



Old motherhouse and novitiate on the prairie showing joined roof.

Chapter 4

The House that God and Gertrude Built

The true story of the new motherhouse, a story of lots of nuns and a shrinking number of feet and inches to hold them, began at least 30 years prior to 1888. In an attempt to make ends meet, Father Donaghoe moved the boarding school into Dubuque in 1859 to “The Hill,” the 14th Street hospital staffed for one year as a favor to Bishop Loras. In 1859 it became two schools: St. Joseph boarding academy and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart day school, with Gertrude Regan as principal of both.

With the boarding school no longer at the prairie, Donaghoe connected the motherhouse to the academy (picture above) by an attic and a roof to provide needed storage. “Following the alteration,” commented writer Pulcheria McGuire, “the buildings seemed unsafe enough to cause alarm. Young Sister De Pazzi Collins convinced Mother Clarke to let her climb through the attic and place a statue of the Blessed Virgin in the niche between the joined buildings. On her way she prayed that the Blessed Mother would keep the buildings secure and all inside safe.” Her prayer of faith was granted. The yoked structures stood secure for 29 more years.

“The old rock convent stands now as it did more than 60 years ago and will, in all probability, last a century longer,” predicted Pulcheria.¹ Usually on target, this time she was wrong. Both structure and statue stood firm, but only until spring of 1904 when Gertrude dynamited them to clear the land for tenants.² Mother Clarke’s niece, Josephine, remarked, “I never thought she [Gertrude] would be the one to do it.”³

From 1869 on, the joined buildings stood firm, but they could not s-t-r-e-t-c-h. Shortly after taking office in 1888, Mother Gertrude asked the Council to take a long look at the buildings stabilized by faith. A realist trying to find space for the young women who entered, she could hardly spy an unused corner in the first novice dorm where she slept. Her faith was indeed strong, but she must have wondered how long a statue of the Virgin Mary could stand the strain of any more active young women.⁴

Nor did Gertrude find the motherhouse convenient to the travel more and more necessary as the community grew. Reaching her desk in Mother Clarke's old room from the train meant a long ride from Dubuque of two to three hours depending on the condition of the roads and the horse drawing her buggy. With no phone, news and mail also came by horse, buggy, sleigh or shank's mare (on foot).

Often Mother Gertrude rose at two or three in the morning for the 10 miles in the springless farm wagon to a Council meeting in Dubuque or an interview with a Sister. Mother did the traveling. Her visitors usually stayed the night at 13th Street [St. Joseph Academy]. It was the duty of the novice sleeping near her to build a small fire and heat a little wash water for her on the coldest mornings.⁵ On her return trip, Gertrude usually picked up the mail though sometimes she appeared with more exciting results.

To staff the schools, Gertrude Regan worked somewhat in the manner of the angel who brought Daniel his dinner. Community stories picture her descending on the motherhouse in a horse and buggy, depositing a sick sister, picking up a healthy novice, and in 20 minutes whirling out again, intent on catching the next train.

Safety in numbers applied particularly to novices left alone in a corridor. Novice mistress Cecilia Dougherty usually stayed with her group and strongly objected to Gertrude’s practice of highjacking them. As if she felt God had chosen the young Sister left alone, Gertrude imagined her in a classroom in the school needing a replacement teacher. Satisfied that God

had provided, she asked softly (if it was cold) “How many petticoats do you have on, Thithy?” After the young woman answered, she might hear a husky, soft lisp say briskly, “Get on your bonnet and good shoes ⁶ and meet me in the kitchen right away. I’ll see that your bag ith packed. The buggy will leave in 15 minuthes.” Somewhat befuddled, the “Chosen-One” watched Mother Gertrude rush off to the kitchen to make a pot of tea and slice bread for a light lunch of bread and honey.⁷

On the way to Dubuque, Gertrude varied the conversation—sometimes asking about the young Sister’s family or astronomy, math, geography, biology—probing the educational shallows and depths of her companion. Beside her sat the dazed young Sister, wearing a cloak transferred from the sick Sister’s shoulders to her own, looking down at borrowed clothes and holding a suitcase packed by someone else with “enough for a few days.”⁸ If troubled or tired, Mother recited a series of rosaries, her face calming as the beads slid through her fingers. To an uprooted novice with no idea where she was going, it could be a very long ride to town.

A section from Lewine Enderle’s Memoir (Chapter 4 Appendix) describes her own long ride on her sudden change to Des Moines.⁹

The ride from to Dubuque was one Mother Gertrude made often to meet with the Council, see the bishop, speak to the banker and the lawyer, pay bills and catch trains. According to community stories, Gertrude had advocated buying 10 acres and moving the motherhouse within two miles of Dubuque a dozen years before her election, but she was never able to convince Mary Clarke of the necessity.

Although Mother Clarke rarely made the journey into Dubuque, she did see the need for more space in the novitiate. One of her letters ends, “... we too need more room and need aid to do it but God is all-sufficient. In Him we will trust. Your Affectionate M.F. Clarke.” With neither money nor energy for the project, Mother Clarke left it tor others after her,¹⁰ while she directed all her energy and attention to the Rule and its acceptance by Rome.

To point her Council toward a Dubuque location became one of Gertrude’s first tasks as Mother, but before she planned too much, she sounded for ecclesiastical opinion. Would Bishop Hennessy approve the building of a new motherhouse in or near Dubuque? Yes, indeed! With evident interest in the undertaking, Hennessy offered the practical

suggestion that two Sisters visit motherhouses in the United States and Canada to see “the best that had been done.”¹¹

Between July and September 1888, Gonzaga McLoskey and Loyola Rutherford toured six motherhouses: Maryville and St. Vincent, St. Louis¹²; St. Joseph and Loretto, Toronto; and the Hotel Dieu and Ville Marie, Montreal. At the special meeting of the Council early in September (over which Hennessy presided) the two Sisters reported on the six.¹³ As a result, Gertrude and her Council resolved to purchase ground in/near Dubuque.

But later, no longer under the spell of the bishop (and his male confidence and superior fortune), the Council examined community resources. It found academies in Council Bluffs and Milwaukee in debt, Wichita mortgaged, Des Moines in need of expansion, “The Mount” ready to build a conservatory. What had they been thinking!!! They backed away. A quick reassessment pared the grand plan down to a few more dormitories and classrooms out at the prairie. In some relief they sketched a tentative plan for Hennessy to check, intending now to build on a little hill called Mt. Carmel in a pasture a short distance from the motherhouse.¹⁴ Again Gertrude saw her Dubuque location voted down.

How to break this new development to the bishop who thought everything was decided? On September 24, 1888, three intrepid women in black turned the motherhouse wagon toward town to see Bishop John Hennessy. Gertrude Regan, Cecilia Dougherty and Baptist Seeley, all of the Council home at the time, jounced and rattled in the farm wagon the three hours to the bishop’s house on Cathedral Square. Surprised and somewhat nettled by their visit, the bishop followed the wagon in his buggy all the way out to the pasture with the hill named Mt. Carmel. He was not pleased! The site showed no imagination, no vision, no challenge and solved no problems. It was just as far away from town as ever. Cryptically, Hennessy advised them to build in Peosta or some railway stop quickly reached from Dubuque. They would have to buy land. With this dour opinion he climbed into his buggy and turned his horse toward Dubuque.¹⁵

But Bishop Hennessy had not given up. Two weeks later in a letter to the Council, he discarded the Peosta site, thought no railway would ever go near St. Joseph motherhouse, and urged the purchase of land near Dubuque while there were still some available bargains. He advised Gertrude to tell

her lawyer, William Keane, to secure land as soon as possible. Armed with his letter, Mother returned to the task of persuading the Council.¹⁶

By now, the bishop was spinning his own dream. A note from Anastasia Mulgrew in the Record of Events (RE) informed Mother that the bishop and Mr. Keane had examined the Rebman place the day before and the bishop was particularly anxious that the Gertrude purchase it as he considered it a bargain. He thought it would do as an interim solution since it adjoined the Mt. St. Joseph (Clarke) property and might later be added to it. Sister Mary Anastasia, superior at St. Raphael school, hoped frankly that Gertrude would see things the bishop's way and said so.¹⁷

In November 1888, Gertrude purchased the Rebman field plus the land next to it, a parcel of 27 acres, for \$15,000. Actually, it proved too small for the bishop's plans, but the act of buying it committed the congregation to a Dubuque location.¹⁸ In the meantime, more places around town were examined, discussed, and dismissed as too expensive or lacking the atmosphere Bishop Hennessy thought a motherhouse should have.

As for Hennessy, he welcomed the challenge of a suitable building for the motherhouse in his diocese, but his idea of its size and grandeur dazed the Sisters. At his suggestion, they chose J.J.Egan of Chicago, "foremost architect of the age" in Hennessy's opinion.¹⁹ Since the bishop owned a large fortune in his own right, Gertrude and the Council may have hoped for more substantial aid than advice and interest, but that was all he offered in abundance.²⁰

There Hennessy was more than generous! On January 10, 1889 he sent two pages of notes on the motherhouse. Page one contained 13 logical reasons to suppose the community would continue to grow, since the Church needed educators. On page two, he concisely stated eight points on the building itself. The first three established it as the home and novitiate always of the congregation. In point four the bishop asked: What then should it be architecturally?

... It should be all a good architect who can look for a hundred years into the future can make it. The external appearance should also be considered and the building made as imposing as circumstances would allow. As for the grounds — they are the frame of the picture, and much more, and should as far as possible, correspond with the improvements to be made thereon.²¹

The Bishop was thinking big and his vision captured Gertrude Regan. But would it capture the Council? She presented his letter to them, this time with more success. Convinced by the bishop's enthusiasm, the Council voted again in support of a new motherhouse in the city of Dubuque. However, finding the grounds to please the bishop and the price to please the Council took time. The hunt for the right piece of property lasted nine months, well into 1889. Much as she supported the project, Mother Gertrude had other things to do, so she delegated, asking Loyola Rutherford, to investigate farms near Dubuque with William Keane, their lawyer.

Some months later, Bishop Hennessy, Mother Gertrude and her Council came to a unanimous decision. On September 8, 1889, five black bonneted Sisters and one bishop boarded a carriage to visit the newest site—91 acres called Grandview Park, situated on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi and offered by the Stout family for \$15,000.²² At the end of the entry in Council Minutes [CM], Council secretary Cecilia Dougherty wrote, "All agreed it was God Himself who had directed us to it for our future home."

Gertrude immediately wrote Agatha Hurley in Chicago.²³ She needed her vote on the Council and her advice on where and how to borrow for the new building. Egan's final blueprints called for a structure to accommodate 500 Sisters, almost all BVMs alive in 1889.²⁴

Egan's June 1889 letter to Mother Gertrude may have surprised her. It lays out for her his own assessment of Hennessy. "The bishop is a man of very positive and decided notions, and it is not easy to turn him aside from his opinions even in building matters where he is not so well versed." Much as he found Hennessy overbearing and arrogant, Egan was the last one to want the bishop to know this opinion. He would never have been so transparent if he thought Gertrude Regan would mention to Hennessy what he wrote her. Obviously, he trusted Mother Gertrude to be quiet.²⁵

In early 1890, Egan at last drew up plans grand enough for Hennessy's vision. On a pleasant spring afternoon, the architect, contractor Deery, Mother Gertrude and her entire Council followed the bishop as he officially marked out the corners of the new motherhouse, previously surveyed and marked by Egan.²⁶ On April 22, Gertrude signed contracts for a basement of Bedford stone, according to the bishop, the best limestone available.²⁷

By now, Gertrude Regan may have regretted (more than a bit) getting Hennessy involved. The bishop advised getting only the best! She knew he favored stone for the entire building! But she also knew that what cost five dollars in stone came to only three in brick. By the time the work reached above the basement, she hoped to substitute Dubuque pressed brick. It was hard to "think big" with a small purse.



New motherhouse, 1891. Foundation of Bedford stone, bottom of SE tower. (BVM Archives)

Notes to Chapter 4

1. 1903 Pulcheria McGuire Annals 160 BVM Archives
2. Coogan2 301.
3. Ibid.
4. The postulants did not enter on the same date, nor remain long in the novitiate, otherwise it would have been impossible to supply classrooms with Sister teachers. Luckily, the Chicago and Milwaukee schools sent girls regularly to the novitiate as did the boarding schools in Clinton, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Des Moines, and Dubuque, Iowa; Holden, Missouri; Wichita, Kansas; and (after it opened in the fall of 1892) Mt. St. Gertrude, Boulder, Colorado.
5. Enderle Memoir Section 1 16 (typed copy of original manuscript). Archives.

Chapter 4

6. The novice's "good shoes" would not be her everyday ones made by Sister Mary Bernard Murray, the Sister shoemaker at St. Joseph prairie. The good shoes would be "store bought." Bernard made soft shoes of rawhide (pampooties), an Irish moccasin. Sister Bernard may also have cobbled brogues, a sturdier shoe not appropriate for the classroom. Enderle Memoir Section 22 (typed) BVM Archives. See also Internet, Irish shoes.

7. This novice was Sister Mary Berisimi De Gunther who stayed home with a cold while the other novices went for a walk with Cecilia. Gertrude saw a lone novice and picked her up in passing to substitute for a sick Sister she brought back to the infirmary. Berisimi De Gunther Infirmary 1954 Oral History tapes

8. Enderle Memoir Section 1 25-26. See Appendix to Chapter 4. In one instance when the kidnapped novice opened her suitcase, she found a single pair of clean stockings. Infirmary Sisters summer 1967

9. Community historian Jane Coogan marked 1892 as the date of the first graduation at the Des Moines academy, and Lewine must have been present for the event. Coogan places the ceremony "...in the parlor, the two graduates wearing long, hand-sewn gowns of white wool with 'street trains'. A medal bearing the name and the date of graduation supplied for a diploma — a custom commonly followed in academies of the day." Coogan2 139-140.

10. BVM Kathryn Lawlor comments on this letter (#174) "While she was agreeing to expand the ministry of the sisters in Des Moines, Mary Frances [Clarke] also was worrying about the living conditions at the motherhouse. The prairie buildings were too cramped for the number of novices and they had very primitive living conditions ...Redoing the motherhouse would be Gertrude's first order of business." Your Affectionate Letter 174 63-64.

11. CM July15, 1888. Council Minutes are entered by date.

12. Maryville college, at the time located in south St. Louis on Grand avenue, belonged to the Religious of the Sacred Heart. St. Vincent, motherhouse of the Daughters of St. Vincent De Paul, stood in the midst of their farm in Normandy, a northwest suburb of St. Louis.

13. CM September 10, 1888. BVM Archives.

14. Following the report of the two BVMs and the vote to construct a new motherhouse near Dubuque, the Council met without the bishop to consider a site for the new motherhouse and novitiate. CM May 25, 1890. BVM Archives.

Putting the proposed motherhouse addition on Mt. Carmel hill pleased most of the Sisters since community lore considered it the spot where the bees gathered in Father Donaghoe's hat. Chapter 4 Appendix.

15. Written two years later as a summary of the process, the May 25, 1890 CM read, "The Rt. Rev. Bishop Hennessy of Dubuque was consulted, and after coming out here to examine the site preferred by us, discouraged all idea of building out here and advised building in or near the city of Dubuque." BVM Archives.

16. CM October 1888 BVM Archives.

17. RE October 25, 1888 letter BVM Archives

18. CM November 16 1888: "After several meetings and consultations [with the bishop], it was decided we should purchase property on West Locust. Done on Nov. 16, 1888. We bought of Carney, Rittermann, Cooper & Thomson." BVM Archives. Some of this land was later sold to Dubuque Senior High.

19. J.J.Egan had done some noteworthy Chicago buildings. In 1875 the Chicago architect superintended building the Cook County courthouse and drew up plans for the Chicago city hall and city courthouse. He was involved in the architects' building at the Columbian Exposition (1893-94) and in 1889, hired by Bishop Cosgrove to plan a larger Davenport cathedral. In spite of this, "When [Egan's] plans for the Rebman property were completed and submitted to the bishop, Hennessy would sanction their use under no consideration and wrote to him expressing his dissatisfaction with them. Egan replied that the ground would admit of no larger building. Accordingly, Gertrude and the Council looked for another place." CM September 1889 BVM Archives, The CM entry for May 25, 1890 summarizes the initial search for the new motherhouse site from the first meeting in September '88 to the November 16, 1888 Rebman purchase. Without Hennessy's input it is doubtful the congregation would have built on the bluff next to the Mississippi river where the motherhouse stands today. Instead, it might be next to Clarke College.

20. Redempta Coleman, then teaching at St. Raphael cathedral school, said that in spite of his personal fortune, he (Hennessy) gave no money for the project, but he did give encouragement. She also mentioned that at one point during the lengthy search for the right place, Bishop Hennessy sent for Mother Gertrude to find out if she had given up the idea of building the motherhouse in Dubuque. Oral History tape recorded by Angelita Kramer Infirmary 1954 BVM Archives.

Chapter 4

21. CM January 10, 1889, a two-page letter showed the vision of Bishop Hennessy on what the new motherhouse building and grounds should be. Chapter 4 Appendix.

22. Council Minutes September 8, 1889, Bishop Hennessy and the Council visit the Stout farm and the Council decides to purchase it. BVM Archives. The Bishop loans \$15,000, which gives Gertrude enough leeway to borrow for the construction of the motherhouse. Chapter 4 appendix.

23. September 23, 1889 letter from Mother Gertrude to Agatha Hurley, a member of the Council missioned in Chicago, calls Agatha to a Council meeting in Dubuque. The bishop would also be present. BVM Archives.

24. Coogan notes that the Bishop wished a structure large enough to house a Community of 1500 Sisters. Notes in Bishop Hennessy's own hand. BVM Archives. Coogan PRICE2 226.

25. June 5, 1889 letter from Egan to Mother Gertrude. Community lore says that Egan charged the BVMs only for his supplies. Mother Gertrude's file. BVM Archives. See also Coogan PRICE 2 227.

26. CM March 19 1890. BVM Archives.

27. CM April 22 1890; Gertrude signs contracts for a basement of Bedford stone. "... the [limestone] quarries at Bedford caused their stone to dominate the others in the market, and the Indiana oolitic limestone came to be generally known as Bedford stone. As such, it is specified by architects in more than thirty states." Transactions of the Indiana State Agricultural Society 1853 31-32 and Geological Reconnaissance of Indiana 1862 137.

2 2 2

Chapter 4 Appendix

Journey to Des Moines—A Memoir by Lewine Enderle, BVM

My coming to Des Moines may be of interest. The Thursday after Easter [April 21] 1892, Mother Gertrude (15) came home and sent for me. [Lewine usually addressed the envelopes and was not surprised to be sent for.] I went to her room where she was busy handling mail.

Chapter 4

But this day she asked me if I'd had my bath (Thursday was bathing day) and if I had plenty of petticoats on. Then she said, 'You are to come with me; we leave in twenty minutes.' Mother had brought Sister Mary Romualda Curran who was sick, home with her and Sister was sitting there in Mother's room. Mother took the cloak off her shoulders and put it on mine.

She went into Mother Clarke's room and brought out a suitcase that had belonged to Father Hattenberger [the crusty old chaplain who died suddenly in January]. It was weather beaten, yellow, and looked as if it had come out of the Ark. She set it down saying, 'This will be enough as you will be back at vacation. Sister Mary Bonaventure will get it ready. Go to the refectory; we will have a cup of tea.' ... In twenty minutes we were in the carriage on our way to Dubuque.

On the ride into town we said the Rosary and Night Prayers. Off and on, Mother broke the silence: 'They will ask you at Thirteenth Street (we always stopped there while waiting for train time) where you are going. Tell them you don't know.' Later she asked me if I had written my Easter letter home. When I told her I had, she said, 'then you need not write again; they need not know where you are.'

Again she said, 'who will teach the geometry now?' I answered that I did not know. Sister Mary Cecilia had gone to Chicago and had not yet returned when we left, and I learned later that she did not want me to go. Mother told me that if Sister Mary Cecilia was at Thirteenth Street when we got there to tell her that she had no one else to take. These and a few more remarks were all that were said.

When we reached Thirteenth Street, Sister Mary Basil Healy [her former teacher] threw her arms around me and turning to Mother said, 'Are you taking my Minnie?'

We had to wait there until train time about 11 p.m. The first thing Sister Mary Francesca Walsh said to me was 'Sis, where are you going?' My answer was, 'I don't know.' ... We had a little lunch and then, when Sister Mary Basil was helping me put on my cloak, she whispered to me, 'You will see Sister Mary Annunciation [another former teacher].' I asked, 'Am I going to Des Moines?'

The weather was cold and snowy. [It had been a record cold winter with spring temperatures as low as -35 on the western plains]. When we changed cars [coaches] at Savannah, it was sleeting and Mother was suffering from neuralgia. We arrived in Des Moines between 6 and 7 a.m. It was pouring rain; all the floodgates of heaven were open. Mother asked the hack man to take us to St. Joseph Academy. He said, 'Not today. The wheels would stick in the mud.' So she asked him to take us to Sixth St.

The convent there was a little cottage across from St. Ambrose Church, now the Cathedral. Next to it was the school, a two story frame building. Some of the Sisters

slept in the school building. When we reached the convent, the Sisters were just coming in from Mass. Of course, the first one to meet my eye was Sister Mary Annunciation. She took me over to the school building, where she slept, to wash my face and freshen up...

We breakfasted on our way [to the academy] by streetcar, I carrying the wonderful suitcase. The streetcar did not go all the way to St. Joseph's so we had to walk some distance [a few miles]. Finally we reached the Academy. It was a two story frame building situated where the front of the present building stands, surrounded by woods and wilderness, clay and mud. There was not another building in sight, north, south, west or east, except the Winsor home...

Sister Mary Baptist Seeley built St. Joseph Academy, Des Moines on the outskirts of the city, a few miles beyond the end of the streetcar line. [One reason she chose this remote location was to avoid further problems with Fr. Brazill.]

...The reason for my coming was that Sister Mary Louis Kennedy had died April 2 and I was needed to fill the gap. Original manuscript in BVM Archives

History of St. Joseph, Des Moines, Iowa

The Redoubtable Father Brazill

John M. Brazill was the vicar of the diocese of Dubuque under Bishop Smyth, the second bishop. He also functioned as pastor at St. Ambrose, Des Moines, where BVMs taught. Sister Mary Baptist Seeley, principal and superior of St. Ambrose parish school, originally planned to build a BVM high school between St. Ambrose and Visitation, two BVM parish schools. Because Brazill consistently "forgot" to pay the Sisters' salaries and demanded more than their contract allowed, the BVMs saw him as a man of doubtful integrity. When he proposed to sell some lots for the high school to Baptist, then offered the same lots to some Christian Brothers for a boys' school, BVM trust in him stretched very thin. However the Brothers decided against Des Moines so Brazill wrote Mother Clarke as if she had agreed to his terms for the lots. She immediately sent Baptist Seeley a plan designed to keep him from any future claim on the lots if she bought them.

Letter 174

"...Dear Sister,

I don't understand what Rev. Fr, Brazil (sic) means by saying the first payment \$3000 won't be due until Dec. or Jan. next, as I have not made the purchase yet, and would not make the purchase before having it well secured from all future claims from any one. If you are all satisfied that the lots are all you wish and that Fr. Brazil gives them as I understand for \$17000, do you think that

young Catholic lawyer there has experience enough to transact the business for us? Dear Sister we too need more room and need aid to do it but God is all-sufficient in Him we will trust.

Your Affectionate

M.F. Clarke

BVM Kathryn Lawlor comments, “Baptist Seeley, one of the pioneers who had opened St. Ambrose parish school in Des Moines in 1865, now [1884] served as its superior. Mary Frances [Mother Clarke] had great trust in her ability since she had known her as a student at St. Joseph on the prairie and admired Baptist’s talent in continually compelling Father Brazill, a difficult pastor, to pay the Sisters.”

The next letter, Letter 181, reveals the business acumen of Mother Clarke and her distrust of Brazill. In Letter 182, she promises to send Gertrude to help Baptist choose among the properties she is examining for the Des Moines BVM academy.

Letter 181

June 3, 1884

My dear Sister,

Yours of the 27th received. As I went to a great deal of expense and trouble in procuring what I sent on to you for that corner lot, and the Rev. Father Brazil (sic) then thought proper not to give it to us, I won’t take it now... I like what you say of the five acres [the Welch mansion and grounds] but could you have a school there if you were now living there and how could you be accommodated for Mass and the Sacraments, as the Street Car does not run that far? ...Dear Sister, be careful in communicating to Father Brazil what passes between us – as it might lead to trouble...

Your Affectionate

M.F. Clarke

Letter 182

June 14th, 1884

Dear Sister,

... I will send a Sister out next week who will aid you in selecting one among the places you named... While Sister [Gertrude] is with you speak together of all matters and if all conclude it is best to have boarders I won’t object—although I must say I prefer the Parish and Select Schools...

Kathryn Lawlor, BVM, comments on the Des Moines negotiations for St. Joseph Academy. “At the suggestion of Baptist Seeley and her advisers, the Congregation finally purchased the Welch estate on Grand Avenue, Des Moines, for \$20,000 on October 22, 1884.” Baptist rented the mansion, ... named Villa Marie until BVMs could equip it as a school. Your Affectionate 63-67.

The Bees on Father’s Hat

The story about the bees places Bishop Loras and Father Donaghoe west of Dubuque on John Walsh’s claim. They had come up the little hill on the prairie looking for a place to build the motherhouse. Donaghoe prayed to the Blessed Virgin for a sign. It was a warm day and both men threw their hats down on the ground to feel the breeze.

“They were then about ten miles southwest of the city [Dubuque],” wrote Pulcheria McGuire.

“Suddenly their attention was attracted by the humming of a swarm of bees that had alighted in Father Donaghoe’s hat. The busy little creatures flew in and out of the depths of its crown and all around its wide brim, while they totally ignored that of the bishop, although it lay beside the other... At length, Donaghoe, pointing to the novel beehive, exclaimed: ‘We shall build our convent here!’”

Pulcheria McGuire ANNALS Chapter 12 --14 (hctographed copy). Harrington 55.

Stout Farm

Of course most readers are doing the math. If the Rebman place of 27 acres cost \$15,000 (about \$556/ acre) and the Stout farm of 91 acres cost \$15,000 (about \$165/ acre) what was the catch? Why was the farm so much cheaper?

Apparently, the bargain price resulted from Mr. Stout’s well-known philanthropy and the death of his favorite horse! Coogan2 243 n6

Henry L. Stout, a rich man, pastured his herd of fine horses on Grandview Acres, his breeding farm. The story is that a favorite horse fell over the bluff and was killed just before the BVM offer to buy. When Loyola Rutherford and lawyer Keane visited Stout to discuss a possible sale, Stout literally “gave the farm” to the Sisters just as he had earlier given a building to the Dubuque YMCA. Because of the Rebman price, Loyola knew it was a bargain and snapped it up. A newspaper account mentions that Stout actually handed the deed to Gertrude in person.

/ / /