

Winter 1992

New Jersey Catholic Records Newsletter, Vol. 11, No.2

New Jersey Catholic Historical Commission

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/njchc>



Part of the [History Commons](#), and the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

New Jersey Catholic Historical Commission, "New Jersey Catholic Records Newsletter, Vol. 11, No.2" (1992). *New Jersey Catholic Historical Commission newsletters*. 32.
<https://scholarship.shu.edu/njchc/32>

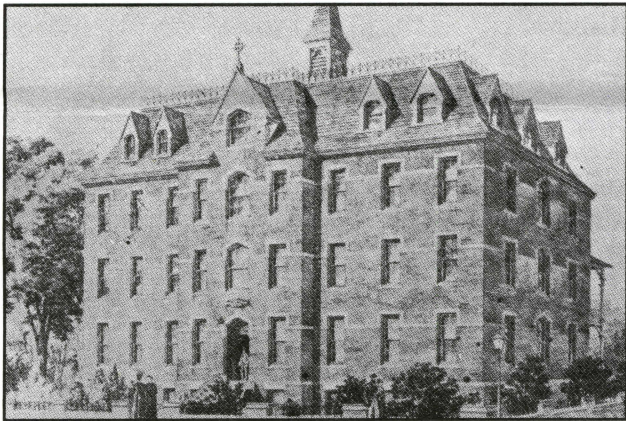


New Jersey Catholic Records Newsletter

VOLUME XI NO. 2

WINTER 1992

Saint Michael's Medical Center, Newark:



Saint Michael's as the building appeared in 1871

**125
years
of service
to the
community**

"The Sisters of the Poor are fully established and have a gem of a hospital, its only fault being its small size." These words of Father George Hobart Doane, written on June 12, 1867, to Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, then in Rome, marked the successful completion of a project initiated some four years earlier. And yet, "completion" is a misleading word, for the task undertaken and the institution established then are still with us, transformed in some ways over the past 125 years, but still vibrantly alive in pursuit of the original goal.

As Newark grew during the 19th century from a modest village into a thriving industrial city, its population expanded and diversified rapidly. The 8,000 residents of 1826, when the town observed the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, grew to about 90,000 in 1866, on Newark's 200th anniversary. Much of the increase was due to the heavy immigration of Germans and Irish, who in the later 19th century were joined by waves of Poles, Italians, Romanians, Serbs and most other Europeans as well as by blacks from the

south. The swelling population overwhelmed the primitive social welfare institutions of the village era and demands for reform soon began to be heard.

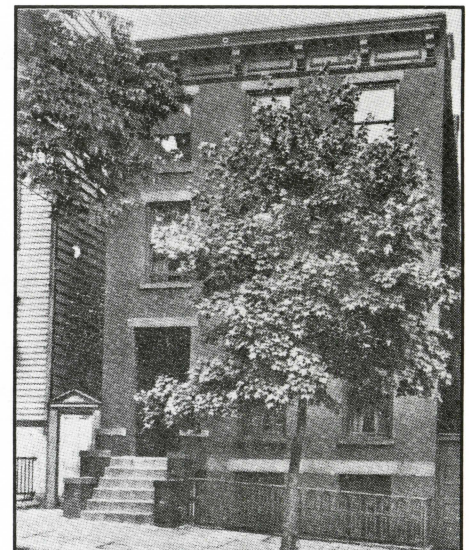
One of the earliest demands was for a hospital to serve the sick poor. Medicine in the mid-19th century still lacked understanding of the germ theory of disease, had few specific remedies for a given illness, and still awaited the development of aseptic procedures, anesthesia and all the panoply of modern medicine. Those who could afford to pay the doctor expected to be treated in their own homes; only the poor resorted to hospitals. Newark, like other growing American cities, counted many sick poor among its residents; what it lacked was a hospital for treating them.

In the 1850s a group of public-spirited citizens formed the Newark Hospital Association to remedy the lack, but the Panic of 1857 disrupted their plans. Then the Civil War ensued. The city did have a hospital then to care for the wounded, but it closed at the end of hostilities.

Thus it was that Newark's first hospitals opened in the aftermath of the war. St. Barnabas, affiliated with the Episcopal Church, began receiving patients in a private house in 1865. Some of Newark's residents of German descent began work toward a facility for their fellow-Germans, which opened in 1870 as German Hospital. Between these two, Newark's Catholics started what became Saint Michael's Hospital.

Catholic interest in serving the sick poor manifested itself earliest, perhaps, in the wishes of Nicholas Moore, who left money in his will to found a hospital and asylum. Father John M. Gervais, pastor of St. James Church and executor of the will, provided some service for the sick poor through the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the ladies of the parish, but it would be some years before St. James Hospital opened its doors. In 1862 the Sisters of Charity began to care for a few sick people in their building at Washington and Bleecker Streets, but the building also housed an orphan asylum, an

continued on page 2



The first St. Michael's on Bleecker Street

Saint Michaels

continued from page 1

academy for young ladies and, for a time, the motherhouse and novitiate of the community. The facility was clearly not adequate to meet the needs of the area.

In 1863 Bishop Bayley had approved Father Anthony Cauvin's invitation to the Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis to establish St. Mary's Hospital in Hoboken. This community — now known as the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor — was founded in 1851 by Frances Schervier and began working in the United States in 1858. Four sisters and a postulant arrived in Hoboken to begin the hospital there and Bayley was impressed by their work. He wrote several times to the provincial superior in Cincinnati for sisters to serve in Newark, but the demands on the community were such that not until 1867 could the Provincial satisfy his request.

On May 6, 1867, a cart bumped across the meadows from Jersey City bearing the staff for the new hospital — Sister Monica Voss, the superior, Sisters Hortulana Menzen, Ewalda Mittler,

Massea Keenan and a postulant, Bridget McDonald, who would soon be Sister Regina. All five were immigrants, the first three from Germany, the latter two from Ireland. Except for the 39-year-old superior, all were in their twenties. Father Doane showed them through the house at 69 Bleecker Street which Bayley and the Newark pastors had obtained as the site of the hospital.

The first floor contained the reception room, pharmacy and an oratory; wards accommodating 13 patients occupied the second floor. The third floor contained two small sleeping rooms for the sisters, who used the basement as kitchen, dining room, recreation room and laundry. Bandages, bedding and other necessities were provided through the Sisters of Charity, the St. Vincent de Paul Society and the ladies of several parishes, who had worked through the winter preparing for the arrival of the hospital staff.

Doane's parishioners at St. Patrick's supplied fruit, vegetables, potatoes and a side of beef. The food saw the sisters through the first few days, until they began the regular round of

door-to-door begging which supported them and the hospital. One contretemps did occur: a donor brought the sisters a container of ice cream for dessert but the cook, mistaking it for a pudding, set it aside where it would keep warm! There must have been some rueful laughter in the recreation room that night.

Over the next few days the sisters established the hospital routine. Nine patients were transferred from the Sisters of Charity to the new building. On the third day an accident victim was brought in, and on the next a fever patient. Soon the beds were full, and usually remained so. In addition to receiving patients at the hospital, Sister Monica began to nurse the sick poor in their homes and to discover their needs. She became so adept that the St. Vincent de Paul Society began supplying her with funds. Over the first winter in Newark she distributed more than \$3,000 in emergency aid.

Medical service at the hospital was supplied initially by two doctors, William O'Gorman and James Elliott, both immigrants from Ireland. They were soon joined by other physicians, whose

continued on page 3

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL.

Under the charge of the Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis.

ADMISSION.

The charities of the Hospital are conferred on all, irrespective of religious creed, social condition, color or nationality.

1. In emergency cases, accidents, etc., patients will be admitted immediately into the Hospital.
2. In all other cases, application must be made to the *Sisters*, and, generally, a note from their physician, stating nature of disease, will be required.
3. Patients will be admitted between the hours of 8 A. M. and 5 P. M.
4. The poor are received free, but those who are able will be required to pay a moderate charge.

INTERNAL RULES.

1. All clothing and valuables belonging to the person admitted will be taken in charge by the Sisters, and returned to the owner on leaving the Institution. In case of death, if the patient has paid board, they can be claimed by relatives; otherwise they will be given to the poor.
2. Patients will not leave their respective wards and corridors without permission; they must always be in their wards during the visit of the Physicians.
3. No smoking will be allowed in the Hospital, but only in the place, and at the time appointed.
4. Patients cannot go out of the Hospital without permission, and should they abuse the privilege, they will be forthwith dismissed.
5. Patients will be dismissed when deemed proper by the Physician.

VISITORS.

1. The visiting days are Thursday and Sunday, from 3 to 5 P. M.
2. No article of food or drink is to be given to the sick by visitors;

HOSPITAL OF OUR LADY & ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, NEWARK.

The Sisters of the Poor of St. Francis have been established in Newark over a year, at No. 69 Bleecker Street. During that time they have done a great amount of good with the limited means at their command. The house being small they could only take care of thirteen patients at a time, and yet, during the course of the year over seventy patients have been treated in the hospital; besides this, a great amount of good has been done in relieving the wants of the out-door poor. The entire expenses, with the exception of the interest on the debt, has been paid by the alms they have collected from door to door. The house where they are now is entirely too small for the work to be done, and the time has come to provide a larger place to meet the wants of the City. Almost daily the sick have to be refused admission into the house because there is no room. This being the case, the property at the corner of Washington and Warren streets has been purchased of Mr. James Mullin, for \$16,000, the owner giving \$1,000, which will leave \$15,000 to be paid. An additional \$5,000 will be required to make the necessary alterations. We will then have in the heart of the city a building fully equipped, with fifty or sixty beds which will go far to meet the wants of the present time. The Sisters are about to commence a general collection for this purpose, in the Parishes of St. Patrick's, St. John's, St. Mary's, St. Peter's, and St. Joseph's, and it is earnestly hoped that the Catholics of the city, and others who are kindly disposed, for the Hospital will always be open to the sick no matter what their religious convictions

Saint Michaels
continued from page 2

services were much in demand, not only for the bed-patients, but also for the rapidly increasing number of out-patients. When Mother Frances Schervier visited the facility in May, 1868, she admired the accomplishments of the first year, but advised Sister Monica to find larger quarters quickly.

The problem of space had been on the minds of Bayley and the Newark pastors, who had been seeking another location. To their dismay, Doane committed them to buying a livery stable at the corner of Washington and Warren Streets for conversion to a hospital and they authorized a public appeal for funds to complete the work. Fortunately, Bayley was able to obtain a better site at the corner of Nesbitt and High Streets (now Central Avenue and King Boulevard) by purchasing the estate of Mr. and Mrs. Eliphalet C. Smith Jr. for \$35,000.

The sisters — now 10 in number — began moving into the new building in May 1869. The substantial two-story Smith residence now housed the kitchen and sisters' dining room in its cellar, the pharmacy, chapel and sacristy/library on the first floor, and wards and sleeping quarters for five sisters on the second floor. The former stable was fitted to accommodate the remaining sisters, the indigent old ladies the sisters were also caring for, a laundry and the morgue.

The new facility, although much more spacious than the old, was soon just as crowded. The increased patient load resulted in the appointment of Dr. George M. Swain as the first house physician, and the available space enabled Saint Michael's to establish clinics for eye and ear diseases, as well as for diseases of the throat and the skin. All concerned recognized, however, that the old Smith residence was only an interim solution to the space problem: the ultimate answer had to be a new building.

Through the spring of 1869 fundraisers were held by the parishes of Newark, and subscriptions solicited widely. Press accounts kept the story alive and resulted in help. One New Yorker who owned property in Newark called at Bayley's residence and gave a

check for \$500. Asked what prompted his action, he replied that he had seen the newspaper accounts and thought the hospital "one of the good things."

Throngs attended the laying of the cornerstone of the new building on September 29, 1869. Bishop Bernard McQuaid celebrated Mass at St. Patrick's in the morning. In the afternoon Grand Marshal Patrick Callan led a parade of many organizations — both Catholic and non-Catholic — past a reviewing party of civic and church notables and through the streets of central Newark past cheering thousands. Prominent in the line of march was the Friendship Benevolent Society, led by Charles Brown astride a large white horse. This was a fraternal society composed entirely of black men. One newspaper commented that their appearance "was a grand event for Newark, and the only one of its kind ever noticed here."

After the parade, McQuaid blessed and laid the cornerstone of the new building. Designed by Jeremiah O'Rourke, the building was of red brick trimmed with brownstone. Three stories tall, with basement and Mansard roof, it contained 22 wards and could accommodate as many as 150 patients. Construction was completed in the spring of 1871 and the building was dedicated on May 8. It stands there today — modified and added to — now only a part of Saint Michael's Medical Center, but still a monument to the vision and dedication of

6
ANNUAL REPORT
 OF
St. Michael's Hospital,
 FROM DECEMBER 31, 1869, TO DECEMBER 31, 1870.

Number of Beds	Occupied, 30		Unoccupied, 4		Total, 34	DISCHARGED				Total, 34	
	Males	Females	Total	Well		Improved	Unimproved	Died			
Sexes	137	69	206	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	206										
Color	White	255									
	Black	256									
Religion	Catholics	199									
	Episcopalians	7									
	Lutherans	7									
	Free Thinkers	1									
	Methodists	4									
	Presbyterians	6									
	Protestants	24									
Total	256										
DIAGNOSIS.											
Abcess	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Received with Amputated Thigh and Extensive Laceration of Integument	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Apoplexy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bills	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bronchitis	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Burns	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cancer, (successful removal in one case)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Castroville	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Chronic Conjunctivitis	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Colica Pictonum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Constriction of Brain and Fracture of Skull	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Constrictions	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Constriction of Intestines	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Consumption	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Delirium Tremens	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Deblility	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Diphtheria	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Diarrhoea, Chronic	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dilatation of Shoulder	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dropsy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dyspepsia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Dysentery, Acute	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Erysipelas	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Enlarged Glands, (Scrophulous)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Erysipelas	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fracture of Forearm	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fracture of both Thighs and Legs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fracture of Arm (compound) and Fracture of Skull	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fracture of Rib	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fracture of head of Femur	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fracture of Leg	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fracture of Foot	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fracture in vicinity of Elbow, compound	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fracture of Leg, compound	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fissure of Rectum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Floating Cartilage in Knee Joint	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fever, Continued	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fever, Typhoid	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fever, Intermittent Quotidian	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fever, Intermittent Tertian	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fever, Remittent	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Genital	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hemorrhage	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Heart Disease	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hepatitis	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hiccough, Persistent	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hydrothorax	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hypertrophy of Heart	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Induced Burns	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Injury to Spine	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Injured Wounds	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lacerated Wounds	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lymphangitis	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Old Age	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Paralysis	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Pneumonia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Progressive Locomotor Ataxia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Pruritus	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rheumatism	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rupture of Intestine	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Skin	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Stroke	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tetanus	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tubercular Meningitis	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	244	256	178	9	9	50	229	30			

*Transferred to Old Age.

Excerpt from the annual report for 1870

all who began the work and have carried it on through the years.

Commission celebrates its 15th anniversary

On Sunday, October 27, 1991, Commission members, friends and supporters met at the Scanticon-Princeton to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Commission's foundation. Established in 1976 by the bishops of New Jersey and Seton Hall University as part of their bicentennial observance of American independence, the Commission was first chaired by the late Bishop John J. Dougherty and is currently led by Archbishop Emeritus Peter L. Gerety. Its purpose has always been the collection, preservation and dissemination of the history of Catholics in the state.



Archbishop Theodore McCarrick

continued on page 4

15th Anniversary

continued from page 3

Monsignor Joseph C. Shenrock, vice-chairman of the commission, served as master of ceremonies at the affair. During the course of the evening, Louis Scarpa, a theology student at Immaculate Conception Seminary, received the fourth annual Archbishop Gerety Seminarian Award for his essay on church architecture in the 1920s and 1930s and its relation to wider cultural developments.

Archbishop McCarrick, in brief remarks to the audience, described the work of the Commission as "a work of family, a family history." Archbishop Gerety remarked that he was delighted to see the fruit of the Commission on its anniversary, noting that stirring interest in history on the part of clergy and laity was a vital part of the Commission's purpose. Sister Margherita Marchione, M.P.F. reviewed the Commission's activities over the past 15 years, both to recognize and to stimulate accomplishment.

Featured speaker of the evening was Dr. Brian C. Mitchell, president of the Independent Colleges and Universi-

ties of Pennsylvania and author of *The Paddy Camps: The Irish of Lowell, 1821-1861*. Mitchell's research for that book relied heavily on parish and institutional records, material that the Commission is most concerned with, so he was particularly competent in addressing our concerns. He noted that the information contained in such archives is of high quality, and said the fact that many historians do not recognize this is "a real problem." Too often Catholic archives have been thought to contain data useful

only to Catholics, but in fact the materials there throw light on a variety of general historical concerns — family life, education, social welfare and numerous topics of concern to the entire historical community.

"We need to tell [the story of American Catholicism] often and we need to tell it well," he said. But we also, he added, need to introduce non-Catholic historians to the riches of the past contained in Catholic archives.

Published by the New Jersey Catholic Historical Records
Commission, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2696.

Most Reverend Peter L. Gerety, D.D., *Chairman*; Reverend Monsignor Joseph C. Shenrock, *Vice chairman*; Bernard Bush, Reverend Augustine Curley, O.S.B., Reverend Mark Dobrovolsky, Reverend Monsignor William N. Field, Reverend Monsignor Charles J. Giglio, Sister Mary Ellen Gleason, S.C., Reverend Raymond J. Kupke, Joseph F. Mahoney, Sister Margherita Marchione, M.P.F., Reverend Monsignor Robert Moneta, George L.A. Reilly, Sister Irene Marie Richards, O.P., Sister Thomas Mary Salerno, S.C., Bernhard W. Scholz, Reverend Monsignor Francis R. Seymour, Reverend Monsignor Edwin V. Sullivan, Reverend John F. Wrynn, S.J. *Consulting Member*: Barbara Geller.

Newsletter editor: Joseph F. Mahoney



Seton Hall
University

South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2691

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Seton Hall
University