta Government to convert the facility into a 75-bed nursing home and a 75-bed auxiliary hospital. This proposal was accepted and approved by the Honourable David Russel, Minister of Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care in March, 1983.

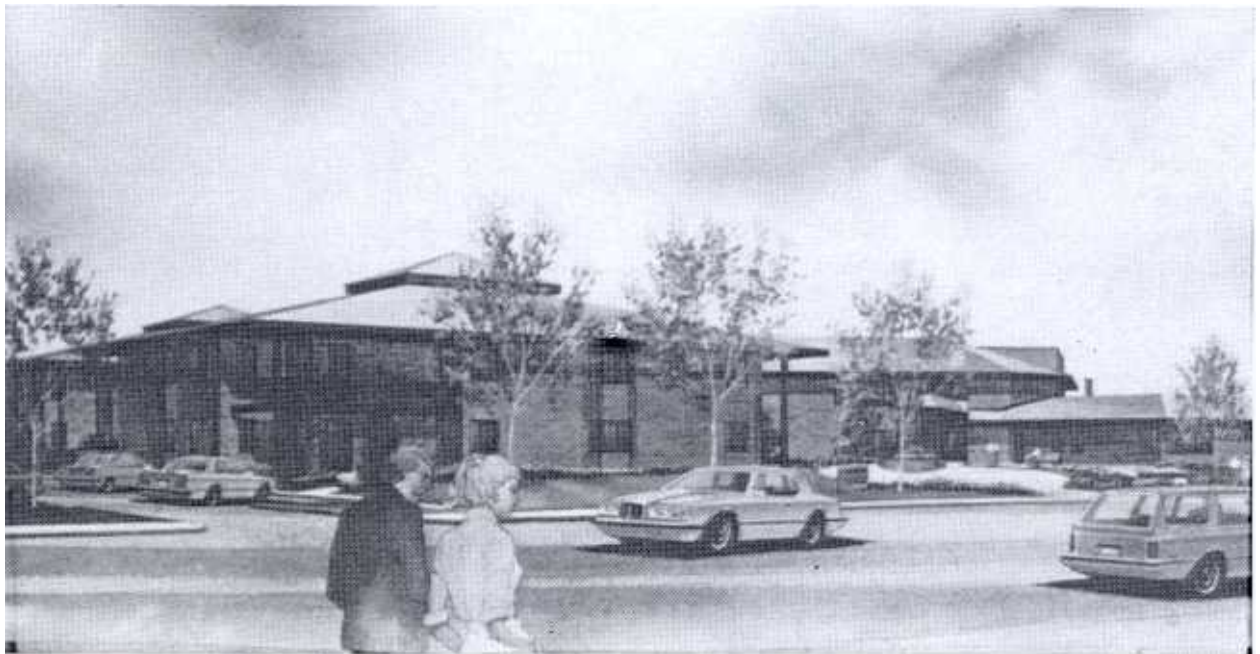
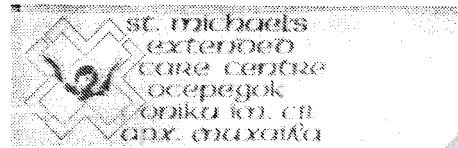
On 4 July, 1983, Daniel Burtnik became the first resident of St. Michael's Nursing Home. Four months later, on 14 November, the Auxiliary Hospital was opened and St. Michael's celebrated its Grand Opening on 5 May, 1984.

Since opening, St. Michael's has carried on a heart-felt pride in the quality of care that is provided to its residents. St. Michael's motto, "Care With Love and Dignity" provides a

holistic prescription for seniors' long-term care that ensures the individual's medical, culinary, spiritual, social, cultural, and linguistic needs are met. The high level of commitment has earned St. Michael's the recognition of twice receiving the maximum three-year accreditation from the Canadian Council on Health Facilities Accreditation.

The Millennium Pavilion

In the spirit of innovation and commitment to a continuum-of-care philosophy, the Millennium Pavilion was constructed, using ergonomic design principles, to accommodate seniors who needed nominal support to live independently. Using a resident profile plant the facility resulted in the innovative use of such things as contrasting stipes to define furniture, cabinets and wall corners, the use of levered door handles and knobs, grab bars, no-skid bathtubs, wheelchair accessed sinks, touch lamps and an elevator that announces the floor in two languages, to name but a few of the items incorporated in the design.





Opening of the Millennium Pavilion in 1990. An August occasion with participation of the (from left to right) Very Rev. John Stinka, Ukrainian Orthodox Bishop of Edmonton and Western Canada; Very Rev. M. Kryschuk, Ukrainian Orthodox, St. Andrew's Parish, Edmonton; Hon. Steve Paproski, M.P., North Edmonton; Dr. M. Snihurowych, M.D., Chairman of the Board; Very Rev. Bohdan Snihurowych, Governor and Chairman of Pastoral Committee, and Pastor of Ukrainian Catholic Parish of Holy Eucharist in Edmonton. In the front, Mrs. Lydia Shulakewych, Director, Millennium Pavilion, and Mrs. Lotta Snihurowych, President, Association of St. Michael's Auxiliary.



An Honoured Guest from Rome: His Excellency Cardinal Myroslaw Lubachiwsky, kisses the bread, as part of the Ukrainian traditional Bread and Salt Greeting. On his left, is Dr. M. Snihurowych, Chairman and Mr. John Hrynchysyn, our Resident, is holding the bread, while one of our staff is assisting.

Opening on 1 April, 1990, the 75-bed Millennium Pavilion also features a therapeutic pool and whirlpool, a spacious dining and lounge area, and geriatric furnishings. The proposed William Hawreliak Wellness Centre, located on the main floor, will act as a focal point for information and will run clinics from blood pressure and glucose testing to foot care treatments. The Millennium Pavilion represents a major phase in St. Michael's plans to integrate their health services more closely with the needs of the community. As health services move increasingly towards community and home-based health care, St. Michael's is adapting to these changes in order to maintain and improve the quality of care that it delivers.

Future Developments

St. Michael's continues to be innovative. The organization is planning to integrate its services even more closely with the community by providing its services to people's homes. From producing FibreCare (a non-drug based laxative) to marketing CareCheck (a telephone call system), St. Michael's is endeavouring to reach out to the community. In newer developments, St. Michael's is opening up a day-support program for individuals who need social activity and also to provide some respite for caregivers. More emphasis is also being placed on cultural groups who are not able to easily access health care services for its seniors because of cultural



Our Multi-Ethnic Staff, during our first Heritage Day, Aug. 1, 1985, our staff participated and dressed in the attire of thier native lands.

and language barriers. By working together with such groups, St. Michael's is able to deliver appropriate services to ethnic seniors. Even as these initiatives evolve, St. Michael's will continue to search out new ways to meet the needs of seniors in our multicultural community.

The future of St. Michael's is well rooted in its past. As the organization moves ahead, it takes with it the values, traditions, and the hopes of

the pioneers of this province. The pioneers' belief that life can be made better for those who follow, is constantly demonstrated through the hard work and efforts of the staff, volunteers and management at St. Michael's. It is this attitude and devotion that will always enable St. Michael's to take on new challenges without ever forgetting its history and those of its residents.



A Christmas Tradition - An embroidered scarf covers a table in the Dining Room. Part of a traditional Christmas Eve Holy Supper. On the left is a tri-candle holder, in centre a "kolach" (braided white bread) sitting on hay, as a reminder of Jesus Christ's humble manger, and a "diduky", a sheaf of wheat held together with an embroidered scarf.

Sisters Of Charity Of The Immaculate Conception Of Saint John, New Brunswick

The Rt. Rev. Thomas Louis Connolly, Bishop of St. John, subsequently Archbishop of Halifax, was fully alive to the need of Sisters in his work for the poor and suffering. The ravages of cholera in 1852 - 1854 left many orphan children in St. John and in other parts of the Province, and his Lordship requested the Community of Sisters of Charity of New York, to supply Sisters for the work, but owing to the many calls on them at the time, none were available. Previous to this, Bishop Connolly had met our venerated foundress, Honoria Conway, and learning of her desire to devote herself to the service of God in the religious life, he advised her to enter the Novitiate of the Sisters of Charity, Mt. St. Vincent, New York, and prepare for the arduous undertaking. She had finished her novitiate at the time Bishop Connolly applied for Sisters. His needs were so pressing that he brought with him to St. John Miss Conway and three other Novices to engage in forming a Community.

The Bishop formulated the Rules and received the vows of the first four Sisters on October 21, 1854. On his trip to Rome in 1858 he sought and obtained papal approval of the new institute and of the rules. From the outset, along with the care of orphans, the Sisters threw themselves with zeal and energy into the work of primary education, and schools were opened in different parts of the city, and later on in other parts of the Province. When the Common School Law was passed in 1870, Bishop Sweeney accepted the concessions made to him by the school boards, with the result that in 1877 the separate schools became public schools subject to the

laws and supervision of the Board of Education. It was a happy arrangement for all, and saved the Catholic population the double burden of taxation for public and private schools.

In 1865 the present Motherhouse was opened, and soon a wing was added for orphans, another for a chapel; in 1880 the boys were moved to a new Industrial School at Silver Falls, a few miles from the city. An urgent need for a shelter for infants led to the opening of Saint Vincent's Home in 1915. At this time the aged too were being cared for at the Mater Misericordiae Home, opened in 1888. The St. John Infirmary, now Saint Joseph's Hospital, came into existence in 1912.

The first call outside of the Province of New Brunswick came in 1906, when four Sisters went to Saskatchewan to take charge of the Orphanage at Prince Albert, and in 1910 Holy Family Hospital was opened there. In 1926, the Sisters went to Radway to open St. Joseph's Hospital for the needs of the rural population; and just thirteen years later, in 1939, Saint Vincent's Hospital in Vancouver entered upon its many years of serving the sick of that city.

In 1912, in order to comply with the new laws of the Church a General Chapter was held for the election of the Mother General and her Assistants. The revised constitutions, submitted to Rome, received the Decree of Praise, May 19, 1914. Final approval was granted February 23, 1937. The Second Vatican Council called for the Constitutions to be rewritten; the work was accomplished and approval granted

February 23, 1983.

As the years passed, the Sisters continued to answer the call to ministry by expanding existing institutions and establishing new centres in New Brunswick and the other provinces of Canada. In 1967, the Peru missions were begun. In later years, with the readiness of the lay population to assume leadership in these areas, the Sisters gradually withdrew in part from many of their activities. They have become more involved in ministries of greater advocacy and solidarity with the poor and marginalized; with the formation of lay leadership and ongoing formation within the wider Church; with groups and organizations fostering the dignity and worth of all persons; with the ministry in rural areas, especially among the native peoples; with housing for the underprivileged and other such ministries being shaped by the reality of the times.



Honoria Conway 1815 - 1892

Foundress

*Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate
Conception.*



*Sr. Joseph, Sister Aimee, Sister Benedicta in
Front of the First St. Joseph's Hospital
Radway. Provincial Archives of Alberta.*

St. Joseph's Hospital, Radway (1926)

It was in 1926, at the request of Father Peter Hughes, that three Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception set out from Saint John, New Brunswick for the "foreign mission" of Radway, Alberta. With Sister Benedicta as Superior, and Sisters Aimee and Joseph as companions, the three were to undertake the care of the sick of the area. For this purpose they moved into a small dwelling house, vacated by two nurses who had attempted to make a beginning of a hospital there. The Sisters divided the house into patients' rooms and Sisters' quarters (a single room serving as sleeping quarters, living room, and, at times, dining room). A lean-to had been added to serve as chapel and dining room, but this too often had to be requisitioned for surgery, and as such required a thorough cleaning - washing of walls, sterilizing tables, etc. - a rather extensive "scrub".

Water was carried from a well, heated over a stone fireplace and transferred to a huge tub at the kitchen door for washing the bedding - a necessary chore even in thirty-five below weather. Rates ranged from fifty cents to two dollars per day, but cash was a rare commodity, often making it necessary to accept as payment vegetables, chickens and even a live hog, even though the Sisters did have their own garden, as well as cows, hogs and chickens. Records for the eighteen months spent in the first wooden building (which still stands on the south side of the village) show 145 patients cared for, and of those, as many as twelve at a time.

With the opening in 1928 of a small brick twenty-bed hospital, efficiency was multiplied

and the burden eased with the acquisition of proper facilities, among others a new generator for electricity. True, there were still cows, pigs, chickens to look after, but the situation was eased somewhat by the generosity of good friends, among them Mr. Wing Wong, who often brought pies and cakes to the Sisters. Dressings, needles and syringes were washed and re-sterilized; but this could not prevent the Sisters' earnings from being sapped up in digging wells. The last one, five hundred feet deep, contained salt water and gas, useful only for bathing patients. The water, pumped to the basement, had to be carried by pail to the floors. It was not until 1931 that running water was installed, and it contained natural gas, not high enough for commercial development, but sufficient to give a workman a fast lift to the surface after breaking a light bulb at the bottom of the tank. For some time the gas was piped to the floors to be used for heating water, until the practice was judged to be dangerous. Once again it was down to the kitchen to heat a little milk or water for the patients, until it was decided to invest in small electric plates.

Refrigeration on the floors was introduced in 1938: an added convenience for staff and patients. A portable x-ray machine, with scant protection, sat at the end of the corridor until an x-ray room was set up in a converted ward near the hospital entrance.

The year 1937 was one of sorrow, as our dearly loved Sister Damian passed away with cancer. She was honoured with a large funeral, her remains being carried in procession from the church to the station, to be buried in the Sisters'

plot in Edmonton. Sister Wenceslaus succeeded her in the arduous task of sewing, cooking, and looking after those who came to the door (as well as providing many a laugh for those who crossed her path).

During these years the Sisters spent summer holidays teaching catechism in the surrounding area. They were often called upon as well to put to use their talents as mechanics to keep the septic tank and the Delto battery plant in operation. Adept at improvising, upon occasion they converted a copper wash boiler into a baby's incubator. As there were no undertakers in the vicinity, they stored coffins in the backyard granaries, and themselves prepared the body to be presented to the bereaved family.

Names which recur in the early history of the hospital include Sister Julienne (who helped in every nook and cranny from 1931 to December, 1937), Sister M. Benedicta, Sisters Rosina, Aimee, and Damian, Sister Joseph, often referred to as saint for her years of unremitting toil in establishing the hospital. We read of Father Heffernan, Father Peter Sullivan, who served at various times as chaplains, Dr. Holubitsky and Dr. Hollis, as well as Miss Vera Andrusiak, who helped in the kitchen. Sister Stella Maris, R.N., arrived in 1935, filled with enthusiasm for the many and diverse works she was to undertake through the many years she would spend in Radway Hospital. Miss Anne Friska, R.N., came to help with the patients - often as many as ten maternities at one time, during which dresser drawers, boxes and bathtubs were brought into use for the babies. In the space of one year 1700 patients were cared for; outpatients were relatively few, as only the very ill came to the hospital.

Dr. Hollis left in 1936, but Doctors Archer and Young of Lamont assisted Dr. Holubitsky. These two Doctors had to cross the Saskatchewan River by themselves when the



Sister M. Benedicta, First Superior at Opening of New Health Centre, 1976.

ferry was not in operation - in bad weather, a danger-fraught trip - when the Sisters doubled their prayers.

In the course of time improvements multiplied: a beautiful altar carved by good friend, Mr. Dombrosky, for the little chapel; tray cupboards built by Paul Holubitsky, the Doctor's brother; landscaping under the able direction of Dr. Holubitsky - trees planted by the hundreds, lilacs, Catonia asters, strawberries, gooseberries; lawns seeded and terraced; rocks put in place along the driveway; a small grotto built near the summer house; and a root cellar dug to store vegetables. As the number of Sisters increased, sleeping quarters were built in the backyard, as

replace some of the unsightly granaries.

In 1941, Father Peter Sullivan built a three-room house north of the hospital to be used as chaplain's quarters. In that same year, Sister Stella Maris, after seven years in Radway, was transferred to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. In 1944, Dr. Holubitsky moved to Edmonton, to be replaced by Dr. Koziak, who remained until 1953, when ill health forced him to leave, and Dr. Lastiwka took over until his death November 4, 1964. In 1945 Sister Rita Carmel arrived to begin an uninterrupted thirty-two years of service in the kitchen. She was met in pouring rain by Dr. Koziak with Sisters Vincentia and Wilfreda, and welcomed to the hospital by Sisters Therese, Eileen and Winnifred.

In 1947, Sister Vincentia went to her reward. Sister Delphina, who replaced Sister as Superior, remained seven years. As early as 1953, there were rumours that St. Joseph's Hospital would be closed, and improvements were therefore held in abeyance. The result was

that when Sister Alexina arrived in 1957 to replace Sister Constance Marie, and Sister Stella Maris returned to the Nursing Department, the hospital was badly in need of renovation and updating. Linoleum was laid, new equipment installed, walls and ceilings plastered and painted, as St. Joseph's entered upon a final two decades of service before the dream of a new facility was realized.

Stories of the early sixties abound in the good news of improvements to the hospital and its surroundings: a sliding door refrigerator in the kitchen, saving thousands of footsteps, with new sinks and cupboards; an office fitted for the Superior; a new room fitted out for the pharmacy.... The need for a hospital board came under review; its realization needless to say, proved to be an invaluable asset to St. Joseph's. About this time the hospital became a disaster-ready unit, with plans completed and a chart with names of all who would assist, the entire project being approved by Civil Defence authorities in Edmonton.

At this time also a Hospital Auxiliary, consisting of close to seventy members was formed. The history of the Auxiliary, of their continued support, hard work and substantial gifts of equipment and money would require a lengthy chapter of its own. Above and beyond material goods, their spirit of generosity and caring has proved a boon to the community spirit and social life of the area. Individual patients also showed their gratitude to the Hospital: one by the gift of a \$360 suction machine, another in the donation of 160 acres of good parkland at Long Lake.

Sisters Landry and Foster, Mr. and Mrs. Tony Styra, and Mr. Walter Chaba met with the Government concerning the deficit at this time. Dr. Mahalingham arrived in 1971 and was



joined by Dr. Clement. An all steel band gave a concert led by a grateful patient and donated the "take" of Seventy Dollars to the Hospital. Dr. Mahalingham set up his clinic in Redwater, to be followed by the erection of a 32-bed hospital, but as patients continued to pour into St. Joseph's after the opening of the Redwater Hospital, it was unthinkable to move out at this point. Five Sisters of the Holy Name had arrived from Poland and were invited to St. Joseph's to learn English; two of these Sisters were nurses, and a welcome addition to the staff.

April 25, 1973, St. Joseph's was pronounced lacking in the minimum requirements of fire safety, and from then on, ways and means were diligently sought for establishing a new hospital. In August, the Honourable George Topolinsky outlined to the Radway Council a plan for an extended care facility, entailing nursing home accommodation, a 24-hour emergency nursing service, and basic facilities for diagnostic, preventive and consulting programs. A generous donation of land by the Ukrainian Catholic Parish of St. Mary's made possible a quick start on building the 1½ Million Dollar St. Joseph Health Centre, officially opened June 25 - 27, 1976, at first administered by Sister Mary Quigg and a staff of thirty.

On the retirement of Sister Mabel Foster (Sister Stella Maris) and Sister Rita Duchscherer (Sister Rita Carmel), it became evident that there were no young replacements available. Sister Patricia Wallace, a retired school principal, took over the position of Administrator; Sister Margaret Shea, a senior nurse of long and varied experience, became Director of Nursing; and Sister Margaret Dooley, a retired teacher, arrived to assist in ordering supplies, teaching Catechism in the school, and playing the organ in church.

In June 1979, Sister Wallace announced the forthcoming retirement of the Sisters of Charity from hospital work at Radway. The smooth transfer of the administration of the hospital to a new staff was accomplished on December 31, 1979. As the Sisters, one by one, departed to take up work elsewhere, each carried with her, warm wishes of the Radway people, with the bright promise of a Reunion Banquet of Appreciation to be held at Radway Hall the following April.



**Reverend Peter Sullivan, First
Chaplain, St. Joseph's Hospital 1926.**

POSTSCRIPT

In retrospect, our vision of three Sisters of Charity en route from Saint John, New Brunswick, to a "foreign mission" in Radway, Alberta, brings a smile to our lips. But when we pause to review the difficulties of those early times when people were bringing their sick over roads well nigh impassable in most seasons of the year; when the Sisters for the first eighteen or so months lived and cared for their patients in the small cottage hospital without running water; and, finally, when we examine the communications problems involved in nursing "new Canadians" unable to speak or understand English, we bow our heads in acquiescence: our Sisters had indeed come to "a far country".

Wasting no time, however, in vain speculation, they set themselves to the task at hand, caring for their patients and at the same time making sure that those who had brought them were sent back on their homeward journey warmed and fed. When the new Saint Joseph's Hospital opened in 1928, the number of patients increased, and before too long the Sisters found it necessary to move their sleeping quarters to the attic (without bathroom facilities), which was then transformed into the "north dormitory" for six Sisters and the "south dormitory" for six or more girls. There was, as time went on, some measure of relief when the chaplain, Father Peter Sullivan, built, at the rear of the property, a summer house surrounded by a thick grove of trees.

The absence of undertakers in the area called for the exercise of a particular sort of ingenuity. One Sister remembers helping a poor man take a relative home for burial. The coffin was placed on top of his old car and secured with ropes through the windows to be transported many miles over dark, rough and muddy roads. On another occasion, a son, too poor to afford the luxury of a coffin, set his dead father next to

him in the front seat to be taken home and buried in a homemade box. In point of fact, during the winter months relatives and friends could be dead and lying in the morgue for days before families could be notified, because of the absence of telephones, great distances, and bad or nearly impassable roads. Travel was by horse and sleigh, wagons, or cabooses containing small stoves.

The situation, of course, had its less sombre side. During one terrible blizzard, a husband was rushing his screaming wife to the maternity ward, when, unable to see the hospital, he found himself a quarter of a mile down the road at the creamery. He turned and dashed back, shouting for help. Stretcher bearers came rushing out to rescue the screaming woman, along with hay, blankets, etc., and carried her to the case room, only to discover that the baby had already been born. As the woman couldn't speak English, the nurses came running out, calling to the husband, who was about to rest his horses for the return journey. Upon his return to the hospital, they dug about in the hay and blankets, where to their untold relief they found a twelve-pound, healthy baby boy. Wrapping him in her big white apron, Sister hurried back to the mother. As the records state, "She kissed the baby and the nurse."

Nor must we pass over this 1942 jotting: "Our present Marymount at the time was in the centre of the backyard containing the batteries which generated the electricity. Before turning on the x-ray machine, we would make a mad dash out the back door to turn up the power, telling each

one we met, 'Turn off all gadgets! We're x-raying.'" We read likewise in the chronicles, dated 1958, " During these pioneer days, we looked after all unwed mothers; we had a contract with Mr. Charlie Hill from Edmonton. These girls worked whenever and wherever they could. Many were not dependable."

Looking to the general good of the people, the Sisters had acquired the old school house located not far from the hospital, with the intention of having Sisters teach there, but the plan did not materialize, and the building was sold in 1958. Their busy and demanding schedule did not prevent the hospital personnel from giving their attention to the finer aspects of patient care. During the summer months Mr. Ford and Miss Betty Moffat supplied flowers from their gardens for all the patients and for the chapel. In the early sixties an old slough on the grounds was transformed into an ornamental lake with some four hundred trees planted around it, and in the middle of the lake, an island with two pink

flamingoes - a beginning, as it was hoped, of "quite a beauty spot and a very fine park to enjoy sitting and walking in." And as winter descended, the tender love and beauty of Christmas shone out at Radway when "many outdoor lights were scattered through the Catonia Aster hedge, with a beautiful Crib above the front entrance; the trees at each gate and in front of the trailer were also lighted."

There were money donations as well, e.g., we read in the 1963-1964 report: "In her first week of office, Sister Stella Maris received a cash donation of Five Hundred Dollars from old Mrs. Ouelette's people. Mrs. Ouelette was a patient here for sixteen years." The Sisters were always ready and eager to go out to the poor and sick of the area in their homes: "In between times we make up little baskets and visit the poor and forsaken of this village. They are always very happy to see the Sisters, and enjoy the little visit and the treats we bring them." Mr. Wong, mentioned earlier as the supplier of pies and



Official Opening 1976.

cakes, was especially grateful for the "hot meal brought in by the Sisters from time to time". The occasion of his baptism in the hospital chapel was, as Mr. Wong affirmed himself, the happiest day of his life. He became a model parishioner, attending Mass each Sunday in the parish church.

In her farewell speech at the banquet at Radway Hall, April 18, 1980, to honour the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception, Mrs. Mary Mark, long time friend and dedicated hospital worker, said in closing:

A final note may be sounded on the keys of the new Yamaha piano which graces the sitting room of the Radway Health Care Centre. With their departure pending, Sister Wallace used funds remaining from the Craft Shop, plus a \$500 private donation and \$300 from the Ladies' Hospital Auxiliary, to purchase this lasting gift. The inscription on the piano reads: "From the benefactors of the Sisters of Charity." It has been and will be much appreciated at the Health Care centre during Christmas Carol Fests, the Senior Citizens' Birthday Parties when the Auxiliary Ladies sing, and to help with other opportunities of entertainment at the Centre. It is a lasting tribute to the cooperation of the Sisters and the Community. Our Thanks.

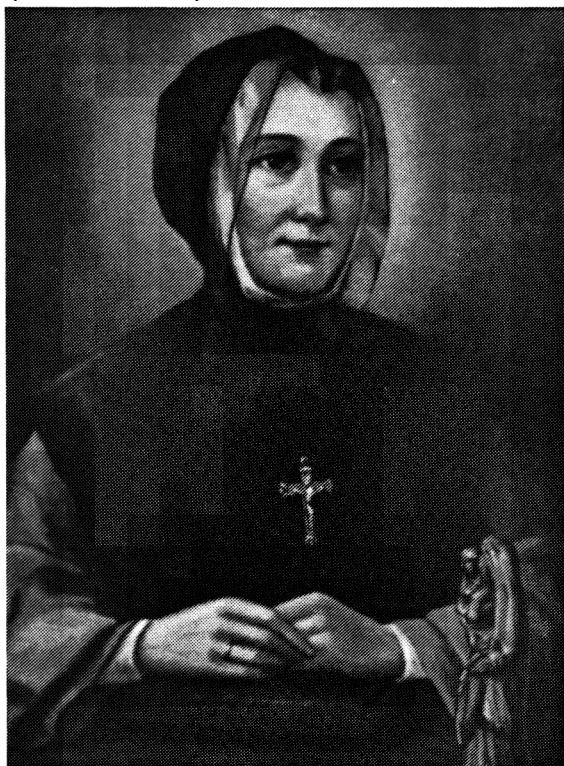
To all the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception who came to live amongst us: "We have missed you - we shall miss you. MIZPAH:

*May the Lord watch between we and thee
While we are absent
One from the other."*

MARGARET DOOLEY, S.C.I.C.

***Sisters
Of Charity
Of Montreal
(Grey Nuns)***

***Foundress:
Marie-Marguerite d'Youville
(1701 - 1771)***



***St. Marguerite d'Youville
Canonized, Dec. 9, 1990***

The Institute of the Grey Nuns reaches back 250 years into Canadian history. Its development is closely intertwined with that of the country itself and with the growth of health care, care of orphans and elderly, education and other apostolic endeavours, to wit:

- Pierre de la Verendrye, the great explorer of Western Canada and the Northern United States was Marguerite d'Youville's uncle, and one of her brothers, Christopher, accompanied Pierre on his exploration of the Great Lakes and the woodlands to the open prairies of the Great Plains.
- Founded under French rule, the first Grey Nuns attended soldiers of both armies before Canada was conquered by the English.
- Archbishop Alexandre Taché of St. Boniface was a grand-nephew of Madame d'Youville.
- In the 1860's Sister Eulalie Perrin, a Grey Nun, a pharmacist and co-founder of Notre Dame Hospital in Montreal developed an emulsion called Pancreatin which was patented both in Canada and the United States of America.
- Thanks to the initiative and persistent requests of Sister Panel, whose priority was to care for orphans, the Provincial Government of Quebec would pass into legislation its first Adoption Law in 1909.
- The first Francophone College of Nursing was founded in 1934 by Mother Virginie Allaire, s.g.m., and was located at the Grey Nuns' Mother-House until 1963 when it transferred to the University of Montreal Campus.
- Mother Virginie Allaire, s.g.m., Assistant General in charge of Hospitals with Sister

Marie-Berthe Dorais, s.g.m. spear-headed the discussions which culminated in the organization of the Institution now proudly called the Catholic Health Association of Canada, an offspring of the former Catholic Hospital Association of the United States and Canada.

Marie-Marguerite Dufrost de la Jemmerais was born in Varennes, Quebec on October 15, 1701, the eldest of a union of two of the most illustrious families of New France. Married to François d'Youville and having given birth to six children of whom only two sons survived, she became a widow before the age of thirty years. She was left destitute and debt-ridden; but nevertheless the dedicated and determined widow, in 1737, pledged the remaining years of her life to the care of the sick and afflicted, the elderly and the orphans. She opened a small store in Montreal and did fine needlework the proceeds of which permitted her to retire her husband's debts and to assist the unfortunate of the nearby parish (now Basilique Notre Dame).

With the spiritual guidance of the Sulpician Fathers, she discovered her destiny and endeavoured to be faithful to God's call. On December 31, 1737 she and two like-minded and industrious companions solemnly pledged to consecrate their time, talents, wisdom and charity "... putting in common all the produce of their labour to provide for as many poor as possible." This date marked the beginning of the renowned Order known as the Grey Nuns, the first Religious Congregation founded by a Canadian-born woman.

With this humble beginning, the group developed its works of mercy. It met at first with great trials and sufferings, and even contempt from some of the inhabitants of Ville-Marie. In 1745 their house was completely destroyed by fire; but in 1747, they were given the directorship of the General Hospital, a retirement home for men which had been under the direction of a new religious group: The

Brothers Hospitallers of the Cross of St. Joseph known as Les Frères Charron (named thus after the Founder), but which had since fallen into ruins.

In 1755 after many trials the Society received Canonical approval from Bishop de Pontbriand of Quebec and the rule drawn up for them by their friend and advisor, Father Louis Normand, was accepted. During that same year, on August 25 the group of ten ladies donned a religious habit (Grey: Ref - *Hands to the Needy*; pp. 101, 189-195; and *Love Spans the Centuries*; Vol. 1, pp. 132-134).

Madame d'Youville was called to God on December 23, 1771. She bequeathed to her companions and successors a spiritual testament which urged them to live in fidelity, in unity and in charity. Her death was marked by sightings of a brilliant cross appearing above the (Montreal) General Hospital, which she had restored from its ruins. It was seen by several citizens.

The Grey Nuns ventured to the Canadian West in 1844 at the invitation of Archbishop Joseph Norbert Provencher of St. Boniface. At the request of Bishop Vital Grandin, four Grey Nuns came to Lac Ste Anne in 1859 when Alberta was still a part of the Northwest Territories. From this base twenty-four other areas developed in this Western Province. (In **Alberta** six of their missions were devoted to hospital work and two to nursing stations; in **Saskatchewan** five of eleven missions were hospitals; and in the **Northwest Territories** five of fifteen mission had hospitals of which two served as nursing stations.)

Marguerite d'Youville was declared "Blessed" on May 3, 1959 by his Holiness, Pope John XXIII and given the title "Mother of Universal Charity". On December 9, 1990 his Holiness Pope John Paul II conferred on her the title of "Sainthood". Her feast-day is observed on October 16.

Canada also paid tribute to this great and compassionate citizen of a young country; thus, on September 21, 1978 the Postmaster General announced that Canada Post would issue a commemorative postage stamp bearing the effigy of Marguerite d'Youville.

The Grey Nun Missions in Alberta, Northern Saskatchewan, and the Northwest Territories are incorporated under the title of Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) of Alberta. Present Management (1992)

President: Sister Faye Wylie, SGM
Vice-president: Sister Thérèse Pelletier, SGM
Directors: Sister Juliette Thevenot, SGM
Sister Aurore Larkin, SGM



Sr. Rita Coulombe Sr. Faye Wylie

*Sr. Therese Pelletier Sr. Juliette Thevenot
G.N. Prov. C. 1989 - 1992*



*Pope John Paul II in Chapel at the Grey Nuns
Regional Centre. Sept. 16, 1984*



*Commemorative Plaques of Papal Visit 1984
and 1987.*

Holy Cross Hospital, Calgary (1891)

Beginnings

Holy Cross was not the first hospital in Calgary, but the religious prejudice that existed at that time made it difficult for the missionaries to exercise their ministry to Catholic patients hospitalized there. Also two Catholic members of the Hospital Board were dismissed. This fact motivated the Oblate missionaries to take measures to establish a Catholic Hospital. Thus, it was that on January 30, 1891 four Grey Nuns arrived in Calgary in the early morning in the company of Father Hippolyte Leduc, O.M.I. Since no vehicle was available, he led the Sisters afoot through the deep snow to the Convent of the Faithful Companions of Jesus, where they were welcomed, but could not be offered even temporary accommodation. They were brought to the house which the missionaries had reserved for them. Their first task was to buy a stove; thus depleting their meagre funds of about \$73.00.

The courageous Sisters immediately set up four beds to receive the first patients, but looked about for means to erect a more suitable accommodation. They were helped by monies raised by the Catholic Women of St. Mary's Parish, and alms collected from the workers of the Canadian Pacific Railway Line which was being built nearby.

Bishop Vital Grandin, O.M.I., gave them twenty lots along the Elbow River where a hospital of sixteen beds was built. The blessing took place on November 13, 1891. The Catholic Ladies zealously worked to supply the bed linens.



Holy Cross Hospital est. 1891

The Sisters had to deal with prejudices and with wily tactics to avoid having their local organization absorbed by the General Hospital, but their discernment kept them firm in their first purpose.

As on previous occasions in the history of the Grey Nuns, two epidemics became a source of blessing for them. An epidemic of small-pox and later one of diphtheria ravaged the town. Tents were set up three miles from the outskirts, but few would take the risk of caring for them. The Grey Nuns mercifully went to their rescue with no question of salary; an honorarium was, however, given to them by the town. This gesture of mercy mellowed the attitude of the population and in time, the Sisters and the care they gave to people regardless of age, colour, creed or ability to pay were given high regard.

The chronicles of Holy Cross Hospital tell us that to meet the needs for this kind of service, the Sisters, from time to time, went out to collect alms as far as Anthracite, Canmore and Banff, and to the south as far as Fort McLeod and Pincher Creek.

Founding Sisters

Sisters Carroll, Beauchemin, Valiquette and Gertrude (a lay Sister)



Sr. Agnes Carroll, s.g.m.

Date of Opening

January 1891 (four beds)

Growth

November 13, 1891 (sixteen beds); 1892, 1894, 1902, 1903, 1906, 1911, 1913, 1928, 1950, and 1967 brought the total number of beds to 516.



Holy Cross Hospital Building Erected, 1903

Educational Programs

School of Nursing (1907)
Medical Internship
Laboratory Technology
Radiology Technology
Post-Graduate in O.R. Nursing and Obstetrics

Special Services

Cancer Clinic (1942)
Pre-natal Clinic
Rheumatoid Arthritis Clinic
Heart Clinic

Transfer of Ownership

Notice of intent to relinquish ownership of Holy Cross Hospital was published on May 16, 1969. The property was transferred to the Metro-Calgary and Rural General Hospital District No. 93 (Rockyview). A generous portion of the proceeds from the sale of the Hospital was given to the Diocese of Calgary. The Grey Nuns left the Hospital on December 31, 1970 after

seventy-nine years of service.

Today, the Grey Nuns continue their healing ministry in Calgary through a Social Agency known as Youville Women's Residence, an organization comprising four dwellings.



*Holy Cross Hospital Airview Taken in 1950
Shows Additions Made in 1906, 1910(3), 1928-
9, 1938, 1950*

POSTSCRIPTS

The First Convention for Sisters working in Catholic Hospitals in Alberta was held in Calgary in July, 1917, and had been organized by Sister Duckett of Holy Cross Hospital.

In 1888, Calgary had a population of about 3,500 persons. At that time, a meeting of citizens was held in view of planning for a hospital to be managed by a Board of Governors. A house was rented and furnished, and all went well for a few months. Then because two Catholic Board Members differed in opinion with the others, they were dismissed. Shortly after that, Father Leduc, O.M.I., was denied the right to minister to one of his parishioners. This affront prompted the priest to renew his pressing request to the General Council of the Grey Nuns of Montreal for Sisters to establish a Roman Catholic Hospital. Approval was given on January 19, 1889. The hospital was opened on January 30, 1891.

When the Sisters prepared to leave Montreal for this foundation, Sr. Devins, the procurator of missions made appeals to friends and organizations for financial assistance. St. Patrick's Parish gave \$50.00, Miss Carrol gave \$60.00 and Mrs. Beauchemin gave \$50.00. With other small offerings, \$209.75 was raised, along with \$150.00 worth of linens and kitchen utensils. But by the time they reached Calgary they had only \$73.75 left.

In 1892 the rate was \$1.00 per patient day. But only 44 of the 123 patients cared for during the first year had paid. The Sisters and some charitable ladies took in sewing.

In 1893 the Northwest Territories Territorial Government began to pay a per capita fee of 40 cents for non-paying patients. A few organizations began to provide \$25.00 to have a room furnished in their name. When the hospital was overcrowded, the Sisters would give up their own beds and set up sleeping space on the floor.

In 1900 as a result of serious internal dissensions between the nursing staff, doctors and patients, at the General Hospital a number of nurses were dismissed or resigned, creating a crisis. Many patients left to come to Holy Cross Hospital, among them the Director himself who had previously played a strong adversary role in the relationship between the two Calgary hospitals. This providential circumstance proved beneficial for the future mellowing of contacts.

In 1901 Sister Duckett came to Calgary to supervise the nursing personnel and eventually to formally open a school of nursing.

Anyone who can remember being on St. Joseph's Ward, St. Mary's or on the Obstetrical Unit will readily recall the view of Sister Lawrence, an elderly Sister who, for many years would stand out on the fire-escape to throw crumbs from patients' trays out to the birds who quickly became familiar with her routine. One time at least, a patient wrote a poem likening Sister to St. Francis Assisi and he had it published in one of the daily newspapers.

When the 1929 wing was opened, a generous donor purchased a magnificent altar carved in marble and mounted with figures of the Calvary scene, along with two side altars. This lovely setting contributed towards making the Chapel serve as a haven of peace of people of all denominations who also kept it well provided with natural flowers.



*90th Anniversary of Holy Cross Hospital
(1981), Showing Latest Wing of Hospital
(School of Nursing at Right)*



Our Lady Of Seven Sorrows, Standoff (1893)

(Now Blood Indian Hospital, Cardston)

Beginnings

Father Emile Legal, O.M.I. had been a missionary at the Blood Reserve in Standoff for ten years. He had recognized the grave need for a hospital to care for the population afflicted with a variety of communicable diseases. The Grey Nuns of Nicolet, founded only seven years previously, accepted his invitation.



Fr. Emile Legal, O.M.I.

Note: The Grey Nuns of Nicolet (1886) were an offshoot from the Grey Nuns of St. Hyacinth (1840) founded from the Mother-House of the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) of Montreal. In

its early history, when a foundation was established at some distance from the Mother-House, it became self-governing in every way. However, as a preliminary experiment to reunite all the branches of the Congregation, the Grey Nuns of Nicolet became "one" with the Grey Nuns of Montreal on March 1, 1941, and were set up as a province.

Four Sisters arrived at Standoff on July 10, 1893 to take possession of a modest building erected under the supervision of Father Legal with help from the Department of Indian Affairs. Our **Lady of Seven Sorrows Hospital** opened the following month. While the natives admired the new building, they were reluctant to take advantage of it, doubtful that an institution of the kind could advantageously replace their own Indian ways. The Sisters learned the Native language from Father Legal and patiently set out to visit the sick in their homes, bringing medicine, changing dressings, making meals as needed and offering clothing to the destitute. In times of epidemics, tents were set up and the Sisters continued to exercise their ministry with Christ-like compassion. Thus they earned the trust and love of the Natives who gradually came freely to the Hospital for treatment.

Founding Sisters

Sisters St. Eusebe, St. Joseph, St. Louis and St. Germain.

Date of Opening

August 7, 1893

Growth

1917, 1922 - enlarged mainly to treat persons afflicted with tuberculosis.

1929 - The Indian Health Services Sector of the Department of National Health and Welfare reached an agreement with the Sisters to build a forty-bed hospital in Cardston to be known as **Blood Indian Hospital** and to retain the Sisters as managers. Other than the fact that crucifixes and holy pictures were not allowed, the relationship of the Federal Government with the Sisters was always most cordial (a chapel was allowed).



*Sr. Ste. Eusebe, First Superior of the
Hospital in 1893.*



*Sr. St. Joseph, One of the Four Foundresses
of the Hospital.*

Activities

Besides direct patient care, the Sisters constantly endeavoured to teach preventive health and hygiene. After they had succeeded in establishing role models in the homes of some of the most prominent members of the tribe, their task met with greater success.

Transition

See 1929, above.

The Sisters withdrew their services on September 15, 1954 (Feast of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows) after more than sixty years of service. The Hospital, still in operation has been staffed by personnel from the Department of Indian Affairs.

POSTSCRIPTS

When the hospital was first inaugurated on July 10, 1893, 800 Indians attended along with a few dignitaries. The Chiefs of the several tribes gave speeches which lasted for 3 hours!

According to Indian custom, there was a special house for patients requiring terminal care. In the early years, the natives would leave the body of the deceased to the mission who had to make the coffin, dig the grave and attend to the funeral service.

Besides caring for the sick, the Sisters were required to do other tasks such as binding 24 volumes for Mr. Wilson, the Indian agent.

In July 1896, the Sisters attended a field day to demonstrate their interest in the Indian people's activities. (Names in vogue were: Clay Bank Foot, Heavy Head, Big Wolf, Melting Tallow, Only Chief, Not Going Out, Broken Leg, Banderouche, Weazel Eagle, Heavy Runner, etc. Some of these names still survive on the Reserve.)

Also, in July 1896, an Indian attempted to murder a Mr. McNeil who served as a farm instructor. One hundred fifty natives sought the would-be murderer who was finally delivered by his own family, and executed in Fort McLeod on March 16th of the following year.

In December 1926, some Mennonites came from their colony to get a Sister to attend to a man with a severely infected finger. In recompense for her services, she was given a goose!

After the hospital was transferred to Cardston in 1929, the Indian Agent who now had more authority, required that the Sisters obtain his authorization before calling a priest for ministry to a patient - a permission which was not always granted. When Chief Mountain's request was denied, the Sisters appealed to a visiting priest who brought comfort to the dying patient.

On April 11, 1930 the Sisters were overjoyed to be allowed to have a car.



New Hospital Opened by Dep. Indian Affairs in 1929.

***The
Edmonton
General
Hospital
(1895 -)***

Beginnings

In September 1859, three Grey Nuns arrived from Montreal via St. Boniface, Manitoba in a horse-drawn carriage to the swampy area of Lac Ste Anne in answer to an invitation from the missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Under the direction of Father Albert Lacombe, O.M.I., they began their mission of evangelization, namely by: teaching the three "R's", providing religious education, and by making home visits to the sick. In 1863, Bishop Vital Grandin and Father Lacombe decided that the Mission Hill of St. Albert would be a more appropriate base for their missionary efforts, and there the sisters occupied a two-storey building which became the first convent-school-orphanage and hospital. The work expanded quickly and the caring for natives afflicted with small-pox took a large part of their time. Doctors from Fort Edmonton came to provide professional services. Then with the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Strathcona (now called the "South Side" of Edmonton), Fort Edmonton which also had the trading post seemed a more appropriate place to build a permanent hospital. A group of six doctors wrote to Bishop Vital Grandin of St. Albert to pledge their full support should the Grey Nuns establish a hospital in the city. The project was undertaken with the approval of Mother Hainault Deschamps, Superior General in Montreal.



***Sr. Coursol, One of the Four Foundresses of
the Edmonton General Hospital.***

Official Date of Opening (Blessing)

December 15, 1895 (ten beds)

Additions

1907, 1920, 1940, 1947, 1953, 1968, 1982,
1988



This Building, Set up in 1864, Became a Forerunner of the Edmonton General Hospital. Rooms Were Kept for the Care of the Sick (As Well As First Aid and School Rooms). - St. Albert.

Present Size

One Hospital - Two Sites

Downtown Site including Youville Hospital renovated to serve for Ambulatory and Acute Care; Geriatric Assessment and Rehabilitation; and Long Term Care (554 beds)

Grey Nuns Hospital in Millwoods (538 beds) - The erection of the Grey Nuns Hospital in Millwoods was financed by the Provincial Government who leased it to the Edmonton General Hospital Corporation. It was officially opened on May 5, 1988 and began to receive patients the following day.

Total of 1,092 beds.

Caritas Health Group: In 1991, the Edmonton General Hospital, the Grey Nuns Hospital and the Misericordia Hospital entered into an Agreement to work together under a new Corporation entitled Caritas Health Group.



Sr. Arthemise Gosselin, One of Four Foundresses of the Edmonton General Hospital.

Educational Programs

A School of Nursing, established by Sister M. Anne Casey, functioned from 1908 to 1973, at which time Grant McEwan College's Nursing Program was established by Sister Thérèse Castonguay, S.G.M.

Medical Internship (1924); Program became affiliated with the University of Alberta in 1935.

School of Radiological Technology (1940).

School of Laboratory Technology (1947).

First School of Medical Records Technology in Alberta (1955); established by Sister Marie-Paul Rheault, S.G.M.

Specialty Training for Geriatricians, University of Alberta (1989).

Special Services

Acute Care at Grey Nuns Hospital: Obstetrics, Psychiatry, Pediatrics, Surgery, Medicine, Emergency Department, Intensive and Coronary Care Units, Outpatient Services, Geriatric Assessment and Rehabilitation (Inpatient and Outpatient) Programs, Long Term Care, Ambulatory and Acute Care (Inpatient and Outpatient) Programs, Laboratory Services to twelve Rural Hospitals (including lab specimen and test referral, consultation services and educational seminars).

At Edmonton General: Ambulatory and Acute Care (sixty beds), Geriatric Care (195 beds), Long Term Care (284 beds), Palliative Care (fifteen beds).



Opened in 1895



Public Ward, Edmonton General Hospital, 1902

Present Management (1992)

Board Chairperson:	Mr. Rick Forest
Chief Executive Officer:	Mr. Gerald Hiebert (President)



Picture of the First Graduating Class - 1911

Present Management (1992)

Board Chairperson: Mr. Ric Forest
Chief Executive Officer: Mr. Gerald Hiebert (President)

POSTSCRIPTS

Thanks to the persuasion of Father Albert Lacombe, the authorities of Fort Edmonton gave a grant of \$1,000.00 for the beginning of the construction of the hospital.

The legal adviser communicated with the head office of the Hudson Bay Company in London who allowed for a property worth \$2,300.00 between Jasper Avenue - Victoria Avenue and 111th - 112th Street.

July 29, 1895 the first lodging for the two Sisters who first arrived was provided by Father Fouquet, an Oblate Missionary who gave his own dwelling consisting of a one-storey open room 14 x 16 feet, and with two cots, a table, two shaky chairs and a stove. After three weeks Father Lacombe came to bring the Sisters to the St. Joachim Mission where they had a room at their disposition. By November 1st they were able to move to the third floor of the building being erected.



Edmonton General Hospital - 1940

The building was blessed on December 15th by Archbishop Langevin of St. Boniface with Vital Bishops Grandin and Grouard in the presence of six priests. The following day, three nursing Sisters arrived.

On December 19th, reporters from the *Edmonton Bulletin* came for a tour and wrote a lengthy article about the hospital, the barn and the storage space.

Beginning in 1896, the Ladies Aid and Junior members came to the hospital each Wednesday for over ten years to sew, knit and make articles for sale. But when they surprised the Sisters with a gift of \$300.00 realized from a "profit ball", held in April, Bishop Grandin would not allow them to accept it. Later in the year they raised \$400.00 from a bazaar while their Junior members raised \$152.00.

An uncle of one of the Sisters (Sister Desmarais) who had earlier given them an open carriage, now gave them a cutter and fur blankets for Christmas.

July 1898 marked the 50th Anniversary of Queen Victoria's Reign. On this occasion, the Mayor and City Council had organized a joyful event on behalf of the hospital, but a torrential rain spoiled the outdoor events. In appreciation, the Sisters designated one of their sick rooms as "Victoria Jubilee Ward".

By mid-year 1896, the Doctors had wanted to have more control of the hospital built at their invitation, but the Sisters would not allow this. In 1899, this became a more serious problem and four of the doctors resigned on June 30th.

These doctors appealed to City Council to have a "non-sectarian" hospital. The Sisters of the Edmonton General Hospital had claimed this appellation for themselves.

In 1901 a small-pox epidemic broke out. Four Sisters volunteered to care for them in a "civic hospital" where they cared for as many as 45 patients at a time between February 21st - May 20th. (Only one death occurred.) The Sisters received \$100.00 from the Municipalities of Fort Edmonton and Strathcona in appreciation of their services. Following this stressful situation, Father Leduc obtained from the Superior General, permission to bring the Sisters to Banff for a rest.

1911 - Telephones were installed, but a switchboard was made available only in 1916.

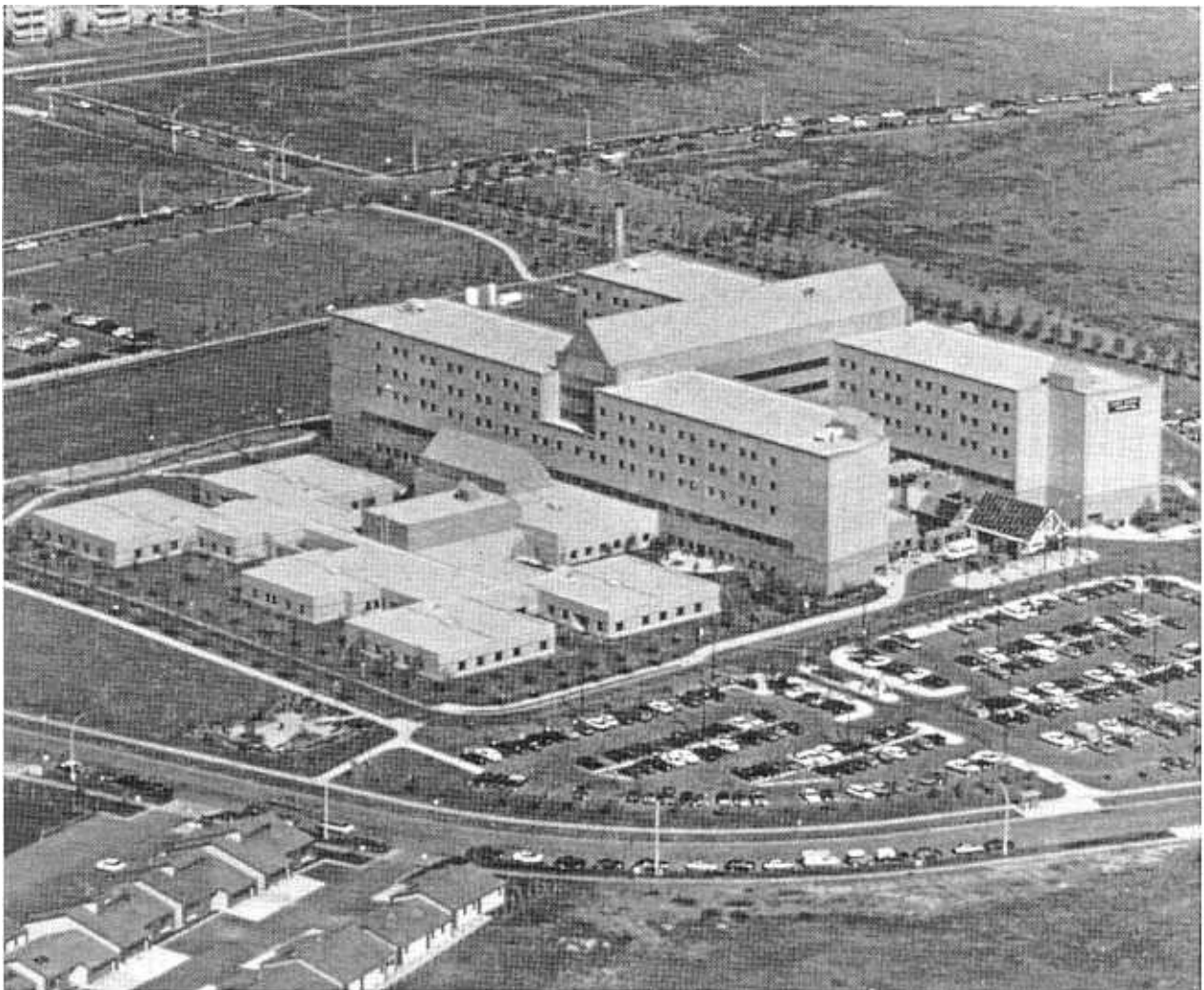
1913 - The Sisters' horse "Bob" who had served for 17 years was shot by order of the Minister of Health.

1915-1916 - During the war, as many as 170 soldiers and citizens were hospitalized at one time although the bed capacity was only 100 beds!

In December 1916, Lieutenant Jubinville of the 233rd Battalion phoned to ask the Sisters where he might obtain a figure of the Infant Jesus for midnight Mass in their camp. When the Sisters learned of this, the Superior said "Our Venerable Mother d'Youville would want us to gladly make the sacrifice of our figurines on behalf of these poor soldiers", provided that they be entrusted to safe hands. And this was done, bringing joy and tearful memories to many of the armed men.

July 1, 1917 - An entry was made in the chronicles to the effect that a large meeting consisting of twenty-five Sisters plus many lay nurses, was held to consider how patient care might be improved, and to draft a uniform plan for the education of nurses. Shortly after this, the medical staffs from the Edmonton General,

the Royal Alexandra and Misericordia Hospitals began to meet monthly on a rotation basis. This proved to be an excellent means of upgrading their policies and procedures as well as improving their relationship with hospital management.



Aerial View of Grey Nuns Hospital

St. Therese Hospital, St. Paul (1926)

Beginnings

The possibility of having a hospital in St. Paul had been discussed by the early colonists as far back as 1916. It became a reality on June 2, 1925 when three dedicated citizens purchased a house for this purpose. It became known as the J.B. Charlebois Memorial Hospital to honour the first Doctor in St. Paul. It contained eight general care beds and ten isolation beds.

At the invitation of Father Ludovic Larose, O.M.I., Pastor, the Grey Nuns accepted the direction of the Hospital in 1926.

Founding Sisters

Sisters M. du Carmel, Jeanne Longtin and Sister Olympe.

Official Date of Opening

September 26, 1926

Growth

With help of the community of St. Paul, and numerous trips to collect alms, a new structure called St. Therese Hospital and providing twenty-five beds was opened in August, 1927. Further additions were made in 1930 and 1962, bringing the capacity to seventy-five beds and eighteen basins.

Besides hospital care the Sisters embraced other



Sr. Clarilda Fortin, Sup. Foundress of St. Theresa Hosp. St. Paul, 1926.

ministries, namely: care of infants awaiting adoption; care of Indian children afflicted with tuberculosis; Nursing Education at the junior experience level, and cooperation with parish ventures.

In 1945 wise counsellors enabled the Hospital to

come under the Municipal Hospital Scheme while retaining full ownership.

Transfer of Ownership

From the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) to the St. Paul General and Auxiliary Hospital and Nursing Home District No. 36. The title of St. Therese Hospital was retained effective December 31, 1970.

POSTSCRIPTS

During October and November 1926, two Sisters would go by horse and buggy to surrounding parishes to solicit alms, often returning from a hard day's work with only \$10.00 and promises. From workers for the Canadian National Railway between St. Paul and Elk Point, they received the generous sum of \$23.65.

On November 26, 1926 they received a relic of the newly canonized St. Theresa of the Child Jesus from the Mother Prioress of Lisieux who stated that this gift to the hospital was an exception as the relics were usually reserved for churches.

Our good neighbours from the convent of the Sisters of the Assumption, for several months, sent the hospital Sisters a supply of buns or muffins.

Even as late as January 1927, the water supply was a serious problem, no sinks and no indoor toilets. Water had to be brought in from a well one acre away.

Confederation Day, July 1, 1927 was observed by a banquet which brought in \$200.00; a sale of sandwiches \$35.00 and of roses \$90.00.



J.B. Charlebois, Memorial Hospital (Opened in 1925) Later Became St. Theresa Hospital When a New Building Was Opened in 1929.

The new hospital was ready for occupancy only at August 15, 1927. It was blessed by Archbishop O'Leary on August 26, 1928.

The upper floor of the old school was rented as a residence for nurses, aides and three Sisters.

People generously came to the support of the Sisters; this was a dramatic increase from the earlier alms - tours. A bazaar held in 1928 brought \$5,000.00 and farmers brought supplies of farm produce.



During those years an infant incubator consisted of a wooden box approximately 30" x 18" with a screen bottom under which rested a small bowl of water and light bulb.

As in most of our foundations, the Sisters had to contend with contagious diseases. In June 1929, a typhoid epidemic was so widespread that the Board of Health had to arrange for tents to be set up to accommodate patients. Two families from Wolf Lake all succumbed to the disease.

Hot running water became available only after 1946. Until then, each Sister had a pail in which she heated water on the kitchen stove for her toilet needs.

Before an elevator could be installed in 1945-1946, patients were transported to the upper floor or to the operating room on a canvas stretcher held by two wooden poles. (Some nurses still recall having had to stop midway on the stairs to deliver a newborn.)



***St. Theresa Hospital - Entire New Building
Opened in 1962.***

St. Gabriel's Hospital, Fort McMurray (1938)

Beginnings

As the Northern Missions experienced a period of expansion, the need for the provision of health care at Fort McMurray was keenly felt. The request for Grey Nuns was made initially in 1906, and then again in 1917. It was only in 1938 that the Sisters were able to respond to the urgent invitation of the Bishop of the Vicariate of MacKenzie-Fort Smith.



Bishop Gabriel Breynat O.M.I. Founder

Ownership

The property belonged to the Catholic Episcopal Corporation of MacKenzie-Fort Smith.

Founder

Bishop Gabriel Breynat, O.M.I.

Founding Sisters

Sisters Marie Nadeau and S. Adjutor.

Official Date of Opening

May 28, 1938.

Growth

In 1964, the Episcopal Corporation negotiated with the Town of Fort McMurray, regarding additions to the Hospital. The Government of Alberta opted for a complete new structure under the auspices of the municipality, but serviced by the Grey Nuns. That Hospital was opened in 1966. The Sisters remained on staff till November 1, 1969. Then they returned to the old St. Gabriel's Hospital which served as a Senior Citizens' Home until November 23, 1970.

Transfer of Ownership

From the Catholic Episcopal Corporation of MacKenzie-Fort Smith to the Municipal Hospital District, No. 99 in March, 1966.

POSTSCRIPTS

The hospital was named after the patron saint of Bishop Gabriel Breynat, O.M.I., founder of the hospital.

As in our other hospitals, a Ladies Aid Society organized and generously supported the inauguration of this health centre. There was no question of drawing lines across sectarian allegiance. In August of 1938 a Bazaar and raffle helped to raise \$186.00. In December, \$255.57 was realized from a raffle, a tea and a film. Hunters brought the produce of their hunt to the hospital.

In 1943, American soldiers collected \$206.02 among themselves to give to the Sisters who had cared for them at the hospital, and when they left Fort McMurray at the beginning of October they brought all their extra food supplies to the hospital.



Sr. Marie Nadeau (Standing), One of the Founding Sisters, and Sr. Routhier, July 1925.



St. Gabriel Hospital

-Original Bldg. at Rear (1938)

-New Bldg. Opened 1966 (Built by Municipality of Ft. McMurray but Administered by the Grey Nuns.



First Grey Nuns Mission at Lac St. Anne 1859.



St. Albert 1890 - Youville Convent

***Youville
Home,
St. Albert (1940 -)***

Beginnings

Refer to beginnings of Edmonton General Hospital. After the Edmonton General Hospital was opened the work of the Sisters at St. Albert was channelled into an Indian Residential School and Orphanage. Then, gradually phasing out these activities, the space was adapted to serve the elderly, 1940 to 1947.

Founding Sister

Sister Victoria Corriveau was the local Superior at the time of the transition.

Growth

Transition completed in 1947.

Completely new structure opened April 1967 with a capacity of 162 beds.

Services

To Level Three Care.

Present Management

As at September, 1992

Board Chairperson: Mr. Marcel Podlosky
C.E.O.: Mr. Dale Mitchell



Sr. Victoria Corriveau 1961

POSTSCRIPTS

The development of Youville Home actually originated with the opening of a Grey Nun Mission at Lac Ste Anne in 1859. The place had earlier become a settlement established by Father J.B. Thibault in 1844. The Oblate Missionaries came later and it was the renowned Father Albert Lacombe who pursued its development.

The Sisters who left Montreal stopped at St. Boniface to receive some initiation to mission life. Then, after 51 days of journey by cart, they approached Lac Ste Anne (then called Lac Manitou by the natives).

Mud certainly was the greatest obstacle to comfortable travel across the prairies and swamps. The Sister wrote about "the torture of the cart" which had no springs to control the jolting as it passed over rocks and fallen tree trunks. Added to that was the unpleasant lack of privacy, for some natives had joined the caravan.

They spent the last night encamped only six miles from the mission. In the morning they had to cross Priests' Creek (now called Ste Anne Creek) when they heard the church bell ring its welcome, and the Fathers and thirty natives came out to meet them. The vehicles sank deeply in the mud and the men had to strain for a long time to free them. (Some records state that the Sisters arrived on horseback, but our chronicles do not confirm this.)

In March 1860, Father Lacombe set up an elementary government structure consisting of a President (Joseph Beaudry, a Metis) councillors and magistrates. This helped to assure order in the settlement.

It is there that the Sisters learned the Cree language, taught school and gave lessons in faith and the culinary arts. They also made home visits to the sick.

Then, in 1863, Archbishop Alexandre Taché urged the Sisters to transfer to the high St. Albert Hill, forty miles to the East. There the



Sr. Emery, First Superior at Lac Ste. Anne & Youville Home

mission developed rapidly. Besides teaching children and sheltering orphans, they visited the sick in their homes;

- a government employee injured by his own gun was brought to the convent for treatment;
- as well, came miners who sought gold along the Saskatchewan River;
- once three small children were sheltered by the Sisters to prevent their being eaten by the natives;
- there is also on record the fact that in 1890, Sister Leveille had extracted teeth, had repaired a denture and also actually made a denture for a man who had come up from Lac La Biche;
- during the hay season, the Sisters were required to bring lunches to the men working in the fields.

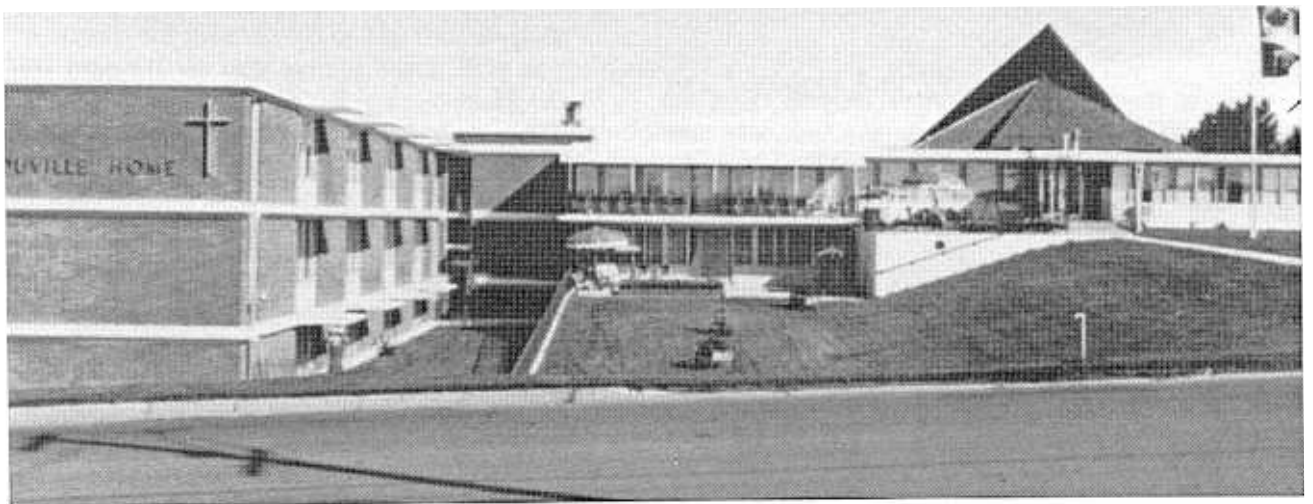


Youville Home - 1961

A journal entry in September 1890, noted that a wash-machine had been installed so that the Sisters would no longer need to go down to the Sturgeon River to do their laundry (this was seventeen years after their move to St. Albert)!

Gradually, an Indian Residential School developed and a regular school program was

established to teach farming skills to the boys and home economics to the girls. This lasted until 1940, when the number of students had declined and two wings of the convent were set up to meet the needs of the elderly. The need was so great that within four years, the entire place was allocated for both ambulatory and bed-ridden patients.



Youville Home - Built in 1966.

Sisters Of Charity Of Notre Dame D'Evron

Foundress:

Madame Thulard

(née Perrine Brunet) 1654-1735

In 1982 the Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron celebrated three centuries of existence. It all began with a young girl named Perrine.

On November 6, 1654, near a tiny village in western France, la Chapelle au Riboul, in a farm home called "La Bigottière" was born Perrine Brunet.

During the years Perrine was growing up, social and economic conditions in France were at a low ebb and the country had been devastated by civil war. Illiteracy and poverty were a way of life.

Perrine, bright and industrious, was fortunate to receive some basic literacy skills from a kind neighbour lady. Always a pious and earnest youngster, Perrine sensed at an early age a call to consecrate her life to God, but as was the custom at that time, she was promised in marriage to a young man, René Thulard. After six years of married life, René died suddenly, and the young, childless widow returned to her family home.

Perrine's longing for a religious life was once again awakened and she sought counsel from her parish priest. Realizing that Madame Thulard was gifted with many virtues and an ardent charity for the poor of his parish, he encouraged her to help with the great task of educating the young and caring for the destitute and sick in the locality.

For two years, Madame Thulard studied for this double vocation of teaching and nursing.

In 1682, Madame Thulard returned to her home and together with a few other women, she founded her Society dedicated to the spiritual and material well-being of the poor through teaching and nursing.

Like all new endeavours, the little Society experienced trials and misfortunes. It took faith and courage to overcome these many obstacles. Madame Thulard instilled in her Sisters a deep love for the poor, and a courageous fidelity to their vocation in the Church. In a humble non-assuming manner they went about their tasks caring for those in need.

In spite of many setbacks, the Order continued to flourish and at her death in 1735, Madame Thulard had founded close to forty convents.

In the early 1790's, the French Revolution caused great havoc among Religious Congregations. Institutions and property were confiscated and the Sisters were forbidden to carry on their charitable works. The Sisters returned to their families and friends. Some were imprisoned, and two of the Sisters met their death by the guillotine in 1794 because they chose to nurse all wounded soldiers without bias.

After the Revolution, the Sisters of Charity were reunited in a former Benedictine Monastery offered to them by the French Government. Since that time this edifice has been the Mother-House of the Congregation.

One hundred years later, in the early nineteen hundreds, new regulations in France forced the educational facilities of the Sisters to close, and many teaching Sisters had to seek other work or secularize. It was at this time that the Superior General began to investigate the possibility of sending Sisters to other countries. And so opened a new era for the Sisters of Charity. Belgium and England were the first to welcome these valiant women.

On February 24, 1909, Mother Marie Cousin, General Superior, Sister Claire Roimier and Sister Marie Louise Rector arrived in Alberta on an exploratory mission with the purpose of finding a suitable place for the Sisters where they could continue to minister to the people in need.

It did not take them long to make their decision. They chose Trochu as the location for their new mission where they would build their hospital and open an school. Within a few months after their return to France they selected those Sisters who would meet this challenge.

***St. Mary's
Health Care Centre,
Trochu
(1909 -)***

***Congregation:
Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron***

***Foundress:
Madame Thulard
(née Perrine Brunet) 1654-1735***

On the evening of July 28, 1909, the first eight Sisters, namely: Sister Marie Louise Recton, Sister Marie Joseph Rondo, Sister Marie Thérèse Laigre, Sister Léontine Reboux, Sister Marie Victoire Bruhay, Sister Joséphine Boisseau, Sister Marie Augustine Buttier and Sister Cécile Février, left their beloved country for the little Canadian Mission. These brave and sincere young women possessed a true missionary spirit and set about adapting to their new country and performing good works.

A modest building which had formerly been a shelter to travellers crossing the prairies, was kindly set aside for the use of the Sisters. This house, with a rustic corridor, joined to a nearby granary, served both as Convent and Hospital.

The day after the arrival of the Sisters, several wounded patients sought admission to the Hospital. Shortly after an epidemic of typhoid fever broke out. In one week ten typhoid



patients as well as other cases were brought to the little Hospital. Night and day the Sisters were on duty. It seemed that everything was lacking except patients, work and courage.

In August 1910, the site for the new Hospital was chosen. Ten acres of land were given to the Sisters by St. Anne's Ranch. Construction started immediately, and on October 3rd, the cornerstone and the well were blessed by Father J.B. Lemieus, a visiting Priest from France.

September 1, 1911 marked the official opening of the Hospital but it was in the year 1912 that the St. Mary's Hospital was officially recognized by the Department of Health of the Government of Alberta. This would bring financial support in the amount of fifty cents per patient per day.

In 1915, the Hospital Aid Society was formed. The ladies have always worked hard to help raise money for the Hospital.



Maison de Trochu 1930.

In 1937, the exterior of the building was covered with stucco. It was also in 1937 that the Ladies Auxiliary helped pay for the new hospital beds and mattresses, as well as an x-ray grid. The

following year, the Ladies purchased the first three Gatch beds and mattresses, and other equipment for the Hospital.

In 1946, the first Hospital Advisory Board Committee was formed. It was composed of seven members.

During the summer of 1948 the new wing was started and at the same time repairs to the old windows were done. On July 19, 1950, the blessing and official opening of the twenty-nine bed modern hospital was held.



During the fifties, the Hospital was updated with new equipment. The first Electrocardiograph in Trochu was purchased in 1951, and in 1952 it was a deep-freeze and an automatic "Stocker" purchased with the help of the Ladies Auxiliary. It is because of these wonderful ladies that St. Mary's Hospital of Trochu continues to be as modern as any hospital in Alberta.

Other equipment which was brought during those years with the help of the Hospital District Board, the Municipality and the Ladies Auxiliary

were: food conveyors, fire extinguishers, a wheelchair, a sewing machine, stretchers, siderails, linen cart, toasters, and much more ... All of these made work easier for the Nursing Staff, as well as making the patients feel more comfortable and secure in the care given.

In 1956 a Pediatric Unit was organized in a wing of the original hospital.

During the year 1958, a complete changeover was done in the Operating Room. A new surgical table with accessories was bought, surgical instruments, basin stands, an anesthetic machine, an irrigation stand, two sterilizers, carts and an "Isolette" Incubator for Obstetrics.

The Laboratory and Radiology Departments also received new equipment, eg., microscope, centrifuge, photometer, filing cabinets, and illuminators. In 1959, construction was again the rule of the day. This time it was the St. Joseph Wing built to celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Sisters' arrival. It was situated south of the present building and joined at the second floor level by a cross-walk to a large Chapel allowing patients who wished to pray and worship to move about freely. On September 30th, the new Chapel was blessed.

The first dishwasher was installed in 1962 and a

large autoclave, as well as other needed equipment were bought during the sixties. The third floor of the east wing was remodelled as a Residence for Hospital Staff.

On August 15, 1974 permission was granted by the Government of Alberta to expand the Trochu Health Care facilities.

It was sad to realize that the 1911 construction had served its usefulness and must soon be demolished. In July 1975, the patients were moved to the 1940 wing, the long term patients to other hospitals in the area.

November 13, 1975 marked the beginning of a new era for St. Mary's Hospital when a new facility was begun. The official sod-turning ceremony was held with Frank Hoppins, Chairman of the Hospital Advisory Board, recounting the events leading up to the ceremony.

On June 17th, the big day arrived for the Official Opening of the new St. Mary's thirty-three-bed Extended Care Facility. It was built in three levels with cafeteria, storage and maintenance on the lower level; outpatients and offices on the first level; and patients on the second level.



In 1978, a new system of management was instituted at St. Mary's Hospital. The Advisory Board which had assisted the Administrator since 1946 ceased to exist. In its place a Governing Board was formed. During the month of May 1978, pavement was laid around the Hospital and the staff parking lots. Application was made for the initial accreditation of St. Mary's. On August 29th and 30th the Survey was

successfully completed and to the joy of all, St. Mary's received accreditation for a two-year term.

In 1979, the Sisters withdrew from administration and turned this responsibility over to a lay administrator.

Trochu was chosen in 1980 for the greatly needed Nursing Home in the district.



The second Accreditation Survey in May 1981 granted accreditation status for a three-year term. During that year, inspection was made of the St. Joseph's Wing. The safety codes were not approved and St. Joseph's was declared unsafe. Demolition began November 1981.

During the year 1982, a new greatly needed Pastoral Department was established in the Hospital.

In the spring of 1985, St. Mary's thirty-three-bed Extended Care Facility became St. Mary's Health Care Centre; a fifty-eight-bed unit consisted of twenty-five nursing home, fifteen auxiliary care, fifteen acute care, and three day

care beds.

The local Hospital Board and Building Committee worked hard for several years developing the plans and dealing with the Government to get the desired results. The site east of the Hospital was donated by the Sisters of Charity.

June 21, 1985 was the Official Opening of St. Mary's Nursing Home. Sister Cécile Goyer, Provincial Superior, closed the ceremony with these words: "We look on the past with thankful hearts, we live from day to day in the present with faith, and we plan for the future with hope and trust in God."

POSTSCRIPT

of patience, perseverance and courage."

It was in late summer of the year 1909 that the train rolled noisily across the prairies of Western Canada. At the station in Calgary several men anxiously awaited the arrival of that train. Of their number were Mr. Armand Trochu, Father Leduc and Father Ciron. In lowered tones they talked of their plans for the future of their community and it was precisely for that reason that they were anxious yet decidedly happy to think of the arrival of certain **passengers** on that train so long awaited. Finally a long shrill whistle is heard in the distance and gracefully the locomotive with much banging and ringing, creeps slowly to a stop and the passengers begin to step down. Eight Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Evron, gay and full of zeal for God and for souls after a long journey had at last come to their destination.

After the first meeting with the delegation assigned to meet them, baggage was checked and a lodging place found for the night. It was the Feast of the Assumption of our Lady and the young and valiant Superior, Sister Marie-Louise Rector and her seven companions gave thanks to God and his Blessed Mother for the numerous favours bestowed on them during their long trip from their dear homeland. They travelled by train to Olds and then came across country through two big coulees in a horse-drawn democrat. Late in the evening, the little group arrived in Trochu which was to become the place where the Provincial House of the sisters of Evron would be founded.

The Sisters were welcomed in a most courteous manner by the dignitaries of the settlement assembled for the occasion. The ladies knew that the Sisters would appreciate having a crucifix in their room. Since this was unattainable, they used their imagination and cut

the picture of the cross from the cover of the



The Cross

Journal "La Croix" glued it to a piece of wall paper and cardboard and hung one in each room. It was a surprise to the Sisters when they arrived and saw such thoughtful attention to detail.

One of Sister Marie-Louise's first tasks was to prepare a Chapel. Here with the help of the Sisters she chose a room, papered the walls,



The Chapel

prepared the curtains and other accessories. In one month's time, on the 16th of September 1909, Holy Mass was celebrated in the little sanctuary in the new Chapel of the Great Canadian West.

On the first anniversary of the arrival in Trochu of the Sisters of Charity and their foundation of a hospital, St. Anne's Ranch donated 10 acres of land on a plateau overlooking the peaceful and beautiful green Trochu Valley where birds of all kinds, deer, and smaller animals abound. A portion of these 10 acres was to be used to build the new St. Mary's Hospital and Convent. The building of this hospital was difficult. The railway as yet had not come through and so the job of getting building material to the site was laborious.... Each board and nail had to come overland by horse and wagon from the railway line across at either Didsbury or Olds. To have enough building material on hand to keep the work progressing was a great challenge.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, in just over a year the impossible had been accomplished. Despite a very rigorous winter, when even bread froze a short distance away from the stove, construction on the hill progressed rapidly. Now a year after construction began, a lovely, many-roomed new Hospital-Convent stood where prairie grass blew in the wind, deer trotted down the hill to drink at the spring and meadowlarks sang in the morning sun.

A prairie Oasis! ...Such might be the term applied to the beautiful grounds of St. Mary's Hospital-Convent. The Sisters have worked tirelessly to improve them and most of this has been done in the odd moments of a busy life of charity and unselfish to others. The Sisters have shown the community that a garden and trees may be made to flourish on the bare prairie. And the lesson they taught is one of patience, perseverance and courage.



***St. Joseph's
General
Hospital,
Vegreville (1910 -)***

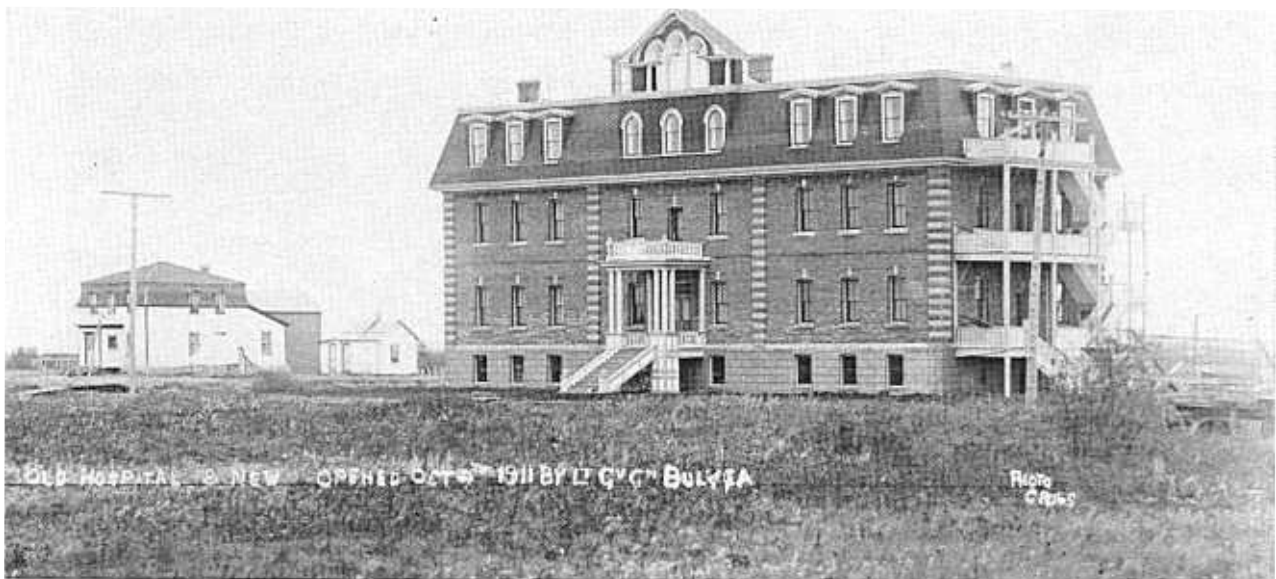
***Congregation:
Sisters Of Charity
Of Notre Dame d'Evron***

***Foundress:
Madame Thulard
(née Perrine Brunet) 1654-1735***

Among the foundations of the Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron in Canada, Vegreville deserves special notice. The history of the place is a memory and reminder of the apostolic labours, privations and virtues of one of the first devoted missionaries of the prairies, Rev. Father Vegreville.

It was in October 1910 that four Sisters of Charity, following in the footsteps of their

beloved Foundress and "choosing to serve our Lord Jesus-Christ in the person of the poor", came to Vegreville to take up the work of caring for the sick and the suffering. These four devoted Sisters newly arrived from France, namely Sister Victoire Bruhay, Sister Josephine Boisseau, Sister Marie-Louise Martigné and Sister Marie Doisneau, are considered the founders of St. Joseph's Hospital.



While awaiting the planning and completion of the Hospital, the Sisters took up residence and improvised a small hospital in a private house owned by the Parish Priests who graciously gave their lodging to the Sisters. The first patient was admitted on November 2, 1910. The original "Hospital" opened with four beds in the Parish Rectory.

The construction of a hospital was undertaken during 1911, and was placed under the patronage of St. Joseph in the hope that he would exercise his powerful guardianship over both the spiritual and temporal interests of this new undertaking. The new building was formally opened on October 4, 1911 and blessed by Bishop Legal. It was a three-storey building with twenty-five beds available for use.

A school of Nursing was founded in 1915 and functioned until 1971. The motto of the school was "Semper Fideles" (Always Faithful) and the four hundred and sixty-eight graduates of the program have contributed a tremendous number

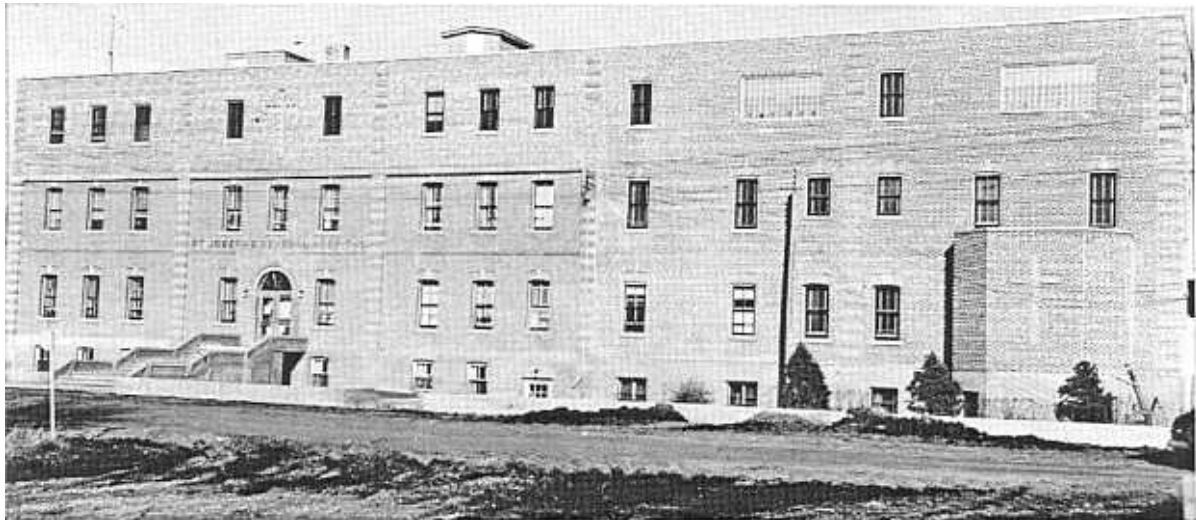
of hours of care and service in many agencies throughout the country. Their Alma Mater has always been for them an example of dedication, professionalism and commitment to caring.

An addition to the Hospital was completed in 1933, raising the bed occupancy to fifty with ten paediatric beds.

The Ladies' Hospital Auxiliary was established in 1935, and 1940 saw the celebration of the first "Hospital Day".

A Paediatric Wing, new Operating Room Theatres and a Chapel were added to the Hospital in 1950, and the name of the Hospital was changed to St. Joseph's General Hospital.

The Golden Anniversary in 1960 also marked the official opening of the new Nurses' Residence. By this time the Hospital contained ninety-one beds and fifteen bassinets.



*St. Joseph's General Hospital 1950
and in 1992 page 91*

In 1965, the new St. Joseph's General Hospital was officially opened with a bed capacity of seventy.

Ongoing improvements and changes continued, such as the first mobile Intensive Care Unit and the first Staff Nurses' Association in 1969 and conversion to metric in 1970.

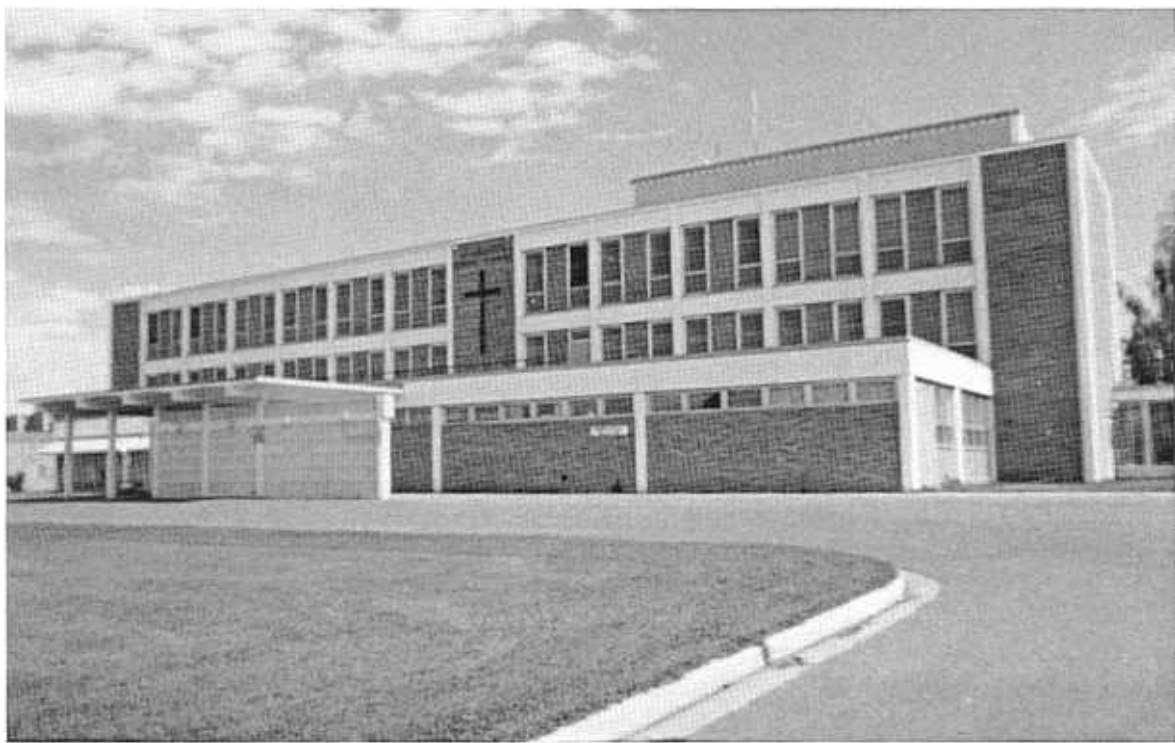
In the decade from 1970 to 1980, the Hospital Management gradually underwent a dramatic change as key administrative and departmental management responsibilities were relinquished by the Sisters of Charity, and entrusted to qualified lay staff.

Specialty areas and services were added beginning with a Physiotherapy Department which opened in 1979. A full-time Pharmacist and an Inservice Education Coordinator were added in 1980. A Respiratory Department was opened in 1981, and Security Personnel were added in 1984.

Nineteen eighty-five was the Diamond Jubilee anniversary of the St. Joseph's General Hospital. That year the Sisters of Charity Residence became the Administrative Wing and the Sisters moved to the top floor of the Nurses' Residence. The announcement for expansion was made at the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations. The construction included an expansion of the Outpatient-Emergency Department, the addition of Ultrasound to the Radiology Department, and the inclusion of Bacteriology and Blood Banking in the Laboratory Department.

Early in 1986, plans to establish a home for unwed mothers in the unused portion of the Nurses' Residence were started. The facility called the "Caritas Centre" has been in operation since October 1986.

St. Joseph's has more recently added a new Emergency and Outpatient Section along with continued improvements inside the building. In 1990, a Day Care Centre was added to the



services

St. Joseph's celebrated eighty years of caring on June 10th, 1990. Many of the Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron were present, including Sister Madeleine Bouttier, Superior General and Sister Renée Boué, Assistant General from Evron, France.

The celebrations began with a beautiful interfaith service, followed by a steak barbecue and "A Trip Down Memory Lane" as each Sister was introduced. Fran Lazarowich, Inservice Coordinator successfully contrasted the "then" and "now" with a moving, sometimes serious, sometimes humorous slide presentation.

On the eve of the twenty-first century it is still our belief that true caring means reaching out to touch with compassion and kindness all those who need to experience healing and wholeness in their body, mind and spirit. Together with caring, concerned health personnel, we, the Sisters of Charity, attempt to live out the call to serve the sick and witness to the Scripture messages:

"I have compassion on the people." (Mark 8:2),
and "As often as you did it for one of my
brothers you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40)

POSTSCRIPT

From the Chronicles...

The Chronicles of the Institution tell us that in the earlier years and indeed for many years afterwards the Sisters had a constant battle with that very necessary but troublesome element called water. There did not seem to be a happy medium. The Sisters either praying to their favourite Saints in Heaven to stop flood water from mounting too high or else they were imploring them to find a safe and abundant water supply that the Hospital could be kept going. The Chronicler notes, "I am sure most of us fail to realize just how important a good water supply really is. We tend to take it so

much for granted in our country but as I read through the records I discovered that it was only in 1934 that the Sisters finally managed to get running water into the operating room." The Sisters had some cute tricks to prevent floods and they also had a very simple and poetic way of describing their actions. This is a quote from the 1923 Chronicles, "Having already experienced the very capricious nature of the little creek, the Vermilion, we placed a statue of St. Joseph at the lower end of the garden. We then prayed to this great Saint and asked him to see that his feet did not get wet."





The flu epidemic of 1918 was a truly painful time for so many people. The Sisters experienced great sadness over the numerous families afflicted and many prayers and tears of compassion were shed over deceased parents or children - occasionally entire families were stricken. Sometimes the Hospital became an orphanage for children waiting to find a new home and the Sisters tried to supply the love and affection that these children desperately needed. At the height of the epidemic it is recorded that student nurses were called home to nurse members of their families and staffing became a major problem. No gathering of more than

twelve people was allowed and when patients died their remains were often taken directly to the cemetery. Some of the Sisters fell victim to the flu themselves which made it even harder for those who could still work. No wonder then that after many gruelling months of constant dedication the Sisters thought the end of the world had arrived early one morning as they prayed in the Chapel. A terrible loud noise and crashing sound split the otherwise silent environment. Apparently the huge chimney stack had collapsed and it was the noise that they heard and thought their end was near. They added a prayer of thanks that no one was hurt and began the plan to replace the chimney.

***St. Louis
Hospital,
Bonnyville
(1919 - 1986)***

***Now Bonnyville Health Centre
(1986 -)***

***Congregation:
Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron***

***Foundress:
Madame Thulard
(née Perrine Brunet) 1654-1735***

In 1919, six Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron, answering an official request, came to Bonnyville. For more than three years Father J.E. Lapointe had persistently pleaded for the assistance of the Sisters to establish a hospital and a school. The task would not be easy, but the Sisters encouraged by the zealous Pastor, began their work of mercy, the care of the sick

to which they were fully committed. Total dedication to the service of mankind for the love of Christ, was their motivation and source of inner strength. The people's response to the Sisters created an attitude of closeness and sharing, which is typical of the Bonnyville community to this day.



The first courageous Sisters who came to Bonnyville in 1919 were: Sister Marie Thérèse Hélie, Sister Eugénie Aucherie, Sister Victorine Perlemoine, Sister Agnès Foucher, Sister Marcelle Edom and Sister Henriette Authenac. The lodging offered to them by Father Lapointe had served as a church and rectory. Alterations had to be made before it was possible to accept patients and students. The building was

enlarged and a new level was completed. The first floor was transformed into a hospital of eight beds. The second level housed classrooms for some thirty students and living quarters for almost as many boarding students. The attic or third level provided rooms for the Sisters. Saint Louis, Patron of the Parish became also Patron of the Institution.



In June 1927, a Hospital Committee was formed to work in collaboration with the Sisters in planning a new hospital as the temporary facility could no longer meet the needs of the growing community. Bonnyville's first medical practitioner, Doctor Séverin Sabourin, who had arrived in 1918 gave the proposed project his full support. He spared neither time nor effort in collaborating with Hospital Management to complete the necessary formalities and obtain the construction permit. The construction of the

new St. Louis Hospital was initiated in the fall of 1928, and on October 16, 1929 it had reached completion. Most Rev. Henry J. O'Leary, Archbishop of Edmonton officiated at the blessing of the new St. Louis Hospital on August 10, 1931.

In 1932, the Hospital was very fortunate to have the support and assistance of the Ladies Christian Organization. Fund raising projects were its specialty and it was quite successful in

these endeavours. Later, the Ladies Auxiliary was organized and these ladies worked untiringly to provide invaluable service to the Hospital.

Under the able direction of several Sister Administrators, the Institution continued to serve the needs of the growing community. On November 25, 1953, the request for a new wing was accepted by the Provincial Government and authorization was given for the addition of

twenty-eight beds.

In 1954, an Advisory Board was formed. Later on in 1972, a Governing Board was established to include representation from the area served and finally in 1979 a Board of Management was formed which became the planning authority in Bonnyville. That same year the Hospital celebrated its Diamond Jubilee.



In 1976, the first lay administrator was named.

The amalgamation of the Duclos and St. Louis Hospitals resulted in the establishment of Bonnyville Health Centre in 1986. The reorganization process allowed for the retention

of ownership by the Sisters of Charity of Notre Dame d'Evron. The District Board and the Sisters appoint community members representative of the area served, to a Board of Management responsible for the operation and direction of the Health Centre.

The Public Opening Ceremonies of the facility took place on June 11, 1986. Today Bonnyville Health Centre is an accredited health care facility. It has a rated bed capacity of sixty-seven acute care beds, twelve bassinets and thirty long term care beds.

Through the years, the Christian dimension of Caring has been the guiding principle in the provision of Health Services in Bonnyville and is enshrined in the Mission Statement of the Hospital. The Mission of Bonnyville Health Centre is to provide quality health care within available resources to the satisfaction of patients, residents and their families. "Committed to Christian values through care and service programs, we promote effective personal,

professional and community relationships.

Symbolically, through the outstretched human hand, we extend a warm welcome to all who enter Bonnyville Health Centre. The hands also signify our desire to offer tender and compassionate caring service to all those who need healing and wholeness. The cross that emanates from the hands, indicates that we wish to add a Christian dimension to our care, believing that each of us can be the healing presence of Christ to someone in need. The heart is the symbol of true love, the basis for Christian caring, and this particular heart is actually formed from two caring hands clasped together, meant to represent the fusion of the Duclos and St. Louis Hospitals.



POSTSCRIPT

From the Chronicles..

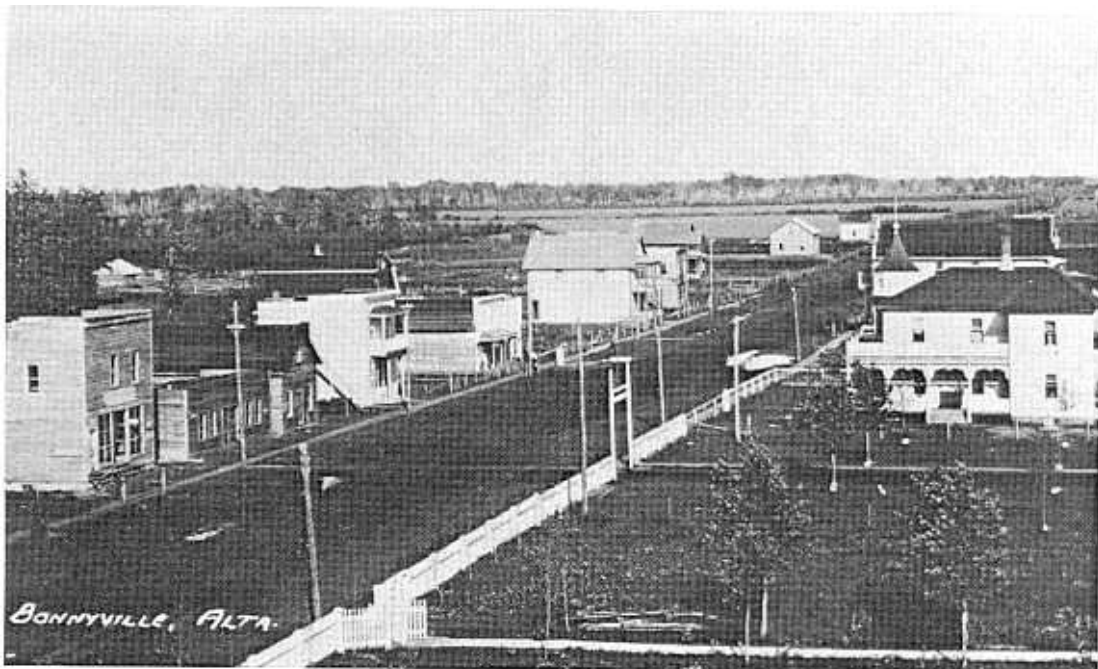
Exchange of goods for service was a common occurrence in the early days on the prairies. Payment for hospitalization was often made with beef, chicken, turkeys, geese, firewood, etc. All was accepted and made use of to provide food and warmth to the patients and boarders. Meat was often canned for future use. It was noted in the Chronicles in 1920 that the Sisters had done some sewing for a lady in the community and in return she gave them \$2.00, a jar of cream of wheat and a nice white hen with a setting of eggs. The results were not great apparently, as out of the fourteen eggs only three chicks hatched. But as the writer noted "three is better than none".

In the early days in Bonnyville poverty reigned but the Sisters lived it joyously. People were very kind and shared what they had with others. It was noted that on one occasion a kind

gentleman gave the Superior a five dollar bill saying, "Here take this Sister, you work hard for us and you are even poorer than I who am far from rich."

In September 1928, the first train whistle was heard in Bonnyville. It happened just in time as the railroad was needed to bring in supplies and equipment for the new hospital under construction. During each building project the construction site and workers were confided to God by the Sisters so that none would get hurt.

The winter of 1929 saw some very cold weather. On January 27th, a minus seventy degree temperature was recorded. Some potatoes in the cellar froze despite the fact that the fire was stacked often. Apparently the pipes were so hot and the fire so blazing that the chimney kept catching on fire.



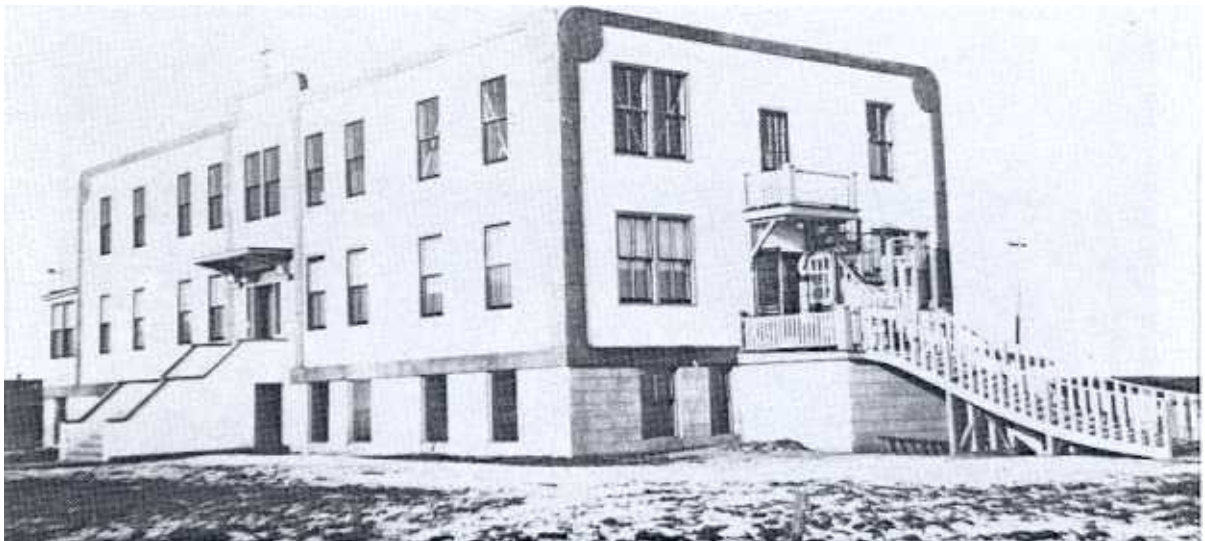
Sisters Of Charity At Ottawa (Grey Nuns Of The Cross)

Beginnings

The Holy Cross Hospital in Spirit River was operated by the Sisters of Charity at Ottawa (popularly known as Grey Nuns of the Cross). The Congregation was founded in Bytown (Ottawa), on February 20, 1845, at the request of Bishop Phelan of Kingston, and by Mother Elisabeth Phelan of Kingston, by Mother Elisabeth Bruyère, Superior and Foundress, and three Sister companions.

All four came from the General Hospital of Montreal where Mother Marguerite d'Youville had given birth to the great religious family of the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) at Montreal.

Marguerite d'Youville was a woman in the midst of whose sorrow the Lord revealed himself as the "God of tenderness and compassion" and "a gentle Father and the God of all consolations". Filled with the merciful love of the Father, she felt impelled to be its channel for all unfortunates of her times. To all people without means, orphans without protection, sufferers without care, to every kind of wretchedness Marguerite wished to bring the love of God and, through the testimony of loving service, give them an image of His compassion. She became known as "Mother of the Poor" and "Mother of Universal Charity".



Holy Cross Hospital 1942

This gift of compassion has been the source of a charism which was bequeathed, as a true legacy, through Mother Bruyère, to the Sisters of Charity at Ottawa. As she incarnated the charism of Mother d'Youville, Mother Bruyère urged her daughters to show to the disinherited the compassionate love of the Father by serving Christ in his suffering members, fulfilling Christ's words: "I was sick and you visited me."

Such was the charism which flowered into works of loving mercy since the founding of the Sisters of Charity at Ottawa, beginning with the response to Bishop Phelan's request. He wanted Sisters of Charity to establish at Bytown similar activities to those pursued in Montreal that is, the care of the sick and assistance to the poor. However, he was especially concerned with the need of teachers for the children of a region that was lacking in schools. Barely two weeks after her arrival, Mother Bruyère opened one of the first bilingual schools in Ontario and a hospital of the area wherein she could keep orphans and elderly, as well as the sick, while fostering home visits providing relief to the sick poor. Little by little the distinctive character of the Congregation became more precise; on the one hand, it went to the unfortunate, the poor, the suffering, and on the other, it was devoted to the teaching of the Truth, according to the needs of the times. Teaching the Truth, instructing and educating, catechizing children and adults, molding them for Christian life - this too was Mother Bruyère's manner of revealing the loving countenance of the Father to the intellectually and spiritually poor.

The Sisters of Charity at Ottawa serving today's Church have a deep concern for maintaining the true spirit of Mother Bruyère and for preserving the tradition that shaped the Congregation: compassion for the poor, the destitute, the

elderly, the orphan, the sick, the prisoner, the illiterate, the immigrant, the battered and disheartened, and the lonely one encountered on one's path. Constantly inspired by the initial impetus of their Foundress, in strong adherence to the spirit she instilled, spurred on by the witness of those who have faithfully followed her footsteps, the Sisters continued to devote themselves in their traditional apostolate: education, hospital work, social service, especially on behalf of the poor in Canada and the United States. An increasing number are sent to missionary outposts: Lesotho, Transvaal, Malawi, Japan, Brazil, Haiti, and lately, to New Guinea.

In recent years the decreasing number of recruits has brought the closing of earlier houses. An ever-changing society calls for a re-deployment of personnel in order to better meet the pastoral needs of the Church in the Post-Vatican II Era: pastoral work in general for the parish or the diocese; pastoral work in the field of health care, catechetics, teaching illiterate or retarded children - in short, participating in all works of mercy.

In this witness to love and service whether in the realm of education, charitable works or health care, the Sisters of Charity at Ottawa ever seek to reveal God's compassion to the poor, whoever and wherever they may be.



**Mother Elisabeth Bruyere
Foundress of the Sisters
of Charity at Ottawa**

Holy Cross Hospital, Spirit River (1941)

Health care as carried on by the Sisters of Charity at the Holy Cross Hospital might well serve as witness of their faithfulness in handing down the said charism with its inherent values, proper to their Congregation, as they administered to the sick and unfortunate ones of Spirit River.

On August 21, 1940, Bishop Ubald Langlois, Apostolic Vicar of Grouard, made an appeal on behalf of the people of Spirit River to the Sisters of Charity at Ottawa for the formation of a hospital badly needed in the region. Catholics and Protestants alike were receptive to the idea of a hospital operated and staffed by dedicated Sisters. The district was very cosmopolitan - a heterogeneous population from the ethnic as well as the religious point of view: Catholics,

Orthodox, Ruthenians, and Protestants of all denominations.

The Sisters of Charity answered the appeal which they saw as an invitation to a service of love and mercy. In addition to health care they hoped to find a magnificent field for a missionary apostolate.

The five foundresses arrived on May 1, 1941. They were warmly welcomed by the whole population. They were Sr. Martha-de-la-Croix, Superior; Sr. Ste-Croix, Bursar and Secretary; Sr. Ste-Geneviève, Operating Room Nurse; Sr. Marie-Wilfrid, Nurse; and Sr. St-Alban, Housekeeper. On the same day they took up



residence in a small bungalow in front of the old Community Hospital, a lodging which the Motherhouse had purchased for them. That would be their convent.

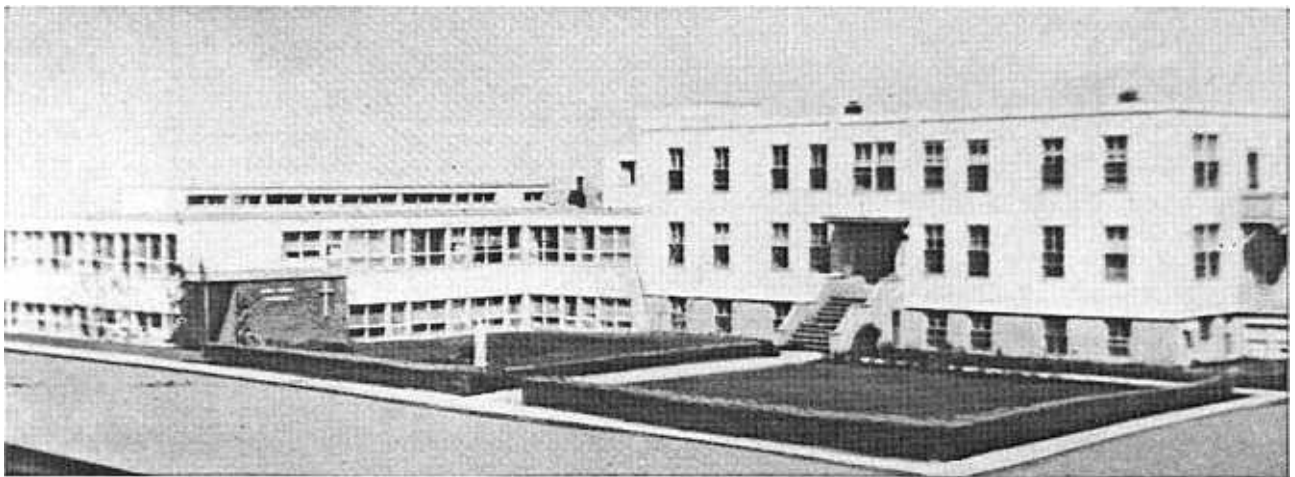
The next day, May 3, Feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross, they took over the former Community Hospital, an inadequate building, the property of the Hospital Association of Spirit River. Built on a piece of land two hundred and fifty feet by forty, the house itself measured sixty feet by twenty-six. Besides the kitchen and two rooms reserved for the nurses, it consisted of three private rooms, one three-bed ward and a semblance of an operating room with very little equipment. It had a bed capacity of nine. Only one doctor, Dr. F.M. Law, and three nurses served the needs of the hospital. The government paid fifty cents a day for the indigents. On January 1, 1942, there were two lady patients; by January 9, the number of patients had increased to nine, by January 25 to fourteen. There were but six beds. Folding cots came to the rescue.

The first year was not yet over when an acute need was felt for a real hospital. The Sisters of Charity assumed the cost of a one-storey, thirty-five-bed building, more advantageously equipped. On January 4, 1943, the Sisters

moved to the new hospital. The old hospital became their new convent and home. With the opening of the new hospital, the number of patients increased to fifteen and continually averaged between eighteen and twenty with the hall serving as a ward. There were then two doctors, four graduate nurses and seventeen departmental employees.

In 1954, the Sisters of Charity agreed to the building of a second storey to the hospital in order to alleviate crowded conditions. This development brought the bed capacity to twenty-seven, with four bassinets. In April 1954, the total number of patients for the first three months of the year was the biggest ever; a total of 1,460 patients.

In 1956, the hospital was continually overcrowded. Even though the successive constructions increased the bed capacity, there was still a lack of space and a need for enlargement. Requests were sent to the Provincial Government to accommodate the increasing number of patients. A wing, fully equipped with modern facilities, was built according to Provincial and Federal requirements. This was to raise the bed capacity to forty-nine. It opened in 1957.



Holy Cross Hospital 1957.

In 1961, the Provincial Department of Health constructed a twenty-five bed residence for the nurses and other personnel of the hospital.

In 1966, after successive developments, the Holy Cross Hospital stood as one of the most flourishing medical centres of the Peace River District. It had a capacity of forty-nine beds including private, semi-private rooms, four-bed wards and also a children's ward. The following services were available: department of radiology, dietary department, central service for sterilization of instruments, physiotherapeutic equipment, as well as laboratory and medical archives.

Even after this final addition, more renovations took place in the following years.

Among the members of the medical staff joining Dr. F.M. Law, we find Dr. Paul Bougeaud from 1953 to 1958, and Drs. Laventure and Paulovich after 1961.

A passing mention might be made here of the Ste. Marie Roman Catholic School where the Sisters accomplished missionary work, hand in hand with those of the Holy Cross Hospital.

In response to several requests made by the Church representatives of Spirit River, the Congregation sent two Sisters to teach at the separate school just established in Alberta. Sisters Marie-Augustin and Berthe-Eugénie arrived on September 2, 1948, opened two classes in temporary classrooms on September 15, and moved to the newly-built school on December 13. There were two classrooms, two teachers, and 39 students of ten nationalities. Grades one to eleven were offered. The teaching Sisters resided at the hospital.

In 1954, a one-storey boarding house was built on hospital ground for outside students who wished to attend Ste. Marie School in order to benefit from Catholic School formation.

In 1959, a new wing was built to the school. There were then 94 students, four teaching Sisters and one lay teacher. The little boarding school became St. Gabriel Convent, the home for 13 boarders and five Sisters: Srs. Gabriel-Marie, Madeleine-de-la-Passion, Bernard-du-Rosaire, Saint-Antonio as teachers and Sr. Eugène-de-Rome as housekeeper.

Faithful to the teachings of Mother Bruyère, the Sisters sought to bring a Christian education to the people of Spirit River, not only in the classroom but also through organized classes for the poor, classes in catehetics for Catholics attending Protestant schools as well as for those of the neighbouring parishes. They visited the aged at the hospital and families in moral and physical misery, many of them non-practising Catholics.

Enlargements and renovations of the school building, changes in teaching personnel and a considerable increase in student population followed up to 1968 when the Sisters left Spirit River and the school was taken over by the Provincial Department of Education.

Likewise, the Sisters were to hand over the Holy Cross Hospital to the Provincial Government in 1970. The hospital board decided a new hospital was necessary to meet the needs of the growing society of Spirit River. On June 9, the Sisters of Charity at Ottawa accepted the Alberta Government's offer to buy the hospital; on June 30, 1970, it was sold to the Spirit River Municipality. Thus the general hospital district was formed. The Sisters left Spirit River in 1971.



Five Founding Sisters of Sr. Gabriel Convent

From 1941 to 1971, the Holy Cross Hospital was the centre of healing for the vast area of the Central Peace River. Back of their efficient work, in spite of the lack of personnel and money, amidst an overflow of patients, the Sisters were eagerly striving to penetrate the District with charity of Christ through hospital health care as well as by their bringing physical and spiritual help to needy homes. The population was sympathetic to the Sisters and

much good was being done. A return to grace and rewarding conversions often resulted through contact with the Sisters.

On August 21, 1971, the Town Council of Spirit River met the Sisters at the Nurses' Residence for a farewell reception. In the name of Mayor Kosowan, Donald Payeur (representing the Council), gratefully acknowledged the Sisters' thirty years of fruitful service to the Hospital

and to the people of Spirit River.

On June 7, 1972, at the official opening of the new Central Peace General Hospital, Father R. Prieur, in a dedication prayer, thanked and praised the Lord for the works of mercy and love that had been realized at the Holy Cross Hospital, "for having inspired so much dedication and Christian charity to women like the Sisters of Charity who took care of the sick for thirty years at the Holy Cross Hospital, indeed without too much technical facilities and money, but with a deep spirit of respect and tender care for the sick persons." After asking the Lord to bless the new institution and its future personnel he prayed: "(Lord), may You help them realize more and more that to the great physical advantages, the ultra-modern technical facilities for which we are grateful, one must always add that type of tender care the Sisters of Charity have inspired and witnessed for so long in this institution."

Whether we read the history of the Holy Cross Hospital, or that of Ste. Marie School, we find a pattern of missionary work similar to that of the beginnings of the Congregation: the same endeavour to meet Church needs as expressed by the local Bishop; the inauguration and maintenance of a hospital and school with pitiful means - all in all, a story of faithful service to the Church, and a "mission of caring" for the poor of a society up to the time when the Government takes over the institutions.

In fond memory, the Sisters who have shared the life and work of these two Institutions still speak enthusiastically of the enhancing dynamic attitudes of the population of Spirit River. The

open, generous, refreshing response of these early pioneers to the services of the Sisters is remembered as a unique enlivening social and spiritual experience in the field of health care and educational pursuits.²

Sister Louise-Marguerite
Archival Services
Sisters of Charity Ottawa

***Sisters
Of Charity
Of Providence
Of Montreal
(1843)***

Foundress:

Emilie Gamelin

(Feb. 19, 1800 - Sept. 23, 1851)

In the years prior to 1843, one woman in the area around Montreal, Quebec was particularly remarkable for selflessness and for charitable activity, Madame Emilie Tavernier Gamelin. From her infancy and at each stage of her life, so outstanding was she for compassion toward the poor, toward the miserable, toward the suffering that she became a veritable "providence" to them. People spontaneously called her home the "House of Providence".

The Sisters of Providence of Montreal were founded in 1843, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada by Mother Emilie Gamelin on the initiative of Bishop Ignace Bourget. The Community's Canonical title was Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor. But from the outset the people called them Sisters of Providence because of their reliance on Providence for the care of the poor in all its forms: nursing, education, care of orphans, aged and handicapped people, and other responses to human need. The second aspect of their charism was the living of compassion for the suffering in imitation of Mary at the foot of the Cross.

The Community grew rapidly and because of the variety of its works there were many requests for Sisters. Within twenty years, the Sisters of

Providence had spread to the United States and Chile.

In 1856, Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart (born Esther Pariseau) was assigned to open up the Pacific Northwest for initiating ministries there. She became the first Provincial Superior in the western United States, and made monumental contributions in pioneering health care and education. In the last half of the nineteenth century, she established twenty-nine hospitals, schools, orphanages, homes for the aged, shelters for the mentally ill, and Indian schools.

In 1980, a statue of the Western Foundress of the Sisters of Providence was presented to the United States to become part of the statuary displayed in the U.S. Senate rotunda; each state is represented and Mother Joseph is the only woman so honoured.

In 1886, the Sisters of Providence continued their tradition of expansion to fill the needs by opening their first mission in Western Canada. The number of Sisters and the vast distances over which they were dispersed made it necessary in 1891 to establish provinces. Each province had its own local administration, and

over the years these regional diversions have been reorganized a number of times in the interest of effective service and good government.

Today the Sisters of Providence, though reduced in number, are to be found in more countries than ever: Canada, United States, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Haiti, Egypt, Africa and the Philippines.

Their ministries extend to the sick in hospital, in nursing homes and homes for the aged, Providence Infirmaries, home visits to the lonely and disabled, soup kitchens, social services, to the young in schools, to adolescents and adults in high schools and colleges, to those handicapped by mental deficiency or deaf mutes, and also in parishes through pre-baptismal instruction and family pastoral work.

As they continue their traditional works they also search out new ministries to help those whose basic needs are neglected. In the past few years, for example, they have become involved in care of persons with AIDS and in providing safe interim housing for battered women with children.

The Sisters are called wherever and whenever there is a misery to be relieved, a poor person to be helped, inspired always by their motto: "The Love of Christ Impels Us."



Mother Emilie Gamelin.

***St. Martin's Hospital,
Desmarais (Wabasca)
(1901)***

(St. Charles Mission, Wabasca (1939-1967))

***Owners:
Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate***

***Managed by:
Sisters of Providence of Montreal***

***Foundress:
Mother Emilie Gamelin***

Bishop Clut, O.M.I., in 1899, asked for Sisters of Providence to come to Wabasca to teach the Indian children and care for them. It was not until June 1901, however, that three Sisters were available. They travelled from Montreal by train, wagon, raft and on foot in a voyage that took exactly one month. Wabasca remained for many years a very isolated area; the trip to the nearest town, Slave Lake, entailed three to four days of travel until 1949, when oil exploration brought a better road, and the Oblates bought a small truck to travel in. Until 1944, it was usual for a Sister missioned in Wabasca to remain there, years at a time, without leaving until she was assigned to another mission.

The Sisters' House was a bare three-storey log cabin. They slept on the floor until their furniture arrived, eight months later. In August 1901, school opened with twenty children. In addition to their work at school, the Sisters were involved in giving out medicine, visiting the sick, and sometimes in taking them in. In times of epidemic (influenza, cholera, etc.), the dormitories were turned into hospital wards. This led to the establishment in 1928 of a small, two-storey temporary hospital linked to the

school by a corridor to facilitate the transportation of food from the school kitchen. It was succeeded in 1934 by the new twenty-bed St. Martin Hospital, where because of the isolation, the Sister Nurse often had a doctor's responsibilities.

Life at Wabasca was demanding for everyone. Repeatedly the chronicles tell of famine among the Indians, of the mission's horses and cows dying of weakness in winter due to lack of food, of the reliance placed on the potato crop and other vegetables grown on the mission farm. Serious fires killed a number of animals at the mission and left the people crowded into small quarters till they could re-build. Again and again epidemics swept the area, causing serious illness and death.

Still, there was gradual improvement and growth. In 1931, a new larger convent opened to house the Sisters and the boarders, who now numbered about 120. The growing population in the area necessitated the opening of a day-school, St. Theresa School at Point St. Charles, seven miles from the mission. Three Sisters, attached to the Wabasca community, went to live

at the Point; this residence was officially closed in 1967, from time to time there were still Sisters living there. In 1957, the first Church was built (religious services had been held in the Mission Chapel till then), and in 1958 electricity came to the Wabasca-Desmarais area. A public high school, Mistassiniy School, opened in Desmarais in 1963, and the Hospital was renovated. In 1969, the Sisters moved into a small house, where they found the people felt more disposed to visit them.

The ministries had their trials still in spite of material improvements. For the Hospital it was a growing debt and chronic shortage of suitable staff; for the boarding school, it was having to live in uncertainty from month to month about changes in the facility and about how long the government would keep it open. It finally closed in June 1973. The following year, St. Martin Hospital stopped accepting patients and became a day-clinic serving five reservations, still under the administration of the Oblates. Sisters in the health field became more involved in public health services.

The new St. Martin Health Centre, under the administration of Slave Lake Hospital District, opened briefly in September 1979, then was closed for repairs for a year following a disastrous fire set by an arsonist. In the meantime, the Sisters and other staff set up a temporary clinic in a small house.

The new hospital was officially opened and blessed on September 15, 1989. Today there are two Sisters in Desmarais, both involved in catechetics and parish work. The Sisters continue to visit the sick in their homes and the Hospital, and one Sister is employed in the Dietary Department of the Hospital.



*Sister Tiburce nee: M.H. Legrand
Superior of the Hospital*



St. Martin's Hospital

Desmaris



Wabasca/Desmaris Hospital Opened 1989

***Sacred Heart
Hospital,
Athabasca Landing
(1908-1916)***

***Congregation:
Sisters of Providence of Montreal***

***Foundress:
Mother Emilie Gamelin***

Sisters travelling to and from the northern missions always had to stop at Athabasca Landing, sometimes for several days, to wait for the barge. This small settlement, 100 miles north of Edmonton, was the landing place for all people travelling north and south, and the only place to stay was in the small hotel or with some of the people. Mother Marie Antoinette, Superior General, decided to open a residence of Providence Sisters there to receive those travelling. The Sisters keeping the residence would carry on some charitable work, according to the needs they found.

Two Sisters arrived in 1908 to open the mission. There was no building yet, and not even land for one. In the first four years, the Sisters were given lodging with the Gagnon Family. They began at once to visit the sick. In a short while Mr. Gagnon gave them the use of the entire top storey (nine rooms) in his house, plus all the wood and water they needed. They began taking in patients, and gave the name "Sacred Heart Hospital" to this shelter. The people of the area were generous, giving food and other necessities. It was the Sisters' joy to be allowed to keep the Blessed Sacrament in their quarters, for they were often without Mass as the Parish Priest was absent making the rounds of his missions. Besides taking care of their patients, the Sisters continued visiting the sick at home,

teaching religion, and "doing all the good they could" as the bishop had instructed them.

The government gave the Sisters about \$70.00 worth of medicine each year, and in 1909 also granted their request for twenty acres of land and sufficient lumber to build a thirty-bed hospital. The Hospital opened in 1912. It had been planned for a good number of patients, for Athabasca Landing had been expected for some years now to become an important railway town, because of its location. However, in 1913 it was learned that plans had changed. The population dropped rapidly as people moved away to find work, and the Sisters were left with few patients, almost none of whom could pay anything. The debt on the Hospital mounted, and there was question of closing it. The Superior General, Mother Aristide, decided to keep it open, because if it had closed, there were no other houses of charity to receive the sick poor who came to the Sisters. "God will pay for them", she said, and so it was, for poor as they were, the Sisters always had enough food and fuel for the Hospital. The people, too, brought gifts of food, wood, etc., in lieu of the money they did not have.

During all the years they were there, the Sisters carried out their original task and gave hospitality not only to their own Sisters passing

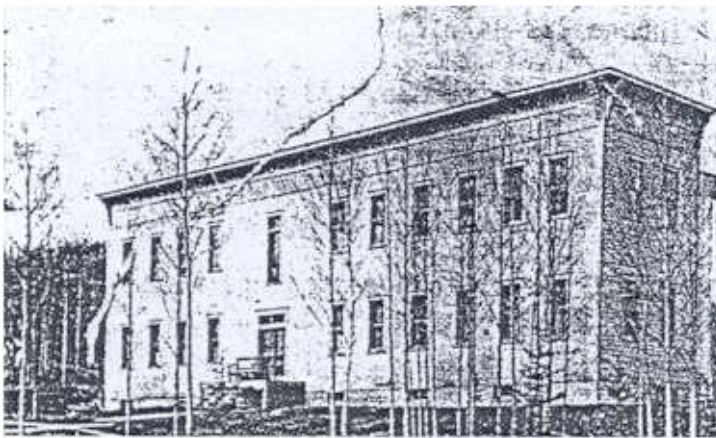
through, but to other religious travellers: Sisters, Brothers, Priests and Bishops.

In order to have more paying patients to help support the others, the Sisters asked the government to send them some incurables to care for. Seven arrived on October 15, 1915, among them some mental patients. One patient asked always to have a kerosene lamp left burning by her bed at night, and in October, 1916, the lamp exploded during the night and the Hospital rapidly burned to the ground. The Sisters were able to remove all but three of their charges. The survivors, including the Sisters, had nothing but their night clothes. The local hotel took all of them in for the time being.

Sister Heliodore, Superior at the Mission in North Battleford, Saskatchewan arrived as soon as possible with habits for the Sisters. There could be no question of rebuilding, so the incurable were returned to the government for placement, and the Sisters were assigned elsewhere.



*Sr. Sostene nee: Marguerite C. Ouellette
Foundress and Superior Sacred Heart Hospital*



Sacred Heart Hospital

***St. Joseph
Hospital,
Grouard
(1909-1933)***

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate opened St. Bernard Mission in 1872, and twenty-two years later six Sisters of Providence joined the mission to take care of thirty orphans and set up a school. The Sisters had brought with them all the furniture, books, clothing and utensils that they could, as well as money to set up the house. The Oblates only income was \$200.00 a year, so they could not be expected to give financial support. For a year the Sisters and children lived in a house, twenty by forty feet with an attic, then they moved into two houses, each thirty by twenty-four feet. By this time there were eighty-one orphans and nineteen elderly ladies.

The food at the Mission consisted of fish taken from Lesser Slave Lake and potatoes grown on land much of which had been cleared by Bishop Clut himself, who took a fatherly interest in the welfare of the children and the Sisters. He shared in the annual work of sowing, weeding and harvest. The sheer physical labour required for the basics of life in this Mission were impressive. When the laundry burned down in 1933, for three years the Sisters travelled across Lesser Slave Lake to St. Bruno Mission in Jousard every two weeks, bringing with them the washing for about 170 people. Water was drawn from the river by the bucket until 1939, when the government paid for digging a well. All the bread for the mission was mixed by hand till 1949; by then there were about 200 people to feed daily.

Besides education and the care of the boarders, orphans and a few elderly people, the Sisters had from the beginning visited the sick at home,



***Sr. Marie Amedee, nee: Rose de Lima Provost
Foundress & Superior St. Joseph Hospital***

received some into the convent to nurse them, and to give out free prescriptions. An eighteen-bed hospital building, named St. Joseph Hospital, was opened in 1909, and the Sisters received patients there until it burned with most of the other mission buildings in 1933. It was never rebuilt; the Sisters reverted to their former practices for care of the sick.

Fire was a recurrent disaster in Grouard. The chronicles record serious fires in 1910, 1933, 1937, and 1941. Every time, it meant loss of buildings and equipment that the mission had acquired by hard work and sacrifice.

The children found the institutional life very different from what they were used to, and enjoyed any opportunity to be free outdoors. In summer, when all went home except the orphans, who were 30 to 65 in number, the Sisters tried to provide ways for them, too, to enjoy the summer. They took the children camping, and in 1943, began taking them to a summer camp set up at Shaw's Point. During school months the curriculum covered the basic subjects as well as religion and music, which the children enjoyed and at which they did well.

Grouard served as day school for the district, too, and many students received their education free of charge. A nursery opened in 1949, gave care to 15 to 25 pre-schoolers till the mission closed. As other districts opened their own schools; both boarders and day students grew fewer. Also changes in government policy for placement of homeless children and for education of native children began to take effect in 1960 and came sharply into focus in December, 1961, when the boarding school and nursery closed, on one month's notice. The Sisters remained until the following June for the sake of the day school.

There are eight Sisters of Providence buried at Grouard, on the shores of the beautiful lake beside which they worked in God's service. One Sister returned to Grouard in 1980, and worked for a year and a half on the pastoral team at Kisemanito Centre.



*St. Joseph's Hospital, Which was Destroyed by
Fire Later.*

***Father Lacombe
Nursing Home,
Midnapore (1910 -)***

***Congregation:
Sisters of Providence of Montreal***

***Foundress:
Mother Emilie Gamelin***

"We are committed as a Christian Catholic Institution to continue the compassionate, loving ministry of Jesus Christ, through the care given to all residents, regardless of race, nationality or religion ... fostering concern for the spiritual, psychological and social needs of each person with respect for the dignity and worth of each one."

The Heritage of Providence

Father Albert Lacombe altered the courses of many lives and distinguished a chapter of Canadian history with his faith, hope and love.

A refuge and home for the elderly and orphaned of southern Alberta was established by Father Lacombe with the devoted services of the Sisters of Providence (an order inspired by Emilie Tavernier-Gamelin, and dedicated to the care of the elderly, infirm and orphaned).

Located on the banks of the Fish Creek Provincial Park, the home is nestled in a country setting. Owned and operated by the Sisters of Providence who reside in a convent on the grounds, Father Lacombe Nursing Home is the only Catholic nursing home in Calgary.

Father Lacombe Nursing Home is a Christian Catholic Long Term Care Centre devoted to



Father Albert Lacombe

meeting the physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs of its residents regardless of race, nationality or religion. Much emphasis is placed on creating a nurturing, homelike atmosphere. The staff seek to carry on the compassionate, loving ministry of Jesus Christ by being open to finding ways to meet the needs of the Community.

Through a recent renovation and expansion program, an enhanced environment has been established which provides thirty private rooms, thirty-eight semi-private rooms and a Palliative Care Suite.

The cognitively impaired are a special concern. Areas have been designed to give space for small groups, dining, and one to one interaction. A special garden has also been designed to encourage residents to wander outside without getting lost.

Residents requiring oxygen therapy, and/or rehabilitation therapy may be admitted to the home. A Respite Care Program is in place to enable families who are caring for their loved ones to have a time for rest, relaxation, a vacation, or a hospital admission.

The Palliative Care Suite has been established to provide a space for the terminally ill resident and their families. The Pastoral Care Team and a volunteer Palliative Care Team offer the gift of understanding.

Father Lacombe Nursing Home employs 120 caring individuals who extend valuable skills and cooperative efforts towards an environment that promotes health, happiness and peace for the hundred and seven men and women who live there. The value of human kindness reaches beyond the walls of the home and brings the community to the residents. One hundred and



*Sr. Marie Clarisse, nee: Virginie Minnie
The Foundress & Superior Lacombe Home*

ten regular volunteers complement the staff, and along with various community groups, bring pleasure to the people who live at the Father Lacombe Nursing Home.

Every opportunity to show the residents that "longevity is a wonderful gift" is nurtured in this environment. The message that the Father Lacombe Nursing Home sends to everyone, from the individual members of the community to the largest corporations in society, is that the Christian care we extend our fellow man is possibly the greatest expression of our humanity and purpose.

History:

Father Albert Lacombe, O.M.I., was inspired to build a home near Calgary for the aged and for the needy children. He persuaded Senator Patrick Burns to donate land and funds for buildings, and was successful in getting four Sisters of Providence to come to operate the facility. The Sisters arrived in 1909. While the Lacombe Home was under construction they lived in a tiny three-room cottage which they shared with an orphan and a destitute blind man.

The Lacombe Home depended largely on charity for its existence. During the greater part of its history, it was sustained by donations and by the funds obtained on begging tours. It was widely regarded with respect and affection because people knew that homeless children and aged people were received there. So well did the Home embody the dream that Father Lacombe had for it, that he ordered that on his death his heart be removed from his body and kept at the Lacombe Home. Father Lacombe died in 1916.

The 1920's saw the expansion of the Home, which was overflowing, and the installation of such modern conveniences as electricity and running water. The Provincial Administration of Holy Angels Province also took up residence at the Home, where it remained until 1965, when it moved to Edmonton. The number of classrooms in the building increased year by year as more and more children came, many of them orphans or otherwise without family, other boarders or day students whose parents wanted them to receive a Catholic Education. Finally in 1956 the work of education moved to Providence School, a building erected on the same property, leaving space in the Lacombe Home for the always-growing need for living accommodation for the children, aged people, and Sisters. It was only in 1961 that the Sisters began to receive any public funding for the school.

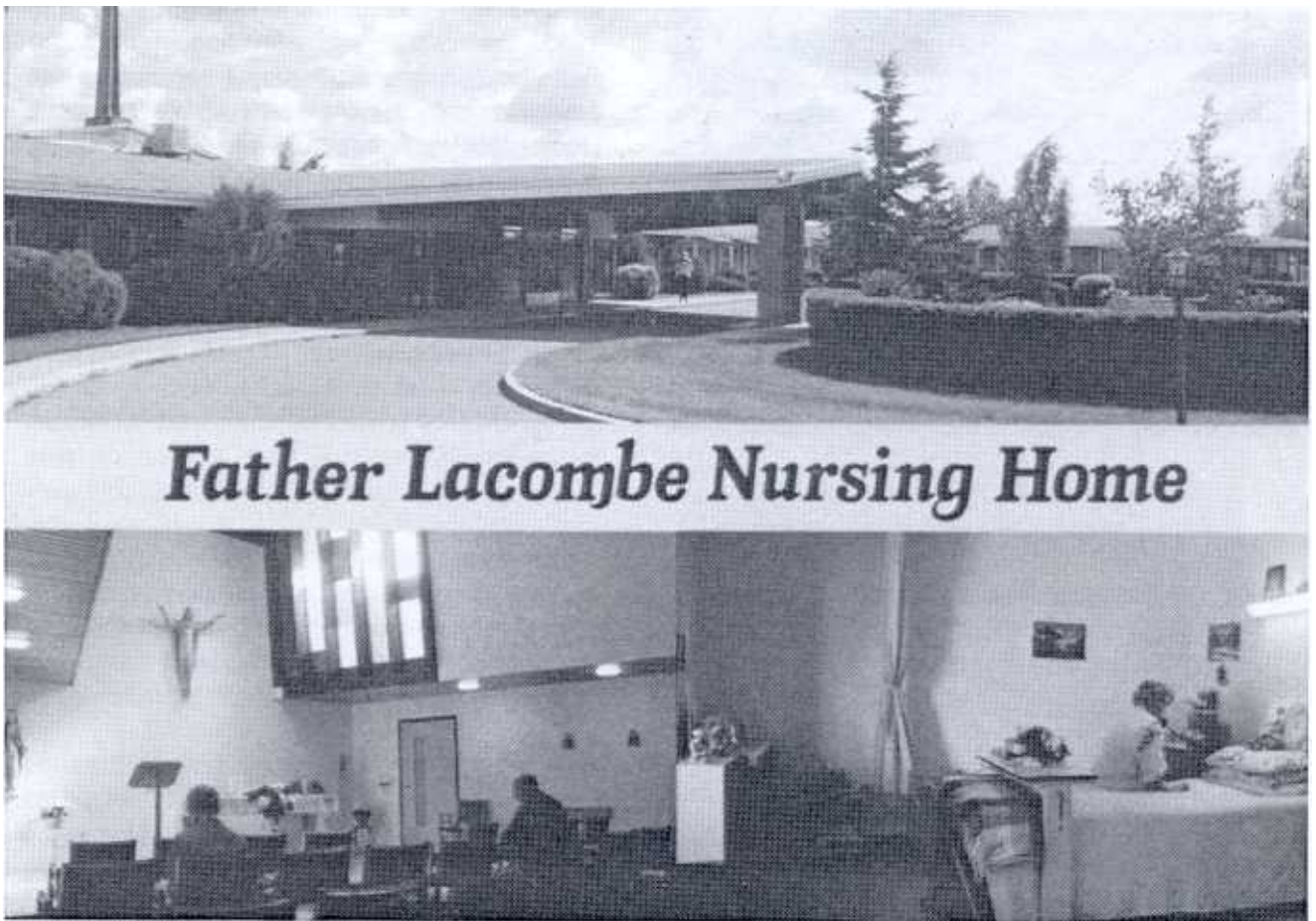


Father Lacombe Home 1910 - 1965

The 1960's were a time of great change at the Lacombe Home. Changed government policy regarding care of children so greatly reduced the number of children at the Home that its principal work became the care of the aged. The building by this time was not up to current standards for a nursing home, and a new one, called Father Lacombe Nursing Home was built to the southeast. The patients moved in March 1966. The Provincial Administration, Infirmary and Novitiate had moved to Edmonton in December,

1965. The old buildings were sold to the Faithful Companions of Jesus, who took possession in April, 1966.

Loving care of the aged continues at the new Home, which is well-respected for the quality of its service to the elderly. In 1985 the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Lacombe Home was celebrated by the Sisters, former students, elderly guests, friends, benefactors and the local Church.



Father Lacombe Nursing Home Today

***St. Theresa
Hospital,
Fort Vermillion (1925-1972)***

***Owner:
Oblates of Mary Immaculate***

***Managed by:
Sisters of Providence of Montreal***

***Foundress:
Mother Emilie Gamelin***

A sometimes hazardous journey of over two months by train, wagon and barge brought Sisters of Providence in July 1900, to the Oblates' St. Henry Mission in Fort Vermillion, Alberta. They had come to run a boarding school for Indian children, but from the very beginning they were also involved in the care of the sick. It is, at times, difficult to separate this history of these two ministries. The Sisters dispensed medicine, visited the sick at home, and nursed sick boarders, some of whom arrived with tuberculosis or scrofula.

For many years the ministries in Fort Vermillion were carried out in most primitive conditions, the fruit of isolation and poverty. The mission was situated on the banks of the Peace River, which could be crossed only by boat in summer or over the ice in winter; in spring and fall it was impossible. It was not until 1971 that a bridge was built. Mail came every three months, at most, till 1938, when weekly plane service began. There was not even a telegraph line until 1930. A well dug in 1939 gave relief from hauling water by the bucket. The government did not recognize the Hospital until 1953; it was built and owned by the Oblates and run on charity and sacrifice. Crowded conditions were the norm, sometimes because



***Sr. Mathias, nee: M. Eugenie Leduc
Foundress & Superior
St. Henry Mission***

shortage of lumber (or money to buy it) delayed necessary building for years on end. Until fire destroyed all but one building - which children, Sisters, and patients had to share - could re-building be done. Qualified lay people who would come to work in such a poor and isolated area (and stay for any length of time) were quite rare, so the Sisters and Oblates bore the brunt of the work to be done.

The first "Hospital" seems to have been a five-bed room in the convent/boarding school, which burned to the ground in March 1914. Lean months followed till spring breakup, when the barge would come up river with supplies and donations. The new building, which again included room for the sick, was ready in August. In 1918 this was enlarged, and a small log cabin was built nearby to house the sick and some elderly Indians who wintered in Fort Vermillion. A small fire in this building in 1925 spurred the construction, already begun, of a twenty-three-bed hospital which opened later that year under the name of St. Theresa Hospital. The Hospital and Convent burned down again in October 1932, leaving the mission personnel facing a bleak winter, crowded into one building and dependent on their neighbours' charity for necessities till help could come from outside. Health care and child care again housed together from 1933 to 1949; the

"Hospital" was an eight-room, fourteen-bed area in the convent. In April 1949, a new seventeen-bed Hospital opened, which in 1954 expanded to thirty-seven beds with modern equipment, which it could now afford.

Besides visiting the sick locally, nursing Sisters would travel long distances by dog sled, team, or boat to help people who could not come to the Hospital.

By January 1969, only three Sisters (two teachers and a cook/housekeeper) were left in Fort Vermillion; the only nursing Sisters had fallen ill and left. These three visited the sick daily after their work, but the people still wanted to have Sisters nursing. One Sister returned to nurse at the Hospital from October 1971 to August 1972. The teaching Sisters remained until June 1973.

It was significant that when the new hospital was opened in Fort Vermillion in 1984, the people wanted it to retain the name St. Theresa Hospital, and one of the last Sisters to teach there was asked to return to re-paint the statue of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus which stands over the Hospital entrance. The Sisters were honoured guests at the opening of the Hospital and of the new St. Mary's School in the fall of the same year.



St. Joseph's Hospital Which Burned Oct. 7, 1932

***Sacred Heart
Hospital,
McLennan
(1929-1973)***

***Congregation:
Sisters of Providence of Montreal***

***Foundress:
Mother Emilie Gamelin***

The railway established one of its principal points of division on the shore of Round Lake, Alberta, in 1914. It was that which attracted settlers to live there, in a hamlet called McLennan, after the Vice-President of the railway company. It was still a hamlet when the Sisters of Providence established Sacred Heart Hospital there in December, 1929, and experienced the advantages and trials of a small settlement. The people were personally interested in the hospital and took responsibility for contributing to it. The streets, which had no sidewalks till 1937, were a mass of sticky gumbo whenever it was wet, and water had to be bought or obtained by melting ice and collecting rainwater.

The 37-bed hospital, too, had to expand; first in 1933 with the erection of a residence for the Sisters and lay staff; then in 1955 with the opening of a new wing which brought the bed capacity to 77. The entire hospital was replaced in 1967.

The Sisters of both hospital and school shared the struggles and advances of the people of McLennan, which in 1942 became the bishop's seat for the Vicariate of Grouard, and in 1948 became a town. The spiritual care given along with health care and education bore fruit in



***Sr. Agapit de Pologne, nee: Eva Beaupre
Foundress & Superior Sacred Heart Hospital***

conversions and in a good number of vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The Sisters saw the new hospital through all the throes of construction before transferring it to the District Board on January 1, 1970. Three or four Sisters worked at the Hospital, where they lived in the nurses' quarters until August, 1973.

The people had greatly regretted the Sisters' departure, and it was with joy that they

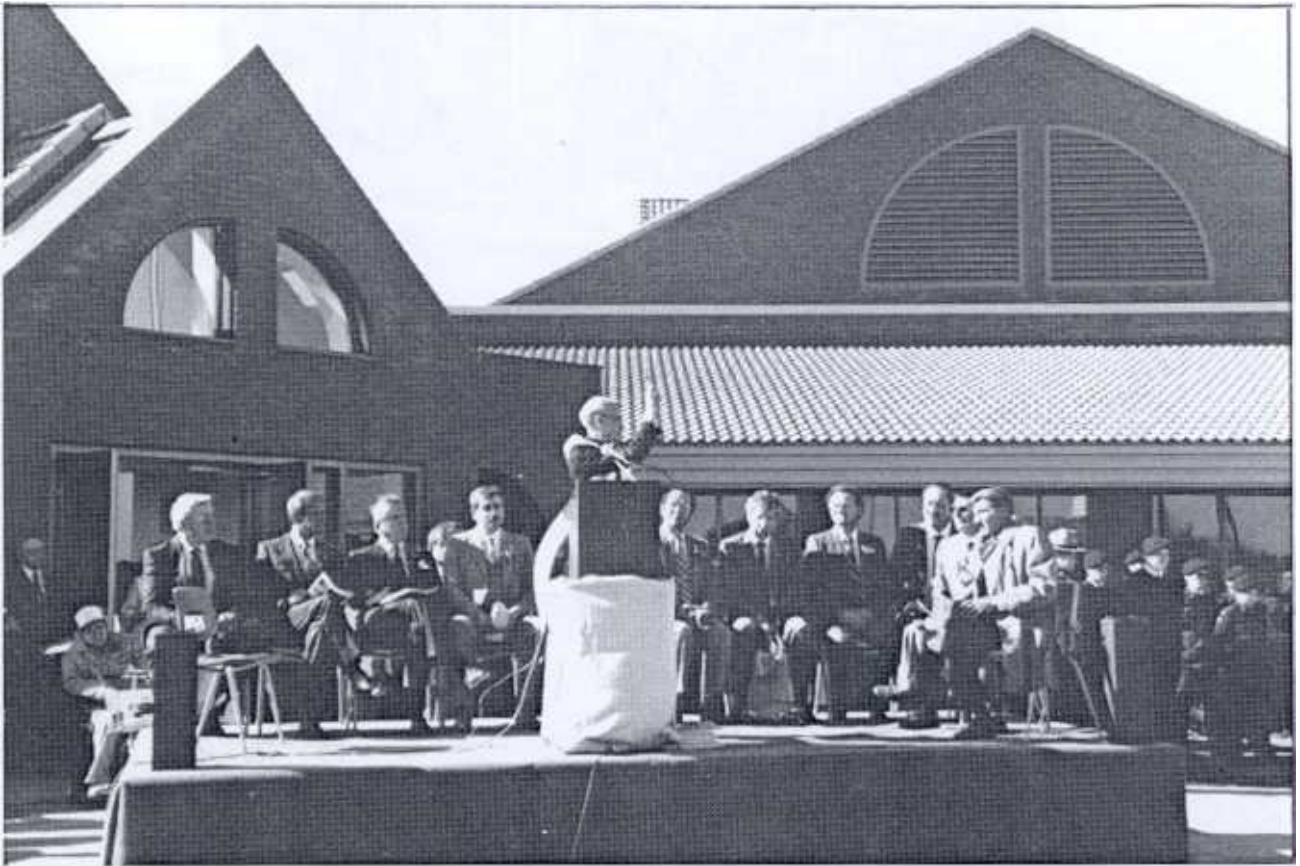
welcomed them back in September, 1984. The four Sisters, who now live in a private residence in McLennan, carry on the ministries of pastoral care at Our Lady of the Lake Nursing Home, and direction of the religious education for the archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan. It is interesting to note that the new health centre now under construction (January, 1987), which will integrate hospital and nursing home, will be given the name Sacred Heart Health Centre, by decision of the people.

*Original Sacred
Heart Hospital*

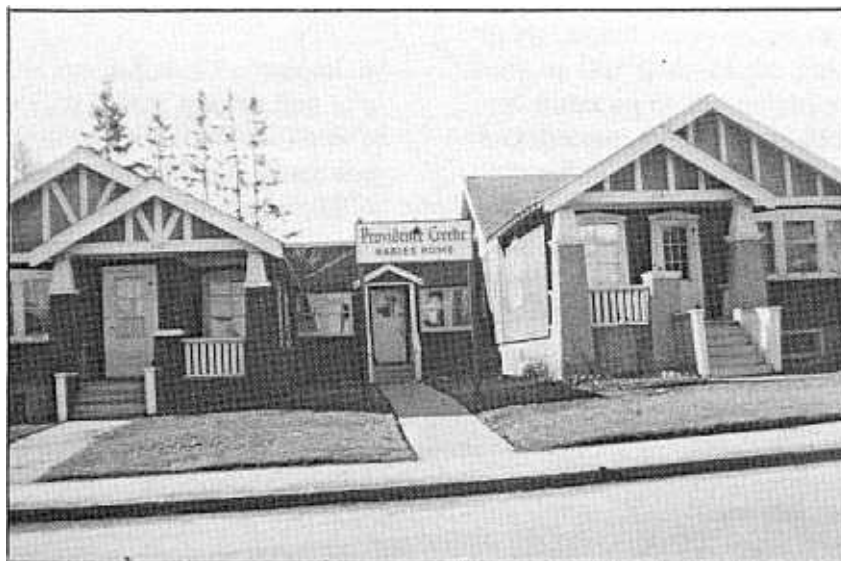


*Sacred Heart
Hospital 1955*

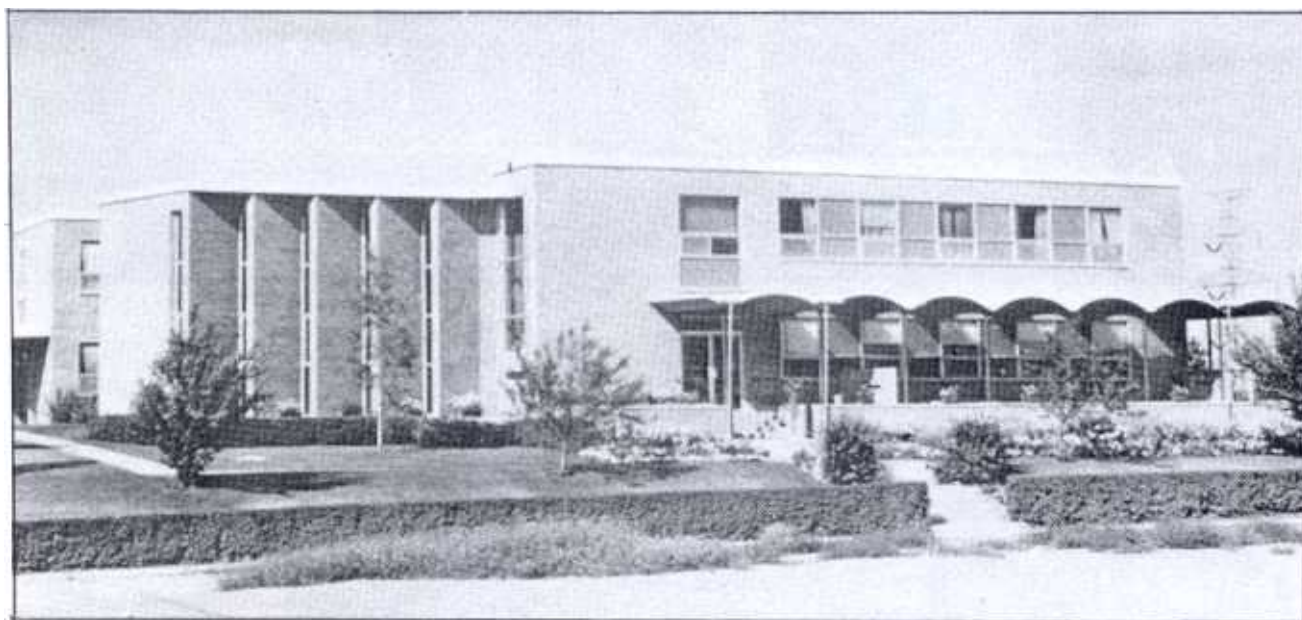




***Official Opening Sacred Heart Health Centre
September 30, 1988. Archbishop Legare Blessing
the New Facility with Officials, Board Members
Attending.***



Providence Creche - 1957 Photo



New Providence Creche Opened June 1958

***Providence
Residence and Creche,
Calgary
(1933-1974)***

***Congregation:
Sisters of Providence of Montreal***

***Foundress:
Mother Emilie Gamelin***

The Sisters of Providence needed a residence in Calgary for their Sister Students, and for that purpose in September 1933, began renting a building called Rosary Hall in downtown Calgary, right beside the river. They renamed it Our Lady of Providence Residence. In June 1944, the Sisters responded to the request of Bishop Francis P. Carroll of Calgary for a creche for abandoned children. A small old house near Providence Residence was remodelled for this purpose, and in September 1944, the first nine children arrived. They ranged in age from birth to three years. The Sisters working at Providence Creche lived at the residence.

The care of abandoned infants had been carried on under the auspices of the Catholic Women's League for almost a year before the Sisters took it, and these ladies and other charitable groups and benefactors, as well as the Board of Directors, took a very active part in supporting the Creche. The increasing number of children and services over the years meant constant expansion and improvement. In 1945 unwed mothers began to be taken in, and in the late 1950's, retarded and handicapped children were accepted. It became necessary to have a large, new facility to cope with the needs.

The new Providence Creche, located in St.



***Sr. Jean de la Passion, nee: Mathilda Gerald
Foundress & Superior, Providence Creche***

Anthony's Parish, opened in June 1958. The property on which the old Creche had been located was sold to the Archdiocese of Calgary. The Sisters were allotted quarters in the new Creche, but by 1964 the need for more space for unwed mothers necessitated that the Sisters move to a rented house nearby. A day-care centre for infants and pre-schoolers, a service offered to help working parents, opened at Providence Creche in March 1966, again calling for expansion and re-allocation of space.

The decrease in religious personnel available to staff the Creche led to increasing involvement of lay people dedicated to this work. In October 1967, the first lay administrator, Mrs. Rita Randall, was hired, and in March 1968, Providence Creche was registered as a society under the name Providence Child Development Society, operated by a Board of Management, which in 1974 purchased the facility and land from the Sisters of Providence.

There was at least one Sister of Providence working at Providence Child Development Centre until January 1986. It is a consolation to us to know that we gave a solid start to this great work which witnesses so dearly to the value of all human life, and that it goes on even without us.

The Sisters moved from one rented house to another, always close to the Creche, until a house was purchased nearby on Stanley Road in 1975. As years passed, more of the Sisters worked at other ministries, and the total personnel in the house decreased. One ministry, special to this community, has been to provide accommodation for Sister Students of other nationalities, sometimes for extended periods. There have been Sisters from Uganda, Vietnam, and Korea living there, enriching the Canadians with their culture, and receiving help in understanding life in Canada. One of the Sisters of Providence living there now (June 1987) works in pastoral care with the elderly and the other does pastoral work on the Sarcee Indian Reserve near Calgary.

***Providence
Hospital,
High Prairie
(1937-1972)***

***Congregation:
Sisters of Providence of Montreal***

***Foundress:
Mother Emilie Gamelin***

It was in the Hungry Thirties that the Sisters of Providence, though as short of ready cash as everyone else, accepted the challenge of running a hospital at High Prairie, a farming community in northern Alberta. They bought the twelve-bed Paulson Hospital, already there, and in early September 1937, began some improvements on it. At the same time, patients started arriving, and there were nine of them before the Hospital opened in October. The opening was striking by the participation of representatives of the major religious denominations in the area, showing a spirit of cooperation that was manifested often in the history of High Prairie, and is very evident today. Also present at the opening was Dr. J.B.T. Wood, who among all the dedicated doctors who worked at Providence Hospital, was there longest and became a particular friend and benefactor to the Sisters.

The Hospital grew constantly, and was always filled to bursting. The struggle to make ends meet took several forms: contributions from the Ladies Hospital Aid and others; an annual provision shower; purchase of land in 1939 and 1943 to grow vegetables for the patients; formation of a Hospital Advisory Board in 1955; and never-ending negotiations with government for costs of expansion and operation. A new wing was opened in October 1938, another in December 1941 (raising the number of beds to

sixty), and finally a new hospital in 1962. It is finished! In spite of the financial pressures, however, it was the Sisters' joy to care for those who could not pay, and records show that there were a good number of these.



***Sr. Teresina, nee: M. Jeanne Levasseur
Providence Hospital High Prairie July 15, 1937***



*Providence Hospital
High Prairie, June 1956
Provincial Archives of Alberta*

***Gamelin
Nursing Home,
High Prairie
(1967-1972)***

***Congregation:
Sisters of Providence of Montreal***

***Foundress:
Mother Emilie Gamelin***

In 1965, the Sisters of Providence accepted to build and operate a nursing home in High Prairie. Construction on Gamelin Nursing Home began in 1966, and was completed in January 1967. Immediately, however, the building flooded, and opening had to be delayed twice, till March, while repairs were done. Faulty construction continued to plague the Nursing Home with damage and inconvenience, costing much in time, money and frustration over the years. The Sisters' consolation was the care they could give to the sick and elderly, who were strengthened by the spiritual attention they received, as well as the other means provided for their well-being. In March 1968, two retarded children were placed at the Nursing Home, and were joined a little later by three others. The following March all five had improved to such a degree that it was recommended that they be placed in a setting more suited to their increased capabilities.

The Sisters from the school, the Hospital, and the Nursing Home formed a community, and lived in quarters attached to the Hospital. Their various ministries sprang from a common love for God's people, especially the poor, and a common trust in His Providence. The Sisters in health care shared in teaching religion on the reserves, and sponsored poor children at school; the school Sisters brought the children to visit

the sick and the elderly at the Hospital and Nursing Home; and all visited families and patients, and took an active part in the Parish.



***Sr. Laura Marie, nee Maria-Anne Labreque
Superior, Foundress, Gamelin Nursing Home***

By the late 1960's, it was evident that neither the Hospital nor the Nursing Home could remain under the Sisters' administration much longer. High taxes and operating costs, and a lack of religious personnel made it impossible to continue. The Nursing Home had suffered from low occupancy also; it was equipped and staffed for fifty patients, but did not have nearly that number until 1969. Providence Hospital was transferred to the Department of Health on February 1, 1970, but still had a Sister administrator until 1972. The Sisters terminated the work at Gamelin Nursing Home on December 30, 1972, and on January 1, 1973, it was transferred to District No. 17. It was

renamed the J.B.T. Wood Nursing Home, a tribute to their old friend, which the Sisters appreciated. The citizens of High Prairie regretted the Sisters' departure, and marked it with many signs of appreciation.

The teaching Sisters rented a small house in the beginning of January 1972. The religious Community in High Prairie consisted of two Sisters teaching in St. Andrew's School, one doing pastoral care in the High Prairie Regional Health Complex, a seventy-bed hospital and fifty-two-bed nursing home; and one visited the elderly. Today one Sister is deeply involved in parish activities.



Gamelin Nursing Home

***Sisters
Of Charity
Of St. Vincent
De Paul
(Halifax)***

***Foundress:
Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821)***



Elizabeth Ann (Bayley) Seton was born in New York in 1774. Her father, a physician of renown, guided her well-rounded education. In 1794, she married William Seton, the son of a wealthy merchant, at Trinity Church, New York. Ten years later, Mr. Seton died in Italy and left a penniless widow with five children to support.

Following her husband's death, Mrs. Seton remained in Italy for a few weeks and it was during this time that she became deeply interested in the Catholic Church. She became a member of the church in March, 1805, at St. Peter's on Barclay Street, New York. So much animosity was aroused by her joining the church that eventually it was the cause of her leaving New York. In September of 1808, with the approbation of Bishop Carroll, she opened a school for Catholic children in Baltimore. Elizabeth Seton pronounced her first vows on March 25, 1809. From that day on, she was known as Mother Seton.

Mother Seton established her Sisters at Emmitsburg, Maryland in 1809. Their rule was adapted from that which Saint Vincent de Paul gave to his Daughters of Charity in France in 1646.

From Emmitsburg, a mission was opened in New York in 1817. Mother Seton died in 1821. In 1846, various circumstances led to the establishment of a new Motherhouse in New York and a separate congregation there.

Sisters went to Halifax, Nova Scotia from New York in 1849, at the request of Bishop William Walsh. The Superior of the group, Sister Basilia McCann, had been associated with Mother Seton in Emmitsburg. In 1885, because of the distance between Halifax and New York, and in order to encourage local vocations, a Motherhouse was opened in Halifax with the approval of the New York Community. In 1856, Pope Pius IX approved the new Congregation. In 1913, it became a Pontifical Institute.

In the first ten years of its existence as an independent Congregation; houses were opened

in Halifax and its environs, western Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. As the Sisters responded to needs in education, health care and social service, their presence and work were steadily extended to include Cape Breton (1883), Massachusetts (1887), Bermuda (1890), British Columbia (1923), New York (1924), Alberta (1925), and Quebec (1935). In 1968, a mission was opened in Peru and a year later another in the Dominican Republic.

The Sisters became involved in health care in Alberta in 1927 with their arrival in Westlock and the subsequent opening of their first hospital in the West. Their work expanded when more Sisters arrived in Hardisty and Jasper to look after the needs of the sick and injured.

Mother Seton was canonized in Rome on September 14, 1975.

Immaculata Hospital, Westlock (1927 -)

Westlock was without hospital facilities until early 1927. At that time, a concerned citizen, Father Eugene Rooney, took the matter in hand. He went to Archbishop O'Leary of Edmonton to request that a religious community be asked to open and staff a hospital in Westlock. The Archbishop, being acquainted with the Sisters of Charity of Halifax, wrote to Mother Mary Berchmans making this request. The result was favourable.

Mother Berchmans promptly dispatched Sisters Elizabeth Seton and Marion Frances to Westlock. They arrived on June 9, 1927, and were accommodated at the priest's house. Another small house across the street was to serve as a temporary hospital.

Six days later, the first patients arrived, one with blood-poisoning, the other with fractured ribs. Two days later, Dr. Henderson, assisted by Dr. Stauffer, performed an appendectomy. On June 21 the first baby was born.

Meanwhile, construction of a permanent hospital was underway. The first sod was turned on June 27 by Father Rooney. In August two more Sisters arrived, and there is mention of at least one more staff member. By the end of the year, 159 patients had been cared for at the small house.

The new hospital, although not completely finished, came into use early in 1928. In 1929, the Ladies' Auxiliary, an organization which was to be invaluable to the financially insecure hospital, came into being. Many donations for

equipment have been given to the hospital over the years. The name was changed to "Westlock Hospital's Volunteers" in 1977.

Because of the Depression, the keynote of the thirties was financial survival. That of the forties was organization in the health-care field. The nurses attended meetings throughout the Province. The Administration became active in the Associated Hospitals of Alberta and in the Catholic Hospital Conference. The Medical Staff and the Sister Nurses began holding regular meetings in 1946.

The need for additional beds became obvious in the late 1940's and approval was given to build a new wing. The sod was turned in September, 1948, and the cornerstone was laid in July, 1949. Construction was completed in 1950, and the new wing was occupied in November 1950.

During the fifties the Advisory Board was formed. Over the years the members have worked diligently, providing many hours of volunteer service.

The aging population of the region resulted in a great strain on the hospital's resources, the Board sought permission to build another wing in the early 1960's to correct the many inadequacies of the two older wings.

Following much consultation a new service wing was approved, and the sod was turned in June, 1967, with opening ceremonies held on October 30, 1968.

Several rooms were added to the hospital and great improvements were made to such areas as Labour and Delivery Rooms, Operating Rooms, Central Supply, Recovery Room, Laboratory, Radiology, and Emergency Department.

In 1971, Immaculata Hospital became a fully accredited hospital and has maintained that status ever since. With the last survey in April 1992, the hospital received another three-year accreditation standing.

Entering the 1980's, it was becoming obvious that the age of the building and its equipment had reached a point where a new building was the only answer to the problem, and once again plans were made and proposals presented to Government.

It was not until June 1985, that permission was granted to plan for a 65-bed acute hospital. This was undertaken with great enthusiasm by Board, Administration and Staff. Following the purchase of property by the Sisters of Charity, planning continued to the Schematic Design Stage. However, in 1990, most construction in the health care field was halted by the government due to financial restraints.

After much lobbying by Board and Administration, the government granted approval in April 1992 for the hospital to proceed in design and working drawing stage, with modifications to have 22 long term care beds replace some of the proposed acute care beds. It is now our hope that necessary permission will be given in 1993 to proceed with construction of a new hospital facility.

Immaculata Hospital has been fortunate during the years in having a dedicated Medical Staff; several doctors have been with us for many years. In October 1992, Dr. George L. Whissel was honoured for his fifty years of service, having been a member of the Medical Staff since January 1942.

The 65th Anniversary of the arrival of the first Sisters of Charity in Westlock was celebrated in June, 1992. During all these years, it has been through the coordinated efforts of all departments that a high standard of care has been provided to our patients. We thank God for His many blessings and we pray for His guidance and protection in the years ahead.



Provincial Archives Photo



Immaculata Hospital, Westlock

Saint Anne's Hospital, Hardisty (1929)

Before 1928 there was no hospital between the Saskatchewan border and Daysland, Alberta. It was in the early twenties that Dr. C.D. McBride, the local doctor in Hardisty, appealed to the Archbishop of Edmonton to open in that town a badly needed hospital under the direction of a religious community. Archbishop O'Leary applied to the Sisters of Charity of Halifax. The town of Hardisty donated land, the Sisters of Charity in Halifax arranged finances, and construction began in 1928. St. Anne's Hospital was formally opened by the Archbishop on May 29, 1929.

St. Anne's was a small hospital, solidly built, enlarged and modernized from time to time, serving three municipal districts in the area as well as the town of Hardisty - a total of 1136 square miles! Dr. J.I. Perverseff was medical director of the hospital from 1941 to 1970 when

he retired from practice. At that time the hospital accommodated twenty patients, as well as newborn infants. It also had a small outpatient service. Dr. Perverseff's practice was continued by Dr. M.J. Kennedy and Dr. G. Cahill.

For reasons of personnel, transfer of ownership and administration of the hospital was decided by the Sisters of Charity in 1972. The Flagstaff-Hughenden District Hospital Board officially took over on November 1, 1972. The Sisters were asked to stay on until a new administrator and accountant could be found and given some orientation, so it was not until December 15 that the last two Sisters took their departure. Since the name "Saint Anne" bears connotation of a Catholic institution, the Sisters of Charity asked that it be changed. It was renamed the Hardisty District General Hospital.



Seton Hospital, Jasper (1930)

In the late 1920's, Sir Henry Thornton, K.B.E., President of the Canadian National Railways, toured the West and recognized the need for a hospital for the town of Jasper. He instructed John McCombe, M.D., to investigate the possibilities of building a hospital. After much correspondence and many interviews Archbishop O'Leary of Edmonton requested the contractor, Mr. Charles Gordon to build the first hospital for Jasper. The Canadian National Railway agreed to donate an initial grant of \$25,000 towards the cost of the building and an annual grant of \$2,500 towards the operation and maintenance.

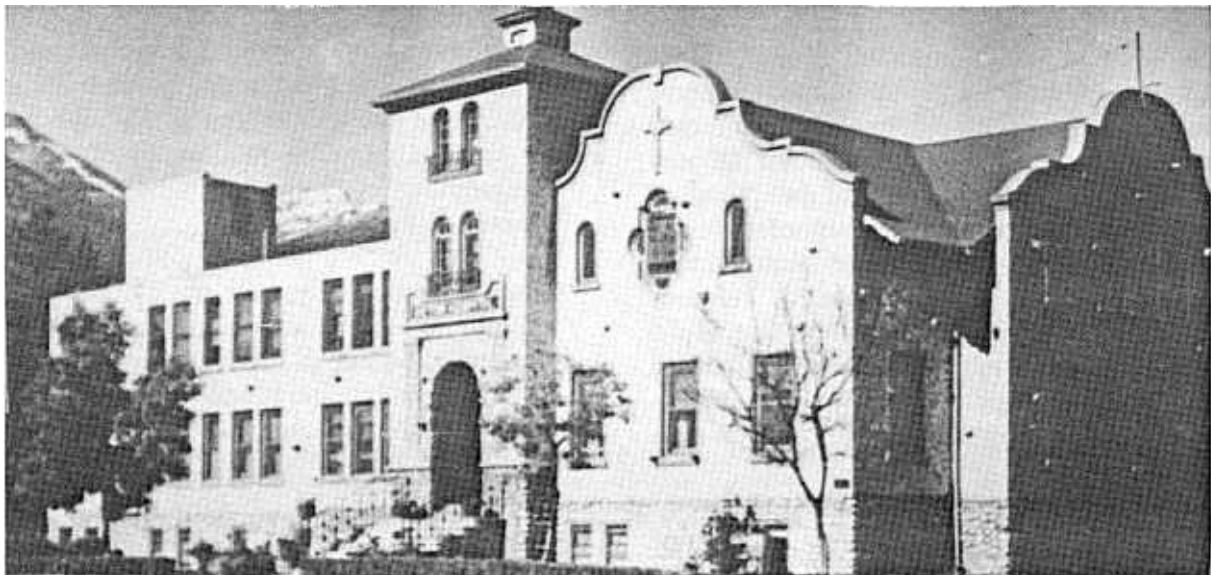
St. Martha's Hospital opened its doors on January 27th, 1930. The cost of the building was approximately \$52,000, and it contained \$10,000 worth of equipment. Four Sisters of Charity of Halifax arrived to manage the hospital. The name was changed to Seton Hospital in honour of Elizabeth Seton, foundress of the American Sisters of Charity.

A Ladies' Auxiliary existed from the earliest days of the hospital and assisted in many ways.

In the first year of operation 181 patients were treated, most of them C.N.R. employees or their dependents. Over the years, the number of tourists increased, as did the population of the town. In the early fifties, expansion was inevitable and the second floor was added and opened in 1952. In 1954, a new residence was built. Then came the expansion in 1964, which gave Seton necessary facilities for the operating room, laboratory, x-ray and outpatient services.

Still, by 1970, it was felt that a new hospital was needed. The Sisters of Charity had already decided to withdraw from ownership of the hospital; ownership acquired by them in 1953 after years of management. In December, 1970 the Provincial Superior of the Sisters of Charity notified the Hospital Advisory Board, the Provincial Minister of Health, and the National Park Authorities of the Sisters' decision to discontinue operation of the Hospital.

Consequently, the Province established a local hospital authority, the Jasper General Hospital District No. 87, which acquired ownership of the Hospital on April 1, 1971.



***Sisters
Of Providence
Of St. Vincent
De Paul
(Kingston)***

The history of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent De Paul is rooted in the option for the poor, a legacy of spiritual origins which reaches into the past to the seventeenth century in France, and the inspiration of one, St. Vincent de Paul. Vincent knew how to meet the challenge of the Gospel in a time of conflict. He knew how to be innovative, so that the poor, the sick, the afflicted in soul or body would be ministered to. He was encouraged and supported in his endeavours by a woman of similar courage and vision, Louise de Marillac. Thus, the first uncloistered religious congregation of women came into being co-founded by St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Marillac.

The legacy from France came through an intermediary, the Congregation of the Sisters of Providence of Montreal. In that city, in the early nineteenth century, a young widow Emilie Gamelin, like Vincent two hundred years before, was consumed with a desire to alleviate the sufferings of the poor. With her own resources she began to solve the problems that confronted them. As Emilie's work expanded and the need for such came to the attention of the Church of Montreal, Bishop Bourget responded. On March 25, 1842, he received seven young women into a newly founded religious congregation to which he gave the rule of the Daughters of Charity, the congregation founded by Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac. Emilie Gamelin joined the group, and became its

first Superior General. She was indeed a foundress.

In 1861, only eighteen years later, another churchman, Bishop C.J. Horan of Kingston, persuaded the Sisters of Providence of Montreal to send Sisters to his diocese to establish a congregation which would serve the sick, the aged, the poor, the prisoners and those in need. Four Sisters led by Sister Mary of the Blessed Sacrament Roy, came with their rule, spirit and spirituality. Kingston was to share in the heritage of St. Vincent de Paul and Emilie Gamelin.

Five years later the Kingston Foundation became independent, with Sister Mary Edward McKinley, a native of Kingston, as the first Superior General, and she proved worthy and capable of carrying Vincent de Paul's dream into the future of English-speaking Canada. Her dedication to the poor and suffering enabled her to initiate building programs, carry out begging tours and begin new works on their behalf. Visiting the sick poor in their homes and caring for orphans were the first works of the new Congregation of Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul.

Since these early days, the work has expanded rapidly to encompass social and pastoral ministries, education, health care, retreat and campus ministries and missionary work at home and in developing countries. The expansion of

ministries has been accompanied by geographical extension. The Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul may be found carrying on their works of mercy in the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. They also serve in the mission countries of Peru and Guatemala.

Still the call of the poor, at times muted, at times clamorous, is always present. Today, as the Sisters of Providence journey into the twenty-first century, their Mission Statement of June, 1989 is an embodiment of the spirit of their founders and states in part: "Impelled by the compassionate love of Jesus and Mary, we seek to empower others, especially the poor and oppressed, to achieve a quality of life in keeping with their human dignity. We strive to be prophetic leaders in our Church and in society through the promotion of structures and relationships of equality and mutuality and through attitudes and actions for justice and peace. Strengthened by prayer, we are bonded in unity and love through our corporate mission."

The motto of the Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul is "Serving with compassion, trusting in Providence, we walk in hope."

Providence Hospital Daysland 1908 - 1974

**Congregation:
Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent De Paul
(Kingston)**

Mother House Kingston, Ontario

Daysland General Hospital was incorporated in 1908. It once served a district stretching from Wetaskiwin on the West to the border towns of Saskatchewan to the East. It was at that time the only hospital in Alberta East of Edmonton on the CPR.

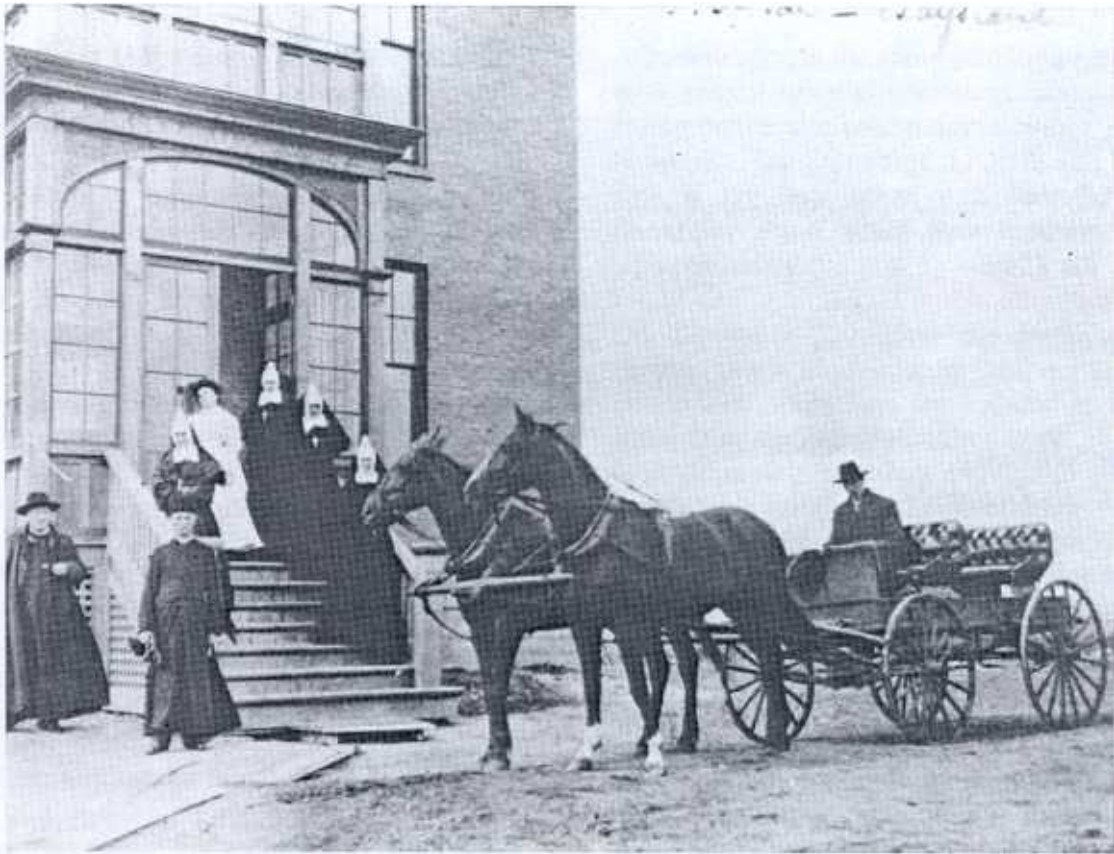
It was on the invitation of Mr. E.W. Day, for whom Daysland is named, that three members of the Community of the Sisters of Providence of Kingston, Ontario came to Daysland (Sisters M. Angel Guardian, M. Camillus, and M. Austin, all graduate nurses). Upon their arrival, the Sisters began their work by nursing patients in their homes until the original building was ready for occupancy in 1909. The doctor on staff at the time of opening was Doctor Sherriffs, later joined by Dr. Quesnell. Ever increasing demands for hospital services made building additions necessary in 1919 and 1927.

The original hospital which had a proud past of serving the community was replaced in 1961 by a new thirty-bed hospital, the old hospital was renovated and was used by Administration and Support Services. No patient care services were provided in this portion of the building.

January 1, 1974 the Sisters of Providence turned over control of the hospital to a municipal board and the hospital became known as the Daysland General Hospital.

In 1985 the old hospital was razed and a temporary Administrative/Support Services building was added to the existing thirty bed hospital.

April 1, 1987 a reorganization of District Boundaries resulted in the formation of the Daysland General and Auxiliary Hospital and Nursing Home District #68.



Provincial Archives of Alberta



*St. Mary's
Hospital,
Camrose
(1924 -)*

1924 To 1990

*Congregation:
Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul*

*Mother-House:
Kingston, Ontario*

The establishment of a hospital run by religious Sisters was discussed for many years by the citizens of Camrose. At the request of the Mayor and local councillors, the Archbishop and Rev. Father Harrington, Pastor, made frequent petitions to the Sisters of Providence in Kingston, Ontario to send Sisters to begin hospital work in the town. Finally on October 3, 1922 Sister Mary Angel Guardian and Sister Mary Camillus of Providence Hospital, Daysland, Alberta went to Camrose to meet with the Mayor, Mr. Adair Young. He welcomed them heartily and brought them to the proposed site, a large block of land on Normal Hill, already set aside for the building. The winter of 1923 was a busy time securing a loan and drawing up suitable plans for a fifty-bed hospital, and the work commenced in May. Then on October 23, 1924 Archbishop O'Leary performed the simple but impressive ceremony of laying the cornerstone of the \$100,000.00 hospital. On November 19, 1924 there was a Civic Opening. It was marked by the foundation of a Training School for Nurses under the capable and devoted direction of Sister Mary Alban.

From the beginning there were four doctors on the staff - Dr. P.F. Smith, who later gave two sons and later still, a grandson, all of sterling

worth to serve the Hospital; Dr. F.A. Nordbye, who with Dr. Smith proved a pillar of support and encouragement; Dr. W.H. Craig, who liked to tell that he taught school just long enough to be able to finance his way to something more worthwhile; and Dr. W.V. Lamb, who later became the first chairman of the Medical Staff.

From the very beginning the Sisters realized the necessity and advantage of a well-organized Medical Staff. The first Medical Meeting was held on January 12, 1924. There were four doctors on the Medical Staff. Officers were elected and an agenda, which included case studies, was drawn up for the meeting. Rules and Regulations governing the Medical Staff were presented and accepted. In the year 1927, the Hospital received conditional approval by the College of Physicians and Surgeons. In 1930, the Medical Staff was increased by two members, making a total of six doctors, all active members. After the inspection of 1931, the Hospital received full approval by the American College of Physicians.

On May 16, 1945 the Town of Camrose was notified that St. Mary's Hospital proposed to build a fifty-bed addition. This was very welcome news, particularly for those who had

long realized the pressing need for expansion. On July 4, 1947 construction began. On April 20, 1949 the magnificent and substantial new addition, the total cost of which was \$400,000, was officially opened with solemnity and grandeur accompanied by deep feelings of gratitude. The new fifty-bed wing was a perfect match for the former fifty-bed, \$100,000 hospital opened in 1924.

At the opening, Archbishop MacDonald spoke of the pleasure he experienced coming to Camrose, and congratulated the local community on the addition to St. Mary's.

St. Mary's reached another milestone of progress on October, 1959, by its formal establishment of a Lay Advisory Board. In general, this board consisted of a group of representative citizens of the community who expressed willingness to serve as advisors to the

Administration in the many problems connected with general hospital operations, and to build strong public and community relations for the Hospital. On September 1, 1973 this Board took a big leap ahead. It changed to a Governing Board which gave it power to act when necessary.

On December 23, 1966 the long awaited permission was obtained from the Department of Public Health to tender the building of a third addition to the Hospital. On March 21, 1967 contractors were removing snow in preparation for thawing the ground for excavation. It was indeed a glorious day of rejoicing when, on May 14, 1969, the new wing of St. Mary's Hospital was officially opened. The dedication was made by Most Reverend Anthony Jordan, O.M.I., Archbishop of Edmonton. Although the bed capacity was only increased by fifteen, much better service was provided in all departments due to the added efficiency of the new addition.



1974 Photo

As early as 1980, the rumblings began to indicate that St. Mary's Hospital was again crowded. The condition of the 1924 wing was such that no part of it could be used for patient care, nor in the view of advisors, could it feasibly be renovated to comply with today's standards. After lengthy consideration and many discussions with governments at both municipal and provincial levels, it was decided to demolish the old hospital (the 1924, 1949 and 1969 wings) and erect a completely new hospital. Construction was officially started on August 4, 1987 with the Honourable Ken Rostad, then Solicitor General and M.L.A. for the Camrose Constituency, turning the sod. The new facility was officially opened on June 23, 1989. Demolition of the older St. Mary's Hospital complex was commenced later that summer. The site was used for parking. Landscaping of the whole area was started in July 1989, and was completed the following summer.

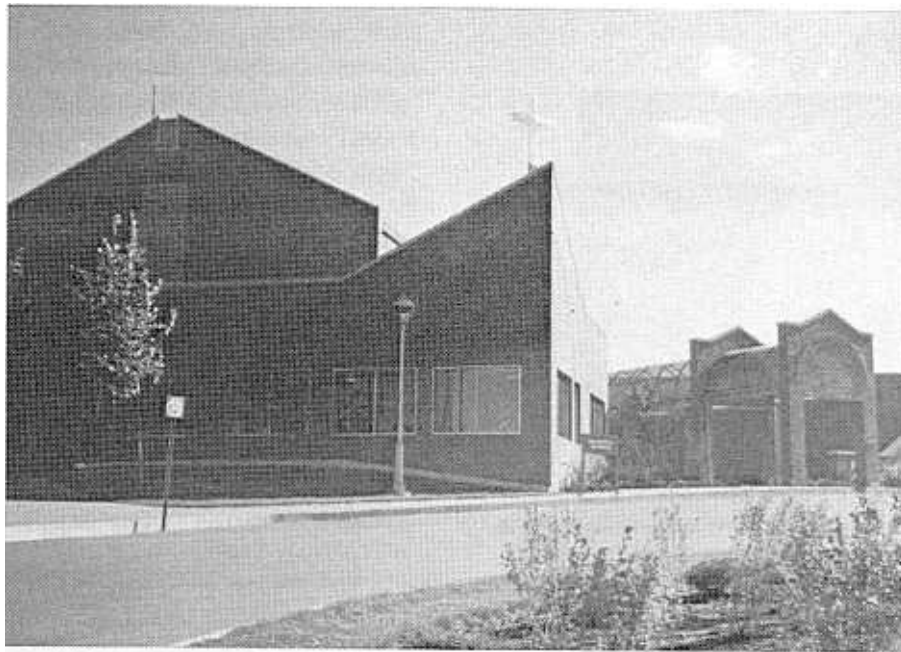
The new 110,000 square foot complex has 117 beds plus four day surgery beds and 12 basins. While the new hospital does not significantly increase the bed capacity, it does provide more space for patient care, diagnostic imaging, laboratory, psychiatry, pharmacy and nursing areas. Advanced technology is evident in the new equipment for the Hospital, which provides advantages for the patient as well as for the medical, nursing, and support staff.

Modern technology significantly improves the ventilation and quality of air, compared to the older facility. The decor of the new Hospital is soft and serene. Gentle pastel colours throughout, and indirect lighting in many areas create an atmosphere of peace and well-being. Virtually all of the patient areas have excellent views of the outdoor blue sky and sunshine; some have exceptionally beautiful views of the verdant Jubilee park.

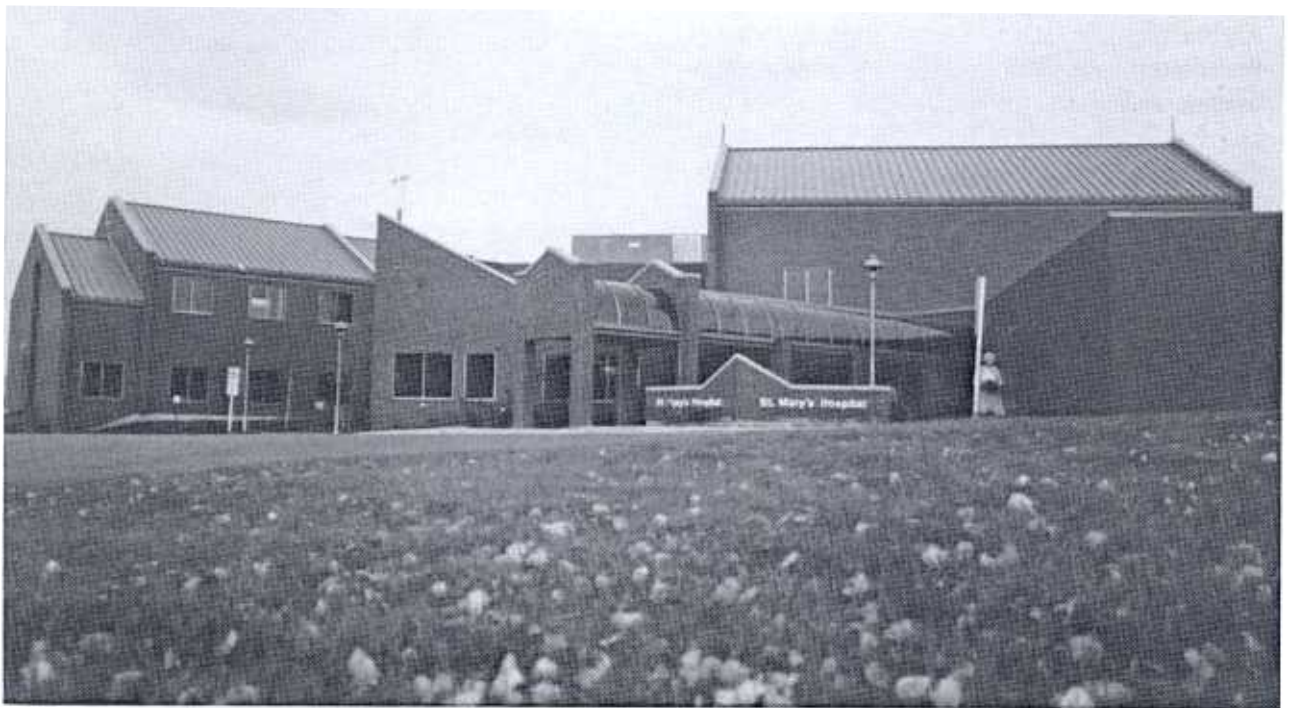
From the small seed planted in 1924 by the

Sisters' dedication and trust in God's Providence, a new St. Mary's Hospital - "The Shape of our Future" has now sprung up in 1989. St. Mary's Hospital Administrative Staff believes in the team concept of management and making decisions in a collaborative way. The approach is found to be both productive and creative and fosters a feeling of ownership and a concern for the good of the Hospital among the managers. As well, St. Mary's Hospital's "holistic" approach stresses total care of the individual both physically and spiritually. So with grateful hearts, true to the spirit of the pioneer Sisters, the Hospital Team courageously embarks on the next chapter of the history of St. Mary's.

At the present time Mr. Michael Shea, the first lay person in St. Mary's History, fills the role of Executive Director. Mr. Douglas Tien is the Chairman of the Governing Board. Other Board Members include: Mr. Malcolm Lyseng, Reverend Brian Hunter, Mr. Casey Kehoe, Mr. William Andreassen, Mr. Roy Cunningham, Mrs. Shannon Nychka, Mr. Ray Heck, Sister Rose Bekar, Sister Bernadine Bokenfohr, Sister Elaine Jacob and Sister Grace Maguire.



Two Views of New St. Mary's Hospital, Camrose



***St. Joseph's
Auxiliary
Hospital,
Edmonton
(1948 -)***

In the autumn of 1927, two Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul, Sister Mary Angel Guardian Mangan and Sister Mary Alacoque Scott, came to Edmonton to confer with Archbishop H.J. O'Leary about the establishment of a "Home" for the aged and infirm in his diocese. Most of the pioneers who had broken the land and established small farms were no longer able to work. Many had nobody to care for them and no place to go to get the care they needed. The Archbishop, whose heart was with the people who built the West, resolved to do something for them. As a first step he contacted the Sisters of Providence in Kingston, Ontario.

Archbishop O'Leary knew the Sisters of Providence. In 1908, three years after Alberta became a province, they had established a small hospital in Daysland in what seemed to them, at that time, a "lonely and desolate wasteland". In 1915, they had responded to a call from Archbishop Legal to take charge of a hostel for girls in Edmonton. Archbishop O'Leary, himself, had asked the Sisters of Providence to undertake the care of needy boys in St. Mary's Home in Edmonton. In 1924 the same Sisters of Providence built a hospital in Camrose.

The Sister who was a key figure in establishing the four Alberta houses and who laid a firm foundation for works of charity and social welfare in the province, was Sister Mary Angel Guardian, one of the two chosen in 1927 to



***Sr. M.A. Gaurdian
Foundress of St. Joseph's Hospital in 1927.***

negotiate with Archbishop O'Leary to provide help for the aged pioneers.

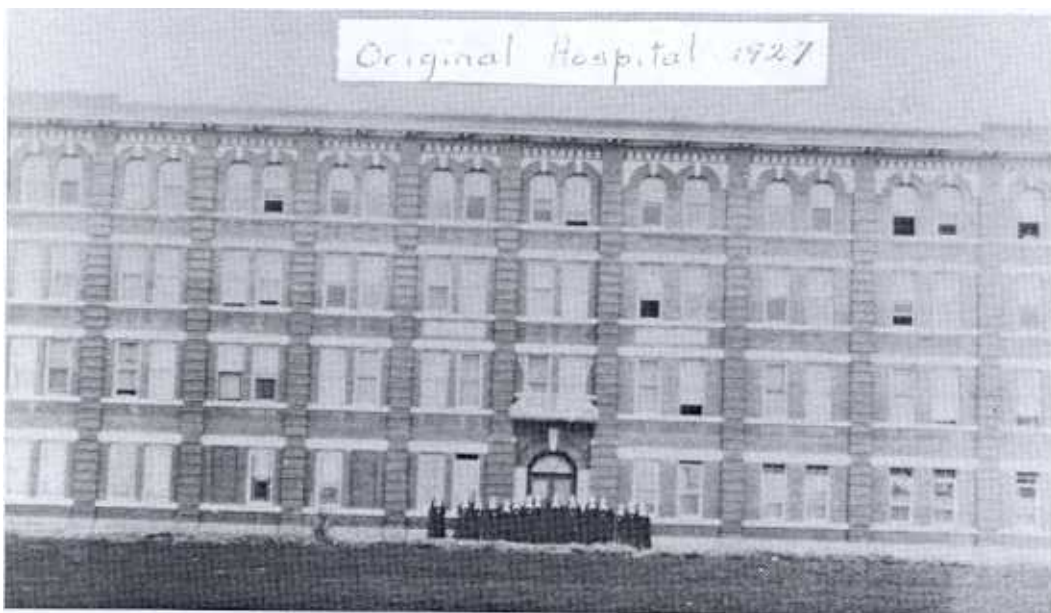
The Archbishop had been pressuring the Community to open a home for the aged and those afflicted with long term illnesses. A property known as "The Whyte Block" was being listed for sale, and the Archbishop offered to secure the property for \$24,000 with seven adjoining lots for another \$2,000. Sister Mary Alacoque, Superior of St. Mary's Home, went to examine the building. It was a four-storey

apartment with thirty rooms on each floor, built in 1912. Sister Mary Angel Guardian, who was now a member of the General Administration, advised the Community to purchase it. Thus it was that on October 10, 1927, the Whyte Block became the property of the Sisters of Providence. Sister Mary Alacoque and Sister Mary Wilfred were the signing officers for the Community.

Early the following year, Sister Monica McCoy was sent from Daysland to convert the old apartment building into a home for the aged. With three assistants - Sister Mary Margaret Masterson, Peter Gavin and Boniface Lansing, Sister had the whole building renovated and fitted with comfortable furnishings. Since she had been raised on a farm in Quebec and was an enthusiastic gardener, she had one of the nurseries in the city plan, on the extra lots, landscape trees, flowers and walks so that the aged residents could enjoy the beauty of God's



Sr. M. Alacoque



Original Hospital 1927

outdoors. On September 24, 1929 the formal opening of the House of Providence of Edmonton took place with ten aged persons to benefit from its ministrations.

In a very short time it was apparent that more than a house for the aged was needed. Most of the aged persons needed nursing care and a hospital was required to treat long term patients. Through the influence and assistance of the provincial Minister of Health, Dr. Goadley, the Federal Government granted the request on January 6, 1930, the House of Providence became St. Joseph's Hospital for the Chronically Ill. Adjustments to the facilities were needed. Sister Mary Michelle came from Moose Jaw Hospital to prepare an Operating Room and other changes were made. The Archbishop named Dr. Herbert Conroy as the Medical Superintendent, and it is to that dedicated doctor

that we owe gratitude for the great help and encouragement that he gave the Hospital in its early days. Many of the patients were Indian, as Dr. Conroy was associated with the Indian Reserves of Alberta. Dr. H.C. Jameison was also of great assistance at that time. The first resident chaplain was a Belgian Priest, Father DeWilde. The patients ranged in age from two to ninety-six.

Very soon the Sisters were in desperate need of increased facilities. In 1945, due to lack of space, they were refusing admission to many patients. They had to expand. They went to Archbishop MacDonald with their plans for an elaborate building program.

The Archbishop favoured the project, feeling keenly "the increasing need of example that would shine forth as a beacon in a world where



St. Joseph's Auxiliary Hospital - 1992

the torches of mercy were being blotted out." He gave every encouragement and support to the Sisters. They proceeded with their plans for a new four-storey building.

The construction of the new hospital began at a time when government restrictions were at their height and continued throughout a period when shortages of one kind or another were the order of the day. Yet the Sisters vigorously pushed the task to completion; spurred on by the pressure to admit more and more patients who were chronically ill and "incurable". Archbishop MacDonald paid tribute to the Sisters of Providence saying, "The confidence of the Sisters in that Divine Providence which rules the world is a marvellous lesson to us all in this age of selfishness and indifference."

The 150-bed extension to St. Joseph's Hospital was officially opened on January 24, 1948. With a look to the future, the Hospital was so constructed as to permit the building of additional storeys when more money would be available. The entire hospital showed thoughtful planning with the social, emotional and spiritual needs of the patients in mind.

By 1955 the need for expansion was again acute. Mother Mary Anselm Egan, Superior at the time, undertook the addition of two floors. One of these floors she allocated for the therapy and rehabilitation of poliomyelitis patients, victims of the recent epidemic in Edmonton and area. Until this time, there were no special facilities for those patients. Care provided by Sister Gracia Whalen, was also given to several seriously handicapped children until a suitable place could be provided for them. True to the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul and Emilie Gamelin, the Sisters were ready to answer new needs when no other help was available.

By the late 1950's, the emphasis in such hospitals as St. Joseph's tended to be on rehabilitation of as many patients as possible. More extensive facilities were required at the same time that a name change to St. Joseph's Auxiliary Hospital occurred.

In 1963, with the help of a \$30,000 grant from the City, the original Whyte Block was demolished. By 1965, the present building including the auditorium, central storage and a Sisters' Residence was completed, providing for new and improved occupational therapy, physiotherapy and recreation departments.

A Governing Board replaced the Lay Advisory Board in 1972.

In 1980, the first lay administrator, Mr. Ray Pinkoski, was appointed.

Changes and upgrading projects continued during the 1980's. Major construction in 1981 upgraded Food Services and improved compliance with Fire Code Regulations. Further safety and environmental upgrading occurred in 1987.

In May 1987, approval to commence planning for a new 200-bed replacement facility was received. The new hospital, which will include 25 day support spaces, is under construction in the Ermineskin area of South Edmonton.

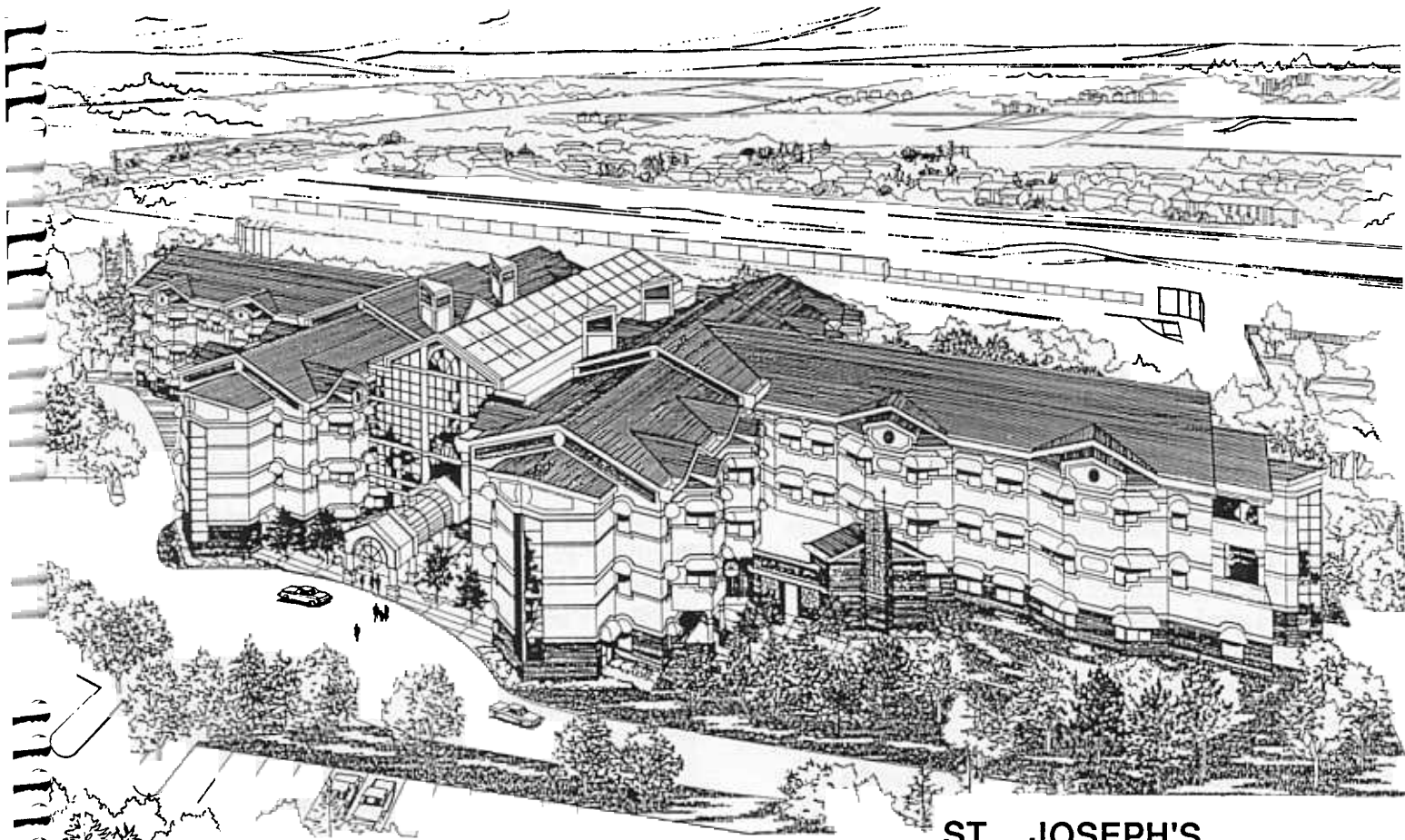
Construction of the \$27,000,000.00 structure is proceeding on schedule with our move to the new facility slated for September, 1993.

At present, the Governing Board membership consists of Dr. L. Grisdale as Chairman, Sr. Rose Bekar, Sr. Mary Benilda, Sr. Elaine Jacob, Sr. Grace Maguire, Gerard Amerongen, Jean Bara, Bert Knowler, Frank Totino, Dr. John

Young, and Dr. R. Bradstock as Chief of Staff. Ray Pinkoski has been Chief Executive Officer since 1980. He also serves on the Board as Secretary and was involved with the Sisters in planning for an upgraded and/or replacement facility for many years before the 1987 Governmental approval to plan for a new replacement facility.



Sod Turning, 1991 Oct 18. St. Joseph's Hospital. Governing Board: A.S. Knowler, Dr. L. Grisdale, Sr. Mary Benilda, R.J. Pinkoski, Sr. Rose Bekar, Sr. Irene Forrester - General Superior, F. Totino, G. Amerongen, Sr. E. Jacob, J. Bara, Sr. W. Whalen, Dr. J. Young



PERSPECTIVE

**ST. JOSEPH'S
AUXILIARY HOSPITAL**

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT
august, 1990

wood gardener o'neill o'neill
architects ltd.

***Sisters
Of St. Joseph
(London)
In Western Canada***

History Of The Congregation

October 15, is a significant date in the lives of the Sisters of St. Joseph. It was on this date in 1650 that the Congregation of St. Joseph was founded in Le Puy, France. From France the Congregation moved to Carondelet, Missouri, in the U.S.A. at a later date. In France, through the efforts and perseverance of Bishop Henri De Maupas and Father John Pierre Medaille, a Jesuit Missionary, this community operated successfully until the French Revolution when five of the Sisters met their deaths by guillotine. It was on December 11, 1868 that the Sisters of St. Joseph established a residence in London, Ontario, Canada, the same year that the permanent Episcopal Residence of the Diocese was established.

Reverend Mother Ignatia Campbell was the head of the Community for thirty-two years. At the repeated requests of Archbishop Henry J. O'Leary four Sisters were sent from London, Ontario to open a hospital in Alberta. In 1926, Sister Patricia Coughlin, Sister Virginia Lobban, Sister Austin Gurvine and Sister Jane Frances O'Rourke began their new field of labour in Stettler, Alberta.

One can hardly speak of operating a hospital in Western Canada in the late twenties, early thirties without an historical orientation with respect to social security and health insurance,

and the total lack thereof. Suffice to say here that the Sisters and their Communities provided the funds for the total construction and operation of their hospitals until 1958, when the Provincial Department of Health, Hospitals Division, began reviewing the provision of health care and some consideration for the voluntary hospital was forthcoming.

The Sisters of St. Joseph (London) operated four rural hospitals in Alberta: Stettler, 1926-1927; Galahad, 1927-1978; Killam, 1930-1990; Rimbey, 1932-1949.

Statistics play an important role in our history. Finances were such that even a lay nurse working for \$25.00 per month, with room and board provided was a rarity. Indeed, few lay people, working for a salary were employed in those early years.

Statistics 1926-1990 - Sisters of St. Joseph (London)

Nursing -	37 for 352 years
Administration -	10 for 73 years
Housekeeping -	16 for 220 years
Business Management -	7 for 87 years
Laboratory -	3 for 20 years
Radiology -	3 for 21 years

TOTAL 76 for 773 YEARS

At the time of Confederation Canada was largely rural and what would be described today as "social problems" were then viewed as matters of Church and community at large.

Without going into detail as outlined in our own Community History of Health Care in Western Canada, it suffices to say that Pre-Confederation was characterized by five rather distinct eras; interesting eras as one looks back over the years and observes evolvement of issues and how they were dealt with as the years passed.

The lot of these early settlers was not an easy one by any means. The men were compared to Yukon gold seekers:

There is a Law of the Yukon, that only the strong shall thrive, that surely the weak shall perish and only the fit survive.

In reminiscing over the first years of work in our hospitals, surely the Sisters of St. Joseph fitted into that Yukon Law. There were many hardships, but with faith in God's help, the future always looked hopeful.

Stettler Municipal Hospital (1926)

1926-1927

On May 8, 1925, the Board of Trade passed a resolution that the Mayor, the Secretary-Treasurer and the Parish Priest (Father Ernest Battle) should approach the Archbishop to again request the establishment of a Sisters Hospital at Stettler. As a result of Archbishop Henry Joseph O'Leary's requests, the Sisters of St. Joseph (London, Ontario) sent four nuns to Edmonton for the purpose of establishing a hospital in Stettler. The Nuns arrived in Edmonton, February, 1926. On March 24, 1926, a public meeting was held to consider the hospital issue.

At this point it seems that two parallel developments were forming which may suggest some competition between the Catholics and the non-Catholic factions of the community. The proposal by the Sisters of St. Joseph to set up a hospital was immediately followed by another request to establish a Municipal Hospital. Father Battle was willing to delay the establishment of a Sisters' Hospital until the vote was taken, however, by September of 1926 no vote had occurred. Rather than lose the Sisters, Father Battle had the Sisters come to Stettler and in September they set up a hospital in the Carder Building. This was followed in the same month by the establishment of a provisional Municipal Hospital Board consisting of S.A. Vanderford, representing Lake Side M.D.; Fred Biggs, representing Vimy M.D.; J.W. Cronk, representing the Lake Side M.D.; Joseph

Harbison, representing Dublin M.D.; F.T. Colley, representing Town of Stettler; E. Prudden, representing Botha; and Oliver Horsfall (Secretary-Treasurer).

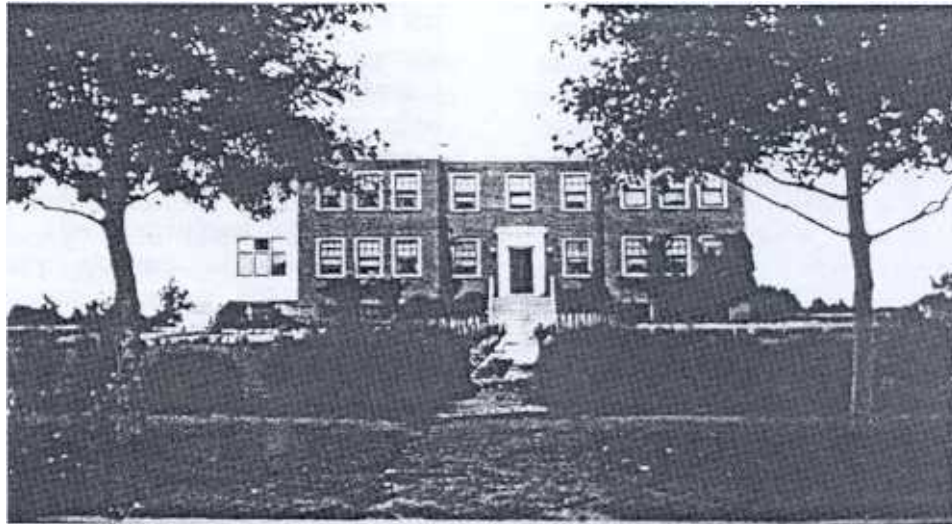
For the next year the Sisters operated a hospital while the community continued to push for a Municipal Hospital. The first vote failed to pass, but after revamping the boundary of the district, a second plebiscite conducted August 10, 1927, was successful, and a Municipal Hospital District was formed which became a corporate body May 28, 1928.

The Sisters of St. Joseph had always maintained that the Nuns would be available on a temporary basis with the intension to withdraw them if a Municipal Hospital was established. As a result of the plebiscite, the Nuns closed their Stettler Hospital and accepted an offer made by the Village of Galahad for the establishment of a twenty-bed Sisters' Hospital.

The establishment of a Sisters' Hospital for less than a year, from September, 1926 to August, 1927 was one chapter in the history of our Healthcare Services. The original Municipal Hospital, constructed in 1927-1928 and expanded in 1949, still stands today, housing a regional daycare and an education centre. In 1954, the A.E. Kennedy Auxiliary Hospital was built in an open space west of town. The area now contains The Stettler General & Auxiliary

Hospital & Nursing Home, District No. 20; The East Central Health Unit, No. 10; The Heart Haven Lodge; and the Stettler & District Ambulance Association.

Although the Catholic organizations did not have a long and established history in this community, they were definitely instrumental in the early development of Healthcare Service for the residents of the Town and County of Stettler.



St. Joseph's Hospital, Galahad (1927)

1927 - 1978

Following our exit from Stettler, the Sisters arrived in Galahad to find that a small teacherage, ill-suited for the hospital facility was to be used until such time as the hospital proper could be planned and constructed. There was no water supply system so that all the water needed had to be carried by hand from a small well situated on the school grounds nearby.

The hospital, as such, was often over-crowded. By 1927, more settlers were arriving in the District, hence longer hours of work and greater responsibilities became the agenda for the day.

It should be noted that the Community of Sisters was welcomed by everyone and many came to help with whatever was needed at any time. Farmers provided farm produce. Many paid their accounts with wood, coal, food or manual labour. Overall, an environment of care, acceptance and affirmation was developed, experienced and appreciated.

For the new hospital our Religious Community provided funds from its own Foundation and bank loans from local banks. This process was not an easy one since the rural hospital concept was new and perhaps considered unreliable for pay back issues.

In the 80's we may tend to forget the struggles and careful planning required for such a major venture. "Rob Peter to pay Paul", must often

have been more than a thought but a reality.

It may be noted that Galahad and District were not without problems with respect to bigotry in voting for or against a hospital to be operated by Catholic Sisters. Fortunately, the vote for the latter carried a large margin and any previous animosity disappeared.

Staff accommodation was poor and accommodation for patients was becoming critical. In 1953, under the direction of Sister Loyola Donovan, deceased in 1989, excavation for a larger unit began. The cost for a forty-seven bed, ten bassinet Nursery, Operating and Delivery Rooms, indeed an entire hospital unit is interesting conversation in 1990. The overall cost was estimated at \$250,000.00, monies borrowed from the Bank of Montreal, Forestburg on a long-term basis. The major financing was still carried by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph. The official opening took place in September of 1954 with Reverend Msgr. William Carleton, officiating.

Renovations of the Old Hospital for staff accommodation, chapel and other non-medical areas was not included in the new structure.

Galahad St. Joseph's enjoyed many "firsts" and achievements.

A lay Advisory Board was organized in 1962,

whereby local business men and farmers assisted and advised the Sisters about affairs relative to the new Provincial Government financial assistance to voluntary hospitals in Alberta.

St. Joseph's, Galahad, initiated and enjoyed many "firsts". A Regional Medical Staff was organized, consisting of physicians from Castor, Coronation, Consort and Galahad. Medical Educational Programs were initiated and well attended. Medical services improved and these were recognized provincially.

On August 4, 1973, St. Joseph's was granted Full Accreditation status.

More advanced equipment and standards were adopted. The hospital continued to be a great asset to the rural area. In spite of the energy spent on improving our facility's services, equipment and educational opportunities, we were becoming more and more aware of physicians leaving rural practices, and opting, as was the trend at that time, for specialities or specialization.

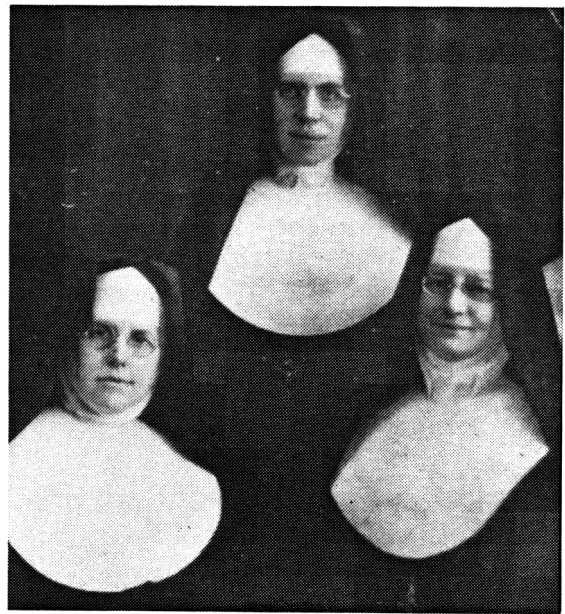
However, like many other Religious Communities, we had difficulty staffing our facility. Our membership in the London Community was declining. Coupled with this decline were the changes brought about since Vatican II, when a greater choice of professions and apostolates became available and approved by Community. Health Care Apostolates appeared to drop steadily. As in other institutions, these factors created a critical situation for our Hospital in Galahad.

Much could be written during these distressing times. Suffice to say it steadily became clear that the time had come when the congregation was forced to re-evaluate the wisdom of continuing ownership of St. Joseph's Hospital. When Catholic Philosophies and Mission Statements and Effectiveness can no longer be

met fully, there comes a time for action. Sister Rose Mindorf of London was the Administrator at the time of relinquishment.

And so on August 31, 1978, the Sisters of St. Joseph reluctantly relinquished ownership of St. Joseph's Hospital, Galahad. The Provincial Department of Ministry of Health assigned the operation of the Hospital to the Flagstaff-Hughenden Hospital District No. 55. The Sisters were feted for months prior to leaving; Interfaith Church Groups swelled the numbers of well-wishers.

The Galahad St. Joseph's Hospital was a fruitful apostolate and experience, and will long be remembered by all participants.



The First Sisters of St. Joseph

Sister Patricia Coughlin

Sister Jane Frances O'Rourke

Sister Virginia Loban

*The Sisters Worked in a Building Previously
Used as a Teacherage Until Their New
Building was Ready.*



**St. Joseph's Hospital, Galahad, Alberta
Officially Opened by His Grace Archbishop Henry J. O'Leary
on September 3, 1928.**



**St. Joseph's Hospital Showing the 1964
Addition to the South. Note Also, a New Garage
at North End of the Old Structure.**

***Killam
General
Hospital,***

***Later
Killam Health Care Centre
(1930 -)***

The arrival of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Killam dates back to 1930. St. Joseph's Hospital in Galahad had been officially opened on September 3, 1928. Hence the Congregation was quite well established in the area by the time a request went out to the Motherhouse for our Sisters to operate a hospital in Killam, twenty-six miles north of Galahad. There were still no grants or financial assistance coming from the Provincial Treasury.

A well constructed brick home only a few years of age, costing \$15,000.00 was sold to the Edmonton Archdiocese. Renovation started immediately and the changes provided nine adult beds, and four bassinets and cribs, an operating room and a small delivery room. The writer of this work is well oriented to the hardships, often generously sprinkled with humour and the ability to carry on in spite of setbacks. Support from the community at large was remarkable.

The years 1930 to 1945 were extremely difficult ones. The Second World War had, as every where else, a devastating effect on the life-style of every resident in the village and district. Staffing became very difficult, nurses often working thirty to forty hours without a break.

At about this time, Wheatland Municipality began subsidizing small amounts. This writer

recalls the huge sum of \$1.00 per diem per patient. The patient was not required to pay any of the expenses incurred, since his portion of the subsidy was considered to be included in the taxation of his property.

In May of 1946, a much needed wing was planned and constructed under the direction of our dear Sister Loyola Donovan, now deceased.

The year 1958 is remembered as a year marked with tragedy. A polio epidemic raged throughout Alberta. City hospitals were hard hit. Only emergency surgery was performed. The medical staff, without exception manned the many iron lungs in the metropolitan hospitals.

In 1959, a Lay Advisory Board was established to assist, advise and direct the Sisters in dealing with the new government financial involvement in Voluntary Hospitals. The Alberta Health Plan came into effect in 1958. The Act set out the Plan which provided grants for construction and limited funds for the day to day operation of hospitals. A distressing note may be added here; Government Policy was set whereby no more Voluntary (Sisters' and other church-owned/operated) hospitals would be built in Alberta.

However, limited provision was made to

upgrade existing units, renovations which required a great deal of interaction with government officials.

The Killam General, after much insistence, quarrels and "battles" was considered to be a replacement for the existing Hospital, and so in 1961 approval was obtained, not without many limitations, to construct a new thirty-bed active treatment hospital.

Sister Mary Lourdes Therens was the Administrator at that time, and recalls the many meetings with the Flagstaff Beaver Auxiliary Hospital Board. This group had asked Sister Julia Moore, the then General Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph, London, for the services of two Sisters to operate their fifty-bed Auxiliary Hospital. Approval had been given by that Board to have the Killam General Hospital Board assist them in planning their unit. There were to be shared services, carefully planned to have these critical areas located in the Killam General Hospital.

This arrangement both in location of units, management functions, sharing and the many facets of hospital operation proved to be an exciting experience. The Boards worked well together.

The Complex enjoyed many firsts and achievements too numerous to mention here. All of course with credit to the excellent Hospital Boards and the Community at large.

In April, 1990 the Sisters withdrew but still maintain ownership. A number of events honoring the Sisters were planned and well attended. The Killam Chamber of Commerce honored them with the Induction of four Sisters of St. Joseph into the Hall of Fame; Sister St. Bride Laverty, Sister Rose Ellen Donnelly, Sister Mary Kevin Moran, and Sister Mary Lourdes Therens.

At the time of writing, the Hospital is under the direction of a lay Administrator and a lay Board of Directors. The Sisters remain on the Governing Board and still maintain ownership.



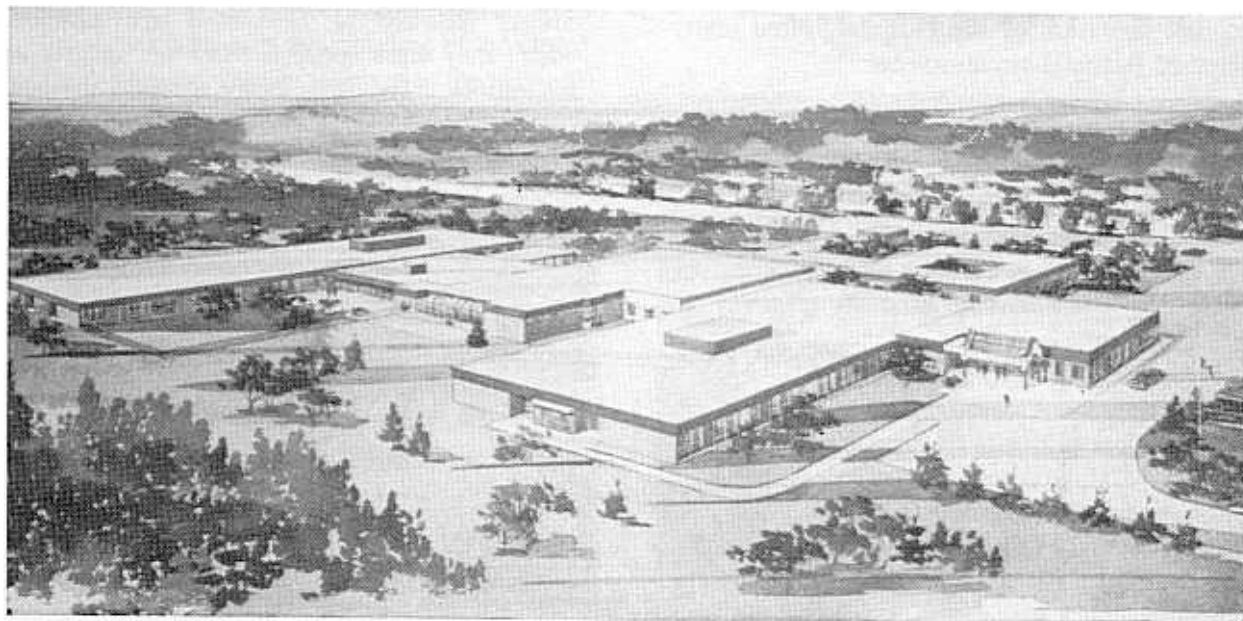
***Killam Original Hospital
The Nichol Home***



*Sr. Mary Lourdes Therens
Past Executive Director Galahad
and Killam Complex.*



*Sr. Angelica Winter
Business Manager
Killam Hospital Complex
deceased (1982)*



Killam Health Care Centre

***St. Paul's
Hospital,
Rimbey
(1932)***

1932 - 1949

St. Paul's Hospital was owned by the Archdiocese of Edmonton and operated by the Order of Benedictines from the United States until, due to limited members in their Community, they were forced to return to the U.S.A.

At the request of Archbishop Henry J. O'Leary of Edmonton, the Sisters of St. Joseph (London) operated the Hospital for the Archdiocese from 1932 to 1949. One would say, the operation of the Hospital was a success in every aspect.

Sisters Loretto Traynor, Liguori O'Dwyer, Lenora Doyle (highly trained nurses) were appointed and did an exemplary job of the day to day operation of the Hospital, often under strained financial circumstances.

In the mid 40's or a little later the need for a new Hospital for Rimbey District became evident. The residents of the Districts involved, as in Stettler, were given the opportunity to choose between a Catholic and a Municipal Hospital. The final vote narrowly favoured the Municipal unit.

At that time the Archdiocese advised that it was finding some difficulty in financing the existing facility, let alone securing extra monies required to build and operate a new Hospital. There was still no Provincial Government financing for the construction of Church-owned, voluntary hospitals, and it was generally felt that the

Archdiocese was relieved to relinquish

ownership.

In the 50's the Municipal Districts in Alberta were beginning to study hospitalization programs and health care needs, resulting in minor subsidies for the care of their sick residents, more especially the indigent patients.

The fact that St. Paul's was not owned by the Sisters of St. Joseph made the task of leaving easier, less traumatic. The institution, however, by now had become a precious unit in our ministry. The transition turned out to be a quiet peaceful event; the Sisters honoured by many public courtesies and events expressing appreciation for work well done. The group of Sisters returned to Edmonton and London, where they were appointed to other centres or institutions. They graciously accepted the new challenges and ventures.



St. Paul's Rimbey - 1932

*Sisters
Of St. Joseph
(Pembroke)*

Founder:

Father Jean-Pierre Médaille, S.J.

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph was established at Le Puy, France, on October 15, 1650, by the illustrious Mgr. Henri de Maupas, Bishop of Le Puy. Through the ardent zeal and timely suggestion of the Reverend Jean Pierre Médaille of the Society of Jesus, from the earliest days of the Institute he has been held in veneration as its Holy Founder.

This celebrated missionary had under his direction a number of pious women who desired to devote themselves in religious life to their own sanctification and to works of charity for the good of their neighbour. Bishop de Maupas, whose ideas were in perfect accord with those of St. Francis de Sales in the founding of the Order of the Visitation, readily assented to the views of Father Médaille in establishing a Congregation in which would be united "the duties of Martha and Mary, the exterior works of charity with the repose of contemplation."

God blessed this new Congregation so abundantly that it spread rapidly throughout France. But the Revolution of 1789 which created such havoc in the Church, spared the Community of St. Joseph none of its ravages. Many of the Sisters suffered imprisonment and death. Others of the Community, among whom was Mother St. John Fonbonne, escaped. This noble woman was destined by God for the great work of re-establishing the Congregation after the Revolution.

In 1812, the necessity of general government for the Community was felt. Lyons was chosen as the Mother-House, with Mother St. John as Superior General. In 1836 the first American Foundation was made from Lyons at Corondelet, Missouri. New Foundations quickly followed in response to appeals from all parts of the United States and Canada. In 1851, the first Canadian Foundation was made at Toronto from Philadelphia. Various diocesan foundations followed, among them one at Pembroke in 1921, at the request of Bishop P.T. Ryan, Bishop of Pembroke.



The Sisters in Front of the Hospital 1957

***St. Joseph's
Hospital,
Barrhead
(1947)***

(1947 to 1974)

***Congregation:
Sisters of St. Joseph (Pembroke)***

***Founder:
Father Jean-Pierre Médaille, S.J.***

It was from the Motherhouse at Pembroke, Ontario, that five Sisters of St. Joseph took over the management of St. Joseph's Hospital, Barrhead, Alberta, in January 1947.

The twenty-four-bed hospital at Barrhead had been built in 1934 by Doctor E.J. Verreau. At his request the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph of Chatham, New Brunswick, came to administer the Hospital in 1940. On their recall in 1946 the Sisters of St. Joseph from Pembroke came to carry on the work of caring for the sick. The first Superior was Mother M. Clare, who together with Sisters M. Monica, M. Genevieve, M. Edith, and M. Joseph, arrived in January 1947.

The new sixty-bed hospital, modern in every detail was planned by Sister St. Michael, Superior from 1951 to 1954. It was completed and formally opened in November 1955. At that time the Hospital was staffed by eight Sisters, with Sister Mary Legris as Superior, and thirty-five lay staff.

The Sisters of St. Joseph withdrew from the Hospital in 1974 due to lack of personnel.

With the discovery of oil north of Barrhead at Swan Hills and Virgin Hill, the population in the area so increased that additional medical personnel, hospital staff and bed capacity were required. And so, in 1961, a twenty-bed wing was added to St. Joseph's Hospital. this was accomplished under the skillful direction of Sister Mary Legris, as was also, in 1966, the renovation of the hospital chapel and the building of a wing to serve as residence for the Sisters.

Sister Mary Legris invested her many talents not only in meeting her responsibilities as administrator of St. Joseph's Hospital for fifteen years, but also in the public sector. For four years she was president of the Alberta Hospital Association; for the same number of years, president of the Canadian Catholic Association.

In 1969, she withdrew from St. Joseph's Hospital and took the position, of Consultant for the Alberta Hospital Association in Edmonton.

In the early seventies the Alberta Government was approached to enlarge the hospital's services wing. The request was turned down with the recommendation to build a whole new hospital, adding to it the wing built in 1961. Many hours

of planning went into this new venture. The plans were to implement the Frezen Concept - units of service and a central nursing station.

But by this time there was a declining number of Sisters on staff with no replacements forthcoming. The key positions were held by Protestants or persons of no religious affiliation and the doctors were not Catholic. Therefore, it was no longer possible to maintain medical practices according to Catholic ethics.

Before the new hospital became a concrete reality, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Pembroke decided to relinquish the ownership of the hospital. In 1973, along with the Sisters' Residence, it was sold to the Alberta government. The Residence was converted into office space for administration.

At the Sisters' request when the sale was completed, the name of the hospital was changed to "Barrhead General Hospital".

In 1977, the new hospital was opened and a plaque in honour of all the Sisters who served in the hospital of Barrhead was unveiled. It is situated in the front entrance of the hospital. It pays tribute to the pioneer spirit of the first Sisters whose zeal, courage and compassion perdured throughout the years.



Sister Mary Agnes in the Operating Room



Sisters Of St. Martha Of Antigonish

The Sisters of St. Martha of Antigonish were founded in 1900 by Bishop John Cameron, Bishop of Antigonish, N.S. The small group of fifteen Sisters who formed the founding group had already completed their novitiate formation under the direction of the Sisters of Charity at Mount St. Vincent, Halifax.



Bishop John Cameron

The primary function of the small community was the household management of St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, which in 1900 had a student body of slightly under 200 with twelve professors, clerical and lay. From the very beginning the Sisters regarded the work for which they had been founded as cooperating with the University in the Christian education of youth and the training of young men for the priesthood.

In the years that followed household management continued to occupy an important place in the activities of the Congregation. In 1915 the Sisters were asked to take over the household management of St. Joseph's Hospital in Glace Bay, N.S., and in 1913 were invited to take charge of the household department of St. Augustine's Seminary in Toronto. Later they served in this apostolate at Holy Heart Seminary, Halifax, and at Coady International Institute, Antigonish.

The first departure from the original work of the Congregation came in 1906 in response to a local need when the Sisters opened a small six-bed cottage hospital in Antigonish. From this humble beginning there developed what today is the fully modern 175-bed St. Martha's Regional Hospital which was opened in June 1989.

The pioneer work of the Sisters of St. Martha in the health care field marked what was the beginning of an ever-increasing involvement in this service. Since then the Sisters have become

owners and administrators of the following hospitals:

- 1915 - St. Joseph's Hospital and School of Nursing, Glace Bay, N.S.
- 1920 - St. Rita Hospital (and later School of Nursing), Sydney, N.S.
- 1929 - St. Michael's General Hospital and School of Nursing, Lethbridge, Alberta
- 1931 - Mineral Springs Hospital, Banff, Alberta
- 1936 - St. Michael's Hospital, Broadview, Saskatchewan
- 1940 - St. Peter's Hospital, Melville, Saskatchewan
- 1961 - St. John's Hospital, Lowell, Massachusetts

In addition, the Sisters were administrators of the following institutions:

- 1925 - St. Mary's Hospital, Inverness, N.S.
- 1958 - R.K. MacDonald Guest House (Senior Citizens), Antigonish
- 1960 - Eastern Memorial Hospital, Canso, N.S.
- 1963 - New Waterford Consolidated Hospital, New Waterford, N.S.

Beginning in 1977, due to a combination of circumstances, principally the lack of personnel, the Sisters were obliged to relinquish ownership and administration of a number of hospitals, including St. Michael's General Hospital, Lethbridge, and Mineral Springs Hospital, Banff. At the present writing they own and operate two hospitals: St. Martha's Regional Hospital, Antigonish; and St. John's Hospital, Lowell, Mass.; and administer the New Waterford Consolidated Hospital, New Waterford. In the hospitals no longer owned by the Congregation, Sisters continue to occupy positions on the staffs of the Community Health Centre (formerly St. Rita Hospital), Sydney; St. Michael's Hospital, Lethbridge; and Mineral Springs Hospital, Banff.

The Sisters began expanding their activities to fields other than household management and health care as early as 1917, when St. Mary's Home was opened in Sydney, N.S., for the care of neglected children and unmarried mothers, to be followed in 1925 by Little Flower Orphanage in Bras d'Or, N.S. With changing social legislation and programs for the care of children and unmarried mothers, this work was gradually reduced.

The shortage of teachers in rural areas during the 1920's drew the Sisters into a new field of service. Between 1925 and the present they taught in many places in Nova Scotia and Western Canada.

Social work with families became part of the Sisters' activities in 1935 and continued for many years until changes in social legislation, shortage of personnel and the introduction of diocesan based social agencies reduced the number of Sisters engaged in this work.

The growing concern for the spiritual welfare of patients in hospitals resulted in the establishment of Pastoral Care Departments in hospitals owned by the Sisters. At present Sisters qualified in this area are employed in the two hospitals owned by the Congregation, as well as in some hospitals in which ownership responsibility has been transferred, including St. Michael's Hospital, Lethbridge, and Mineral Springs Hospital, Banff.

The emphasis on pastoral ministry in many parishes opened up still another field in which the Sisters have become active. Presently Sisters in parish ministry are working in several parishes in the Diocese of Antigonish, in Western Canada, and also in the Diocese of Schefferfield-Labrador, St. Kitts, West Indies, and the Diocese of St. Georges, Newfoundland.

Since 1972 the Sisters of St. Martha have been involved in providing for retreats, counselling and spiritual direction for religious, priests and lay people at the Mother-House in Antigonish, and also at Martha Centre, Lethbridge.

The year 1985 saw the Congregation undertake its first venture in mission work when they responded to the invitation of Bishop Peter Sutton, then Bishop of Labrador-Schefferville, to establish a Community at St. Paul's River, Quebec. The following year, in 1986, four Sisters of St. Martha began a new foundation in St. Kitts in the West Indies, at the request of Bishop Donald Reece of St. John's-Bassaterre Diocese.

This year, 1992, at the request of Bishop Raymond Lahey, Diocese of St. Georges, Newfoundland, two Sisters began a new service

administering a parish in Deer Lake.

The Sisters of St. Martha have a promising associate program known as Martha Associates operating in several houses in both Nova Scotia and Western Canada. This form of collaboration with the laity is experienced as a mutual enrichment and as a rewarding form of ministry.

Looking to the future and faced with the reality of limitation in numbers which has obliged them to cut back in several areas, the Sisters of St. Martha hope to continue their ministry in a variety of services in the mission of the Church.

Bethany
Antigonish, N.S.
July 6, 1990



1936

***Sisters of St. Martha at St. Michael's General
Hospital Lethbridge, Alberta***

***Mineral Springs
Hospital,
Banff
(1930 -)***

To trace the development of Mineral Springs Hospital, it is necessary to go back to the year 1883 when Dr. R.C. Brett opened a small cabin hospital on the site of the present Banff Administration Building. The discovery of hot sulphur springs drew an influx of tourists, and the small hospital soon became famous as a health spot. A new building soon replaced the original one, which in turn gave way to a large frame and brick veneer structure known as the Brett Sanatorium. The Hospital had two wings, one on either side of the centre section for the accommodation of both patients and visitors. The 1909 location changed to the site occupied until 1987.

When Dr. Brett became too old to operate the sanatorium, his son, Dr. Harry Brett, took charge until his death in 1927, after which the sanatorium remained idle for a few years. Following the death of Dr. Brett, Senior, in 1929, the Brett Sanatorium was offered for sale. At this point, Bishop John T. Kidd, Bishop of Calgary, invited the Sisters of St. Martha of Antigonish to purchase and take charge of the institution. The purchase price of \$45,000 was agreed upon, and in June 1930 four Sisters of St. Martha arrived in Banff to take over the former Sanatorium, which was renamed Mineral Springs Hospital.

The main centre building was three stories high, while the two wings were two stories. In addition to patient accommodation, the Hospital had an operating theatre, X-ray Department with diathermy, hot mineral water bath section with

thirty-four dressing rooms, pool and tub, a medical library and a large kitchen and dining room.

The Sanatorium had been closed for two years prior to the arrival of the Sisters, and admissions were slow during the first year. Also, the depression was beginning to be felt in Alberta, and taking advantage of the sulphur springs in Banff, even for health reasons, was considered a luxury which few could afford.

At least five years elapsed before an appreciable change occurred in the number of admissions. Gradually, however, as the Town of Banff became better known and popular as a resort, Mineral Springs Hospital was more utilized, and by the summer of 1936 was able to report overcrowding during July and August.

In 1938, in an effort to improve the financial situation of the Hospital, negotiations were made with Dr. C.F. McGuffin of Calgary, to establish a physical therapy department at Mineral Springs Hospital for the treatment of Workmen's Compensation patients from various parts of the province, who, it was thought would benefit from the use of the mineral waters. According to the agreement, Dr. McGuffin staffed and equipped the new department which was under his control. The income resulting from the introduction of physical therapy eased the financial problems of the Hospital.

In 1940, a new laundry, separate from the original building, was erected on the premises,

and at about the same time a new boiler was built on the grounds, with an extension to provide accommodation for hospital staff. The year 1942 saw the erection of a three-story residence at the rear of the Hospital, for the use of the staff nurses, housekeeping and dietary staff, most of whom had been accommodated in various sections of the Hospital. The release of these rooms provided much needed patient accommodation.

In 1946, Dr. McGuffin decided to open a clinic of his own in the town of Banff; here he was later joined by his two sons, Doctors Harold and Alexander. This led to a decrease in the number of outpatients at Mineral Springs Hospital, although the Hospital still cared for those patients who required bed care in addition to treatments in the mineral waters section. The opening of the Banff School of Fine Arts with its enrolment of 1000 students on a year-round basis, and the establishment of a Reserve Army Centre in Banff for 200 trainees, began to put pressure on the facilities of Mineral Springs.

General deterioration of the old building, combined with the increased utilization of the Hospital, convinced the Board of Trustees that a new hospital should be built. After much negotiation, a plan for a 100-bed hospital was approved in 1947, but the estimated cost of \$2,000,000 was considered prohibitive and plans for the building had to be deferred.

For a time consideration was given to remodelling and renovating the original building, but this area was also abandoned, and so for some years the Hospital struggled under great difficulties to continue in operation. When the Dollar-A-Day Plan was introduced in the Province in 1948, and financial assistance from the Government seemed assured, hopes for a new hospital were renewed, but those hopes did not materialize because the people of the Town of Banff did not accept the Plan.

In the meantime changes were taking place in the treatment of persons with arthritis. For one thing, the introduction of the drug Cortisone was proving remarkably successful in the cure of the disease. Then, in 1949, a survey made by the Canadian Medical Association on types of treatment for arthritis made the recommendation that special hospitals which focused on the treatment of arthritis should be in close proximity to hospitals having a medical school. Since the nearest medical school at that time was in Edmonton, this left Mineral Springs Hospital questioning its future as a treatment centre for arthritic patients. Furthermore, the Provinces of Saskatchewan and British Columbia notified the Hospital that in future arthritic patients from those provinces would not be sent to Banff.

At about the same time, the Workmen's Compensation Board notified Dr. McGuffin that, in future, cases requiring long term care were to be sent to the newly established Rehabilitation Clinic in Edmonton. Only short term cases were still to be sent to Mineral Springs Hospital.

To offset this disappointment, the Provincial Government signed a contract with the Hospital for the treatment of polio patients, but it was judged that the income from such a source would not make an appreciable difference.

Because of the continuing deterioration of the building, it became apparent in 1954, that the Hospital should either be closed altogether or that plans to build should begin immediately. Those plans were contingent, however, upon the Town of Banff's acceptance of the Dollar-A-Day Plan which would ensure Government grants for the project, the plan which had already been rejected in 1951. In May 1954, Mother M. Ignatius, General Superior of the Sisters of St. Martha, visited Banff and held an emergency meeting with the Board of Trustees. At that time she told the Board that the Sisters of St. Martha were willing to undertake construction of

a new hospital **only** if the people showed themselves willing to support it. A second plebiscite was to be held on November 1, 1954. If the Dollar-A-Day Plan was not accepted at that plebiscite, Mother Ignatius said, Mineral Springs Hospital would be closed.

As it turned out, the plebiscite had to be postponed until June 21, 1955, but a favourable development in the fall of 1954 prepared the way for a successful outcome. In October 1954, the Town voted unanimously in favour of a Municipal Hospital District in Banff, and at the plebiscite in 1955 the townspeople voted 90% in favour of the Dollar-A-Day Plan. (Actually, this Plan ceased to exist only a few months prior to the opening of the new hospital in 1958, when the Alberta Health Insurance Plan went into effect, but at the time of the plebiscite the Dollar-A-Day Plan played an important role in the future of Mineral Springs Hospital.)

Resumption of plans for a new hospital began immediately, but it was not until January 1956, that the final draft was ready. The original overly optimistic view of 1947 of the need for a 100-bed hospital had already been scaled down to 30 active beds. The approved plans of 1956 called for a 45-bed hospital, plus newborn nursery. Construction on a site adjacent to the original building began before the end of 1956, and continued without interruption throughout 1957, and until May 1958. The opening on May 25th ended fifteen years of disappointments, frustrations and delays, but was an important milestone for the Town of Banff. Demolition of the old building began almost as soon as the patients had been transferred to the New Hospital.

The new building consisted of three sections: a two-storey Chapel, northwest of the hospital proper; a three-storey hospital building; and a



Brett Sanatorium Banff 1929

two-storey Residence for the Sisters and Nurses, connected to the main building by a passage way. The structure was a steel reinforced concrete with brick facing. Parts of the front were faced with blue-black "Rundle Rock" from the base of Mount Rundle. From one angle Mount Rundle formed a perfect back-drop for the Hospital; from another the less majestic Tunnel Mountain may be seen in the background.

In the planning of the New Hospital, no provision had been made for a treatment section utilizing the mineral waters, as had been the case in the former hospital. Recent studies on the use of the sulphur water baths in the cure of arthritis had downgraded its value, and other forms of treatment were considered more beneficial. From 1958 on, Mineral Springs Hospital operated as a general hospital for all types of sickness. Severe accident cases, common among skiers and mountain climbers, were usually transferred to a Calgary hospital following examination and x-ray at Mineral Springs.

In 1971, at the request of the Alberta Hospitalization Benefits Plan, a hospital district, the Banff General Hospital District No. 71, was established for the whole Banff National Park. The purpose of setting up a hospital district was to permit the Hospital District Board to requisition funds from a school board in the same way as hospital districts in other parts of the Province are allowed to requisition municipalities. Mineral Springs Hospital was entitled to have three representatives on the Hospital District Board.

From the earliest years Mineral Springs Hospital had the services of a resident Catholic Chaplain, who was at the same time Pastor of St. Mary's Church in Banff. When a new rectory was built for the parish church, the chaplain moved his residence but continued to act as Chaplain. In

1977, following the lead in other Catholic Hospitals, a Pastoral Care Department was established in which a Sister of St. Martha worked with the Chaplain in the spiritual care of the patients. At present the department uses the services of volunteers to assist in special cases.

A Ladies' Auxiliary has been part of the Mineral Springs Hospital since 1931 and has given invaluable support not only in substantial monetary contributions, but as a dedicated body of women ready to help in whatever way they can for the good of the hospital and its patients.

In 1975, Mrs. Lillian Mandryk, who had been Business Manager at the Hospital since 1965, was appointed as the first lay Administrator of Mineral Springs. When planning resumed for the new hospital in 1982, she was appointed building coordinator, a position she held until ill-health obliged her to resign in 1984. Her death occurred in February, 1989. Michael Ostafichuk became Administrator in 1984.

By the late 1970's, the management and Board of Trustees were wrestling with the problem of upgrading facilities at the Hospital. Of particular concern was the Emergency Department. Two alternatives were being considered; to renovate the existing structure and build an extension on adjacent property or to build a completely new hospital on a different site. As a preliminary to adopting the first alternative, the Board approved the purchase of the Hruble property next to the Hospital and began negotiations with the owner. In September 1980, the Hospital engaged the services of Resources Management Consultants, Edmonton, to assist in the planning process. By the end of 1981, Minister of Health, D.J. Russell, announced that Mineral Springs Hospital could proceed with plans for a new facility of forty active and twenty-five auxiliary beds on a new site to be selected.

The matter of choosing an appropriate site and arranging with the Federal Parks Department for an exchange of properties was complicated and time consuming, and it was not until September 1982, that Parks Canada approved the site on Wolf Street. The preparation and approval of plans and a procedural multitude of problems occupied the next three and a half years, and it was not until the early part of 1986 that the ground was broken and construction could begin.

The official opening of the new sixty-five-bed hospital took place on Friday, May 29, 1987.

In the meantime, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Martha had been negotiating with the Alberta Catholic Hospital Foundation and with

the Provincial Government with a view to relinquishing ownership of Mineral Springs Hospital. This move was necessary because the Congregation did not have the personnel necessary for conducting a hospital. The final transfer of ownership to the Provincial Government, with a lease to the Alberta Catholic Hospitals Foundation, was signed and sealed in July, 1988. Following the resignation of Michael Ostafichuk in 1987, Mr. Neall Stevens was appointed Administrator of the Hospital and has continued in this position under the new ownership.

This ends the brief history of Mineral Springs Hospital, Banff, under the Sisters of St. Martha from 1930 to 1988.



Mineral Springs Hospital



*Sisters of St. Martha
Reception and Banquet - Lethbridge Lodge in
Honour of 56 Years of Service as Owners
of Lethbridge Hospital*

***St. Michael's
General Hospital,
Lethbridge
(1931 -)***

Now St. Michael's Health Centre

In 1928, Bishop John T. Kidd, Bishop of Calgary, invited the Sisters of St. Martha to take over a small hospital in the City of Lethbridge. At that time the city had two hospitals: the Galt Hospital, a municipally owned sixty-five-bed institution; and the Van Haarlem, a privately owned twenty-five-bed facility operated by Mrs. Maria Elizabeth Van Haarlem, who was anxious

to sell. After preliminary investigations and after the feasibility of the project had been established, the Congregation agreed to accept the undertaking. Included in the arrangements was the understanding that the Sisters of St. Martha would begin planning to replace the Van Haarlem Building with a new hospital.



Van Haarlem Hospital - 1929

Six Sisters of St. Martha arrived in Lethbridge in May 1929, to be followed two months later by two more, and in December of that year by a further two Sisters. By 1930, plans were already being made for a 125-bed hospital on a new site and construction began that same year. Completed in 1931, the New Hospital was named St. Michael's General Hospital. The years that followed were times of great financial stress. Faced with what was then an enormous debt, the Sisters had difficulty meeting interest payments, not to mention salaries and other operating costs. The depression and poor crops in the southern part of the Province contributed to the inability of the people to pay their hospital bills.

By 1945, the situation had begun to improve. Not only was the Hospital able to meet its obligations, but was considering the opening of a School of Nursing. Before any definite steps in this direction were taken, however, it became apparent that a prior need was an extension to the Hospital for patient accommodation. Accordingly, negotiations began for the construction of an 83-bed wing at the east end of the building. Plans proceeded on schedule and the wing was opened in September, 1951, bringing the number of beds to 203.

Not too long after the opening of the 1951 wing, plans were resumed for the School of Nursing and the Residence. The L-shaped, five-storey building was constructed in stages, the first section being completed in 1953, at which time 46 student nurses were enrolled. The total structure, completed in 1954, had accommodation for 100 students and 20 Sisters. The Residence included a large chapel, an auditorium, classrooms and parlours.

In 1952, the Canadian Medical Society gave approval for St. Michael's to receive medical

intern trainees, and in 1954 the training of resident pathologists was also approved. The first students in medical and laboratory technology were accepted in 1954 for a two-year training course under the direction of Dr. A.R. Bainborough, Director of the Laboratory, with a Sister of St. Martha in charge of the Lab. The Blood Bank, established in 1954 in cooperation with the Red Cross Society in Calgary, gave service to both the Hospital and the smaller district hospitals.

A new critical care unit to accommodate five patients was opened in 1953, and in 1955 a centralized oxygen bank was installed for piping oxygen to the Recovery Room, Operating Rooms, Pediatrics and Nursery as required. In 1958 a central recording dictating system installed in the Medical Records Department eased the workload of the staff.

The School of X-Ray Technology was established in 1954 with Dr. Brian Black, FRCP, as chief radiologist.

By 1960, a serious need in the Hospital was improved laundry facilities. Accordingly, the Alberta Hospital Services Commission approved the construction of a new laundry adjoining the east end of the building.

Each year saw the addition of new medical staff members in various fields, as well as the acquisition of the most modern equipment for new procedures. Soon it became impossible for the service departments to function efficiently in the limited space available to them. Accordingly, in May 1963, the breaking of ground began for a new service wing on the west side of the original building to correspond with the 1951 patients' wing on the east, thus forming a U-shaped structure. The new wing provided for a concentration in one area of most

of the departments hitherto located in different parts of the Hospital. On the ground floor were Admitting, Emergency, Radiology, Physiotherapy, and Medical Records; on the first floor were Laboratory, Respiratory Technology, Pharmacy, Central Supplies and Board Room; seven Operating Theatres and surgical beds occupied the second floor, maternity and pediatrics were located on the third floor.

In 1967, the first Cardiac Intensive Care Unit was opened. In 1968, data processing was introduced in the Business Office. In 1969, the Hospital signed a contract with Modern Building and Cleaning to take over the housekeeping functions. In November 1969, at the request of the Provincial Government, St. Michael's joined the Lethbridge Municipal Hospital and the

Auxiliary Hospital in a joint laundry project to operate in a newly constructed building on the grounds of the Municipal Hospital.

In 1966, the Blood Bank service was extended to include not only emergency cross-matching but all cross-matching of blood for the surrounding hospitals in southern Alberta. The Lethbridge Municipal Hospital continued to send all their cross-matching to the Red Cross in Calgary until 1971 when St. Michael's was asked to take this over for them. Amalgamation of Laboratory Services came into effect in 1972, whereby St. Michael's Hospital retained haematology and blood bank procedures, together with the administration of the total regional set-up, and the Lethbridge Municipal Hospital had the remaining areas of laboratory services.



St. Michael's Hospital - late 1950's

In 1970, following the trends in nursing school education, St. Michael's Hospital School of Nursing admitted its last class of students. The final graduation exercises took place in May 1973. After 1973, student nurses who followed the nursing education degree program offered by the University of Lethbridge obtained their practical experience at St. Michael's Hospital and at the Lethbridge Municipal Hospital.

As the space formerly occupied by the student nurses became available, the rooms were adapted for use by the Hospital Business Office and offices for heads of some departments. One section on the first floor was rented to the Foothills Hospital in Calgary for the use of persons in the city requiring dialysis facilities. The former classroom also on the first floor was rented to the Lethbridge Municipal Hospital for day care patients. Other rooms were made available for meetings of various groups.

In 1972, a qualified Sister of St. Martha was engaged to head up the newly established social service department. Her primary function was to work with those patients needing assistance after discharge from the Hospital, as well as to provide counselling for patients with problems of alcoholism, marital conflicts, attempted suicide and other areas of emotional involvement. She also acted as liaison with local community agencies.

From the early years at St. Michael's, dedicated priests served as chaplains to attend to the spiritual needs of the patients. For the most part they had quarters at the Hospital, and were on call day and night. Ministers of other religious faiths were also free to attend to patients from their communities. In 1977, a Pastoral Care Department was established at St. Michael's when a Sister of St. Martha, a qualified pastoral care worker, was appointed to set up the program. The Department continued to expand



to include the Chaplain and three Sisters, and also made use of lay volunteers. In 1982, St. Michael's Pastoral Care Department was instrumental in establishing a Lethbridge Branch of the Provincial Pastoral Care Services which included representatives from all religious faiths in the area.

The first Board of Trustees of St. Michael's General Hospital in 1931 was composed of the following: Very Rev. Dean Murphy, OMI; A.G. Baalim; Martin McMahon; J. Heinitz; R.V. Gibbons; E.E. MacKay; and Nick Supina.

Although through the years the names of the board members may have changed, the dedication, loyalty and devotion of the Board of St. Michael's Hospital has remained constant. They suffered with the Sisters through the days of the depression when the Hospital operated on next to nothing. As new board members replaced former ones, they supported the Sisters in the ever-present problems of running a hospital.

The history of the Ladies' Auxiliary of St. Michael's dates from the earliest days when the Sisters were still in the old Van Haarlem Hospital. At that time both a Senior and Junior Ladies' Aid were working to raise funds for the new hospital. The work of the Auxiliary has continued unabated through the years, and no amount of words can describe what their support meant to the Sisters of St. Martha. They were active not only in fund raising, but contributed to the welfare of the patients by supplying and distributing reading material, maintaining layettes for needy mothers, entertaining pediatric patients and supplying toys. They also arranged for scholarships for students in the School of Nursing, while it was in operation.

In the early 1980's, due to a shortage of personnel and other factors, the Sisters of St. Martha began to consider their future involvement in St. Michael's General Hospital and the possibility of withdrawing from ownership. Since Bishop Paul O'Byrne, Bishop of Calgary, many people in Lethbridge and also the Alberta Catholic Hospitals Foundation were anxious that St. Michael's continue in operation as a Catholic facility, negotiations began with the Alberta Catholic Hospitals Foundation to assume ownership responsibility in the event that the Sisters withdrew from ownership. By May 1985, the fine points of all necessary arrangements and agreements had been worked out whereby the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Martha would transfer ownership of St. Michael's General Hospital to the Provincial Government, which in turn would lease the Hospital to the Alberta Catholic Hospitals Foundation.

The actual transfer took place on June 27, 1985, and at that time the name was changed from St. Michael's General Hospital to St. Michael's Hospital. Mr. Larry Tokarchuk, who had been appointed as the first lay administrator in March 1985, continued in the same position under the new ownership. The Sisters of St. Martha who had been working in various departments of the Hospital continued in their respective roles while living in the former nurses' residence building. In 1988, the Sisters took up residence in the newly opened St. Monica Convent, which was formerly known as St. Aloysius Convent of the Faithful Companions of Jesus.

At the time of the transfer of ownership the Board of St. Michael's Hospital was deeply immersed in plans for the renovation and extension of the Hospital in keeping with the

Hospital's new role in the health care programs of the City of Lethbridge.

This ends the history of St. Michael's General Hospital under the Sisters of St. Martha from 1929 to 1985.

The tradition of caring that was established by the Sisters of St. Martha continues to be the cornerstone of St. Michael's Health Centre. In 1985, the ownership of St. Michael's Hospital was transferred from the Sisters to the Alberta Catholic Hospitals Foundation.

Then in January of 1992 the administration of the Auxiliary Hospital and the Southland Nursing Home were transferred to St. Michael's. The addition of the two facilities is consistent with St. Michael's new focus which will see the hospital expand its services to include new and innovative geriatric programs. In order to reflect the transfer of services and new focus, the hospital name was changed to St. Michael's Health Centre.

St. Michael's has recently broken ground on a new health centre. The development project approved by the government will see St. Michael's Health Centre, through new construction, expand to a 300 bed facility on the present site and 150 beds on the Southland site. The new facility will consist of 100 medical/surgical beds and 200 long term care beds.



Model of St. Michael's Health Centre

Sisters Servants Of Mary Immaculate

*Congregation:
Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate*

*Foundress:
Sister Josaphata Hordashevska, 1892*

*Co-Founders:
Reverend J. Lomnitsky, O.S.B.M.
Reverend K. Seletsky*

This Congregation had its beginnings in the Western Ukraine in 1892. At that time there was an acute shortage of parish priests to serve the scattered villages, which fact reflected sadly on the spiritual life of the people. No one realized this better than the Basilian Fathers who were conducting missions across the entire territory. They felt a need for someone to remain with these people and nourish their faith after they had left. Especially were the children and youth neglected, since their elders were engaged in a perpetual struggle to wrest a livelihood from the soil. They had little time or energy left to devote to the education of their children. The sick, also, were being deprived of any semblance of reasonable care.

It was under such circumstances that the thought of founding a Community of Sisters, whose chief aim would be to toil in the vineyard among Christ's young ones and to minister to His sick, occurred to Reverend Father J. Lomnitsky, O.S.B.M. He shared his plan with Reverend

Father K. Seletsky, a diocesan priest, who agreed to give his financial aid and support.

Our Lord must have looked approvingly on these plans, for immediately, nine young women offered to accept the call and devote themselves to the proposed task. Michaelina Hordashevska, who later became Sister Jasaphata, was the first Superior. God blessed their labours; vocations to the new Community were many, and, in 1902, hardly ten years after its foundation, four Sisters accompanied the first Ukrainian Basilian missionaries to Canada, to share the pioneer life with the increasing number of Ukrainian immigrants.

They settled at first in Edmonton, in 1902, but soon after opened a House in Mundare. From here they served their people: teaching children, instructing young women in homemaking, and nursing the sick. Gradually new Houses appeared everywhere on the horizon of the vast Canadian West, giving aid to the overburdened

parish priests, and strengthening the hopes of the scattered Ukrainian population. There were day schools, evening schools, orphanages, old peoples homes, hostels, catechetical centres, youth organizations, and in 1929, the first hospital was built in Mundare followed by a second in Willingdon, in 1935.

Mary Immaculate Hospital, Mundare (1929)

The Early Years

An Edmonton newspaper described the arrival of the first Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate in November of 1902 from the Western Ukraine to Edmonton, their first mission in Canada, with these prophetic words:

"...under the fostering influence and inspiring institutions of these good missionaries the Ruthenians (Ukrainians) of this diocese will have a grand future." The four Sisters who arrived in 1902 lived in a two-room apartment over the sacristy of St. Joachim's Church. Right from the beginning the Sisters cared for the sick, ministering to them in their homes and also visiting them in the hospital.

In July, 1903, the Sisters founded a convent on a homestead in the Mundare district (Beaver Lake). Here began a fruitful and varied ministry: a school, an orphanage, catechetics and health care ministries. The Novitiate being constructed today, 1980, for the training and spiritual formation of future SSMIs from all parts of Canada is a sign of a new era of faith and hope for the Mundare and district faithful.

From their very first days in Mundare the Sisters were involved in the health care apostolate. They made sick calls at a moment's notice every day of the week. Sister Ambrose Lenkewich was one of these first Sisters who cared for the sick either in the Sisters' convent or in their own homes. The Sisters not only did all they could to alleviate pain, prepare the dying to meet their Lord, console the bereaved,

but they also helped the patient's family by cleaning the home, cooking meals and caring for the children.

The nursing skills of the Sisters and their tireless dedication was heroically shown during the Spanish influenza epidemic after World War I. In fact, their school was converted into a temporary hospital. The classrooms became wards, crowded with the suffering of the district. The Sisters ministered to the sick, remaining on duty almost around the clock. Dr. J.F. Belanger of Vegreville was the attending physician, bringing desperately needed medicines and greatly encouraging the Sisters with these words: "You Sisters have successfully completed a nursing examination. Here in Mundare you saved the lives of more than 300 people. But what I find most remarkable is that no one nursed by you in this improvised hospital has died."

The new St. Joseph's Convent located in the village of Mundare was officially blessed on September 22, 1926. Already in 1924 Sister Ambrose, the Sisters' highest Canadian Superior, was harbouring another building project in Mundare: a hospital which would give the Mundare district medical care services so urgently needed.

History Of The Mundare Hospital

The Sisters, especially their highest Canadian Superior, Sister Ambrose (herself a nurse), came to realize that Mundare was one of the most

neglected rural centres as far as medical services were concerned. The government left the responsibility for health care in the hands of private or charitable institutions. Dr. Rush of Vegreville, who weekly treated the patients in the Sisters' Convent, enthusiastically promoted the idea that the Sisters build and operate a hospital. He encouraged nurses' training for the Sisters. In preparation for this new apostolate, Sisters were enrolled in nursing studies at St. Boniface, Manitoba and Edmonton (Sister Gertrude Lesuik and Sister Macrina Schab). Sister Naucratria Mizun was sent for a commercial course so that she would be eligible for the position of secretary-treasurer of the hospital. Finally, the new Provincial Superior, Sister Athanasia, with her council, decided to undertake this charitable and desperately needed project.

Dr. N.C. Strilchuk, with Mr. C. Gordon (the architect and contractor) and Mr. H. Koss (the local supervisor of the project), travelled to St. Paul and Camrose searching for ideas in planning and organizing a hospital facility. Finally, in the spring of 1928, the blueprints for a small, twenty-four bed hospital were prepared by Mr. Gordon of Vegreville. Mr. John Baron and Mrs. Daria Woytkiw were appointed by Father N. Kryzanowsky OSBM to form the first campaign committee in an effort to raise \$20,000. Four Sisters Servants were also sent throughout the province to solicit funds for the new hospital. People responded wholeheartedly, contributing either money or produce.

On July 6, 1928, the first step was taken toward the realization of the hospital. The Sisters were heartened by the enthusiastic response of twenty-seven local farmers who united in their efforts to level the knoll for the site of the hospital.

During the early period of construction the women of Mundare and Chipman raised money by organizing concerts, bazaars and picnics.

The Sisters contributed by donating handmade articles for the bazaars. But only \$1,700 was raised; costs were higher than had been estimated, even in those early days, and so, due to lack of funds, construction had to be suspended during the winter of 1928.

The Sisters then took the initiative and responsibility for obtaining a loan of \$18,000 so that the hospital could be completed. Once again the campaign committee worked long hours to obtain monetary donations. The Sisters will be ever grateful for the support and concern of the residents of Mundare and surrounding district. A book could be written about all the beloved benefactors who contributed what they could - money, labour, produce. We list only a few of the outstanding benefactors: the Basilian Fathers, Father M. Pelech, Mr. H. White, Chipman Women's Organization, Mundare Women's Organization, Mundare Town, and Father J. Tymochko OSBM (collected for an x-ray machine). Much support was also gratefully received from the neighbouring districts of Lamont, Skaro, Andrew and Myrnam.

Despite the discouraging financial situation, Sisters Gertrude, Macrina and Theodora worked hard to set and organize the hospital according to the specifications of the Alberta government and the American Hospital Association.

On September 22, 1929, the Mundare community gathered for a festive occasion - the blessing of the cornerstone of Canada's first Ukrainian hospital. His Excellency Bishop Ladyka OSBM officiated at the ceremonies. A dream had been realized, and today we can appreciate and be grateful to those first pioneers who brought an efficient and much needed health care institute to Mundare and the surrounding area. In 1979, the dream had become a reality, fifty years of service and medical care.

The cost of the completed hospital was \$37,863, and with furnishings and equipment \$38,932. The official opening of the first Ukrainian Catholic hospital under the auspices of the Sisters Servants was held on May 29, 1930. The first Administrator was Sister Gertrude, and the Director of Nursing was Sister Macrina. The Sisters unreservedly implemented the philosophy of Catholic hospitals: to recognize man's unique composition of body, soul, spirit, and hence to embrace the concept of total care of the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of every patient. Reverend A. Luhovy observed that in this small country hospital the Sisters performed a multitude of compassionate deeds that must have delighted Christ the Healer. The fruitful healing ministry and their effective management of the hospital was noted also by

the American Hospital Association, for in ten years they obtained accreditation under the Hospital Standardization Program of the American Hospital Association.

The first patient to be admitted was Mr. John Franchuk (December 20, 1929). In February, 1930, the first surgery was performed by Dr. N.C. Strilchuk, assisted by Dr. J. Yakimischak (appendectomy, patient Mr. O. Filievich). The beds were seldom unoccupied as news of the new hospital spread. Many arrived by horse and buggy from as far away as fifty miles for surgery or treatment. The first baby delivered in the hospital was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Fedoruk (now Mary Shelast) on January 31, 1930.



*First Mary Immaculate Hospital -
Mundare 1929 - 1980 (Present Sisters
Residence)*

In May, 1930, Father B. Kamenecky OSBM celebrated the first Divine Liturgy in the hospital chapel. It was a very memorable day, as the patients were accustomed to attending various Church services. As a Catholic Health Care Institute, we believe and practise that one must minister to the spiritual as well as physical needs of our patients.

During the depression years the hospital, like the rest of the world, struggled for survival. Since money was scarce, hospital bills were often paid for in produce.

In spite of all the difficulties and setbacks, the health care ministry grew under the inspiration of the Sisters and the dedication of Dr. N.C. Strilchuk.

The hospital was blessed with dedicated physicians. Dr. M. Mallet worked with young Dr. Strilchuk until the latter assumed full responsibility. In March, 1933, the first goiter operation was performed at the hospital. The doctors took pride in their efforts to maintain high standards in health care services for the people of Mundare and district.

October 13, 1933, Father O. Hannas OSBM celebrated Divine Liturgy in the chapel and dedicated it to the Mother of God.

In May, 1935, on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the reign of King George V, Mr. White, Mayor of Mundare, presented Sister Gertrude with an honorary distinction - a silver medal for excellent care given to patients and efficient management of the hospital.

In 1935, the Sisters from Mundare hospital laid the groundwork for another hospital to continue serving the needs of Albertans, this time at

Willingdon. Their experience and ideas thus contributed to further the healing ministry.

Prior to 1940, due to lack of professional personnel in the vicinity, the Sisters filled these positions, often working around the clock when duty called. In 1940, the first lay nurse, Miss Catherine McKele RN, was recruited. Her salary was \$45 a month. Volunteers in domestic areas generously aided the hospital in activities such as planting gardens, canning vegetables, painting and making pillows, or in whatever way necessary.

During the fifties, Mr. Nestor Chmilar hand carved a beautiful altar for the hospital chapel. It was consecrated according to Eastern-Rite tradition and is still in use today.

To celebrate the Hundredth Anniversary of Our Lady to Lourdes, a statue of Our Lady was purchased to add to the beautiful landscape directly in front of the hospital.

In the fall of 1955, the hospital coal furnace was converted to oil; however, the kitchen stove remained on coal supply until the following year when the town of Mundare received a pipeline for gas.

In July of 1962, under the direction of Mr. L. Maynard, the By-laws of Incorporation of Mundare General Hospital were enacted and the name was changed to Mary Immaculate Hospital of Mundare.

In 1960, to assist in the management of the hospital, an Advisory Board was formed under the chairmanship of Mr. W. Ilkiw. This group has been and continues to be active in many facets of hospital operation.

The local community came to play a more and

more active and organized role in the operations of the hospital. The Mundare Hospital Auxiliary was formed in April, 1971, under the chairperson Mrs. Vera Siracky. It continues to give much support and has funded new equipment.

In 1972, pioneer Dr. N.C. Strilchuk retired after having dedicated a lifetime in the healing ministry in the Mundare district. Dr. F. Brennan took up duties in 1972, Dr. S.M. Yaqub in 1974, Dr. R. Brown in 1983, and Dr. Richard Ansell in 1991.



Mary Immaculate Hospital - Mundare Nov. 1979 Opening - L to R: Sr. Janice Soluk, Executive Director; Sr. Sylvia Nakoneshny, Administrator; Sr. Justine Kowal, Prov. Superior; Back Row: Dr. & Mrs. N. Strilchuk



Meeting Community Needs Official Opening Mental Health Day Program First Alberta Rural Program

The conclusion of this sketchy history is the beginning of a new era in health care in the Mundare district. September 13, 1978, was a joyous day for all present: the sod-turning ceremonies for the new Mary Immaculate Hospital. A thirty bed complex replaced the time-worn and inadequate facilities. The project has the assistance and full support of the provincial government. The words of the Honourable Gordon Miniely, Minister of Hospitals and Medical Care for Alberta, are a tribute to the Sisters who have operated the hospital for fifty years and to the friends of the hospital and the residents of Mundare and district: "Sisters, you care; and it's obvious you care in the way you operate the hospital." Commenting on the beauty of the site for the new hospital, Minister Miniely congratulated the Community of Mundare on their new facility.

The Sisters' mandate has always been to serve the health care needs of the community, whatever they may be. In the early 1980's, the Sisters were approached to begin a Mental Health Day Program, as there were several people who were recently discharged from Alberta Hospital and were living in approved homes in the area. Once again the Sisters took up the challenge, and in 1984, the first rural Mental Health Day Program was officially opened by the Honourable Jim Dinning, Minister of Community and Occupational Health. This program continues to fulfil a

special need for this group.

As a sequel to this program, a four bedroom group home was built as a special housing project for the mentally handicapped of whatever nature. The first tenants have taken up residence with full supervision on Oct 1, 1990.

In 1992, a new program, "Operation Forward - Our Family, Our Future", was initiated to meet the need for a parenting program within the community.

And so continues the challenging work begun by those first Sisters who came to Canada at the beginning of the century.

As gold is beautiful, precious and rare, such is the spirit of service which has formed a bond between Sisters, clergy, the medical and nursing profession, patients, and the residents of Mundare and district.

Sixty years! From our humble beginnings we have come a long way.

The average person entering the hospital for the first time is often unaware of the many departments and "behind the scenes" activities which go on in order to provide service for his well-being. Each department has its own function, yet all work together in an inter-related fashion.



Mary Immaculate Hospital Mundare - New 30 Bed Multi-level Facility Opened 1980.

Mary Immaculate Hospital, Willingdon (1935)

Historical Annals

In 1931, Willingdon had a local resident physician Dr. V.B. Goretsky who had administered medical aid in his small office and within the homes of the people. As various serious medical, surgical and obstetrical cases presented themselves in his practice, both Dr. Goretsky and the local pharmacist, Mr. Stanley Syshka, saw the urgent necessity of a hospital in this area. Vegreville, Mundare and Lamont were the closest hospitals, and sometimes, due to unfavourable road conditions and bad weather, it was virtually impossible to transport patients to these hospitals.

In the period between 1934-35, an active and energetic body of Willingdon Chamber of Commerce people began urging the Village and the Eagle municipality to look for an interested group, preferably a religious order to start promoting a hospital to provide medical care for this vast area. Very serious consideration was taken and the Village of Willingdon purchased 7.7 acres of land adjacent to the north end of the Village in March 1935, which was allocated solely for the purpose of a hospital and future health facility expansions. A caveat was placed upon it to assure their intent.

At this time, a dedicated and hard-working Ukrainian Catholic priest from the Basilian Order in Mundare, R. Ambrose Wynnyk was providing religious services and spiritual care in a vast area. Fr. Wynnyk was well known by the people of Willingdon for gentle, kind and dedicated concern not only for spiritual needs,

but also for the physical and medical needs as well. He was approached by Dr. Goretsky and Mr. Syshka to advise them on the means of interesting, and, literally, luring the Ukrainian Sisters here to Willingdon. Sr. Elizabeth Kassian, the Provincial Superior of the Sisters Servants of Mary Immaculate was then contacted, and in May 1935, she had delegated Sr. Gertrude Lesiuk and Sr. Sophronia Sianchuk to meet with both the Village of Willingdon and the Eagle Municipality Councils. This religious community was materially and financially very poor, but these religious women were rich in enthusiasm, dedication, faith and daring adventure. Both of these councils met the Sisters with warm acceptance and requested that these Sisters come as soon as possible, assuring them of their support and assistance. The need



***Willingdon First Community Hospital 1935
1937***

for a hospital was so great that both of the councils advised the Sisters to rent a small house immediately, and convert it into a small medical unit and at the same time plan and canvass for the construction of a new hospital. The young Sisters were enthused with their kind acceptance and took these propositions to their Superiors. This would inevitably mean a great sacrifice as personnel and very limited resources would require the Sisters to go out to canvass from home to home, locality to locality, to beg alms in order to provide funds and resources to build a new hospital. It was also the depression times, and people had very little to share.

In the same month, the Sisters met with the Department of Health in Edmonton, and were granted temporary permission to conduct a hospital in a small renovated house until such a time as a new facility could be constructed according to their specifications and plans. Mr. George Skwarok, the Sisters' legal advisor, attended to the legal aspects of initiating this hospital. Sr. Sophronia Sianchuk then paid the monthly rent of \$20.00, and arrangements were made to have the selected house renovated and ready for occupancy on June 3rd, 1935. In the meantime, the Eagle Municipality agreed to give \$3,000.00 towards the new hospital construction, while the Village of Willingdon supplied the 7.7 acres of land, and would later give \$300.00 towards the new building and another \$200.00 for the hospital care of the poor who could not afford hospitalization. The local people of the village and the municipality agreed to excavate the basement on a voluntary basis to initiate this project. The Sisters were indeed grateful to God and these good people for their generosity.

Sr. Elizabeth Kassian and her Council then assigned Sr. Gertrude Lesiuk, R.N., as the Superior of this hospital, Sr. Stanislaus Koziak,

R.N., to care for the patients, Sr. Theophane Malowany to take charge of dietary needs, and Sr. Onufria Hnatiw to provide the laundry and housekeeping services. This cottage hospital (the present home of Kost Kachuk) had very few facilities and items to work with. The hospital in Mundare and the Mundare Convent donated numerous items of necessity, ranging from linens, dishes, and beds to medical supplies.

June 2nd arrived with great joy and anticipation. The four Sisters assigned to Willingdon left Mundare with blessings and ten dollars in cash. A truck was hired and was loaded with donated supplies and furniture for a new residence. Upon arrival, they found the house not ready for habitation, carpenters milling around and a patient already assigned to this hospital. Dr. Goretsky then took this lady patient to the Willingdon Hotel and requested the proprietor, Mr. Joseph Olmstead to allow the Sisters to treat her there. The supplies truck got stuck on the road some miles away from Willingdon and it took a team of eight horses to pull it out sometime near midnight.

The following day the house had to be cleaned and made habitable. Since the proprietor had not lived up to his promise of having a place ready, Sr. Gertrude Lesiuk, the shrewd business woman that she was, managed to bargain a month's rent off for the services the Sisters rendered in doing this work of clean-up. The Chronicle then states that on the 5th of June, they were able to admit their patient Mrs. Leliuk to their cottage-hospital. On the 28th of June, the legal agreement was drawn up by Mr. Harold Savage, and was signed by the Provincial Superior, Sr. Elizabeth Kassian, the Architect Mr. Dewar, and the contractor Mr. Thompson. The project was underway. On July 4th the excavation was begun and by the 26th of July the construction commenced. On the 20th of

August the walls were erected and by the 25th of August the basement was fully cemented. Plans were now made for the blessing of the Cornerstone for September 15th.

Sincere thanks go to all the benefactors and members of the Hospital Committee who helped not only in the organization of the committee but in the erection of the hospital, namely Dr. V.B. Goretsky, Mr. J. Semboliuk, Mr. Tom Kokotailo, Mr. S. Fedorak, Mr. G. Kowalchuk, Mr. J. Daneliuk and to the rest in the excavation of the basement and hauling the gravel, sand and lumber.

Money was always a nagging problem and the Sisters in other vicinities as well as in this Willingdon area had to beg, request and plead for assistance to try to keep up with the payments. On numerous occasions there was work stoppage by the contractors because payments were not available on the dates requested. Grants and loans were impossible to

obtain as the Sisters Community was poor and depression years left painful consequences. Plastering was stopped in October because of lack of money. The Sisters resorted to prayer and great faith in God. If it was His will that a hospital be built in Willingdon, then He would provide. Help always came, but not necessarily when the contractor demanded it! Heartaches and bitter discouragements did not frighten off the Sisters. There were many kind folks that always lifted their spirits with some kind gesture. Patients kept on coming, and there was always this forward pull to carry on, and they did. Some cases were indeed complicated and required great vigilance. The Sisters knew they were needed, and stayed.

In October of 1936, the new hospital was nearing final completion and new hopes had arisen that the winter of 1936 would be an easier one in the new premises. Then on October 10th, 1936 at midnight a loud noise was heard in the site of the new hospital and a roaring fire



*Willingdon Hospital 1937 - 1962
(Present Residence SSMI)*

swept the whole building into flames. Volunteers tried to save what they could of the building, but it was in vain. In the spring the village and the municipality began to put pressure on the Sisters to resume the building of a hospital.

On July 28th, 1937, Mr. Luke Koss of Mundare agreed to rebuild the hospital at an approximate cost of \$20,000. All the Sisters had was \$7,000 and faith in God that "funds will somehow come if it is the will of God". The building commenced and by September 19th, 1937, the cornerstone of the rebuilt hospital was blessed. In front of the hospital, liturgy was celebrated and a choir from New Kiev came to glorify the event. Dinner was served by volunteer women of the district and a program of speeches followed. Mr. Diduik, mayor of the village greeted the guests in Ukrainian, Mr. Bill Tomyne spoke in English, Mr. Tom Zaharichuk in Romanian, the Agriculturist and landscaper of

the hospital grounds Mr. Fred Magera in Ukrainian, Mr. John Koshure in Ukrainian, and the lawyer Mr. George Skwarok in Ukrainian. They all encouraged the people for continued support and congratulated the Sisters for their stamina in the face of unsurmountable obstacles. Dr. W. Cuts (Cutsungavich) had replaced Dr. Goretsky as the local physician.

On October 29th, 1937, the transfer was made from the cottage-hospital to the new hospital. The Sisters who were now assigned to this hospital in Willingdon were Sr. Luboy Chawrona, Sr. Apollonia Dzubisky R.N., Sr. Innocentia Baraniuk R.N., Sr. Macrina Schab R.N., Sr. Margaret Sereda, and Sisters Alexandra Doran and Sophronia Sianchuk were on the road canvassing for funds from one end of the province to the other.

On May 7th, 1938, the Eagle Municipality passed a motion that their council purchase an



***Community Participation
Float Annual Parades.***

X-ray machine for the hospital. There was stipulation that in the event that the Sisters should move away, the municipality would reclaim the X-ray. This was supposedly to encourage the Sisters to remain in the area. Hospital chronicles indicate that in 1939 there were 630 patients, 1943 operations, and 10 deaths. As the years passed, the utilization increased and the daily number of patients was often between 30 and 37. Maternities were numerous, in the Nursery there were always 4 to 6 babies. When the bassinets were filled, then the laundry baskets were improvised. The hospital hummed with activity, and life was never dull, uninteresting or boring. There was a transition in the Willingdon Medical Staff. Dr. Cuts left for Holden, Alberta in April, 1942 and Dr. William G Lazaruk began his medical practice.

In 25 years the hospital building showed considerable depreciation since the second construction was a "patch-up" project from the remains of the 1936 fire. Lack of funds necessitated cuts and compromises in many areas of the construction. As time went on, these compromises began showing up with repeated frequencies. Governmental policies changed, requirements were added to up-grade standards of care, community personnel changed, methods of medical practice too changed, and long range plans had to be contemplated to determine the future of the hospital and medical care of the Willingdon area. Some suggested that the Sisters relocate to another area where they were needed more, others rumored that the municipality would take the project upon itself and rebuild, and still others urged the Sisters to remain and continue their health care ministry within this area as they were needed, and to make efforts to build a new modern facility. The Chamber of Commerce once again met in

August, 1958 with the Provincial Superior, then Sr. Boniface Sloboda, regarding the plans for the new hospital.

Representation was made by the Sisters to the Department of Health and on August 14th, 1959, the Minister of Health, Honourable Donovan Ross, approved construction of a new hospital in Willingdon. Mr. G. Thornton, architect, was engaged in planning the new 25-bed hospital. On January 25th, 1962, the Willingdon General Hospital was incorporated as a separate entity and was named the Mary Immaculate Hospital.

Tenders were held on June 7th, 1961, and Alta. West Construction was contracted to build the facility. Construction was contracted to build the facility. Construction proceeded without too many interruptions and on October 3rd, 1962 the official opening took place. The Administrator, Sr. Sylvia Nakoneshny, had headed the planning team for the new facility.

It was a joyous day for the entire locale, and in particular for the local physician, Dr. W.G.



Sr. Martha Zulyniak, LPN SSMI

Lazaruk. It was a special highlight in his life, a dream come true. The patients would enjoy much more comfort and privacy with so many added necessities of an updated nature, an Emergency Room, Treatment Room, Recovery and Intensive Care Room, a spacious Nursery and Pediatrics, Semi-Private and Private Rooms with high-low beds and all those things that go with larger urban hospitals.

Life went on at the hospital at the usual pace. As time went on, patterns did change somewhat, obstetrical patients became fewer and fewer and the pediatrics was quieter than it had been in previous years, surgery was referred to the larger urban areas as the transportation system improved considerably and surgical procedures became more complicated. It was the age of specialization and regionalization. The clientele tended to be more concentrated in the older age group with chronic long term illnesses.

"Our hospital history was interwoven with many joyous events, but also with some very painful and sad ones. On April 12th, 1967 we lost our Dr. W.G. Lazaruk. He died after a very short illness at the age of 50, after spending 25 dedicated years in Willingdon." This was a crucial time and closure was almost enacted, since the medical schools stressed specialization and rather discouraged general practice. It was hard to attract another doctor to replace Dr. W.G. Lazaruk. Dr. N.C. Strilchuk from Mundare came several times a week to attend to the patients who kept on coming. Two doctors from St. Albert consented to take turns in providing emergency service. Dr. F.M. Fairfield and Dr. E.N. Gramlich did this until Dr. George Kwong started practice. On November 1, 1967, hospital activities resumed an active pace for another few years. When Dr. Kwong died in an accidental asphyxiation in his residence, the hospital again suffered a setback.



*L to R: Vicky Topolnisky, RN
Dr. S. Kanani, MD Medical Director*

*John Kuckoraway, Maintenance Supervisor
Sr. Frances Byblow, Superior General, SSMI
Gladys Fedorak, LPN*

This young doctor had provided vital service to the area of Willingdon and was sadly missed by all those who had come to know this fine man in their encounters.

Dr. David Chew arrived in Willingdon on April 17th, 1971 and once again excellent care was available. Dr. D. Chew's son Dr. Paul Chiu joined his father on internship experience in 1972; and then in 1975 on locum and in summer relief. In October 1975, he joined him in his practice in Willingdon. It is indeed an ongoing process of God's providence to whom the original hospital was dedicated of divining, compatible and self sacrificing individuals to provide medical care in the area.

The wheel of time moves on and the day to day activities in the hospital have always adapted to

the needs of the day. A new program for work experience students was established in 1978 and has seen many students go through it. In August 1980, there was a major change in the administrative system. Mundare and Willingdon Hospitals came under one administrator, Sr. Janice Soluk. December 1, 1980 was a memorable day, as through the efforts of the Hospital Ladies Auxiliary the century tub was unveiled by Mr. George Topolnitsky, M.L.A.

The Auxiliary has been most supportive over the years and in November of 1984, the hospital Administration and staff held an appreciation tea in honour of their 35th Anniversary.

During the period 1983-85 two major upgrading and renovation projects were undertaken to maintain the building in optimum condition.



*Willingdon Hospital 1962 - Present
Mary Immaculate Hospital*

"Life went on at a normal pace until in April of 1984, we arrived at another sad moment, when after 13 years we had to bid farewell to Dr. David Chew, upon his retirement. Once again we were recruiting for a resident physician." Dr. D. Kelly, Dr. T.B. Letts, Dr. Donna Smith, Dr. Hement Katarey, and Dr. Fraser Kennedy have all been providing medical services to the hospital and community since Dr. D. Chew's retirement. July 1, 1985, Dr. S. Kanani arrived to take up residence and open up a permanent

practice.

This brief history tells the story of health care provided to the Willingdon and district residents. Fifty-five Years! From the very humble beginnings of the Cottage-hospital to the modern facility of today. Many changes have taken place over the years in the type of services provided, and the Sisters hope to continue caring for the people of the community for a long time.



*Accreditation Appreciation 1991 Mary
Immaculate Hospital 1991
L to R: Dr. S. Kanani, MD Medical Director*

*Sr. Janice Soluk, Executive Director
Vicky Topolnisky, RN, Clinical Services
Supervisor, Anton Powley, Ass't Exec. Director*

Sisters Of Service

***Foundress:
Catherine Donnelly***

***Co-Founders:
Father Arther Coughlan, C.Ss.R.
Father George Daly, C.Ss.R.***

The Community of the Sisters of Service was founded in Toronto, August 15, 1922 by Catherine Donnelly, S.O.S., foundress, and Father Arthur Coughlan, C.Ss.R., and Father George Daly, C.Ss.R., co-founders. Members of the new community worked in the rural areas as nurses, teachers and catechists. The Sisters taught in rural public schools. Many other children in rural areas received most of their religious instruction from the Sisters of Service who did excellent work with children through their Correspondence Schools of Religion. The Community also engaged in working with immigrants, looking after them following their arrival in a strange country, and helping them to get established.

There was great need for health care in the rural areas. The Sisters opened their first hospital in Vilna in 1925, and just one year later, established a second facility in Alberta, St. John's Hospital, Edson.



***Sister Catherine Donnelly
1884 - 1983***

Our Lady's Hospital, Vilna (1925)

The Institute of the Sisters of Service was founded in Toronto, August 15, 1922, to work in the outlying districts of the Home Mission Fields of Canada, particularly among New Canadians.

Catherine Donnelly of Alliston, Ontario, had gone to Alberta in 1918 to teach school but instead found herself nursing victims of the flu epidemic. Later, teaching in schools where immigrant families had settled, she was appalled by the lack of religious influence in the lives of the rural settlers, particularly in the lives of the children, and became convinced something must be done. Catherine returned to Toronto in early 1920, approached Father Arthur Coughlan, a noted spiritual guide, for advice. By the end of the year, Father Coughlan and Catherine Donnelly, with the consent of Archbishop MacNeil, decided that the solution of the problem was to found a community of religious women to work in rural areas as teachers, catechetists, nurses and social workers.

It required more than a courageous young woman, a Provincial Superior, busy with the affairs of his own religious province, and an Archbishop occupied with the concerns of a large Archdiocese to set the wheels in motion. Father Coughlan, C.Ss.R., appointed Father George Daly, C.Ss.R., to take charge of the Sisters of Service. Father Daly arrived in Toronto in January, 1922. Father Daly had been rector of the Cathedral in Regina, 1915-1918; while there he had written a book, "Catholic Problems in Western Canada". Father

Daly was well prepared for the work confided to him, the work to which the remainder of his life was dedicated. Father Daly became "the director, the guide, the trouble-shooter, the travelling salesman, the fund-raiser". Thus, it came about that the Sisters of Service recognize Sister Catherine Donnelly, S.O.S., as foundress, and Arthur Coughlan and Father George Daly, Redemptorists, as co-founders.

In 1924, Sister Catherine Donnelly led the first contingent of Sisters of Service west to establish a teaching mission in Camp Morton, Manitoba. At the request of Archbishop Henry Joseph O'Leary, three Sisters of Service opened a Catechetical Centre in Edmonton, in January, 1925. That same year, Father Peter Hughes, with the consent of Archbishop O'Leary, persuaded Father Daly to establish a hospital in Vilna, some ninety miles east and north of Edmonton on the CNR line to St. Paul, Alberta, to provide newcomers with health care facilities.

Father Daly visited Vilna in September of 1925 and bought the one and one-half storey frame building on Main Street, owned by the Canadian Bank of Commerce for \$1,500, to take possession November 1. Sister Wymbs was appointed the first Superior. A graduate of St. Boniface Hospital, Sister Wymbs had served overseas during World War I. She was awarded the Bronze Medal of Honour by the Minister of War, in the name of the President of the French Republic, for "her most devoted contribution to the French Military Health Service".



Vilna General Hospital

Tuesday, November 17, 1925, three Sisters of Service, Sisters Catherine Wymbs, Ann Geraghty and Mary Rodgers arrived to prepare the 'Vilna General Hospital' for occupancy. While the Sisters had supper at the Royal Cafe, the proprietor of the Hardware Store, Dave Bell, with two helpful young men, started the furnace, transported the baggage from the depot and set up the beds; the Sisters borrowed a lamp and saucepan from Mrs. Sanderson. Water could be heated on the camp stove, loaned by Mr. Bell. The building was much as the bank had left it with built-in teller's cage, counters and desk. The next morning Mr. Anderson arrived with the carpenter (whose wage was sixty-five cents per hour) to do necessary renovations and repairs. The work was nearly completed December 2, when the hospital furniture and equipment arrived.

The first patient, treated as an outpatient, was Mrs. Anna Pollock with an eye infection, November 29. She came daily for treatment. Mr. Mike Gordey was the first patient admitted to the hospital, December 12, 1925. Dr. Morish, from Smoky Lake, attended the first maternity case January 3, 1926.

For the first year, the Sisters had to rely on visiting priests for Mass. The first Sunday in Vilna, the Sisters were driven to the Moric farm

where Reverend Father Prott, O.M.I., stationed at Sacred Heart School, Saddle Lake Reserve, offered Mass. Father welcomed the Sisters and informed the people of the work they would be doing among them. When Father Hughes arrived November 30, he drove the Sisters to families who cared for their ill members in their homes. It was on this occasion that Mr. and Mrs. Flynn of Hamlin presented the Sisters with a generous donation of \$110, collected in that area to assist the Sisters in establishing the hospital. Father O'Reilly came from Edmonton to celebrate three Masses in the Vilna School Christmas Day; a large congregation attended. After the last Mass, Father brought the Blessed Sacrament to the small Chapel prepared in the hospital, the best possible Christmas present the Sisters could receive.

Dr. and Mrs. W.W. Eadie took up residence in Vilna, May 19, 1926. Mr. L. Lawlor, Deputy Minister of Health, came to inspect the hospital. His report, dated June 26, 1926, reads as follows:

The little hospital has nine beds. The staff consists of one Registered Nurse and three assistants. The wards are clean and in excellent condition. Water is obtained from a well on the grounds and there is gasoline light. Dressings are sterilized by means of a gasoline autoclave which is controlled by a Dyack. There was no special operating room but they did have one Buchanan table placed in a side room which is adequate for surgical procedures. Doctor Eadie, a recent graduate from the University of Alberta, is practising medicine here. Case records are kept and the order book signed.

Mr. Lawlor was pleased with the hospital and the care given. The first records show that 118 patients were admitted in 1926.

It was soon perceived that a new hospital with



Back Row: Sr. C. Graff, Sr. C. Albany (Visitor), Centre Row: Sr. A. Brunning, Sr. M. Roberts Front Row: Sr. M. Knechtel, Sr. Eveleen Donnelly, Sr. Helen Hayes, Vilna 1956

adequate facilities must be built. February 28, 1928, the Sisters acquired four acres of land just east of the town site for \$300. Father Daly obtained donations from various sources and negotiated a loan for \$20,000. Mr. Charles Gordon of Vegreville, Contractor, was retained to build a cottage hospital for the sum of \$25,000. Before construction could begin, a well had to be drilled at a cost of \$5,000. Actual work on the site began May 14, and the hospital was ready for occupancy Christmas Eve.

It was appropriate that Father Hughes arrived that year, 1928, to celebrate Christmas in Vilna.

December 26, Father Hughes blessed the new fourteen-bed facility; he also blessed a beautiful statue and placed it in the window above the main entrance. From her window 'Our Lady' watched over Vilna until the building was demolished. The Sisters of Service moved into "Our Lady's Hospital" December 27, 1928. Generous farmers came with horse-drawn wagons and moved the patients and equipment. The men set up the stove, placed the furniture and left everything in good order. The whole operation was completed within five hours. In the spring of 1929, landscaping was completed with the planting of the avenue of spruce trees leading to the hospital.

It was difficult to operate a hospital in the 1930's; money was so scarce. Some patients paid their bills in kind: produce, grain, wood, and occasionally lumber was brought in 'on account'. The Sisters acquired twenty acres of land adjacent to the hospital, and gradually developed a small farm to become as self-sufficient as possible. The Sisters were fortunate in finding a good man, knowledgeable about machinery and willing to look after the farm. Bill Christiansen remained for many years as engineer, maintenance man, farmer, trusted employee and friend.

Much of the success of the little hospital was undoubtedly due to the wise and devoted services of Dr. W.W. Eadie, a good diagnostician, excellent in surgery and orthopaedics. At one time there were 28 patients including six children in hospital. It was a great loss to Vilna when Doctor Eadie decided to move on to Edmonton in January, 1942.

During the years, when Vilna was without a doctor, the Sisters did what they could to minister to the sick who came for assistance.

The Doctor from Smoky Lake arranged to spend one day weekly in Vilna to attend to outpatients and emergencies. He travelled the twenty odd miles to care for maternity patients who insisted on remaining in Vilna. The telephone was a very valuable instrument which was used extensively between the nurse and doctor in caring for the sick. The Sisters did home visiting, giving care and comfort. During this period, the Sisters took advantage of attending courses to obtain their degrees as X-ray and Laboratory Technicians, as well as courses in midwifery. The Sisters of Service owe a great debt of gratitude to the Sisters in Edmonton hospitals who made this possible.

From the beginning, the Sisters of Service participated in and promoted parish life. They taught religion in the parish and for many years conducted Religious Vacation Schools in the surrounding areas, preparing children for the reception of the sacraments, and instructing them

in their faith. During 1961-1970, two Sisters and two staff members, on their hours off, taught religion classes weekly in the village school.

August 11, 1946 was a day of great rejoicing; Dr. P.W. Frobb, who had been in military service, and his wife arrived, to set up a medical practice in Vilna. Many physical improvements took place at the hospital during the 1950's. The electrical plant became obsolete in October, 1951 when the hospital was linked to Canadian Utilities. The farm was phased out in 1952, and the hospital was connected with the town water system in 1955.

The ladies of Vilna were always great supporters of the hospital, but not until 1944 was "Our Lady's Hospital Auxiliary" formally organized. Led by an active executive, with the cooperation of auxiliary members, many fund-raising projects were held over the years. Since 1952,



Our Lady's Hospital, Vilna 1966

the most popular function has been the annual "Strawberry Tea" held on the hospital grounds with Doctor Frobb as Master of Ceremonies. All monies raised were used for improving facilities or purchasing new equipment. The Sisters were most grateful to the Auxiliary for their devoted assistance.

Doctor Frobb won the hearts of the people. He was great with obstetrics, orthopaedics, an excellent diagnostician, a dedicated man. Those were busy, happy years for the Sisters and staff working with Doctor Frobb. Because Vilna is a farming community with a fixed population, there is a family tie which unites the doctor, patients, Sisters, priest and personnel into the unit which forms the hospital family.

From the mid-1940's, government gradually became involved with the finances and operation of the hospital. An Advisory Board was formed in 1945. The members were of immense help to the Sisters during the time of adjustment. During the 1960's it became apparent that the physical plant was inadequate. It was impossible at that time to obtain funds from the Department to build or adequately renovate.

Late in 1969, the Sisters of Service Administration informed the Advisory Board it had decided to withdraw the Sisters from Our Lady's Hospital. The Administration regretted the move but did not have sufficient personnel to continue to staff the hospital. There was shock and dismay. The people of Vilna wished the hospital to continue, and the Sisters worked with the Board and the Department of Health to that end. Eventually, the Advisory Board was replaced with the Governing Board of Our Lady's Hospital. It was to this Governing Board that the administration was transferred, when the Sisters of Service relinquished ownership of the

hospital to the municipality, and left Vilna June 30, 1970.

The Vilna community thanked the Sisters with a beautiful farewell gathering. The Sisters who had worked there left a bit of their hearts in Vilna but were happy to know that the tradition of patient care, established during their forty-five years of service, would be carried on. The Sisters of Service rejoiced with the Board, Staff, Citizens of Vilna and area, when their splendid new prototypical fifteen-bed "Our Lady's Hospital" was opened in 1980.



Doctor P.W. Frobb, Sr. K. Allen, Vilna 1966

St. John's Hospital, Edson (1926)

During the summer of 1914, the town of Edson built a two storey frame building known as the Lady Minto Hospital. There is no record of the hospital being used after erection. The building was used temporarily as an emergency centre during the flu epidemic of 1918. In September, 1921 the name was changed to Edson General Hospital. Under an agreement with the Town of Edson the Victorian Order of Nurses operated the hospital for one year - October 1, 1921 to October 1, 1922. The building was then left vacant until the summer of 1926 when it was bought for the sum of \$1,500 for the Sisters of Service of Canada by Rev. G. Daly, C.Ss.R., co-founder.

In August 1926, the contract was awarded for extensive repairs and renovations to the dilapidated building. Father Daly sought funds to repair and operate the hospital; the name change to "St. John's Hospital" was owing to a gift of \$5,000 made by Mrs. T. Small in memory of her brother John Korman. Father Daly arrived in Edson November 19 to assess the work done and to meet with various officials. Sister Catherine Wymbs, RN, Superior, and Sister Mary Rodgers arrived with Father Daly to prepare for the opening of the hospital. They will be ever grateful to the ladies of the town who assisted them and voluntarily organized an Auxiliary.



Original St. John's 1926 - 1931

St. John's Hospital was opened December 8, 1926, by Archbishop Henry Joseph O'Leary, D.D., Archbishop of Edmonton. Members of the Ladies Auxiliary greeted the guests and served tea. The next morning, December 9, three patients were admitted. The Sisters secured a nurse for night duty until Sister Agnes Brunning, RN, and Sister Marie Anne Paradis joined the staff after Christmas. Help was hired when necessary; nursing, administration and housekeeping were done by the Sisters themselves.

Two Doctors were working in Edson, Dr. McCordic and Dr. R. Johnson. Dr. M.E. Tiffin arrived shortly afterward and became "Doctor Tiff" to all who knew him. Nothing was too difficult for him - orthopaedics, surgery, obstetrics or repair of severe lacerations -all done with a great sense of humour. Edson has

always been most fortunate in the calibre of doctors practising in the town. The pioneer doctors and all who followed them are remembered with gratitude and affection.

Edson was the Divisional Point of the Canadian National Railway and the business centre of a tremendous area, not only of the farms and homesteads in the vicinity, but also of mines served by the railroad spur known as the Coal Branch, and numerous logging camps in the hinterland. Workers in the above fields and their dependents relied on St. John's when hospitalization was required. At the time of its opening, St. John's was the only hospital on the main line between Edmonton and Kamloops.

From the beginning, the fifteen-bed hospital was busy; frequently temporary beds were set up in the reception and dining areas. Conditions were



primitive and space limited. In a few years, plans were under way for a new two-storey building with full basement, at a cost of \$90,000, a great debt to assume at that time.

The new St. John's Hospital was officially opened October 15, 1931. Father Landrigan was chairman of the event, His Excellency, Archbishop O'Leary and Mayor A.D. McMillan of Edson cut the ribbon. Also present were Dr. Braithwaite, representing the Minister of Public Health; Mr. C. Pattinson, M.L.A.; Mr. A.E. MacDonald, Supt. CNR, Father G. Daly, C.Ss.R.; and the Medical Staff. All speakers were most eloquent in their praise of the new 38-bed facility. The original hospital became the Sisters' Residence.

Winter was the busiest season in the hospital; since a sudden drop in temperature heralded the opening of lumber and tie camps. Soon the health professionals were busy attending victims of serious accidents and a goodly quota of torn ligaments, broken limbs, bruised arms and cut fingers. Men enjoyed the camaraderie found in one of two eight-bed wards during convalescence. One busy day when a visitor was in the ward, a Sister rushed in to take temperatures during a lull. The visitor opened his mouth to speak and in popped a thermometer. The Nurse did not discover her mistake until she reached the last grinning patient, minus a thermometer.

Dreaded road accidents were numerous and most often occurred on holidays and weekends. Spring was the tonsillectomy season; paediatrics and obstetrics knew no season. On one occasion, there were thirteen newborns in the hospital and the nursery was equipped with only nine bassinets. The sewing room staff used wooden apple boxes for their creations, leaving the original labels under the frill. One of the doctors called the lucky infants in the improvised bassinets by their 'apple' name. When the next expectant mother was wheeled into the case room, after a whiff of anaesthetic, she piteously said to the doctor, "You won't call my baby Mac or Duchess, will you?" "Oh no," he assured her, "We are saving Roman Beauty for your baby."

Through the years, the Sisters took an active part in the civic and parish communities. From the beginning, weekly religion classes were conducted during the school year. Every summer the Sisters taught religion classes in the Edson missions, instructing the children and preparing them for the reception of the sacraments.

During the twenty years, 1926-1946, admissions increased from 243 in 1927 to 1,100 in 1946. Gradually, a great change took place in the hospital field. In 1926, a hospital was a strictly charitable institution. By 1946, charity was a social responsibility and a hospital was expected

*Srs. Knetchtel, C. Wymbs,
Antoinette St. Pierre 1946.*



to be a highly efficient institution. New trends in the health care field presented new problems, but the spirit of the Catholic hospital had to be maintained: caring for the sick in a Christ-like spirit of charity. The staff of St. John's Hospital took steps to keep abreast of the times in qualification, organization and management. They were commended by the Department of Health for their standard of nursing service.

The Ladies Auxiliary of St. John's Hospital was organized in March, 1957. Members of the Auxiliary were of great assistance in hospital projects. In 1963, an Advisory Board was set up to assist the Sisters in their work in the health field. Great thanks are due to the endeavour and interest of the first Advisory Board and succeeding members. This group became the Governing Board of St. John's Hospital in April, 1973.

Gradually the Town of Edson outgrew the stately brick hospital. In 1964, the Sisters of Service began negotiating for a new fifty-bed facility. The Official Opening of the third St. John's Hospital took place December 8, 1969. The Architect, Stan Hodson, presented surgical scissors to the Honourable Donovan Ross, who cut the ribbon.

The Provincial Government funded the building of the new hospital. The Sisters of Service, at their own expense, erected a Sisters' Residence adjacent to the new facility. Consideration had been given to upgrading the former hospital, with thought of converting it into a Nursing Home or Auxiliary Hospital (the building was in good repair and many Edson residents were fond of it), but remodelling was cost-prohibitive and both former hospitals were demolished.

In operation for one year, the new hospital recorded 1,485 patients admitted, 2,906

outpatients treated, 122 new arrivals, 2,662 patients x-rayed, 143 major operations and 550 minor operations. St. John's Hospital was grateful for the efforts of Sister Margaret Guest, Registered Record Librarian, in setting up the Medical Records Department. This was a very important item in attaining accreditation by the Canadian Hospital Association; accreditation was granted in 1971, after the first inspection, and was renewed during the following years. In 1973, for the first time, the hospital engaged a lay business manager, Albert Mercier, who, in 1975, became the first lay Administrator.

It had been evident for some time that Edson needed an auxiliary hospital for the treatment of older and infirm patients who required special attention. In 1973, a Nursing Home Board was formed to investigate and offer concrete plans. This Board was later amalgamated with the Governing Board for better communication and speedier decisions. The Nursing Home was attached to the active treatment hospital enabling it to use many of the same facilities. After much discussion, confusion, delay and inconvenience, the project was completed. This brought the total bed capacity of St. John's Health Care Complex to 106.

The beautiful Extended Care Facility was officially opened September 19, 1980. Appropriately, two Old-Timers, Mr. Andrew Fosheim and Mrs. Ivy McEvoy, cut the ribbon. The people of Edson took the new facility to their hearts. As on former occasions, especially the opening of the hospital in 1969, many local organizations made substantial contributions toward furnishings and equipment; even the school children put on activities to raise funds.

In 1986, the St. John's Health Care Complex was honoured by a visit from delegates of the International Hospital Federation on a tour of Canada. The delegates praised the staff on the

cleanliness, order and good spirit evident; they also said they had seen few establishments of comparable size that could equal the Complex.

The Sisters of Service had an agreement with the Alberta Government that if they withdrew, ownership of the Health Care Complex would be negotiated with the Province. The lengthy process began in 1987. The Sisters preferred to transfer administration to the Catholic Health Association of Alberta rather than to the Municipal District, but there was some opposition and the Minister of Health decided in favour of the Municipal District. The Agreement was signed April 1, 1991, and took immediate effect.

The Sisters of Service are grateful that they were

privileged to serve in the health field at Edson for sixty-five years. It was the missionary spirit in caring for the sick that won the respect and love of all. The Sisters pray that the Edson and District Health Care Complex will continue to care for patients with skill, dedication and love.

The Catholic Health Association of Alberta chose the Sisters of Service for their 1991 Recognition Award. During their Annual Convention, the C.H.A.A. honoured the Sisters of Service Community for its outstanding contribution to Catholic Health Care. In his presentation, Archbishop Joseph McNeil remarked that this award was given not only in recognition of past works but also for the services the Sisters are presently rendering to the people of the Province of Alberta.



***St. John's Hospital, Edson 1969. Now Part of
Edson and District Health Care Complex.***



*St. John's Hospital, Edson. Sr. Gallagher (L)
Sr. Jansen (Standing R) with Kitchen and Dietary Staff
1955*

ADDENDUM

Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph of Montreal

*Congregation:
Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph*

FOUNDER:
*Jerome Le Royer de la Dauversiere
(1597 - 1659)*

Jerome Le Royer came from a prominent middle-class family in La Flèche, France. He received his education at the Jesuit College in his native town where he probably came to know something about Canada through his contact with the first Jesuit missionaries...Father of five children, tax collector and actively concerned for the poor of La Flèche, he rebuilt its old shabby hospital.

Between 1630 - 1635 three mystical experiences led him to establish a Congregation of Hospitallers of St. Joseph at La Flèche, create a Hotel-Dieu in Montreal and establish a colony to evangelize the native people.

A true visionary, Jerome Le Royer chose Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve and Jeanne Mance to fulfill this mission. Although he never crossed the Atlantic, Jerome Le Royer is considered as the Founder of Montreal.

In 1642 Jeanne Mance established the first Hotel-Dieu hospital in Montreal. In 1659, Jerome Le Royer completed the task which God had entrusted to him; he sent three Hospitallers from La Flèche to care for the sick at Hotel-Dieu, Montreal.

Thanks to them, the work undertaken by Jeanne Mance was continued. In spite of poverty, privations, fires and wars, they have remained faithful to their mission, responding to new needs of the sick and the poor.

In 1845, the Hospitallers of Montreal undertook their first foundation in Kingston, Ontario to care for the victims of typhus. In 1868, they responded to the call of distress from the lepers of Tracadie, New Brunswick. this was the beginning of an expansion in the areas of health care and education which continued for more than one hundred years in Canada, the United States, Peru, West Africa and the Dominican Republic.



Jerome Le Royer de la Dauversiere

Hotel-Dieu Hospital Whitelaw 1952-1979

Hotel-Dieu, Whitelaw, was founded under the auspices of the Religious Hospitallers of the St. Joseph of Windsor, Ontario at the request of Bishop Henri Routhier, of the Diocese of Grouard. Permission granted by Bishop Kidd, Sisters Garceau, Marie de la Ferre and Roy went to visit the site September 24, 1949.

Three pioneer Religious Hospitallers arrived in Whitelaw, Alberta on March 18, 1950. A banquet was prepared for the Sisters by the ladies of the parish. A large number of people from the area were present for this warm welcome. Father J. Wagner, O.M.I., pastor of Whitelaw, graciously lodged the Sisters in his rectory while the hospital was being built from March 18, 1950 to June 29, 1952. He lodged himself in two small rooms adjacent to the Church. He was so happy to have the Sisters that he generously made this sacrifice.

When Sister Marie Roy and her colleagues Sisters Prieur and Helen Gouin left Windsor to embark on this missionary venture, they knew they were tackling a job that would require courage and tenacity. There was neither building nor equipment. With much prayer and work, the Sisters developed building plans and prepared service programs. The original plan of building a general hospital had to be changed to that of a chronic hospital, since there were ample acute-care beds and a real need for chronic care beds.

The hospital was built by the Sisters at a cost of \$317,000.00 receiving a \$102,000.00 grant from the government. The Provincial Department of Health readily recognized the need for the care of the aged and chronically ill, both young and old. The 34 bed modern hospital was opened June 29, 1952.

In the years that followed what had been planned was not adequate for the needs of Peace River District, therefore, more beds were added. The hospital served the needs of many sick and elderly patients who found healing there.

Patients were cared for by the Hospital Medical staff of three Fairview physicians; Dr. Julius Kratz, chief of the Medical Staff, Dr. T.W. Garrison and Dr. Hanna Kratz. The Ladies Auxiliary were very active and supportive, providing for the many needs of the hospital to better serve its patients.

The Sisters served in many capacities in the community such as Home care services, parish work teaching the children and religious education classes. the 22 Sisters who through the years helped in this work of mercy know that their efforts continue to bear good fruit.

In 1979, due to a decreasing number of Sisters, the Hotel-Dieu became affiliated with the Fairview General under a new lay administration.



***The 3 Foundresses: Sr. Helene Gouin,
Sr. Marie Roy, Sr. Rose Marie Prieur***

Postscript

"The Fairview Hospital, Auxiliary and Nursing Home Board assumed ownership of Hotel Dieu in April 1980 and continued to operate it as an Auxiliary Hospital. In 1992 a new facility was built in Fairview. The completion of this project combined the 40 Nursing Home beds and the 35 Auxiliary beds into a modern 75 bed Long Term Care facility.

The contribution the Sisters gave of serving and caring in this community will always be remembered and appreciated."

*From a letter from
Mrs. Caroline Kronast,
A.E.D. Support Services,
Fairview Health Complex.
May 6, 1993*



Mrs. Lepetre, Sr. Adeline - 1956



The Sisters arrive at Whitelaw - 1950. Pictured are: Mrs. J. Fuchs, Granny Fuchs, Mrs. Koch, Mrs. Frey, Sister Prieur, Father Wagner, Sister Roy, Father Herter, Sister Gouin, Mrs. Knor and Mr. O. Poulin.

***Notre Dame Du Lac, McLennan,
Alberta
Home For Aged
1967 - 1982***

This Home for the aged situated 82 miles from Whitelaw, was built by the Archdiocese of Grouard in 1966, and was temporarily serviced by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate until a permanent Community was found for this Mission. In 1967, at the request of Bishop Routhier, the Generalate accepted the new foundation, to the great joy of the Sisters of Whitelaw who were really isolated.

The terms: The archdiocese was to assume the financial responsibility and the Sisters under contract were mainly to supervise and care for the aged.

The Sisters appointed for this 75th. foundation of the R.H.S.J. were: Sr. Claire Maître, Supérieur, Sister Claire Renaud, Sr. Émilienne Dumaresque, Sr. Rolande Plamondon. They arrived on November 22, 1967.

The Mission was closed March 22, 1982 when Sister Estelle Breton, Administrator and Sister Denise Lefebvre left Notre Dame du Lac.



Notre Dame du Lac Home for the Aged - 1979

