CONFLICT AND CONSENSUS IN CATHOLIC WOMEN’S EDUCATION: A HISTORY OF SAINT MARY’S COLLEGE, 1844-1900

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Saint Mary’s College has long proclaimed that it focuses on educating the whole woman; mind, spirit, and body in the hopes of creating women uniquely suited to face the current (whatever decade that might be or has been) social situation. Nothing expresses this goal better than the marketing motto, “Educating Women, Transforming Lives,” which graced the college’s promotional materials from 2004-2009. This slogan reflects the college’s commitment to graduating young women as empowered, educated, and Christian individuals who can create change in the world around them. This motto also signifies the importance placed on women and their ability to have an active role in society that has played a fundamental role in the foundation of the college, creating a legacy of active community involvement and a dedication to the ideas of dignity, respect, and self-confidence for all women. Saint Mary’s graduates are given a card, which they are encouraged to carry in their wallets upon their graduation that reflect these ideals.¹

In spite of the college’s efforts to craft a seamless, institutional history for its contemporary students, one that connects its present aims to a past founded on consensus among its founders, my research sheds light on the considerable conflict that also shaped

¹ See Appendix 1A, for a copy of such card.
Saint Mary’s role in the Catholic Church and its mission to educate young women. This study will examine the obstacles faced in creating a college for women within a religious society that remains highly patriarchal. I will analyze the college’s founding in 1844, its break from male leadership and patronage in the 1860s, its relations with skeptical locals between 1844-1900, and, finally, its curricular aims relative to Protestant institutions in the same era. By examining the institutional history of Saint Mary’s College this study will determine the path to autonomy, explore the tensions between Catholic tradition—rooted in European models of piety—and its American context, as well as the differences in how Catholic and Protestant women were educated, and if it had any role in the larger conflict that would emerge between Protestants and Catholics in the early twentieth century.

Until recently Catholicism was nearly written out of this era so dominated by Protestant revivalism. But when Father Sorin and the Sisters of the Holy Cross arrived, they set out to build upon missions to Indians in the Great Lakes that had their roots in the eighteenth century. When Catholicism has entered into the historiographical discussion, the focus has been on how the Catholic Church could compete with the explosive growth of the Baptists and Methodists in the early nineteenth century, focusing largely on regional differences between the North and South. Indeed, the historiography has stressed how the Catholic Church sought to keep pace with westward American expansion while engaging the increasingly democratic values of the American population.

In the eighteenth century, the Protestant majority in the British colonies showed continued hostility towards Catholics. Only in Pennsylvania and the French colonies were
Catholics welcomed and embraced. The French embraced Catholics because they had been “hardened by long civil wars over religion[.]. The crown regarded Catholic uniformity as essential to the political subservience of its subjects.”\(^2\) In the British colonies little welcome was offered to Catholics, with the exception of Pennsylvania. In Pennsylvania William Penn, tired of being persecuted for being a religious outsider, created a colony which welcomed all religions. For the most part distrust towards Catholics remained widespread. Alan Taylor notes that between 1689 and 1713 warfare made France a major concern for Britain, creating one unifying theme among all British subjects: a distrust and hatred of Catholics. “Despite their many internal disputes over religion, the Scots, the English, and their colonists could see themselves as united Protestants when they focused outward upon Catholic France.”\(^3\) In colonial America national identity became tied to religious belief. Catholics were unsuitable subjects because of their beliefs.

With American independence came now questions from Protestants about the fitness of American Catholics for citizenship. Francis Cogliano’s essay *Exposing the Idolatry of the Romish Church: Anti-popery and Colonial New England* best explains the interconnection of these anti-Catholic fears in the cultural and economic context of the Revolution. Protestants had the “intellectual freedom to read scripture; in turn, their intellectual freedom permitted their religious and political freedom; religious and political freedom produced economic initiative and drive which produced economic prosperity—

\(^3\) *Ibid.*, 300.
the emblem of a free society.\textsuperscript{4} Catholics, who accessed scriptures during the mass through a priest were seen as ignorant, because scripture access led to intellectual autonomy. Because of this ignorance, Catholics were “easy dupes for tyrants, secular and religious, thus the church hierarchy was able to steal the wealth of its laity; therefore Catholics were mired in poverty and ignorance which cost them their freedom and their souls.”\textsuperscript{5} In the post-revolutionary era rational thought and self-government emerged as prized values for the new citizenry. Because Catholics supported the pope and relied on priests to interpret scriptures, Protestants believed Catholics failed the single largest litmus test for citizenship in the new America.

In the post-Revolutionary era the question over Catholics’ ability to be part of the new national identity took on a new dimension. As the nation developed a distinctive identity, concerns emerged over whether or not greater personal freedom would mean a decline in church attendance and a dip in individual morality. With preachers like Charles Finney and Lyman Beecher sparking an evangelical revival, Americans turned increasingly to Protestantism during the Second Great Awakening. Taking the Methodists as an example, itinerant preachers, grounding their teachings in the new scientific discovery of the era while still employing fire and brimstone images drew converts rapidly. In 1810 there were 175,000 Methodists; by 1850 1,247,000 Methodists.\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{5} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{6} Daniel Howe, \textit{What God Hath Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 178
percent. And these itinerate preachers eventually settled down, creating church communities that responded to issues of everyday life. At the time of the Revolution there were 50 Methodist congregations in the United States, by the time of the Civil War there were 20,000.

The Methodists were not the only evangelical Protestant group that saw a rise in membership during the post-Revolutionary era. Rather they were one of many that dominated religious life in America. Catherine Brekus in her essay *Interpreting American Religion* notes that Robert Baird wrote the first major history of nineteenth century religion in America in 1844. He noted that “constitutional separation of church and state had not weakened American Churches but, on the contrary, strengthened them.” Baird contended that rather than harm religious dedication, the freedoms and personal liberties inherent in the new American experience created greater opportunities for religious choice. Baird surveyed the religious landscape and divided the vast number of religious groups into two categories; evangelical and unevangelical. “According to his interpretation, the evangelical churches were responsible for the best features of American life.” He noted that they were responsible for a number of social reforms and were dedicated to educating non-believers, teaching children the Bible, and caring for the poor and orphaned. In contrast he saw all non-Protestants (unevangelicals) as rejecting what he called the true Christianity. In the unevangelical category Baird combined Roman Catholics, Jew, Shakers, Swedenborigans, Unitarians, Mormons, Deists, and

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 180.
10 Ibid., 318.
atheists. He noted in his book that Catholics “had buried the truth amid a heap of corruptions of heathenish origin.” Regardless of espousing a belief that these religious groups were small and too preposterous to ever find a hold in America, he was concerned that they would all, “undermine America’s identity as a Protestant nation. Despite his defense of religious volunteerism he hoped that unevangelicals would eventually become mainstream Protestants.” Thus to Baird, and many Protestants converted during the Second Great Awakening, the ultimate goal for the new nation was to become a Protestant nation, to be the city on a hill shining the religious fervor and dedication to the rest of the world. Catholics and those Baird identified as unevangelicals were a direct challenge to that idea and were in turn lazy and falsely religious until they too joined the ranks of mainstream Protestants.

As Catholic missionaries surveyed Lake St. Mary’s in South Bend in 1843, they surely encountered Protestants like Baird who espoused suspicion, if not hostility, towards Catholics. Adding to this alienation, Catholics do not worship in the same ways Protestants do leading to confusion about idolatry and worshiping persons other than Jesus—that to be an American one must be Protestant. Catholics rejected this notion, and sought to create a community identity that would meld with the Protestant experience around them. They held their own revivals, with itinerant Priests.

Priests of several religious orders (notably, Jesuits and Redemptorists) became traveling missionaries, carrying the divine word and sacraments to the thinly scattered 150,000 Catholics living in the United State in 1815. Like their Protestant counterparts these preachers warned of the flames of hell and encouraged hymn-singing; then they

11 Ibid
12 Ibid.
would exhort their hearers to the sacraments of penance and [H]oly [C]ommunion.13

Catholic revivalists did not take their cue from American Protestants. Rather, certain orders (once again the Jesuits and the Redemptorists) had been doing this type of work for centuries in Europe, where in some cases, monarchies banned them as subversive. During these revivals, priests would often leave behind books that detailed the various devotions that lay Catholics could perform either in private or in a group, so that they could continue to worship once the priest left. In the revival era American Catholics were swept up with emotional camp style meetings. At the same time they retained their beliefs in transubstantiation, miracles, and saints. Jay Dolan addresses this phenomenon in his work, *The American Catholic Experience*, when he notes that these devotions flourished in this period because they “became a means of social identity; it gave people a specifically Catholic identity in a Protestant society.”14 It was a means of remaining Catholic while, the public camp meetings offered a means of demonstrating their American values to a suspicious public.

Despite these efforts and a dedicated belief about Catholics that they were indeed Americans, tensions remained. Protestants found Catholic devotions to saints and rote prayers too constrictive. And the inherent hierarchy that was associated with Catholicism, like the need for all parish property to be put under the ownership of the bishop and the lack of personal freedoms associated with taking orders from priests, bishops, cardinals, and the pope, was too much for Protestants to accept. Despite efforts to blend in with Protestants, and a conscious effort to demonstrate and to encourage lay-organized

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devotion—often out of necessity due to a shortage of priests Catholics could not bridge the divide.

Like their co-religionists elsewhere in the nation, the Sisters and Brothers of the Holy Cross who arrived in South Bend in 1843, felt the need to prove their ability to be devout Catholics and good Americans. They were well aware that they were under suspicion and that there was great concern about what it was they were doing, as they attempted to create a Catholic college. These women and men were worried they would not be able to win over their Protestant neighbors, a feat, which if not accomplished could potentially turn deadly. Yet despite these concerns, Catholicism flourished, though not to the levels that Protestantism did, and the communities at South Bend continued to flourish as well.

The ascendency of the Catholic Church, and the large immigrant following who transplanted their faith from Europe to the United States, spurred a strong nativist response among native-born Protestants. American Catholics had reason to fear this movement in the wake of the destruction of the Ursuline Sisters Convent in Charlestown, Massachusetts in 1834. The Ursuline Sisters operated a school that was attached to their convent. The nuns, fearing the non-Catholic population would cause them harm, kept to themselves and prevented contact between themselves and the townsfolk. This led many Protestants to wonder just what was occurring behind closed doors at the secretive convent, whose purpose was to house women who would serve as teachers to the convent school, and nurses to the Catholic medical facility. Tension came to a head when a nun, suffering a reported nervous breakdown, fled the convent only to return a few days later. Protestants believed she was being held hostage upon her return, and, demanded that they
be allowed to see her and speak to her when they gathered at the gates of the convent on August 10, 1834. When the Mother Superior refused, they set fire to the convent. They carried with them tar, flammable materials, and torches, and began their assault on the convent. The students and many of the nuns fled, but by morning the institution was in ruin. These events made Catholics fearful of Protestants and Protestants more distrustful of Catholics. Further complicating matters, the woman who had left the convent, wrote a book six months later detailing that she had been abused both emotionally and sexually by priests who said mass for the convent. The events in Charlestown made the Sisters of the Holy Cross more careful and reminded them that they had to be vigilant about the image they presented to the world. Furthermore, events such as these illustrate the emerging nativist movements in the U.S. that flourished with the surge of Irish and German immigrants, many of them Catholic.

The flood of Catholic immigrants made “the Roman Catholic church [became] the nation’s single largest demonization” by 1840. While Protestants still out numbered Catholics, Catholicism was a force to be reckoned with. With their growing numbers Protestants began to fear their influence more and more, particularly when you realize that to many American Protestants, Catholics were not American, an interpretation that was not helped with the mass immigration of the early nineteenth century. As American Catholics welcomed millions of immigrants to their ranks, adopting traditions from their respective countries, Protestants viewed Catholics as a fringe element, straying farther from Christ, and becoming more and more un-American. An example of this type of

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adaptation of other cultures is most commonly associated with Hispanic cultures. In 1848 when the United States took Mexican land, residents of Texas, Arizona, California and New Mexico were flooded with missionaries. Primarily Catholic priests who converted them by allowing them to adopt a folk tradition based Catholicism. “This included an intense respect for local patron saints, many of whom were credited with frequent miracles, and a strong Mariolatry, represented by devotions to the Virgin of Guadalupe.”17 These adaptations, as well as celebrating feasts of local saints made the transition to Catholicism easier, and are how the Catholic Church was able to convert immigrant populations as well as many of those who found themselves annexed as part of the era of Westward expansion.

In the nineteenth century, American Protestants were moving more and more toward home worship. This is perhaps best explained by Coleen McDannell’s work, The Christian Home in Victorian America.18 Looking at both Catholic and Protestant families in the Victorian period McDannell examines the trends in middle-class consumer culture to explain a shift in Protestant religious practices that simultaneously offered women a larger role in the family and in the religious sphere. McDannell argues that the nature of Protestant religion, which does not require believers to attend church every week, coupled with the nature of consumer consumption—which saw the addition of religious material goods such as Bible stands—created an avenue for women. They were reading from the Bible and teaching the children in the home. They became the de facto worship leaders, usurping the man’s ultimate authority in the home. She also suggests

17 Ibid., 219.
that the home, the center of female power, according to the domestic sphere ideology, was the primary place of religious observance. Yet despite these broader changes in American Protestantism, Catholics were still reliant upon a patriarchal hierarchy that dictated only men could be priests and no sacraments, the primary form of celebrating worship for Catholics, could be offered without a priest.

McDannell’s work highlights two important issues: increasing Protestant distrust of Catholics and increasing reliance on worship within their homes. The role of women in the church was another point of contention for Protestants and Catholics. Catholics had female participation, but it was limited, prescribed, and overseen once again by a priest whom non-Catholics felt was given too much power. Nuns were a great source of confusion for Protestants; they did not understand what their function was, since sacraments could not be carried out without priests. Orders of nuns served in support roles. Nuns were and continue to be the nurses, teachers, and social workers in the Catholic church. They were also often times the domestic help for order priests. Their duties often appeared to outsiders as subservient and thankless. In addition many Protestants felt as though the need for nuns could have been eliminated if priests would simply marry. Nuns often fulfilled many of the duties that a minister’s wife would have managed. As Protestant women were being given an expanded role within the church, they were increasingly being welcomed into camp meetings, fundraising efforts, and benevolent programs. As McDannell notes, they were also generally the leaders and instigators of home worship. While they were not being allowed to lead formal services, nor showing up in the pulpit their role was expanding while Catholic women’s
opportunities for participation were not, and it was yet another source of difference and confusion surrounding an already distrusted and mysterious religious group.

Women’s expanded role in the religious arena was not only significant to those who wished to participate more fully in their worship practices. Rather it also provides insight into the shifting social mores of the period. Women’s growing moral authority in the home reinforced the link between piety, morality, feminine virtue, and domesticity, combining these ideas into a revised definition of womanhood. Women were using religious participation to create an expanded social role for themselves. One cannot consider how womanhood is defined in the nineteenth century without first being aware of Barbara Welter’s seminal article “The Cult of True Womanhood”.

Welter defined how historians understood women’s role in society; she coined the term most often associated with nineteenth-century women, the cult of domesticity. Nancy Cott offers the fullest explanation of this concept. She contends that women’s sphere, which emerged in 1780 and was the dominant school of thought concerning the role of women until the Civil War, provided a means to greater gender consciousness—or so Cott believes—linking women together as it held them all down.

Catherine Kelly argues that while men’s work was becoming more industrial, more governed by time, and society more dominated by cash, women labored in ways that remained preindustrial. “In other words whatever bound women together was linked to broader social and economic transformations and by extension to the emergence of new class structures and

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relationships.” As the society became more and more driven by cash as well as goods and services, women found that their personal labor could be worth something, even if not monetarily. Men found their sphere in politics and industrial labor. Women’s sphere was defined by domestic work and childrearing, yet as economies grew, middle-class women—not just affluent women—found themselves in charge of domestic help. They were managing the affairs of the household, they grew more powerful and were seen as the authority on the matter.

Out of this idea of spheres emerged the justification for women’s benevolent work. Women reasoned that if their sphere was the home and domestic matters, then they were best equipped to teach poor and immigrant women how to be better mothers and housekeepers. The best description of this ideology, and the movement towards charity work that it sparked emerges in Ann Boylan’s work *Origins of Women’s Activism.* This book deals specifically with women in Boston and New York from 1797-1840. It highlights that women first began breaking the social boundaries outlined by the separate spheres ideology through benevolent work. Boylan describes the ideology as one in which “men would still exercise power over women, especially over wives, but fathers would no longer rule sons, and women’s continued subordination within families would be ideologically reconstructed through a discourse of equal but separate spheres.” Understanding the role of women this way allowed women an opportunity to extend their feminine virtues outside the home, by doing charity work for the poor, often seen as

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23 Ibid., 6
children and therefore under the purview of women. Women found power in such work, not only because they were leaving their homes, but also because they were often times running such societies and organizations on their own, with little or no help from men. Furthermore, as women became more engrossed in this type of work, and had experience with the poor in the large cities, men called upon their expertise to shape public policy and fight poverty.

Lori Ginzberg also deals with the notion of benevolent work, in her work, *Women and the Work of Benevolence*.\(^{24}\) She suggesting that benevolent work was neither a liberating nor a restraining experience. Rather, she suggests that benevolent work reinforced and highlighted class barriers, and that while it brought middle-class women out of their homes, and offered them an expanded social role, working-class women suffered. She suggests that the moral undertone to middle-class benevolence worked, creating a climate in which working-class women were judged on a moral and a social level, failures not only as mothers and housekeepers, but also as Christians. This reflects trends that were seen among missionaries in the West and in foreign fields, where contempt for Indians and other native peoples who were seen as savages or the others. This also relates to the tensions between Protestants and Catholics, where an inherent distrust of the “other” exacerbated a misunderstanding of the origins of a given behavior. Ginzberg thus rejects the idea of a universal sisterhood, that crossed class boundaries, and embraces the notion that benevolent work only helped middle-class women change their social status, while doing little for poor women.

While Catholic women’s involvement in nineteenth century parish benevolence needs additional attention, this study illustrates how the Sisters of the Holy Cross tapped into these currents of American education and reform while seeking to remain steadfast in their Catholic faith. They themselves were focusing on expanding the education of women, offering them the most robust education possible, in a time when such an education was still taboo. They also suggest that the idea of space, and what constituted public religious space, were being redefined in this era. Both Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s founders were focused on creating an institutional footprint, on erecting buildings as early as possible. This in part reflects a practicality for Catholics. But mostly it is another facet of Catholicism: to create a separate, sacred, worship space as a sign of respect and glory to the sacrifices of Christ is a significant part of Catholicism. According to Church doctrine, the faithful must demonstrate moral responsibility to care of the living Church, which Christ himself built upon St. Peter, when he declared him the first Pope. Thus the creation of a defined and separate worship space was not only necessary it was a definitive priority, even as it caused further tension between Catholics and Protestants, who undoubtedly did not understand the focus on a building.

All of these authors offer the foundation from which this study germinated. As is the case with any academic effort, this study has its limitations. When dealing with a closed religious organization that prized discretion and often faced suspicion, if not hostility, it is little wonder that they limited primary source materials. Moreover, because Saint Mary’s college was originally run exclusively by sisters much of the early personal diaries, letters, and papers were either lost or remain restricted within the community’s private archives. Thus the sources, though rich in basic information, like course
catalogues, class lists, rules, costs, and courses, are bereft of personal details, opinions, and speculation. Moreover, the authors of most of the primary source documents were written by individuals who had a vested stake in the institution’s history. Considerable information can still be gleaned from these limited sources. Of course room remains for further research, including the creation of Saint Mary’s and its eventual split of the two colleges from Notre Dame’s perspective. One could also expand the study of Catholic women’s colleges to include the others that existed, like Saint Mary’s of the Woods, or to delve further into the history of Protestant women’s colleges using more examples on both sides. These are the additions to the study that I would make were I to continue further research for a doctoral dissertation.

Despite these limitations this study does a number of things, with excellent—if limited—source materials. The institutional history of Saint Mary’s, and its intimate relationship with Notre Dame, explores Catholic success in a time of anti-Catholicism, and serves as an interesting baseline for how such matters were dealt with from Catholic persons and institutions. It explores the role of women, in a time of change, where roles outside of the home were prescribed to domestic matters, like childrearing, and helping the poor. Yet, it was also a period of growth and education, one in which women played an integral role. It also explores whether or not the differences everyone assumed and that did indeed exist between Catholic and Protestant extended to how both sects educated those whom they saw as needing protection. Saint Mary’s, its establishment and growth, offers a microcosm through which to study the greater changes that were occurring in gender and religion in America during the 1800s.
Chapter 1: The Early Years

The history of the women’s colleges is full of men who played a large role in their founding and development. Whether as funders, founders, or governors, most women’s colleges have had men involved in their organization. This is also true of Saint Mary’s College. Yet complicating this rather common place involvement, in the case of Saint Mary’s College is the fact that the founders were religious women—not in the sense that they had religious faith, but in the sense that they were members of the clergy—who by the nature of their religious order had at some level a priest who governed their business operations. At the time of the College’s founding, the idea that women would have sole ownership was so foreign that it did not occur to anyone. And yet, the women set out to establish an academic institution that would educate women, and in its modern form become a college dedicated to empowering women to exceed gender stereotypes. It is an interesting juxtaposition. The conflict between religious duty, the desire to be autonomous, and to provide the best education possible is not limited to modern times. In fact it has played out across the history of Saint Mary’s College and provides broader insights into the role of Catholic Women’s education.

Saint Mary’s is typical—its origins and rules are similar to other women’s colleges—and yet at the same time it is unique. The college is headquarters of the world order of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, shares a unique and undaunted connection to the
nation’s preeminent Catholic university, the University of Notre Dame, and has a history as diverse and unique as it is long. This story is one that is infused with interesting characters like Reverend Sorin, whom any Notre Dame graduate is aware of and who was as responsible for the establishment of Saint Mary’s college as the first sisters who operated the institution. And yet such a connection cannot exist without internal struggle that at times nearly destroyed the relationship between Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s. There were internal politics throughout the organization’s histories that made progress difficult and painful. These conflicts centered around men who sought to serve a divine interest in the way they saw best, and yet in reality they placed personal goals and vendetta as well as social mores (that limited the role of the very women they sought to employ and educate) ahead of what was in the best interest of other own goal. At the same time these conflicts shed light on the state of Catholicism in early Indiana and offer insight into the origins of American Catholic women’s education. This chapter will explore these divisions, as well as the founding of the order and the decision to open a mission in the wilderness of the newly formed Indiana state, in the hopes of understanding how a college founded and originally dictated by men, became the college run by women with the goal of educating women to be free thinking.

With Faith in their Hearts: Founding the Order

The story of Saint Mary’s College starts with a different but connected story. It cannot be told without the inclusion of a brief amount of the history of the origins of the University of Notre Dame du Lac as well as the origins of the Congregation of the Holy Cross. The Congregation of the Holy Cross was created in Le Mans, France in 1836 and
founded by Blessed Brother Basil Moreau as an order of priests.\textsuperscript{1} Moreau was
considered an extremely devout man, who also possessed a great love of secular
education. He believed that a well-rounded education was essential to the development
of a more religious individual. One of Moreau’s biographers, but also most notably by
Sister M. Eleanore observed this quality in her work \textit{On the King’s Highway}. She wrote:

He was, for example, a pioneer in the promotion of the general learning of
priests; for he knew that, along with their dignity as ministers of sacrifice
to the Most High God, they are also custodians of learning among
Catholics. With that far-seeing vision which was to anticipate the liturgical
renascence so much the goal of modern Catholicism, which was to
anticipate Canon Law in many of its latest points regarding religious
discipline, he looked into a future rich in education establishments of
higher learning, wherein not merely priests belonging to religious
Congregations would be educated and would teach but also secular priests
would be trained to higher standards of intellectual efficiency. Even so
early as 1835, Farther Moreau brought about the introduction of a
scientific course in the Grand Seminary.\textsuperscript{2}

Moreau clearly possessed a deep and abiding interest in educating the laity as well as the
religious. In 1838 Moreau and his order opened a boarding school “in which there was
opportunity for those who wished to acquire more education than given in the primary
department. Latin was given special attention. Constant increases in number in both
departments created a difficult problem of domestic help.”\textsuperscript{3} Moreau desired to have
religious women doing the domestic work rather than the laity, to keep the focus on a
religious-based education in the fore of the student’s minds. Moreau in his own notes

\textsuperscript{1} There were others involved in the creation of the world order of the Brothers and Sisters of the Holy
Cross, however, for the purpose of this study this information has been omitted in the interest of brevity
and simplicity. Moreau has been nominated by the Brothers and Sisters of the Holy Cross for sainthood,
and is currently in the first stage of three involved in the confirmation process. More information on the
creation of the world order can be found in the first chapter of Mary Riia, CSC, \textit{A Story of Fifty Years: From the
Annals of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, 1855-1905} (Saint Louis: Becktold, 1905.)

\textsuperscript{2} Sister M. Eleanore, \textit{On the King’s Highway: A History of the Sisters of the Holy Cross if St. Mary of the

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Ibid.}, 22.
recorded that he desired a sisterhood “to co-operate with the other branches in their pious labors, and to labor themselves in a particular manner for the benefit of the youth of their own sex.”

Before this study can continue to discuss the history of the origins of the Sisters of the Holy Cross and the founding of Saint Mary’s College a word about sources must be mentioned. Moreau himself authored a memoir, however, it is entirely in French and no English translation could be located. Thus much of what is known about Moreau is from other works that draw on this memoir that their individual authors have translated and incorporated. These sources are good and the authors are native French speakers often associated with the order or Moreau himself. Furthermore, Edward Sorin, also authored a series of letters that have been translated and compiled giving further insight into who Moreau was as both a man and a leader. Another problem with gaining insightful, unobscured writings about Moreau is that Moreau carefully restricted his writings to religious topics, and always couched his thoughts in religious terms focusing on the divine will of God in his efforts, and spending a great deal of time on religious matters such as prayer and mass preparations.

Similarly, it is also difficult to find an un-muddled picture of the rights, responsibilities and feelings of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. That is not to say that these kinds of issues go unaddressed. Rather they are clouded by formal language and a sense of a need to avoid certain aspects of life within the order. The sources drawn on here, to discuss the early years and the internal political tensions, reflect this hesitancy to speak plainly. Religious women were expected to be devout, pious, tolerant and obedient.

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4 Rita, *Fifty Years*, 8.
Even when referencing individuals with whom they disagreed, the women remained
diplomatic and gracious, preventing historians from having a window into their true
feelings on the matter. This does not preclude an incisive study on their women and their
work. With this context and an understanding of the limitations on free speech and the
ways in which a closed religious organization view their mission and purpose, these
works can provide a rich picture of this vital era in American Catholicism.

Despite the limitations of these sources much is still known regarding the
founding of the order. Spurred on by his desire to have religious women doing the
domestic work for his newly organized priest and brothers, Father Moreau organized an
order of sisters, the original group consisting of only five women, in 1839. The women
were chosen from a small group of local French women, who have been described as
“uneducated country girls.” Moreau describes the women in this fashion:

> Since the foundation of Christianity on the twelve shapeless stones which
> it pleased the Son of God to choose and fashion, have not all the
> Institutions that have flourished in the Church started with instruments
> which, humanly speaking, were most unpromising? There is the seal and
> the triumph of divine workmanship.

Moreau possessed high hopes for the women who originally formed the Sisters of the
Holy Cross, but they did not necessarily come from auspicious origins. This is perhaps
the best explanation as to why, despite beginning to live together, pray together, and
working in the service of others, the women did not profess their vows or enter into a
formal novitiate until 1841. Furthermore, because he distrusted the women, Moreau
closely oversaw their activities and tightly controlled the fledgling order. When it was
decided a habit would be beneficial to designate them from the non-religious, several of

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5 Eleanore, *On the King’s Highway*, 22.
6 Ibid.
the women opposed his proposal on the grounds that they found the dress too religious in appearance and refused to wear it. A compromise was struck and the women first began wearing the dark colored habit which was similar in style to a French peasant dress, in February of 1839.

This difference of opinion over the habit may seem trivial, but it highlights two values integral to this order. First, among Catholic religious women, the order typically chooses their own habit collectively among the founding members. Second, by choosing to refuse their Abbé the women displayed unfamiliarity with the process of religious life where novitiates were not given choice or freedom in respect to activities and practices. It also suggests that even in the early days the women of the order were not typical, nor content to be mindless rule followers. The women respected the rules and their founder; however, they were not afraid to voice dissent or opinion.

The official habit was received in September of 1841, when the women began their training. As noted by Sister Mary Rita in her work *Fifty Years From the Annals of the Congregation of the Holy Cross, 1855-1903*, “At the end of a year they were admitted to the religious profession with the formal title Sisters of the Holy Cross[.].”7 The women then took residence in a building specifically built for them among the others at the small compound which had come to be known as Holy Cross by other residents of Le Mans, France. The branches of the Orders of the Holy Cross [the sisters, the brothers, and the priests] were modeled after the Holy family, in Moreau’s opinion operating together for a religious purpose, yet each individually fulfilling their own predetermined role in fostering the faith. Despite Moreau’s goals and his own support of the sisters, they faced

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7 Rita, *Fifty Years*, 9.
opposition from the beginning. In 1841 Moreau received a concerned note from his Bishop who wrote:

> See that your Sisters are pious girls, solely destined to household work and I shall have nothing to find fault with, provided all necessary precautions stated by the Rule, are kept. But the predetermined end must be clearly stated, and it seems to me preferable that, even in your Constitutions, there should be no mention of these girls, since they are only an accessory.  

Moreau complied with his bishop’s request and in the original constitution described the women as “pious girls devoted to the household work of the various establishments directed by the priests in France; but abroad they apply themselves to education, as do the Brothers whose Rules they are to observe.”

Here again the sisters struggle to be recognized and accepted as part of the religious community. The Bishop of the Le Mans, France diocese, whose name is not found in the records, expressed a desire to prevent the women from becoming full sisters, a title with which certain status and respect is given. He feared that the women were not ready for such status. Moreau himself showed a belief in the women, and negotiated a middle ground. By acquiescing to the Bishop and noting in his return letter that the women were under the direction of the priests of France he, prevented them from being recognized members of the Congregation of the Holy Cross with an independent set of rules. However, by also making a notation about women out of the country in a missionary role, he left a door to legitimacy open. Women missionaries were to follow the rules of the Brothers and Priests, and while this was not an independent set of Rules for the sisters themselves, it was an opportunity to follow and interpret the rules of the other divisions of the Congregation, without the direct influence of a Priest, as the

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8 Eleanore, *On the King’s Highway*, 33.

community under Moreau in France faced. This twist of words offered a broader purpose to the sisters if they were to leave France. Moreau himself had desired to be a missionary priest but had been assigned to the French countryside instead. But his desire to go abroad in the name of God was an advantage to the Congregations of the Holy Cross. Soon the brothers (and a short time later the sisters) were being dispatched to the foreign missions.

A Call to the Wilderness: The Indiana Missions

In the spring of 1841 Moreau was asked to send missionaries to Indiana. Asked by “the Right Reverend Celestine de la Hailandiere, the successor to Bishop Brute…for volunteers for the Indiana missions”\(^{10}\) the group lead by Reverend Edward Sorin consisted of six other brothers, “four professed and two novices, who left the Mother-House at Le Mans on August 5th of that year.”\(^{11}\) Sorin was twenty-seven years old when he made the trip and had been a Priest of the Holy Cross since 1839.\(^{12}\) He was a native son of France. Although largely untested, Moreau found him to be extremely devout and to have a sharp mind. Under Sorin’s leadership, the small band arrived in New York in September of 1841, and after staying for three days to celebrate a feast day, began that journey from New York to Vincennes, Indiana. The trip was long, and not the most direct route, however it was the cheapest and the small group of missionaries arrived in Indiana in October.

\(^{10}\) Rita, *Fifty Years*, 12.
\(^{11}\) Ibid.
These missionaries were not the first Catholics in Indiana, nor were they the first to open a mission in present-day South Bend, Indiana. The mission of St. Joseph was the first in that part of Indiana, it was founded to engage and convert the Pottawatomi Indians. Father Allouez called by some “founder of Catholicity in the West” arrived to serve the Pottawatomi in February 1770. Allouez erected Fort St. Joseph at the southern Bend of the Saint Joseph River. In 1868 Father Allouez constructed a log chapel at the edge of St. Mary’s Lake. This would become the original site of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame. The outpost fell into disuse after the missionaries moved on to Illinois to convert Indians there. The little log chapel as well as the land would not see residents again until Father Sorin and his six compatriots arrived on a cold day in November 1842.

The intermediate abandonment was an unplanned event forced by a combination of territorial politics and understaffed missionaries. At the same time that the settlement at Ft. St. Joseph was being established, the first Bishop of Indiana was being installed. The diocese ranged over all of Indiana territory and into Illinois. By 1838 it was Father Benjamin Petit who was in charge of the little community in South Bend, his predecessors having died in their work. However, it was in that year that the United States government ordered the removal of Indians to territory west of the Mississippi. Petit accompanied the Pottawatomi, many of whom had converted to Catholicism, to St. Louis, and left them in the hands of a Jesuit priest, Petit died a few days later in St.

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13 Eleanore, *On the King’s Highway*, 98.

Louis. Some of the Indians had been permitted to stay in Indiana by purchasing their land from the state and agreeing to live as white men. These were the individuals left without a priest until the arrival of the Brothers of the Holy Cross.

Sorin and the others arrived and were stunned by what they found. They were surprised not only at the beauty of their new location, but also of the work that had already been done by LaSalle and Petit. Sorin noted in his journals:

I said my first Mass at Notre Dame, where M. Petit so often before me had offered the Holy Sacrifice, over the tomb of the saintly M. de Seille, [LaSalle] whose memory is still fresh and revered throughout the land, and who, realizing that he was dying, and having no priest to assist him, dragged himself to the altar, administered the Viaticum to himself, then descended the steps and died. I cannot express how happy we are to possess the remains of this saintly missionary! The death of M. de Seille was a great loss to the Mission, especially to the Indians among whom he had done so much good. His place could be supplied only by M. Petit. I knew M. Petit, the worthy Apostle of the Indians, only through chance meetings when travelling. But now, as I possess all the books and writings which he left to the Mission,—now, that every one around me is continually speaking of the good M. Petit, and that everything here, from the altar on which I offer the Holy Sacrifice to the very table on which I write these lines, reminds me of dear Father Petit, I intend to make him my model; and if I cannot imitate him, I shall, at least, at a later date, tell you of what he has done.

For Sorin, LeSalle and Petit had provided a sacred space upon which to build the University. In not only their actions towards and dedication to the Indians, which Sorin saw as pious and Godly, but also through their deaths which were unmarked and unattended by a Priest these men had sanctified by sacrifice the land that Sorin assumed

15 Petit was recognized for his service to the Pottawatomi and to the fledgling community that would become the University of Notre Dame. His remains have been laid to rest in one of the chapel vaults in the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at the University of Notre Dame.
16 For more about what has been described here, and other key parts of the history of the Catholic church in Indiana, particularly in northern Indiana, see Eleanor, On the Kings Highway, Part II Chapter I.
17 Excerpt as printed in Rita, Fifty Years, 19. Full copies of Sorin’s journals and much of his correspondence from this period are available to researchers in the Sorin Manuscript collection at the University of Notre Dame Archives, Hesburgh Library, South Bend, IN upon request.
control of. A sacrifice that undoubtedly had a Christ like symbolism for Sorin and his men, which helped to establish the land as a sacred space, much like adding relics of saints to the alter of Catholic churches helps to sanctify the space through sacrifice. This is a common and powerful theme among Catholics, something that holds great meaning because of the parallel to Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. Sorin’s decision to imitate the life of Petit was also a sign of how deeply he respected these men and saw their lives as holy and a model for his own service.

Yet, despite what already existed, Sorin and the others saw immediate need. The original buildings—including their lodging provided by the bishop of Vincennes—were insufficient; they were too small, indeed the men spent their first night in the nearest town’s lodging house because they could not all fit into the existing structure. In addition the little money they brought with them from France quickly ran out. Sorin was understaffed, out of funds, and in need of more structures if the fledgling Notre Dame was to flourish and grow.

From the beginning Sorin had been promised by Moreau and Bishop Hailandiere of Vincennes that a group of sisters would be following them from France. After much finagling and many transatlantic letters, Moreau and the Bishop of Vincennes finally came to an agreement in September of 1842. Moreau indicated this in a letter to the Bishop, stating:

I am willing to send you, next May, another priest, two Brothers, and two Sisters if you wish. … I desire to make our foundation dependent on Holy Cross, because such is the spirit of our Rules and the wish of my Council and mine likewise. Then, my Lord, you will have the advantages derived from this work without having the burden, and you will have the enjoyment of it so long as you will protect it; for I pledge my word not to
withdraw our *confrères* and our Brothers from your diocese so long as they can live there.\textsuperscript{18}

Moreau’s terminology is interesting. For the phrase, “you will have the enjoyment of it so long as your will protect it” is a savvy political move. In couching his desire to remain in the area in these terms Moreau was giving a silent acknowledgment of Hailandiere’s power. As the Bishop of the diocese Hailandiere alone could decide whether or not the congregation of the Holy Cross would be allowed to remain. However, by stressing that there are advantages to Hailandiere by having the Holy Cross in South Bend, a great distance from Vincennes, without having to staff the outpost himself Moreau was underlining the necessity of the work the congregation was doing, while acknowledging the power (and in some ways stroking the ego) of Hailandiere. This was a delicate situation in which Moreau showed a keen sense of the power struggle that was taking place in the United States.

This awareness and careful handling of the situation appeared to have paid off. In November the Bishop sent a return letter to Moreau agreeing to his terms, and informing him of a plan to cede diocesan land to Sorin and his group to help with their efforts in establishing the college. It was six hundred and forty acres upon which the current outpost occupied ten. This gift by the bishop showed the dedication to the forthcoming college, but was also a political move. The land in South Bend was judged by the bishop to be three hundred and fifty miles from Vincennes. Allowing the Brothers to take over the land took the headache from the bishop and established a Catholic ministry in the furthest reaches of the state, all staffed by priests who would not come from the meager

\textsuperscript{18} Eleanore, *On the Kings Highway*, 111.
supply the bishop himself had in Vincennes. It was a move motivated by faith, but rooted
in politics, a description that would come to characterize much of the story of Notre
Dame and its twin institution Saint Mary’s College.

The Need Is Great: The Sisters Arrive

On June 6th, 1843 four sisters of the Holy Cross left France for the Indiana
mission. These women were the first sisters of the Holy Cross in America. Sister Mary
Rita, notes in her work on the history of the college that, “these pioneer sisters brought
with them from France—from ‘home’—a statue of Our Lady, the first to grace Notre
Dame, the place so especially dedicated to her name and honor.”19 Upon their arrival they
immediately began the domestic work, which included overseeing the sacristy, the
infirmary, the laundry, and the dairy.20 In addition they took on many other menial task
that might be needed and also did some teaching to area children. Yet, when they first
arrived they had no formal lodging because the building that Sorin was in the process of
constructing for them was unfinished. So during those first few months the women made
their home in one of the dilapidated log buildings, their trunks and boxes as the furniture,
and their umbrellas serving to patch the leaky roof when it rained.21 Further complicating
these conditions, of exhausting work and an unsatisfying place to rest, three more nuns
were sent to join the original four. For two years the seven women lived above the new
log chapel that Sorin constructed. It was all one room, with one window and half of the
room was partitioned for a chapel in which the women could say devotions.

19 Rita, Fifty Years, 21.
20 Ibid.
21 M. Eleanore, On the Kings Highway, 126.
Sorin recognized that these conditions were less than ideal, and decided that the women needed their own building in which to give them a permanent founding in the United States and to establish their own novitiate in Indiana. He applied on behalf of the sisters (as was the usual procedure) to Bishop Hailandiere of Vincennes for permission to establish the order in the diocese. He was refused. The bishop argued that the sisters of Providence in modern Terre Haute, who had come a few years earlier at his own request, would require all of the diocese’s support. He suggested that the diocese charged with such a large undertaking on such limited resources could barely support what they already had, let alone take on a new order. Sorin was at once disappointed and agitated. He submitted to the bishop’s decree, as he was required to, but he was displeased and disagreed. He believed that the women would be able to care for themselves financially, as Brother Moreau had promised. Furthermore, he believed that geographically the two orders would not be drawing spiritual support from the same people. He felt that the bishop’s rejection was rooted in something other than concerns over financial stability.

This would begin a period of tense political infighting within the church. Sorin, unwilling to cross his own Bishop but devoted to the cause of the sisters, approached Bishop Lefevre of Michigan (headquartered at the time in Detroit) regarding a permanent home for the women. The Fathers of the Holy Cross had been sent to a small town near the Michigan-Indiana boarder, called Bertrand. They had been raising small buildings of their own. Sorin contacted the leader of the Fathers at Bertrand and asked if they would be willing to allow the sisters to take up residence at their compound and endeavor to open an academy there, in order to educate young women of the community. The rector of the community agreed and Sorin received written permission from the Bishop of
Detroit. On July 16, 1844 the women took up residence in a home provided for them by M. Bertrand for whom the community was named.22

However, the news of this arrangement reached Bishop Hailandiere of Vincennes, who was outraged that Sorin had in essence ignored his decision and flouted his authority. He appealed to Bishop Lefevre of Detroit to rescind his approval and he did. Sorin was aggravated and traveled to Detroit, as soon as he heard the news, to appeal to the bishop directly to see if he could have the decision reversed and settled once and for all.

His visit was most opportune, for Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati arrived while Father Sorin was there, and to him the matter was submitted. After studying the situation, he decided that Bishop de la Hailandiere's [the Bishop of Vincennes] fears were without ground, and, as a result of the conference, Bishop Lefevre [the Bishop of Detroit] withdrew his prohibition, renewed his first permission and gave to Father Sorin and his young community his paternal and episcopal benediction.23

The mediation of the Bishop of Cincinnati was fortuitous because it resolved the political and emotional dispute by giving each of the players an excuse and someone else to blame. Sorin found Bishop Hailandiere to be distrustful and backbiting, reneging on his solemn promise to help Sorin establish a Catholic community in South Bend. Sorin felt that he was only doing what was necessary to accomplish this task to the best of his abilities by ensuring both domestic aid for Notre Dame as well as a place for the education of women in the northern part of the state. Hailandiere, however, felt that he was doing exactly that, and that Sorin was trying to amass a larger group than he had been permitted (Hailandiere had never promised to allow him to establish two schools in northern Indiana). Rather Hailandiere believed that the Sisters of Providence in Terre

22 Rita, Fifty Years, 24.
23 Ibid.
Haute would provide Catholic education for women and that Sorin’s alliance with the Sisters of the Holy Cross was simply part of Sorin’s plot to usurp the bishop’s own authority. In the end, Sorin achieved his aims even as he made an enemy of the Bishop of Vincennes. Yet, Bishop Lefevre of Detroit became one of the sisters’ most ardent supporters and remained on their prayer intentions list until his death.

In the first few years of the community at Bertrand they struggled. There were times when they were without meat or bread because their supplies were split with those at Notre Dame, and had to be sent from South Bend to Bertrand. Their work was also long and difficult. In addition to overseeing the physical development of buildings at the small community, they were also charged with educating the settlement’s children and caring for orphans that would routinely arrive at the small compound. Most tedious was their responsibility to Notre Dame. Sorin noted in his sermon to the Congregation for mass at Notre Dame the first Sunday they arrived, that their “devotion…[would be] to cook, wash, mend, nurse, even milk the cows…” for the students at Notre Dame. By the second year of operation at Notre Dame, 1844 there were “twenty five students on hand; before the following September, forty students had attended the college, some very briefly.” The community was small, but as the Sorin’s sermon suggests, he was adamant about the need for the sisters.

The women met these needs, and these duties took up much of their time. They had to wash their clothes in the St. Joseph River, and then return them to Notre Dame. Yet the women were used to difficult labor, and saw it as their pastoral duty.

24 Arthur Hope, CSC. *Notre Dame One Hundred Years* (Notre Dame, IN: University Press, 1943), 76,55
Furthermore the shortages and difficulties of receiving supplies eased as Father Sorin applied for funds for both the brothers and the sisters, in 1845. His request was granted, and along with the funds additional women came from France to join the community at Bertrand, and by the end of the year there was a total of fourteen women. In 1846 a Mother Superior was appointed and she took over the needs of the community and managed its affairs.

The appointment of Sister Mary of the Cenacle, one of the original pilgrims, to Mother Superior was a bold and momentous step. Within the Catholic Church the Mother Superior is responsible for the governance and running of a particular order. There is a superior for each house, or location of nuns, and a mother superior that supervises the entire order. Similar to the way that parish priests run the parish but still answer to the bishop. The mother superior is also responsible for assigning daily tasks, a task essential to good order. The average day of a Sister of the Holy Cross began early around 5 a.m. with personal daily prayer. Daily mass, with required attendance, was at 6 a.m., breakfast at 7, and the work day began at 8. Work included teaching for those assigned the task, or it could mean more rudimentary labor, including tending farm animals, mending, washing, or any combination of these tasks. Noon saw a small midday meal and then work commenced again. At 5 or 6 p.m. dinner was eaten, followed by vespers at 7 and then a return to solitary quarters by 8. Once in their private quarters sisters were expected to be silent for private prayer or sleep. The appointment of one of the women in South Bend as a mother superior was significant because it allowed local

\[26^\text{Ibid.}, 32.\]
\[27^\text{A general description of a daily schedule can be found, M. Companion Kuhn, History of the Sisters of the Holy Cross: Saint Mary's, Notre Dame, IN, Microfilm, roll 6.}\]
control over the daily life. Moreover, it was the first time any of the women were appointed to self govern themselves. They continued to work in tandem with Father Sorin and the Brothers of the Holy Cross. However, they were able to make some of their own decisions and had a small budget of their own with which to procure supplies. The bond between the women and Father Sorin was great; he came weekly to hear confessions and say mass for them, to council them on religious matters, and was a great source of advice for the mother superior. The women endearingly called him Father Superior.

As soon as a mother superior had been named the community began development. Buildings were built to make classrooms for the yet unnamed academy under construction. They continued to do the domestic work for themselves as well as at Notre Dame, but their school was also growing. In 1848 Mary of the Cenacle died and was succeeded by a number of women in quick order who all faced untimely deaths, until finally in July of 1849, Mary du Sauveur was appointed mother superior.

This appointment was most timely, for Mother du Sauveur was a woman of discernment as well as of superior education. There was an immediate impetus in school-work, and soon was inaugurated a period when it was said, "The Academy begins to fly with its own wings." These "wings" were forty feet each, and attached to a building with ninety-two feet frontage, a structure most imposing for those times.28

Under her watchful eye the school expanded rapidly. The new buildings were only the beginning.29 By the fall of 1850 there were 50 students on the rolls. The school had been named the Saint Mary’s Academy, and a dress code and code of conduct for students had been named. In 1851 the state of Michigan granted them a charter, and in 1852 a charter

28 Ibid., 42-43.
29 See Appendix 1B for a lithograph of the community at Bertrand.
was received in France authorizing the spiritual education of the women at Saint Mary’s, officially making it a Catholic institution. In the span of approximately six years the once homeless novitiate had grown into a fully developed order in the United States and had established a successful school.

Yet the women remained close with Father Sorin and all involved still desired to have the twin orders (the brothers and the sisters) closer together. The same desire extended to the twin institutions. The opportunity arose when the responsibilities of Bishop in Vincennes passed from de la Hailandiere to a new bishop. Thus in 1850 the novitiate was given permission to move to South Bend, taking up residence on some land next to that which Notre Dame and Father Sorin resided on. It was not until 1855 that the entire tract of land along the St. Joseph River could be purchased. Upon purchase the sisters and their school were relocated from Bertrand to South Bend. On August 24, 1855 the cornerstone of the first classroom building was laid and blessed along the St. Joseph River. The Saint Mary’s Academy was renamed that day, to be St. Mary’s of the Immaculate Conception. Within the year a chapel had been constructed and buildings had been moved from Bertrand to South Bend. Interestingly the Bertrand buildings remained in Michigan until the construction began on the tract of land in South Bend, several of the buildings were then moved from Bertrand to South Bend to add to the new construction. They began the next school year in South Bend at the now permanent home of St. Mary’s College which under the direction of Mother Superior Angela, flourished and grew. This growth and the meaning it held for the college’s students will be explored
in later chapters, however the time at Bertrand and even its name holds significance and a storied history in the college to this day.³⁰

Some might be wondering why the fully established and growing community at Bertrand embraced the move. It was in part, as has been mentioned, to be closer to the twin community and school. Sister May Rita described it best in the work, *A Story of Fifty Years*,

while there could be no impugning the uprightness of intention on the part of ecclesiastical authorities there or in the diocese of Michigan, the atmosphere had not the clearness of perfect understanding. The relations between France and the Indiana province, and the relations between Notre Dame and Bertrand, gave to the little missionary and educational centre, notwithstanding its actual dependence on the diocesan powers, a seeming aloofness, a solidarity that presented the aspect of independence. Because of this, there was a withholding of that full episcopal approbation which is absolutely necessary to the peace and happiness of true children of the Church. There could be no censure on the sisterhood, but there was wanting the sympathy which makes labor light and which takes the savor of bitterness from the bread of toil.³¹

In this note it becomes apparent that while there had been support for the two groups, the internal politics of the Catholic Church had made things difficult. There were frequent misunderstandings regarding financial support, and bishops who felt their autonomy was being questioned. As a result these bishops withheld full spiritual support and accreditation from the sisters, causing the women to often feel they were not being recognized as a legitimate entity. For this reason Moreau and Sorin often sought to eliminate the political conflict in the hopes of highlighting the value of the women’s work, and bridging the gap between the bishops and the sisters caught in crossfires of their power struggle.

³⁰ There is a scholarship named after Bertrand. Also the world headquarters of the Sisters of the Holy Cross is located on College property today. Their offices are housed in Bertrand Hall.
Internal politics were not the only concern. The women faced external forces as well. Not everyone in Michigan was happy with the Catholic enclave and showed their displeasure. The chapel was robbed, the tabernacle carried away and the Blessed Sacrament spread on the floor and trampled in November of 1847.32 This incident upset the women and brought to light the harsh reality that they were not accepted by all of the members of the village in which they resided. Thus, in part, the decision to bring the two groups together was also done out a desire to offer greater protection against anti-Catholicism for both.

Just as the Brothers and Sisters of the Holy Cross are organizations with a shared history, so too are Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s. The women who created the college were not autonomous, they did not found their school without the intervention of men. However, they were given an unparalleled amount of freedom in their development of the community at Bertrand, in large part because of the distance between the two organizations. Furthermore, Father Sorin proved himself a colleague not an overseer to the women, for whom he had great affection and respect. In a sense as long as the sisters maintained their domestic duties to Notre Dame Sorin didn’t care what they were doing in the community at Bertrand-as long as it did not contradict the church. The move to South Bend was a collective decision done to protect both organizations and to consolidate power. It is a relationship defined in its earliest history by mutual respect and loyalty. The decision to bring the two institutions closer together to protect against violence and distrust would prove to be beneficial and wise in the coming decades as the wilderness of Northern Indiana became less wild and its inhabitants grew more

32 Ibid., 37.
distrusting. We will explore this phenomenon and the challenges it brought in the next chapter.
Chapter 2: Enemies Foreign and Domestic, 1854-1894: Growth in the Time of Internal Conflict and External Ambivalence

The early years of the Sisters of the Holy Cross were fraught with difficulty and movement. However, the novitiate successfully weathered the challenges and with the help of Father Edward Sorin, secured permission to move their residence from Michigan to South Bend, Indiana. And yet, the move brought with it a new unique set of challenges. There were some buildings brought from Bertrand, Michigan, but much of the work of erecting new buildings had to be done on sight after the move. Furthermore, for a religious order dedicated to education and nursing, the development and growth of the fledgling academy was of the utmost importance. Thus the period of development and growth between 1854-1894 would be the most challenging for the Sisters, for they would contend with erecting buildings, developing a community, establishing and growing an academy, as well as dealing with enemies to that progress both internally and externally.

As discussed in chapter one, the origins of Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s were linked, however, as both colleges grew the sisters developed their own mission. In the minds of some, namely Sorin, this mission to educate women and create a notable and exceptional educational institution for women was in direct conflict with the sisters original purpose to be domestic aids at Notre Dame and to the men of the Holy Cross. The sisters administrators saw their calling as educators and sought to separate, at least in
part, from Notre Dame so as to allow some of their members’ work to be focused on education. With the desire to become more independent came a fight over control not only of work assignments, but also of organizational and legal documents, but financial autonomy as well. In the end the Sisters successfully won both this internal conflict with a man whom they owed and respected a great deal. Moreover, at the same time they sought to justify their existence (and independence) to several levels of the church hierarchy they also fought to defend their existence and the very things that made them unique from local Protestants who questioned their motives and their religion. In the end it was a combination of luck, well placed friends who provided support, a sheer will to triumph, and an understanding of how to work from within a male-dominated system to challenge that system that lead the Sisters to prevail and move forward as an autonomous group.

“A Period of Quiet Growth”: 1844-1855 in South Bend

It is noted in the order’s archives that Sister M. Angela, who would soon become the mother superior of the order, and Sister Euphemia, were first brought to the newly erected building that would become their home on the evening of the ceremony, that had renamed the academy and celebrated their arrival to at South Bend, the building was largely unfinished and uninhabitable. In fact only one room had been plastered and was ready for occupants.\footnote{Rita, \textit{Fifty Years}, 64.} Furthermore, neither woman was discouraged by the state of their new home. Rather, as Sister Mary Rita notes, the next day Mother Angela, “declared that the measures arranged for in their legislative meeting of the night before called for an
immediate executive session; whereupon, she herself set about washing windows, while Sister Euphemia, with equal zest, applied herself to cleaning the floor!”2 Within three days the women had seen to the arrival of furniture from the house in Bertrand, and had finished the house, having it ready for the other sisters to move into and ready to shift their focus to the planning of the opening of the academy on its new site in September. This story shows the dedication of Mother Angela. Much of the growth of the college would take place under her watch. Furthermore, it shows the dedication to evolving and growing the mother house (simply a convent, which is a group of religious men or women who live communally, that has spawned other subsequent convents) would become her focus.

Mother Angela possessed a sharp mind and determination. The Catholic Encyclopedia notes that Angela had a love of religion and education early on in life. Her father died when he was young and the family moved back to Ohio, her mother’s home state. She attended a Dominican run school in Summerset, Ohio. She finished school at the Visitation Convent in Washington D.C. in 1844. “Her sympathy was roused by the sufferings of the Irish people during the famine, and she and her cousin, Eleanor Ewing, by their joint efforts, collected a large sum of money for their relief. In 1853 she felt the call to the religious life and determined to enter the order of the Sisters of Mercy.”3 Upon visiting her brother, who was studying to become a Priest at Notre Dame, she decided that the Sisters of the Holy Cross would be a better fit than the Sisters of Mercy. She found their mission of caring for the ill and teaching to be aligned with her personal

2 Ibid.
beliefs. The same tenacity that infused her early life, led Angela to excel in her role as director of Saint Mary’s.

She was also a shrewd directress, and quickly cultivated a climate of respect.

“Though there was not little prejudice among non-Catholics of the neighboring towns, some of the leading citizens of South Bend showed an interest in the new foundation.”

While there is not much mention of anti-Catholic sentiment in the congregation’s archives, nor in the published works that have been based off of those archival notes, this statement suggests that there was ill will towards the sisters at least in the beginning. This phenomenon will be explored in further detail later in this chapter. However, it is worth noting that in such a climate Mother Angela was able to secure help from South Bend residents to further the growth of the college. In fact one such “leading citizen” was a local judge, Judge Stanfield, who “aid[ed] materially in putting St. Mary's on a legal basis as a regular corporation, giving his counsel and services most generously,” so that “before the opening of the Academic years 1855-1856, the institution had a legal existence and was recognized by the State.” All that is known about Stanfield is that he was a judge in the area, his personal motivations for assisting the sisters is not known. Yet, for the fledgling institution it was seen as nothing short of a miracle.

This accomplishment reflects St. Mary’s rapid development. Securing legal existence offered the new college legitimacy in the eyes of the state, and while it did not

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4 Ibid., 66.
5 Ibid.
6 Ancestry.com was consulted on Stanfield, however only the basic biographical information was returned. According to the 1860 census records he was married and had one male child. Stanfield had real estate valued at $24,000 and a personal estate valued at 30,000. Other than these facts little is known. Year:1860; Census Place: South Bend, St. Joseph, Indiana; Roll: M653_295; Page:319; Family History Library Film: 803295  Accessed at Ancestry.com 1860 United States Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com on 1 October 2011.
alleviate anti-Catholic tensions, it demonstrates the women’s earnestness to the citizens of South Bend. This was only the beginning of the growth undergone in the first ten years at the new location. Within six months of the arrival of Mother Angela in 1855, there were wood frame buildings erected and finished, which constituted a convent, the academy building, an industrial school and a school for deaf mutes. At the same time the other sisters arrived from Bertrand, twenty-five in total. By 1860, a blacksmith shop had been added. The building was in fact a small cottage that was used for guests, particularly young women who were considering joining the order and their families, so that they could observe the life of the sisters at South Bend. In 1858 a small building was erected close to the academy building that was used as a gathering hall, but by 1860 became St. Michael’s Chapel. In 1859 the primary chapel that would be used by the sisters for their daily worship and college high masses was conceived. Construction of the Church of Loreto, which still serves this function today, began in 1859. The Church of Loreto has been and remains a spot for reflection and devotion. It holds a special place in the heart of Saint Mary’s students today, despite several renovations to the original structure, and Sister Mary Rita author of *A Story of Fifty Years* suggests that since its inception the church held a similar place in the hearts of the sisters and students alike.

Though a shrine of devotion open to all, for years it was associated closely with the Sodality of the Children of Mary, and it has always been a favorite spot with the students, as many votive offerings testify. There in the quiet chapel the cares of the busy school-day seem to slip off as the chaplet of Our Lady slips through the fingers, while to the Sisters, Loreto is a place where the present meets the past before the Altar throne, and where, almost unconsciously, the heart frames the prayer, "Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord!" Adjoining Loreto, a small presbytery was built
the same year, Father Sorin's room leading into the chapel; and additions later on gave accommodations for the chaplains and for visiting clergy.\textsuperscript{7}

In 1862, the main academy building was replaced by a new larger all brick structure. The expanding number of pupils justified this expansion and the building was noted as being fitted with all the extras of the time, though these were not enumerated in the records. In 1865 a new brick music building was dedicated to celebrate the first ten years in South Bend. The sheer size of the settlement and the growth in the number of students in these first ten years were not the only place that development occurred. The sisters saw their ranks more than double in ten years, and that only included those who were residing in South Bend at the end of the decade. It did not include those who had been sent to open smaller parochial schools in places like New Orleans, Chicago, and among the Indians, nor those who had been tasked with serving as nurses in army field hospitals for the Union during the Civil War. Thus the first decade in South Bend was a time of enormous growth and leadership for the sisters.

Father Moreau visited from France in 1857, at which time he was impressed with the growth and development that had occurred in such a short time. He published an open letter to the congregants at which time he noted, “The benedictions of heaven are too abundant not to acknowledge the protection of the august Patroness of the Society of the Sisters, and to honor whom, the good Superior of the Academy at St. Mary's (Mother M. Angela) prepared a beautiful ceremony, the remembrance of which will never leave me.”\textsuperscript{8} This sentiment conveys Moreau’s delight with the Sisters and their work. His visit also had a more practical effect, it was not solely to examine the progress made by the

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 68-69.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 71
sisters. Rather, since 1852 difficulties between the desires of the parent community of brothers and sisters in France and the needs of community of brothers and sisters in South Bend had raged in an extremely polite internal war of letters. In 1854 Father Sorin was given Provincial status and allowed to act in Moreau’s stead in the management for the needs of the entire Holy Cross community in the United States, namely the communities of Brothers and Sisters at Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s. Sorin found this an enormous responsibility.

[Father Sorin] felt the weight of his own personal obligation, as well as his responsibility for others, soul and body, who were bound to obey him. In addition, he was charged by the Bishop of the diocese of Vincennes with the spiritual interests of a widely scattered population; and was at the same time the head of an educational movement, the direction of which called for more than ordinary ability, energy and foresight. The spiritual relationship with the Mother-House was fully recognized and highly prized by Father Sorin, and there was little room for personal ambition in the whole-hearted dedication of his life to his chosen as well as appointed task.9

Thus it is evident that even early on there was a mutual respect and reliance on the women of Saint Mary’s, in part because without Mother Angela and her subordinates, Sorin would not have been able to accomplish what he had been tasked with. However, as time elapsed and the community’s responsibilities in the United States grew, to include smaller parochial schools in other parts of nation it became difficult to manage all aspects of the twin institutions and still defer and report back to Moreau in France. And while in the early years it was easy for Saint Mary’s and Notre Dame to share common funds, because both institutions were rather small, it soon became apparent that as each grew, more funds were needed and more autonomy was needed for each institution.

9 Ibid., 78-79.
Furthermore, Rome had already requested that the mother house in France, split the brothers and sisters into separately run and funded organizations with individual business operations. In short the brothers and sisters would operate alongside one another sharing a common pot of resources that would be divided between them, each with their own governor/governess, rather than joint governance under one individual. Rome also announced that this split should occur among the American delegation. Moreau’s visit in 1857 was to deliver this news and begin this process in South Bend.10

Breaking Free: The Battle for Autonomy, 1855-1865

While Mother Angela was overseeing an unprecedented growth and expansion that would constitute the largest period of building until Mother Madeleva would conduct a massive expansion project begun just before (and completed during) the Great Depression, a young girl was developing her own path in the religious life. A woman who would not only be instrumental in the further growth of Saint Mary’s college but would also be partially responsible for the political battle that would split the order and challenge the relationship between Sorin and the Sisters of the Holy Cross.

Because of her role in the internal political struggle between Sorin and the sisters, Augusta was a divisive individual. However, she also inspired a great deal of loyalty. In her short paper on the life of Mother Augusta, order historian Sister M. Campion Kuhn relates the story of how Augusta’s records were protected until a period in which they could be entered into the archives without being distorted or destroyed.

10 For more information and for a more detailed account of this division and a more nuanced description of what lead to this decision please see the chapter titled “Relations with France and Notre Dame” in the Sister Mary Rita, A Story of Fifty Years, From the Annals of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, 1855-1905. (Saint Louis: Becktold, 1905), 77-87.
The following facts were given to me by Mother Colette as she lay close to death. I was instructed by Mother to keep them carefully until such time as I saw fit to give them to some superior who would consider it a duty and a privilege to have them entered in the archives. They treat important events of the community at a time when its very existence was threatened; when God raised up a noble self-sacrificing woman who carried the community through its crisis.

Mother Colette said: “I vouch for the truth of these statements under oath with no thoughts of doing anyone a wrong, but only to have these facts secured for the archives, for I feel that mother Augusta will make no effort to disclose any of her participation in these events”.11

From this passage two important facts come to light, that even among the community members there was a need for secrecy so that the events in which mother Augusta played a large role would not be lost, as well as the fact that Augusta herself did not leave such records. Moreover Collette felt that she was duty bound (by her religious vows to be truthful.) She felt that despite the trouble recounting the story might cause the truth was necessary, for the community, but also to maintain her religious vows. In the same work Kuhn notes that materials on Augusta, or any notes in her own hand regarding the struggle with Sorin, are almost nonexistent. There are some materials in the Congregation Archives, that require permission to view, but these are not direct sources. Rather the information comes from two secondary sources, both written by the same individual, named only as Sister Cyril. One account comes from the materials and narrative given by Mother Colette on her death bed, and discusses the conflict with Sorin.

11 As quoted by M. Companion Kuhn, The One Woman: Mother M. Augusta First American Superior General, Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, IN, 1987 from Congregational Archives materials from the Mother Augusta box. Mother Collette died December 11, 1890. Sister Cyril who took possession of the archival materials and recorded Collette’s statements to the truth of the materials, held onto the items until the Centenary Chronicles were written. Cyril had been in the congregation 10 years at the time of Collette’s death. Cyril died in 1942.
Convoluting this incident are the multiple sources through which it passes. Regardless it is the best avenue for understanding what happened to cause a split between Sorin and the women at Saint Mary’s. The second account of Augusta’s life is compiled by Cyril once again, and comes from information given by Sister Evarista who lived with Augusta for a time at St. Cecilia’s, and from individuals who knew Augusta’s father. 12

There is a small amount of information that is directly from Augusta which comes from her Queries. Queries are the questionnaire that every individual who joined the order filled out. These questionnaires, as Kuhn notes, were “more concerned with freedom from impediments than with information.”13 Thus while there is much known about Augusta very little comes from her. Moreover, her role in tumultuous events with Sorin is less documented, and information is from secondhand sources. Nevertheless, the information is corroborated by those who were present in some way, and was sworn to be truthful by religious women who would have believed that breaking such an oath would result in an eternity in hell. Silence on an issue was much more likely than falsehoods. Of course, there was an inherent interest for the sisters to defend the institution along with a desire to claim credit for its success. Regardless of the limitations of the sources, enough is known about Augusta to know that her role was momentous and she perhaps more than any other individual woman, helped to propel Saint Mary’s towards becoming an autonomous institution for women by women.

In 1834, at age four Augusta’s mother died and her father attempted to take her as well as her three older siblings to Kansas. However, her brother was kidnapped and though later returned to the family, the event scared her father, and he felt that it was not

12 Compiled in 1890 on Collette’s deathbed. For more information please see Kuhn, foot note 1.
13 Ibid.
safe for her to continue on with the family. Her father continued his trip to Kansas with the older children, whom he felt were better able to safely make the journey. He left Augusta (birth name Ann Amanda)\(^{14}\) in the care of her aunt in Ohio. She grew up on a large farm, with a grist mill. It was here that she was exposed to Catholicism, there was a young priest who would come to celebrate mass, in a room that was reserved as a chapel at the grist mill. The young priest became the Bishop of Detroit in 1870, and Augusta became deeply moved by the faith.

Augusta was educated much the way that women of her age would have been in the period. She received the “essentials of reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and geography. She was, however, a student of human nature…. There was no topic in business, farming, or general subject on which she could not give firsthand information.”\(^ {15}\) Augusta also watched her aunt as she often nursed Indians and others who would come to mass. Throughout her youth and early adulthood Augusta was well educated and observant, learning many things outside of the traditional curriculum offered to women in that period. In 1854 she received the habit and was originally assigned to Notre Dame as a dressmaker, most likely because she indicated dressmaking as her occupation prior to joining the convent. After a brief stay at Notre Dame she was sent to Chicago to teach at an industrial school in the slums of the city. After four years of formation, and having worked in several different cities and schools, she was deemed ready and made her profession of vows to the church in 1858.

\(^{14}\) Prior to the Second Vatican Council it was expected that those joining the religious orders would assume the name of a Saint whom they admired, Augusta chose her name after Saint Augustine. Thus she ceased to use her given name. This practice, though much less common and no longer expected, still continues today.

\(^{15}\) *Ibid.*, 2.
As previously mentioned, Father Moreau visited the United States in 1857. However, the spilt from the Brothers of the Holy Cross did not occur until 1869. In 1870 a charter meeting was held and Augusta was elected as general stewardess. As such she “was responsible for all the temporal affairs of the Congregation and consequently was charged with receiving and centralizing particular account of all the Houses in order to prepare the semi-annual, annual, and sexennial synopses of the same. In the religious rank of the day, she was the last and lowest member of the general council.”

Augusta was well suited to these challenges. She had managed not one but two hospitals and been directress at the trade school in Chicago. The vote for her was a show of confidence in her skills as a leader. It is also important to note that it was the women who were electing their own leader; the men of the Holy Cross had already elected Father Sorin. Sorin was a natural choice to lead the men because he had already been serving in such a capacity. At the time of the sisters’ elections, Sorin was in Lafayette, Indiana. Nevertheless, upon hearing about her election, Sorin wrote her a detailed letter in which he congratulated her and offered her advice. Sister Mary Kuhn notes that the relationship between Sorin and Augusta appears to have been one of mutual respect and encouragement, at least initially. Kuhn notes that Sorin’s letter was largely encouraging as one colleague offering advice to another. She notes that he opened the letter by stating, “I feel satisfied that you will succeed in your important office and contribute not a little in securing at St. [sic] Mary’s comfort, peace and harmony to everyone depending on you.” Furthermore, Sorin

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16 Kuhn, The One Woman: Mother M. Augusta First American Superior General, 8.
17 Ibid., 9.
cautioned her not to be afraid of the responsibilities of her obedience nor to trust in herself for its fulfillment but each day to recommend her task “to Heaven and to our Blessed Mother.” He then gave her some specific advice: Remember the sick and visit them in person every day. Because Saint Mary’s had reached a degree of prosperity that made unnecessary “too close and call ways,” she was to be “prudent and cautious” with merchants “but never small.” Within six months she would gain the good will of all. “A little present from your surplus once in a while for your dealers in town goes a great way to make friends,” he reminded her. No matter how heavy her work, she must never forget that she was a religious. “Take care of your soul, attend to your exercises & [sic] give the community the first example of regularity.”

Yet the relationship between Sorin and Augusta may not have been as picture perfect as it seemed. The advice Sorin offered in his closing paragraph suggests that he saw a potential for a difference of opinions, or perhaps that he was simply worried that Augusta might take the institution on a path that that differed from the goals he himself saw for Saint Mary’s. Whatever the motivation, Sorin cautioned Augusta against doing much that would separate the two colleges, suggesting that it was God’s will to keep them linked. He noted, “As far as lies in your power, keep the two institutions on the best terms. Be zealous for both. If I know myself before God I feel the same for the one and the other. Heaven will bless these dispositions, I am sure, and therefore I wish them to remain unchanged but perfected.” Here, Sorin sought to appeal to Augusta’s religious sense of divine providence and remind her of the existing relationship between the institutions.

Yet Sorin’s wishes seem to have fallen on deaf ears. Or, at least were not enough to dissuade Augusta from pursuing the best interest of Saint Mary’s. Within a few months

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18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
of being placed in charge of the order’s financial records, she discovered that nearly all of
the income that Saint Mary’s was generating, and it was a sizable amount, was being
transferred to Notre Dame. Saint Mary’s was keeping virtually none of the money that its
efforts brought in, primarily through tuition. The money was collected and deposited in
Notre Dame’s coffers. If the sisters needed something they petitioned Sorin and it was at
his discretion if they were funded. Moreover they provided clerical and maid services at
Notre Dame for only limited, in-kind remuneration (scanty food supplies and a small
number of books). Augusta felt that this was not only a disservice to the students at Saint
Mary’s but also a misuse of the sister’s time. Sorin felt that the women emphasized their
teaching duties at the expense of their original mission of caring for the community at
Notre Dame. And this is where what is often simply referred to as “the incident” by
congregation historians occurred.

A basic look at the brief facts examined without a look at author bias or
emotionally charged rhetoric, it is clear that, in 1872 Sorin formed his own Novitiate. It
was located at Notre Dame and had a different directress than the Sisters of the Holy
Cross. Augusta wrote a letter expressing her dissatisfaction with this arrangement and
appealed to Bishop Dwenger. Shortly thereafter Sorin sent Augusta to Utah. These are
the basic facts of the situation, and yet they tell an incomplete story, for none of these
things happened independently of one another and they were highly contentious events.
But as is often the case with emotionally charged events that had little effect outside their
small community, scholars of these events are closely affiliated with the major players
and as a result were less than objective. Add to that a system that discourages dissenting
opinions, and a general desire to forget the events of such a tumultuous time and it is often difficult to find accurate accounts of events.

Accounts of the incident are hard to find from those who do not have a stake in the argument. In other words, the individuals who have chronicled the events have all been members of either the Sisters of the Holy Cross or the Brothers of the Holy Cross. For information on Sorin, there is one biography that is widely recognized as the expert tome on Sorin’s life. *Edward Sorin* by Marvin O’Connell details every major event in Sorin’s life, including the fight for Saint Mary’s. Drawing on personal papers and other sources, he records Sorin’s side. O’Connell suggests that while Mother Angela was difficult and strong willed he could compromise with her. Particularly on the issue of forming a second Noviate, he notes:

Cool heads—and no doubt, mutual affection and respect—in the end prevailed. The sisters’ council put forward a compromise proposition, which strongly denied Sorin’s allegation of calculated neglect—“that we, the sisters, have ‘virtually abandoned’ our first work we are scarcely prepared to admit”—and brushed aside his verbal legerdemain of “Adjunct Sisters”—a gesture “so frail, a mere nominal affair that sooner or later would end in two distance communities.” At the same time they acknowledged “our lively remembrance of what we have received from Notre Dame in years past and [from] you particularly, Very Reverend Father.”

The sisters agreed to a partial deal with Sorin, which will be discussed in more detail later, but Sorin’s biographer suggests that the primary reason for this deal was mutual respect. While the sisters themselves suggest it was sheer force of will, angry factions within the sister’s own organization, and Sorin’s own, fear of not compromising.

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O’Connell suggests that the Sorin and the sisters could have found their own solution to the issue had Bishop Dwenger not gotten involved. Sorin had a history of conflict with Bishops, which O’Connell notes, “Joseph Dwenger was only the latest among bishops with whom Father Sorin has had serious difficulties.” As for Sorin, he writes about Dwenger saying that, “[his] hotheaded (emporté) and imperious character all the world dreads.” O’Connell further notes that Dwenger “enjoys episcopal rights over the houses in his Diocese, as does any other bishop,” explaining that Dwenger had the right, as O’Connell puts it, to “meddle in the sisters’ business.” Both Sorin and O’Connell’s interpretation suggests that Dwenger was the party at fault and that that sisters and Sorin wanted to settle things peacefully. It also suggests a concern.

Much of the early history of Saint Mary’s is derived from Notre Dame because of their intertwined development in the early years. And this event, which spanned a decade is discussed in three pages. When the event is discussed it is done so in veiled terms. O’Connell’s work spends little time on it, roughly 10 out of a total of 720 pages. Moreover O’Connell’s mention of key players are skewed, 73 for Angela— with whom Sorin was close friends—and only 3 for Augusta. With little information about the incident, and much of the information being skewed or disputed, many present day alumnae of Saint Mary’s do not even know this event occurred. It has largely been hidden or misrepresented. There are a few authors who have touched on the subject in more detail, and they have all been affiliated with the Sisters of the Holy Cross.

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21 Ibid., 645.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
The incident, chronicled by multiple authors, remains shrouded in mystery by competing and often incomplete accounts of the event. To this end Sister Madeleva Wolff, college president from 1934 to 1961 and former head of the English department, in the chapter titled Mother M. Augusta, in the work, Superior Generals, notes, “The facts close up and isolated are disillusioning in spots and unpleasant in general. Looked at through the perspective of half a century of and in terms of results, they are the adverse and contending forces by which the will of God for the Sisters of the Holy Cross became manifest.”24 All authors who study this period refer to it as a black spot or dark period. This recalcitrance to discuss the events as well as the somber language in which they are discussed leads to the confusion surrounding them, yet this is likely due to the limited sources. The nature of the division of the congregation meant that documents were lost in transit, held for secrecy and (allegedly) intentionally misplaced out of spite. For these reasons both Kuhn and Sister Mary Rita have cultivated a suitable narrative which provides basic facts that are accepted as reflecting the actual events, yet we may never know exactly what happened during this period of change and confusion.

Another reason for the confusion surrounding these events is that the period is often overlooked by congregational historians or intentionally described in general terms. Only three sources, Fifty Years, Superior Generals, and Sister Kuhn’s conference paper, discuss the events in any sort of detail. Neither the brothers nor sisters of the Holy Cross like to discuss these events, they consider them a dark period in the colleges’ histories, as well as marring the legacy of early leadership, people who have been venerated by their respective orders as for their leadership and vision.

24 Madeleva, Superior Generals, 82.
As for secular historians it is often overlooked as insignificant or a simple footnote to larger more pressing points in institutional histories. However, these events cannot be overlooked, for it is in this period, and the challenges that surrounded the creation of a second novitiate, had lasting effects. It is in the 1870s that Saint Mary’s started to develop its own, distinctive institutional identity. There is a separation from the past of following Sorin unquestioningly and a sense that the leadership at Saint Mary’s was starting to look out for Saint Mary’s College as a separate and independent organization, rather than an auxiliary to Notre Dame. Moreover, this period sees a questioning, in so much as possible without being excommunicated, of the power structure surrounding the church as it applied to the administration of educational institutions. There is significant and outstanding physical growth, reflected in the construction of new buildings. But also administrative growth, reflected in Augusta’s willingness to fight for that which she had been entrusted without backing down or yielding.

The author of the rather self-congratulating work, *Fifty Years*, describes this period in perhaps the most positive light of the three accounts that were found. She notes:

Notre Dame grew rapidly, and the increased student body necessitated the employment of seculars for the work of the various domestic departments. This, of course, could not but be unsatisfactory; and, in 1872, Very Reverend Father Sorin conceived the idea of opening a novitiate at Notre Dame for the reception and training of subjects for the special needs of the place. Mother M. Ascension took charge of the new venture, and for seventeen years the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Cross presented the anomaly of having two novitiates, the one at Notre Dame only nominally under the administration at St. Mary’s, the
Mother-House. There was no question as to the admirable religious training at Notre Dame; the spiritual advantages were all that could be desired, and many excellent subjects were received; but the establishment was looked upon with disfavor by many of the best friends of the Order, who saw in it a detriment to the sisterhood and an obstacle in the way of Papal approval.  

This brief explanation is Rita’s only explanation of what transpired. It suggests that the split was unavoidable, and hesitates to blame anyone. In fact she remains upbeat through her discussion of the events which spans only three and a half short pages of the two hundred fourteen that comprise the work. She even goes so far as to note, that “it was only in official matters that there was ever any difficulty.” She insists that a mutual respect was retained throughout the difference of opinions. “Father General continued his ministrations at St. Mary’s, as he had done at Bertrand, considering no detail too small for his personal attention and interest; and he spent at least a third of his time in his beloved room adjoining the Chapel at Loreto, that shrine so dear to his heart.” Moreover, she suggests that the other priests at Notre Dame were also equally respectful.

Even in troubled times, when Father General could not see things as St. Mary’s viewed them, or the sisterhood could not take his view of them, the ties formed in early days between the two branches of the Association were not broken, and there was never any interruption in the exchange of the little offices that mean much in the way of encouragement and sympathy.

The good will that existed between the sisters and the brother came in handy in 1889 when the contention came to an end. It was in this year that an agreement was

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25 *A Story of Fifty Years*, 84-85. The proposed novitiate would have been styled in the same way that Saint Mary’s was. They would reside on the campus of Notre Dame and provide domestic services at Notre Dame. Sorin would be their administrator.


reached. “The Apostolic Approbation of the new Constitutions of the Congregation of
the Sisters of the Holy Cross, in 1889, for a term of seven years, provided for but one
novitiate; so the novices at Notre Dame were transferred to the novitiate at the Mother-
House, which still remains the only one of the Congregation.”29 Moreover, whatever
disagreements might have occurred they did not impede a formal recognition of the ties
between Saint Mary’s and Notre Dame. “In 1892 the status of the relations between the
two institutions at St. Mary’s and Notre Dame was drawn up by formal contract; and
though, in 1893, a renewal of the former unpleasantness threatened, the contract is still in
force and most amicable relations continue to be maintained.”30 Viewed through the lens
of Sister Rita in 1905, it seems as if the events were minor disagreements. And yet it
seems incomplete to explain the creation of another order in South Bend. When, as was
discussed in chapter one, it was considered by the clerical hierarchy unusual that two
orders of sister would exist in the same state, it seems unlikely that a mere forty years
later, it would be acceptable, welcomed even, to have two different orders of sisters in the
same city. Moreover, that they would share a general advisor (Father Sorin) seems
unusual.

A more nuanced explanation of the events is needed to understand how these
complexities effected the situation. Such an explanation is provided by Sister Madeleva
Wolff, Saint Mary’s president from 1934 to 1961, in the chapter titled “Mother M.
Augusta,” in the work, Superior Generals. Madeleva suggests that the “while solving the
problem of domestic economy for the priests of Holy Cross, they presented another of
their own autonomy. The solution of this problem is Mother Augusta’s unique service to

29 Ibid., 86.
30 Ibid.
As a young sister, Augusta walked back and forth between Bertrand, Michigan and Notre Dame, approximately six miles, twice daily to wash, cook, and clean for the university. Madeleva suggests that Augusta used the time it took her to walk such distances to question the system that had the sisters employed as domestic help at Notre Dame. Beyond her own dislike of the arrangement, Augusta saw problems in the system as well. As both institutions grew, and the Sisters of the Holy Cross became an order dedicated to both education and nursing, the daily chores grew unmanageable. Soon there were not enough sisters to meet the daily domestic needs of Notre Dame.

For reasons that are unclear and unspecified by any of the authors who touch on these subjects, secular help was unable to be obtained. Madeleva succinctly describes this and Sorin’s response when she writes, “Reliable secular help was even harder to obtain. Father Sorin decided to open a novitiate at Notre Dame for subjects willing to work there.” Madeleva offered harsher criticism of this decision than Sister Rita, noting that “Two novitiates within a mile were obviously undesirable and uncanonical. However, he presented his proposal to the chapter in 1873. Eleven members agreed to it. The opening of the second novitiate incurred severe censure from the Congregation for the Propaganda and definitely imperiled the approval of the constitutions and rules then under consideration at Rome.” It should be noted, and indeed Madeleva does, that Father Sorin was acting within his apparent authority. Since the establishment of the

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31 Madeleva, 83.
32 It appears after examining these authors as well as O’Connell’s work on Sorin, outside help could not be attained for no other reason that Sorin did not desire to hire and pay secular workers. 84.
33 Ibid., 84.
34 A serious accusation, suggesting that to open a novitiate without authority was in direct violation of canon law. Such violations can, in extreme cases, result in excommunication from the Catholic Church. Canon law is the universal church law that guides Catholic practices and devotions, with the hierarchical structure (the Pope in the head position) as a governing body.
35 Ibid.
Sisters of the Holy Cross in America in 1843, Sorin had been recognized as the only governing authority. “He presided at all elections as a matter of course. The bishop of the diocese was not invited and slight advertence was given to ecclesiastical sanction.”

Mother Angela, the directress at Saint Mary’s and in title leader of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, led the congregation for twenty-five years acting as a mouth piece for Sorin’s wishes and following his directions. In this period, between 1873 and 1882, her unwavering dedication to Sorin, as well as her failing health began to pose a problem. Or at least Augusta and others saw it as such. Angela had, in her dedication to Sorin, allowed community documents (financial papers, enrollment records, and property deeds) to be lost. As Madeleva notes, “In her impaired physical condition, Mother Angela could not account for these things.” Madeleva also discusses that it was believed that these lost documents, which should have been in the South Bend courthouse, were in actuality at Notre Dame.

Despite the level of detail provided by Madeleva she does not give specifics on what occurred between the forming of the novitiate in 1873 and 1882 when the chapter called a special meeting. She does note that that Augusta, despite her role as mother superior was sent abruptly and without recourse to the mission in Utah by Sorin in 1873, where she remained in exile until 1882. The chapter meeting was called and Bishop Dwenger was informed of the situation with the second novitiate. Dwenger acted at once.

He commanded an election to be held to which the sanction and the blessing of the Church might be given. He counseled the choice of a woman of strong and fearless character who would act according to the laws of the Church for the betterment of her community. He promised

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 85.
suffering and humiliation. He promised, also, a rebirth of the community to a fuller and more perfect life. He insisted that the deeds to property and other important legal papers belonging to the Sisters of the Holy Cross be put in their possession, and authorized legal assistance if necessary to protect them.  

It was the first chapter meeting to be presided over by a bishop and was the first election in accordance with cannon law to be held in the history of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. After that election in 1882 change was still slow and difficult. Mother Angela was retained as mistress of the novitiate until her death in 1887. The documents and deeds once lost were located at the archives at Notre Dame. Sorin returned them as he was instructed to do, but the process was long and took over a year. However, Augusta was diligent and found this a personal victory because once the documents were returned the sisters held the legal rights to the property that the college rests upon today. It is also worth noting that Augusta was unsure if she ever received all of the personal documents, those not directly related towards property and legal status. This loss, even temporarily, of the congregation’s historical documents perhaps best accounts for why rich primary source documents like personal letters and journals remain scarce. They are thought to have been held hostage out of anger, or perhaps lost, discarded or damaged in the course of changing hands and locations so many times in this contentious period. What does remain clear, however, is that property rights were returned to the sisters and they held the exclusive legal ownership of the land.

This change, did not come fast, and the sisters still relied on Sorin for priestly duties. Madeleva notes, “the recognition of and adjustment to the change were involved.

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38 Ibid.
The transfer of authority was slow and difficult. Father Sorin continued his accustomed administration. “39 Despite being declared autonomous, the sisters were still bound by the church hierarchy, in which they were still beholden to Sorin for mass. As well it was difficult to become independent overnight, and without Bishop Dwenger’s presence it was a challenge to keep the lines of authority clear. Moreover, Sorin was displeased and felt betrayed by the actions of Augusta.

Acting within what he felt was still his authority, Sorin sent Augusta away to foreign missions. From 1885 to 1889 Mother Augusta was only at Saint Mary’s sporadically.

After the first visit of Bishop Dwenger and the election she was ordered to Salt Lake City. At the end of three months the council wired her to come home. On her arrival Father Sorin directed her to return at once to Salt Lake. Mother Collette interfered. The vacation work of obediences was at hand and required Mother’s direction. Shortly afterwards she was sent to Texas for some months. On her return she was ordered away again.

Mother Angela acted as superior during these periods of enforced absence. Finally in desperation at her persistent exile, Mother Augusta sent a letter of protest to Father Sorin. He replied advising her to send in her resignation to the bishop. This she did July 24, 1884. 40

But the events were not over with her resignation. Much like a school teacher dealing with errant children, Bishop Dwenger traveled to South Bend immediately and took over the council that Augusta had called to tender her resignation. He called her forward in front of those attended and “upbraided Mother in no gentle terms, called her a traitor, and dismissed the council which she had summoned, without accepting Mother’s

39 Ibid., 87.
40 Ibid.
resignation.”41 Perhaps most frustratingly Sorin was present and said nothing. Mother Collette was furious and after the council was closed begged Augusta to tell the bishop the truth about all that had been happening and implicate Sorin for his part in the events. Augusta refused to do so, out of a loyalty that Madeleva does not explain.

Frustrated with Augusta’s silence and enraged at the events that were affecting the entire community, Collette herself went to the Bishop and shared with him all that had happened. In return the Bishop reconvened the council and reprimanded Sorin as well. Madeleva notes, “He…reprimanded Father Sorin as ruthlessly as he had reproved Mother Augusta shortly before.”42 As a result Father Sorin, who himself had been traveling—though Madeleva does not provide specifics about where or for what—chose to leave the meeting and remained away from South Bend for “some time.”43 Mother Angela was blamed for his absence.

Madeleva’s narrative, while a great deal more explanatory than Rita’s, still does not offer a full portrait of what happened in this tumultuous time. Little explanation exists about what Augusta did while away from Saint Mary’s, or how she managed to run the order while in Utah and then Texas. Moreover, little information is given regarding how Sorin had the ability to force Augusta away. Offering a more complete picture, though Augusta’s absences are still not fully illuminated, we must turn to Sister Kuhn, who in 1987 drew upon sources from the archives that are closed to lay researchers, as well as the oral tradition that exists among Sisters of the Holy Cross, and personal interviews with those who knew Augusta to create the most comprehensive narrative of

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 88.
43 Ibid.
this tumultuous period and recorded her findings in a paper that was presented at an unspecified conference.

While Madeleva details the specifics of the difficulties between Sorin and Augusta she goes into further explanation. On the subject of Augusta’s election as superior she offers a much more detailed explanation of the situation that allowed Sorin to still have a role in the direction of the sisters, and what gave him the power to force Augusta to leave the college so frequently. In July of 1869, Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati was named Apostolic Visitor and endowed with the powers of superior general of the Congregation the Holy Cross. “This charge he considered purely honorary. On the 27th of August, he sent the sisters a circular promulgating the separation and telling them they would soon receive new a Constitution and a Directory.”44 The constitution and directory were drafted and disseminated in 1870. In the documents was a request to Rome—a specific group in Rome would have to accept the documents and grant official permission for the order to become recognized—that the sisters have the right to elect their own ecclesiastical superior through a ballot every six years.45 Kuhn notes, however, that there are no records that show that this request was granted or that this election was ever held. Rather, “Father Sorin simply assumed all the privileges of an ecclesiastical superior as specified in the Constitutions; he watched over ‘the interests both spiritual and temporal’ of the Congregation, and he presided at all their council meetings.”46 As had been previously discussed it was in 1870 that Angela was named as the Mother Superior. Thus we see how Sorin had the authority to cause trouble for

44 Kuhn, 15.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
Augusta. The Sisters of the Holy Cross had a situation in which rather than being allowed to choose a Superior General (who would serve as the final decision maker, and could override the Mother Superior) the provisions in the fledgling constitutional documents were not followed, and Sorin assumed control. It is worth noting, that at that time, and given that Sorin had dedicated followers who remained such even throughout the tumult of this period, that Sorin would have likely been elected had an election been held. This failure to follow the newly created procedure, as well as the declining health of Mother Angela, created the conditions that allowed the events of 1882 to occur.

Sorin’s role in the sister’s organization is one of the few parts of the whole incident that O’Connell discusses. He notes, “what Father Sorin wanted…was a formal confirmation of his own position, or, expressed more broadly, continuing through him and his successors, of the integral relationship between the sisters on the one and hand the priests and brother on the other.” 47 Sorin did not agree with nor want the split between the religious orders that Rome was insisting on, thus his best case scenario and ultimate desire was to continue on as the ecclesiastical superior. In addition O’Connell suggests that Sorin believed that the sisters did not want the spilt either. Sorin wrote a letter in 1888 in which he noted that all the sisters supported him, and that, “the very thought of a decision severing them at not distant time from the paternal care and government under which Heaven has so abundantly blessed them, fills their souls with fear and trembling.” 48 Sorin closes these remarks by noting, “it is far better, they unanimously say, to remain as they are.” 49 Here it is clear that Sorin felt as though he had the support

47 O’Connell, 688.
48 Sorin to Dufal, October 6, 1885, AGEN as quoted in O’Connell, Edward Sorin, 688
49 Ibid.
of the sisters. And for a time he likely had the support of some. O’Connell alludes to the fact that Sorin did enjoy some support, but not as unanimously as he believed. “The unanimity in the end proved illusory, though no doubt there was substantial support for this position among the sisters, particularly so long as Mother Angela was alive.”50 Sorin believed that he had the support of the sisters, a testament to Angela’s ability to hold the sisters together into one cohesive group. It also underlies an issue that would become apparent in short order, Sorin disliked Augusta, and did not feel that she was a suitable nor acceptable leader for the sisters. At the same time, it also serves to demonstrate that Notre Dame historians—and stakeholders like Sorin—were reluctant to discuss this issue. The whole discussion of Sorin’s desire to be ecclesiastical superior occupies only one paragraph of O’Connell’s work.

While Madeleva and Rita both provide details about the events that occurred after Augusta was elected, including the difficulties that Sorin caused, such that it is not necessary to rehash them, Kuhn adds complexity to the story. She notes that the transition of documents back to Saint Mary’s occurred not out of good will or sheer determination on Augusta’s part. Rather because Augusta threatened to hire a lawyer (her strong defender and ally through her forced absence, Mother Collette, had a brother who was a wealthy lawyer.) Kuhn credits this threatened legal action with the return of important documents.51 She also notes that “at this point [Augusta’s] suffering began.”52 She notes that Sorin was vicious in his desire to see Augusta away from Saint Mary’s. She was only allowed to stay between her time in Utah and Texas, as discussed above, because Mother

50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., 17.
52 Ibid.
Collette threatened to expose Sorin’s actions (which violated the authority granted to the Mother Superior) to Bishop Dwenger. Moreover, as Kuhn notes the sisters were aware of the situation, both those at Notre Dame as well as those at Saint Mary’s, and were not above using the interpersonal conflict between Sorin and Augusta to their own benefits. “When dissatisfied Sisters complained to Sorin, he would tell them they need not abide by Augusta’s choice of work for them. At one time, so the story goes, more than one hundred were dissatisfied.” There were more disagreements which Kuhn would consider to be aggressive harassment. While the papers and deeds that detailed property rights were still being withheld from the Sisters there was an incident, which Kuhn describes.

One day as some Sisters were walking down the Avenue towards the road, they saw excavations for two houses on the property between the railroad and the highway. They learned that Notre Dame owned the property and was constructing faculty housing there. Mother Colette offered to buy the land whatever the price. Thinking she could not meet the demands, the University set the price exceedingly high. They had reckoned without Mother Colette. She simply wired her brother for the money. That threat to Saint Mary’s was counteracted.

Mother Colette purchased property that was already owned by Saint Mary’s, but without the bill of sale they had no such proof. Rather, she decided it was easier to force their hand into recognizing Saint Mary’s claim to the property by purchasing it a second time, even at an outrageous price. This sort of petty infighting grew daunting and wearisome, particularly for Augusta who experienced it from a distance, virtually powerless to prevent it from happening.

53 The length of her stay in South Bend is not enumerated in the account.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
As discussed previously, by 1884 Augusta was ready to tender her resignation, exhausted from the fighting and her banishment from the institution to which she felt a strong dedication. In July of the same year Sorin requested that she resign, and Augusta sent a letter to Bishop Dwenger notifying him of her willingness to resign. This is what brought Dwenger to South Bend to upbraid Augusta for her cowardice. But Kuhn also notes that Augusta thought it would be “more fatherly” if Sorin would “free her from the obligations imposed upon her by the chapter still ‘bearing her good name.’” It also appears from the letter that Augusta sent to Sorin that among Sorin’s accusations against Augusta, he had accused her of “permitting irreligious behaving at Saint Mary’s,” because Augusta also requested Sorin to come inspect the women at Saint Mary’s himself. Augusta in the same letter insisted that if her resignation was accepted that she was not to be put into a position of power in any way. Her new assignment would have come from Sorin and it was clear, according to Kuhn, that Augusta did not want to have to answer to Sorin in a capacity of authority. Her frustration was clear.

It is after this letter that Dwenger arrived and chastised Augusta, and Sorin’s actions were made known. Yet, as is indicative of Kuhn’s narrative as a whole, she offers further details about this event as well. She notes that after Collette filled Dwenger in on the events his reaction was

Immediate and severe. “All sense of right and justice have been outraged. It must not be borne by the community. Recall the council at once.” When the coronal reassembled, the Bishop ordered Sorin to his knees, admonished him “with the utmost severity” and ordered him off the premises “never to return.” Instead of rejoicing at his “exile,” many of the Sisters considered that Augusta had

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56 Ibid., 18.
wronged Sorin and allowed him to be driven from Saint Mary’s. She did not think she could explain. The council finally persuaded the bishop to allow Father to retain his place at Saint Mary’s. All of this had little effect on the community. Sorin was still the Superior General. The harassment continued and Augusta was sent hither and yon. Mother Collette summoned her home, Sorin sent her away.  

In 1888 there was to have been an election, based upon the constitutional documents that would have provided for the election of a new Mother Superior. Sorin did not notify Dwenger of the elections, though the bishop was to have been present, and Augusta, believing that Sorin had notified the Bishop did not either. By accident, a priest visiting the Bishop on an unrelated matter mentioned the elections, and Dwenger sent a telegram ordering everything postponed until he arrived. Augusta, wanting to be released from her role, and not wanting to have to do battle with Sorin or the Bishop, refused to show up for the meeting. “Collette although suffering greatly from cancer, explained to the bishop all that had happened since he had been there in 1884. He was greatly disturbed and tried to fix a definite date for the election.” However the date was too close to the beginning of the new school year and as a result Dwenger appointed Augusta as Superior for an additional year.

The conclusion to this divisive period came not from a willingness to agree or an explosion of disagreements. Rather it happened largely by accident. In March of 1889 the Constitution was approved provisionally for seven years by Rome. In April, Augusta notified the sisters that Sorin would read out the official text of the approval. This would be the final decision on the two novitiates, which as mentioned before, were frowned

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57 Ibid, 18-19.
58 Ibid., 19.
upon by church hierarchy. “Her words of caution are significant, considering the problems that were to follow, ‘Although we know there are some changes we also know they were made by Propaganda without the suggestion of anyone. Bishop Dwenger even says he made none’….In other words she had not requested the closing of the Notre Dame novitiate.”59 Augusta, though she did not know what the conditions were when she spoke to the sisters, was right to express her innocence in the events. Despite years of Sorin using outside influences, of being shuffled around, of facing infighting and disappointment, Augusta and her allies finally prevailed.

Conditions stipulated by Rome were: 1. All Sisters at Notre Dame were to be withdrawn by the end of the summer except those caring of the sick in the infirmary; 2. Other places the Sisters were engaged in the domestic work were to be notified of the discontinuance of their work; 3. Mother was to make the visit at Notre Dame and rectify conditions; 4. The novitiate there was to be closed August 15 and all novices who wished to transfer were to be sent to Saint Mary’s to begin a new novitiate; 5. The Holy See would recognize the status of the Sisters at Notre Dame if they transferred to Saint Mary’s at a given time. Otherwise the Church would allow them to return to the work unencumbered by their vows.60

This rule effectively ended the Notre Dame novitiate and furthermore, by recalling all of those sisters engaged in domestic work at any of the sites run by the Holy Cross, Rome established the Sisters of the Holy Cross as a teaching and nursing order rather than an order dedicated to providing domestic help. It was the emergence of a unique identity for Saint Mary’s.

The women had achieved the right to address concerns and needs directly to Rome without having a male middle man. This autonomy was nearly thwarted. Dwenger

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., 20.
had planned a trip to Rome to expedite the process of receiving approval. After the initial trouble at Saint Mary’s in 1884 concerning Augusta’s election, Dwenger promised the sisters he would ensure that they were placed under the direct approval of the Vatican rather than having Sorin as an ecclesiastical superior. This was what the sisters understood had been requested already when Sorin went to Rome initially to deliver the Constitution and documents. When Dwenger arrived in Rome to again ask for such an arrangement he was not well received. “A community of women who had been directed by a community of men for so long, he was told, and had never asked for Roman approval could not desire it much.”61 What he discovered was that no petition for approval of any kind, for the women autonomously or for those under the Brothers of the Holy Cross, had been made. Furthermore, he was told that “the Holy see never recognized communities of men and women associated.” Dwenger was told that he could file the petition himself. It is for this reason that the approval of the Constitution took so long. In addition, upon realizing that Sorin had not fulfilled his promise, Dwenger became convinced that “Sorin could no longer be allowed to retain his office as superior general of the Sister of the Holy Cross.”62 He requested, and was granted, that Sorin be allowed to retain his title until his death, but that his role was in name only, he had no power over the sisters after they were approved by Rome.

Upon recognition of the Constitution in 1889 an election took place (on July 25th), and after three ballots Augusta was defeated by Annunciata, who became the Mother Superior. Mother Collette was elected as general secretary. However she died and Augusta was to replace her. But the end of the battle regarding the Novitiate at Notre

61 Ibid., 21.
62 Ibid., 22.
Dame was not easily resolved and some sisters refused to go to Saint Mary’s. Finally a compromise was struck, in 1892, the first ever contract emerged between the two institutions. It provided that the men had to officially recognize the Roman decree “exacting complete separation of the two communities in spiritual as well as temporal matters.”

All dowries that had once belonged to the sisters, and as was common in this time period, that became property of the order—thus became part of the operating budget at Notre Dame—had to be returned to Saint Mary’s. This was approximately $13,000. The final provision of the agreement was that the sisters agreed to provide 105 sisters “for the work they had been doing in the minim department, the two infirmaries, the laundry, kitchen, printing office, clothes room and mending room.” The order would be provided with 6,500 dollars a year (approximately sixty dollars per sister). This also solved the issue of Notre Dame novitiates who refused to go to Saint Mary’s, they were the largest part of the one hundred and five provided to Notre Dame. In addition Norte Dame “furnished Saint Mary’s with a chaplain at $400 and four lay Brothers “capable of doing all the work heretofore required” for six hundred dollars.”

The agreement would be automatically renewed each year and as the Sisters at Notre Dame became too old to do their work, they would be replaced and returned to the mother house at Saint Mary’s for end of life care.

This agreement solved the problem from one year until Dwenger’s sudden death in 1893. After that time, Sorin once again began to “write and speak anew about the

\[63\] Ibid., 24.
\[64\] Ibid.
\[65\] Ibid.
original mission of the Sisters.” There was back and forth arguing, during which time
the contract between the two institutions was renewed twice. It even seemed as though a
new Notre Dame novitiate would be opened in 1894. Sorin died in October of 1894 but
his successor at Notre Dame took up the argument for a second novitiate. However, the
long running despite was finally concluded once and for all on Christmas Eve 1894:

Father Francais the new superior general of the
Congregation of the Holy Cross and Mother Augusta in a
joint letter asked Propaganda to suspend the decree order
the complete withdrawal of Sisters from Notre Dame the
following July, but to allow the Sisters to remain but
entirely under the governance of Saint Mary’s. It then
confirmed in general terms previous agreements between
the two institutions. As a result the contract between them
was renewed again in July of the next year.

It took nearly twenty five years, but the Sisters of the Holy Cross finally achieved the
aims set out in the first Constitutional document of 1870. The sisters were autonomous.
It was a huge step forward for the order that was initially created to do the washing,
cooking, and cleaning for Notre Dame. Not only were they free to fashion their own
identity, they could structure their activities for to their own interests, primarily education
and nursing.

Uneasiness and Distrust Abounds: Interacting with non-Catholic Neighbors and Finding
Common Grounds

As the college and the community at South Bend grew, so did its profile among
non-Catholics in the area. There is little explicitly stated by the sisters regarding whether
this interaction was based on mutual respect or if there was a culture of distrust. It is

66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., 28.
likely that the sisters were not able to speak freely in their own personal writing. It was the policy of Catholic religious orders that upon the death of a member, those members’ possessions became the property of the order. Thus the sisters would have been aware that anything they wrote would indeed be read upon their death, and a fear of eternal retribution at being found lacking in Christian virtue of tolerance and deference from religious women, likely resulted in the holding of tongues and pens, making it difficult to ascertain the exact level of intolerance among the Protestants of South Bend. An understanding of the situation can be gleamed, however, from the sister’s book of customs compiled by mother Augusta, who succeeded Mother Angela as the superior general.

Catholicism was something that before the arrival of the two institutions in 1842 was not prevalent in South Bend. Originally founded as a mission to the Indians, the site where Notre Dame sits was isolated. Any Catholics in the area would have worshiped with those ministering to the Indians however their profile would not have been large. It is likely that Protestants in the area had never met a Catholic in person until Sorin and the sisters arrived. This unfamiliarity and the prejudice that can often come with the unknown are mentioned by Sorin in his *Chronicles of Notre Dame Du Lac*, when he writes:

> The Catholic religion was thus little known as yet in all this part of the diocese. The few ceremonies that could be carried out, being necessarily devoid of all solemnity and even of decency, could have hardly any other effect in the eyes of the public than to give rise to a thousand offensive

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68 In his work *Notre Dame 100 Years*, Arthur Hope, CSC, notes that Father Claude Allouez a Jesuit Priest founded the Saint Joseph’s Mission near present day Niles, Michigan in 1680. In 1830, Chief Pokagon of the Pottawatomi Indiana asked the Bishop of Detroit to send them a priest. The request was made and the site where the priest created his home was the site where Sorin and his men arrived in 1842 that became Notre Dame. Arthur Hope, CSC, *Notre Dame 100 Years* (South Bend, IN: Icarus Press, 1978).
sarcastic remarks against Catholicism. There was scarcely a single Catholic in all the country able to defend his faith against these insults and the conduct of many often served as foundation and proof of the blasphemies of the malicious and the ignorant. All the surroundings were strongly Protestant, that is to say enemies for or less embittered against the Catholics.  

Here we see Sorin’s acknowledgment of the scarcity of Catholics in the South Bend area, as well as the distrust that ran both directions between Catholics and Protestants. Early difficulties were linked to distrust by Protestants of Sorin and his colleagues.

This type of distrust and confusion was not limited to Notre Dame. The sisters also experienced prejudice from visitors confused by a group of women who lived alone without men and who were worshiping in ways that to those not familiar to Catholicism had to be significantly troubling. In her work Flame in the Wilderness, Anna McAllister notes that not all townspeople welcomed their Catholic neighbors:

One sultry afternoon several men wondered up and down the path in front of the convent, apparently undecided how next to proceed. A sister appeared and asked them politely what they wished. At first the scowled in silence; then the leader recovered his voice and asked to see the owner of the place. Having invited them to be seated in the cool parlor (a suggestion they ignored), the Sister left them standing under the tree and went in search of the Directress. Engrossed though she was Sister Angela interrupted her work to accompany the Portress outdoors. At once she sensed the antagonism of the caller but was far too level to show it.  

Angela engaged them in conversation and at one point, the story is recounted, she referred to them as neighbors. The townsfolk are reported to have replied “we’re not

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neighbors of your ma’am…and we don’t’ want you for ours.”\textsuperscript{71} However, after explaining that the sisters were there to open an academy and showing the men around the convent and other buildings, the sisters talked with the men and offered them refreshments. Eventually the “callers rose to their feet, wished her success, and promised they would be the best of neighbors in the future.”\textsuperscript{72} It appears that for the sisters at least, when faced with criticism and distrust, being forthright, open and willing to discuss matters, went a long way in relieving the fears of non-Catholics.

But for Sorin and for the sisters establishing the new college there was no nefarious motivation. Rather, a desire to erect the necessary structures to properly celebrate religious ceremonies as quickly as possible. It is telling that, as was mentioned in chapter one, one of the first buildings that Sorin concerned himself with was the log chapel at Notre Dame that was used to say mass for any Catholic in the area who could arrive in time for services. The emergence of the home altars in Protestant homes in this period, detailed by Colleen McDannell in \textit{the Christian Home in Victorian America} allowed Protestants to conduct their own services, and hold prayer meetings in their living rooms. The Bible was the most important and sole piece of equipment necessary for worship. The emergence and popularity of things like ornate Bible stands and the personal Bibles allowed for Protestants on the early frontier and in unsettled areas like northern Indiana to celebrate wherever and whenever necessary. For Catholics, however, as Sorin alludes, there is a strong correlation between devotion and the physical church. A better explanation of this tradition can be found in the Catholic Encyclopedia, under the term church maintenance.

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Ibid.}
As the Church of Christ is a visible organization, it must embrace a visible priesthood, worship, and temples. These must be maintained. As a consequence, the Church must acquire property both movable and immovable, and this she cannot obtain without a corresponding generosity on the part of the faithful. To pretend that the Church should be utterly deprived of property, is not only an error, but also an absurdity.  

Formal sacred space, where Catholics could give glory to God, were thus requisite to Catholic worship. In this sense it becomes clear that for Catholics the institution was of great importance there is a religious obligation to create buildings that give glory to God. Furthermore, the need for dedicated clergy was in part responsible for the communal relationship between the sisters and Sorin and his men. But all of this secrecy, ornate ritual, an almost manic desire to build, could be seen from an outside perspective as suspect, and potentially dangerous. Sorin recognized this and was as distrustful of Protestants as the non-Catholic population of northern Indiana was of him. The Catholics were also aware of the dangers of not winning over the locals, the 1834 burning of a Charlestown convent was not easy to forget, and that type of destruction, which was discussed in the introduction, likely left a lasting imprint motivating Sorin and the sisters to try and forge a relationship with the Protestants in the area.

Recognizing the challenges of winning over the locals, Sorin as well as the sisters endeavored to earn the trust of Protestants. This was a necessity as the largest part of the country was still Protestant. In numerical terms, there were in the 1850s approximately 1.75 million Catholics in comparison to 3.2 million Protestants. In 1850 there were two Catholic churches in Saint Joseph County; by contrast there were four Presbyterian

churches, four Methodists, and two Episcopal churches in Saint Joseph County at the same time. If for no other reason than practical considerations, the limited pool of Catholics in South Bend forced financial considerations to the forefront. Both schools accepted non-Catholic students as a way to not only appease the community but also to help populate their respective institutions. Students were required to attend mass and participate in school wide prayer times before classes, but were not required to take catechism courses. Furthermore, Sorin assured parents that there would be no effort to convert non-Catholic students. In his work *Notre Dame: One Hundred Years* Arthur Hope notes that Sorin paid to publish a story in the *South Bend Free Press* that stated, “there will be no interference on the part of the faculty with the religious tenents’ of non-Catholic students.” This seemed to pacify Protestants and first ten years in South Bend were a period of growth at Saint Mary’s as well as at Notre Dame. The influx of students both Protestant and Catholic from Chicago and all over the country brought money and people to South Bend. And a new rail line came to South Bend in 1851 connecting both colleges to New York, Chicago, and Cincinnati. The economic benefits synonymous with the railroad helped to create a tenuous peace between Catholics and Protestants in South Bend because the colleges were responsible for the rail line. This was also the beginning of a working relationship based on mutual economic success. These types of mutually beneficial relationships were not limited to South Bend. As John Dichtl discusses in his *Frontiers of Faith*, acceptance of Catholics across the Midwest was often linked to

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75 Ibid., 69, 78, 90, 105.
economic advancement. Catholics with their highly regimented and ornate style of worship required a steady stream of supplies, this translated into economic development both in settlements, and in means of transportation to bring such specific supplies. Protestants were willing to overlook ideological differences in return for economic advancement, particularly in early settlement.

Furthermore, leading Protestants began to recognize both institutions as reputable and strong educational institutions. In fact it is well known, and often repeated yet today, that despite being Catholic institutions, General William Sherman sent his children to South Bend for college during the Civil War, his son to Notre Dame, his daughter and niece to Saint Mary’s. This is due in part to the regeneration of the scholastics of the university and in part to the fact that both institutions were some of the few to remain open and continue to grow during the Civil War. Sherman also sent his wife to South Bend, believing it was a safe place for all of his family. Sherman’s wife was a devout Catholic who raised their children in the faith. His eight-year old son was accepted as a minims to allow him to come to South Bend with his siblings. Sherman even agreed to be the commencement speaker at Notre Dame in 1865. However, Sherman a lifelong Protestant, turned from ambivalence to antipathy toward the Catholic Church, most likely after his eldest son decided to become a Jesuit priest. Still, his openness—and even willingness—to engage with Catholic educational institutions over many years underscores the complex personal relationships a non-Catholic could have with the Catholic Church.

A review of Saint Joseph County newspapers from this period of growth also shows a climate of grudging acceptance, due largely to the economic benefits of having the twin institutions there. Looking at every county newspaper available at the Indiana State Library that was published between 1844-1888 revealed little in the way of information about the two institutions. In no publication was either school mentioned, other than when paid advertisements were placed to announce fall enrollment or spring commencement. Notices appeared regarding commencement and annual events for non-religiously affiliated academies in the area. These stories were not large, nor were there many of them, however they did appear in more than one publication. There were no stories condemning the Catholics in South Bend. However no features or articles covering the twin institutions appeared. This lack of coverage outside of paid advertisements displays that while there may not have been active hate speech against Catholics, neither school was a celebrated part of the community either. Protestants were willing to tolerate Catholics because of economic incentive, not because of a great trust or gladness at their presence.

While the sisters made no explicit mention of anti-Catholic sentiment, they did make allusions to such tensions. In the Book of Customs, authored by Mother Augusta as a means of making a written record of the orally based standards and practices that were common place among the sisters, other sources provide information on the everyday life of the sisters. From discussions on their vow of poverty, to restrictions on unauthorized travel, to their set prayer regimens, the book of customs holds information  

79 For a list of the papers consulted and their publication Ranges please see Appendix 2A
on all aspects of the religious life for the Sisters of the Holy Cross. These rules aimed to protect reputations and avoid the appearance of impropriety.

The strictest rules are those that pointed to the sisters’ concern with the reputation of their school and pupils center on the reception of visitors. It is noted that “when called to the parlor, the Sisters must lower the large sleeves and keep their hands in them during the visit.”80 This restriction enforced extreme modesty on the sisters, leaving only their faces as exposed skin, which was restricted to a certain extent by the habit’s headdress.81 This suggests a strong preoccupation with appearing modest and upright to those who might visit or discuss their visit, particularly because at least in pre-Vatican II times, the code of dress applied to all Sisters regardless of age.82 Moreover, the rules regarding conduct in the parlor also suggest a concern that those who visited could have cause to spread disdain for the sister’s conduct upon returning to the secular world. The customs dictate that “the Sisters should never retail news, if they happen to have heard any. No one when repeating a piece of town talk, should be able to say I heard it from the Sisters of the Holy Cross.”83 This desire to prevent gossip has a more practical function, in that it is not in line with the religious teachings of tolerance that the religious were expected to follow. It also suggests that the sisters were very concerned with the way that the convent was perceived in a climate of distrust towards Catholics. By trying to present the

80 Book of Customs, pg 38, Reel 15. Saint Mary’s College Archives.
81 Please see Appendix 2B for an example of the habit with the sleeves down.
82 Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, known coequally as Vatican II, convened in 1962 by Pope John XXIII, and closed in 1965 was a gathering of the College of Cardinals, the body that elects the Pope, in an effort to enact reform in hopes of meeting the challenges of the modern Catholic church. The first Vatican Council was convened in 1868 with the same purpose. The Second Vatican Council changed Catholic liturgy to be in the language of the congregants rather than Latin, made leaving the religious life less difficult, and allowed nuns and order priests (like Jesuits or Dominicans) to have a choice in wearing a full habit. For more information please see: "Vatican Council II". New Catholic Encyclopedia. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 563.
83 Ibid., 85.
nuns as morally upright, it seems, that the sisters sought to combat prejudices about what might be occurring behind closed doors at the community. Thus, appearances and reputation were prized. It was a fine line the Catholic community in South Bend maneuvered, that unsurprisingly came to a head as national anti-Catholic sentiment swept the nation in the 1920s. But one thing is clear, while not able to write explicitly about anti-Catholics feelings in South Bend, the Sisters of the Holy Cross took a great deal of action to ward off that which was unspoken. Moreover, every effort was made to embrace the community, to put the best picture of Catholicism forth, and to be an economic benefit to South Bend, so as to ward off any possible challenge. By being transparent in their purposes, actions, and business dealings both Saint Mary’s and Notre Dame managed to avoid an all-out war in the local community. They won a begrudging acceptance, or at least benevolence from the locals, which was a blessing because with internal conflicts that raged, external conflicts could have easily destroyed both institutions.

The late nineteenth century was a period of enormous growth for both Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s. No period more so than the ten years between the move to South Bend and the end of the Civil War. Amongst enormous facilities growth, the Sisters of the Holy Cross battled prejudice stemming from the unknown. They battled not only aversion, but perhaps more disheartening for the sisters who wished to live in harmony and shared experience with their non-Catholic brethren, they battled pointed indifference from the community at large and the refusal to acknowledge their presence in South Bend. And while striving to win over outsiders, the sisters also sought to hold together their own internal order. They waged all-out war for the independent autonomy
necessary to foster and continue such growth. It was this autonomy, and the women who helped secure it, that created an environment in which Catholic women could get a comprehensive education and were encouraged to pursue an education that would lead to increased autonomy. Working within a system that was entirely patriarchal, the Sisters of the Holy Cross found independence. It was not an easy task, and success meant battling internal and external forces. However, their dedication to their own work and the emphasis they placed upon being free of oversight, are reflected in the type of education they sought to offer women, education free from restraint of social mores regarding the role of women. However, the devotion to education and religion did not end at the conclusion of the this period, rather it flourished and grew until Saint Mary’s was one of few women’s colleges in the nation granting college diplomas to women in a wide array of subjects not just domestic arts. This evolution from a passion for education to advancements in women’s education that were ahead of their time will be explored in greater depth in the next chapter.
Ch. 3: Mothers or Educators? The Balance of Religion, Curriculum, and Propriety

The women who founded the college battled internal pressures, external fear and distrust in an effort to serve God through education. They believed that women had the right and should have access to education. But what shape would that education take? There was already a growing movement to educate women, as men were already attaining education beyond primary schools, but what that education looked like differed and was greatly contested. Moreover, as the distinction between Protestant and Catholic became more defined and contentious throughout the nineteenth century, one begins to wonder if what women were taught was not just a fight between educators and over protective fathers, but also between Catholics and Protestants.

What women were taught was a great source of debate, as was how their education would affect their abilities to find husbands and become mothers. This largely relates to the emerging gender ideology of the nineteenth century. A gender ideology defined by spheres of control in which, “men would still exercise power over women, especially over wives, but fathers would no longer rules sons, and women’s continued subordination within families would be ideologically reconstructed through a discourse of equal but separate spheres.”

In other words women were given a sense of power and freedom inside the home, to manage domestic spheres that mirrored the control men had over the public sphere. In a sense it “merged the domestic domain…with the new public ideology of individual responsibility and civic virtue.” Women’s domestic role expanded in that they became the masters of all things domestic, including educating and rearing children. Thus, education for women was significant in that they needed to educate their sons, because doing so was their political participation, it was their right and responsibility as a citizen in the same way that a man’s role in the political sphere was his. Yet, this education was seen by some as a threat to the natural order, that too much education would confuse women and leave them unsuited for their domestic responsibilities. The threat to motherhood and marriageability were in fact such a prominent concern, particularly among opponents of women’s education, that when institutions were established to educate women, strict rules regarding conduct and morality were also established. Furthermore, within the Catholic faith, a religion that was and remains notoriously hierarchical and patriarchal, there were concerns over morality, piety, and how an education might affect women’s acceptance of their roles as mothers within the church.

“Glorified Finishing Schools?”: The Historical Debate Over Women’s Curriculum

In the post-Revolutionary War era, there was an emphasis on education. An attempt to create a citizenry excellently educated, because it was a generation that would be responsible for self-government. In this period educational opportunities in America grew exponentially. As Christopher Lucas explains, many Protestant clergymen voiced

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concerns about the personal, familial, and social dangers, if women received an education comparable to men.

Forced to compete in a man’s world, traditionalists were convinced, women would suffer nervous breakdowns and their pure and benevolent nature would be corrupted. Worse yet, or so it was believed, a woman’s reproductive system might suffer irreparable harm under the rigors and stress of academic pursuit. Too much learning would render her unfit for her preordained destiny as wife and mother. Coeducation meant a violation of the natural division of complementary sphere of competence and influence between the sexes; it could only serve to coarsen or masculine young women, even as it made men more effeminate and less aggressive.3

In addition to concerns over women’s physical and reproductive health in the face of the stresses of an academic program that was equal to a man’s, there were also concerns about educated women’s desirability and eligibility for marriage and worries that mass education of women would destroy the family. Even advocates of women’s education debated the purpose of women’s curriculum in the middle of the nineteenth century. Catherine Beecher, American proponent of women’s education and sister to Harriet Beecher Stowe, remarked in 1851, “those female institutions in our land which are assuming the ambitious name of college, have, not one of them, as yet, secured the real features which constitute the chief advantage of such institutions. They are merely high schools.”4 Beecher felt that women’s education was inferior to men’s education at the same level. Beecher’s comment reflects the debate that has been central to women’s education since the emergence of female only educational facilities: How academically rigorous was the curriculum at these schools? And, how did they compare with curriculum at men’s institutions of higher learning?

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In her outstanding work, *Learning to Stand and Speak*, Mary Kelley addresses this issue. She writes that “between 1790 and 1830, 182 academies and at least 14 seminaries were established exclusively for women in the North and South.” \(^5\) She also points out that, “the catalog…and plans of study deposits at the American Antiquarian Society show…that at least 158 more schools were opened between 1830 and 1860.” \(^6\) Kelley notes that as the female academies movement accelerated, as did men’s enrollment and the development of colleges. By 1800 there were 18 colleges in the New United States, half of which had been founded since the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. Between 1800 and 1820, 50 more colleges had been opened, within twenty years that number was 142. In 1850 there were an additional 75 colleges that were accepting students. Within 10 years (1860) there were 241 colleges. This explosion of colleges, for both women and men, reflected the movement in American population. “Between 1800 and 1860, the proportion of colleges in the Southwest and Midwest increased from 16 to 60 percent of the total in the nation.” \(^7\) At the same time New England’s share of colleges decreased from 25 to 7 percent.

With the expansion of educational facilities, so too came a debate about how women and men should be educated in post-secondary situations, and how different their educations should be. Immediately following the Revolution it was suggested that women should have a more ornamental education, grounded in civics, and primarily focused on domestic arts, whereas men would learn Greek and Latin, emerging sciences, and civics as well as literature. By the Civil War era, more was becoming required of the

\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Ibid., 68.
citizenry, and the importance of science was starting to be recognized. Women’s
seminaries were losing ground to colleges, where the gap between men’s and women’s
closed, with the exception that they were still not offered Greek or Latin. This debate
over language and the role of the domestic arts became the main point of contention.

Prior to 1830, seminaries represented the highest level of education available to
women. According to Roger Geiger, many critics feared that the curriculum and goals of
female education, would be detrimental to women’s presumed delicate sensibilities. To
this end he notes that “female seminaries (or institutes) were established with the belief
that women should be instructed in at least some of the collegiate curriculum in order to
prepare them to become teachers as well as good wives and mothers.”

While noting some of the shortcomings in these seminaries between the 1820s and 1850s, Geiger
observes that they served as an essential stepping stone in women’s education.

Seminaries aspired to a higher level of studies than academies, but they
occupied a rather ill-defined education stratum. The early seminaries
usually taught a three year course that included many of the subjects
required for admission to men’s colleges. They also taught some subjects
belonging to the college curriculum, having particularly broad offerings in
science, English literature, and modern languages. The conspicuous
difference lay within Latin and Greek. Latin was at best started in the early
seminaries, while Greek was almost unknown. To encourage domesticity,
the seminaries taught young women hygiene and embroidery, and to
cultivate refinement, they often taught supplemental courses in drawing,
music and dancing.

It becomes apparent that women’s schools attempted to strike a balance between men’s
educational standards and the domesticity required of them as women. Because these
women were indeed expected to be domestic, the long term goal of college education was

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Roger Geiger, “The Superior Instruction of Women,” in *The American College In the Nineteenth Century*,

Ibid.
to educate women; however, colleges and proponents did not advocate that these women eschew married life or neglect the moral obligation of birthing the next generation of Americans. Indeed, their access to education remained tied to their expected roles as mothers.

Mary Kelley stresses “ornamental education” (music, dancing, penmanship, drawing, and the like) was not viewed “as antithetical to the more advanced academic subjects now being offered, newly independent Americans considering the arts an important complement.” She suggests that in the newly independent country, Americans were desperately trying to define what it meant to be American. And for a generation of people used to British gentility, they sought to mimic the social structure they were most familiar with. And the so-called ornamental arts in women’s education filled a gap created by the eradication of British tea rooms from the American social order—eliminated in the post-Revolutionary era as a means of creating further independence from the Empire.

The means to, and the evidence of, gentility, they played a key role in the fashioning of an elite women’s subjectivity, an enterprise that teachers and students made the center of female education. In reading polite letters and, no less important in practicing ornamental and decorative arts, students cultivated the taste and sensibility their mothers had displayed at British America’s tea tables and salons. School in refinement had a second and more immediate purpose in the increasingly contested social dynamic of the early Republic. Readily identifiable signifiers of privilege became all the more important to post-Revolutionary elite struggling to preserve the legitimacy of a rank-ordered society in the face of political democratizations.

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10 Kelley, 69.
11 Ibid.
This early emphasis on domestic arts for women highlights the social mores of the time, establishing that domestic education was a means of demonstrating class and marriage eligibility. This explanation provides context for why, even as the emerging nation began to adopt a more scientific and mathematical based approach to logic—as well as education—the ornamental arts remained an important component of women’s education.

Kelley, like Geiger, also notes that “gradually, the values attached to instruction in these accomplishments yielded to the increasing emphasis on a strictly academic course of study that distinguished antebellum academies and seminaries.”\(^{12}\) Between 1820 and 1860, the trend emerged that women’s education came to model that of men’s education. Ornamental arts were something available to women for study at an additional charge or were offered as a smaller portion of the credits necessary for graduation, in much the same way that a modern college student takes general education elective courses; women took ornamental arts, as part of their elective courses. Using Mt. Holyoke student Harriet Hollister’s 1837 coursework as a window on the era, Kelley notes:

She and the other entering students took grammar, ancient geography, history, physiology, rhetoric, geometry, and botany. The next year they were expected to continue grammar and botany, and to take algebra and physics. During the final year Hollister and her classmates concentrated on ecclesiastical history, chemistry, zoology, logic and astronomy.\(^{13}\)

Thus, as the shift from seminaries and academies toward colleges occurred, women’s education, on the whole, became more like the educational opportunities of men.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 71.
\(^{13}\) Ibid., 72.
Not all schools were like Holyoke. Many academies and colleges stressed the domestic arts over the sciences. These women were not encouraged to seek a place outside of the home. Richard Geiger notes that many of the institutions were poorly funded and privately run by a single proprietor, and as a result were forced to offer students the opportunity to take single classes rather than require students to sign up for an entire degree’s worth of courses. Furthermore, these institutions often offered the trendy courses that would draw in students to pad their pocketbooks and cover their expenses for the more rigorous courses. “Women had even less incentive than men to finish an entire course, so completion rates were exceedingly low. Thus abundant evidence existed, if one looked for it, for contemporaries to dismiss the female seminaries as decidedly inferior to education in the colleges.”

Responding to this condemnation of the process of higher education for women, coeducational opportunities emerged amid vocal objections. Despite these objections there were colleges that were accepting women and educating them alongside men. Between 1855 and 1863 colleges in Iowa and Wisconsin, offered coeducational opportunities, followed in the 1870s by colleges in the West. However these were land-grant schools and they were largely regarded as experiments. Women often found that their degrees meant little outside of the geographical region and the schools were scorned by traditionalists. For every Holyoke, Smith, and South Carolina Female Collegiate Institute in Columbia, there were schools that were more interested in financial revenue than educating women. Like men’s higher education, the quality and rigor of women’s

14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., 162.
higher education varied widely and depended largely on the personal goals of the proprietors of the institution.

Geiger criticizes contemporaries at the time and historians who have dismissed women’s colleges as irrelevant or substandard. While this may appear to contradict Geiger’s suggestion that some diploma mills existed, he largely believes that seminaries were those most pernicious in taking funds without providing measurable educational benefits. He distinguishes colleges, those that sought to provide a strong education, from seminaries and academies that were focused solely on domestic arts and monetary gain. He supports Kelley’s assertion that women’s education largely reflected the same pattern as men’s. He notes that discarding the classical languages women’s college curriculum was not so distant from its male counterparts.

Math was taught at least through trigonometry, and women had classes in all the sciences taught to men. They also had similar offerings in history, philosophy and religion. All of these subjects were identified by the textbooks used, which were often the same in both types of college. Women’s colleges had some advantages in modern languages. French (and later German) was regularly taught to women when it was at best optional in men’s colleges. Women also were likely to devote more time to English language, literature and composition whereas men stressed rhetoric and speaking.\(^{16}\)

Thus any effort to assess women’s higher education must include the entire curriculum, rather than a limited view of classical languages, which were already under criticism in male dominated educational circles. Kelley and Geiger focus their discussion of women’s education on Northern and Southern Protestant based schools. Even those that did not have a religious foundation were founded by Protestant women. Kelley notes that Holyoke’s graduates were prepared and encouraged to offer a social influence.

\(^{16}\) Ibid.
Committed to exercising influence in civil society, “these daughters of fairest promise,” as Lyons, referred to her students, played a prominent role in organized benevolence and enlisted in the ranks of those calling for white women’s right and black people’s emancipation. Mount Holyoke’s graduates were also influential actors in the antebellum missionary movement, organizing and teaching in mission schools in African, India, and Persia."

These were women of the middle and upper class, often daughters of prominent Protestant fathers. They were Protestant women, who would become a generation of benevolent women. They were also Northerners and Southerners. Little has been done to explore whether the trends in education that Kelley and Geiger note also applies to Catholic women’s education. Neither author mentions any Catholic institutions nor examines whether Catholic women were being educated alongside Protestant women. The Catholic women’s educational experience is not reflected at any point in their literature on women’s educational experience. By examining the curriculum offered at Saint Mary’s it is hoped that we will shed light on the Catholic women’s educational experience in order to examine if the pre-Civil War era was also training a generation of Catholic benevolent workers as well.

“To Excite the Love of Study”: Saint Mary’s College Curriculum

The education received at Saint Mary’s was full and broad while still embracing the social mores of the time. And there were a number of women enrolled at Saint Mary’s who received this education. From 1857-1860 there were never fewer than 90 students enrolled. By 1860 there were 100, in 1869 there were 222 total students

\[17\] Ibid., 73.
enrolled.\textsuperscript{18} Young women were offered a wide range of scholastically challenging courses, much like their male counterparts at Notre Dame, but were also instructed in the domestic arts. The 1867-1868 catalog demonstrates this, when under the heading of Ornamental Department, it reads, “while the solid studies are regarded as the most important, much attention is given to those lighter and more graceful accomplishments which throw a charm over domestic life. And contribute so essentially to elevate the tone of society at large.”\textsuperscript{19} This does not mean household duties; rather it is a focus on music and artistic expression for young women. The catalog notes,

Music, in its various branches, is assiduously cultivated. The rudiments of vocal music are taught to all the pupils in the Institution, and the practice of social singing, both sacred and secular, is encouraged to the utmost extent. The Scientific, Vocal and Instrumental Departments are taught by accomplished and experienced teachers.\textsuperscript{20}

There is also an attempt made in the catalog to describe the fitness of the facilities, highlighting the forty music rooms, “each one containing a harp or piano.”\textsuperscript{21} It also notes that while independent lessons are available students also have instruction “in Harmony and the theory of instrumental music…in regularly graded classed, on the European Conservatorium plan.”\textsuperscript{22} Perhaps most interestingly the catalog stresses,

While every facility is offered to obtain a brilliant and scientific musical education, yet the students are not allowed to sacrifice higher interests to proficiency branches purely ornamental. Those who from want of natural talent, make but little progress, are dissuaded from wasting time and means which might be used to better advantage.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{19} Saint Mary’s Academy Course Catalog 1867-1868, Saint Mary’s College Archives, Cushwa-Leighton Library, Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, IN, 5.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
This detailed discussion of the music facilities and educational opportunities shows two things. Saint Mary’s focused on well rounded students, who would be available to pursue music and art if so desired, as well as displaying a high level of equipment and qualified teachers. The catalog suggests that students would find ample equipment and instructions would be provided by experienced faculty, which was paid for by the order, which absorbed the chief brunt of the costs of running the institution, as well as by course fees, which were adequate but not unreasonable. The following is a fee schedule, as printed in the 1865-1866 catalog. It is also worth noting that other than tuition, room and board, many of the enumerated fees were additional add-ons that could be chosen, but were not required.

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<td>Entrance Fee</td>
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<td>Board and Tuition</td>
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<td>Music-Piano</td>
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<td>- Harp</td>
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<td>- Guitar</td>
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<td>- Thorough Bass</td>
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<td>Modern Languages</td>
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<td>Latin</td>
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<td>Italian</td>
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<td>Drawing and Painting (water Color)</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Painting in Oil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boarding in Vacation (July-August)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of Philosophical Apparatus</td>
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<td>Use of Library</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Bedding</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing and use of Bath</td>
<td>8</td>
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These numbers undermine Geiger’s theory that insufficient funds and materials plagued women’s colleges. Furthermore, the fact that the catalog notes that students who do not show a natural ability in music would be dissuaded from its study, suggests that Saint Mary’s, unlike the schools that were criticized by Beecher and her contemporaries, did
not enroll students simply for the revenue only to neglect their proficiency and completion rates. Furthermore, the importance of music in Catholic worship suggests that Saint Mary’s offered music courses to allow women to study to become parish organists. To this end the catalog notes that “particular attention is given to pupils who are preparing themselves to become organists.”

A church organist in a parish would not only be seen as an acceptable career for women, it was also one that often required training and was essential to the service. In this sense women received education in a respectable skill while enjoying a well-rounded education, because as is mentioned in the catalog women were not permitted to simply focus on their music education, they were required to take other academic courses. In this way Catholic women were encouraged and educated with the goal of benevolent work in mind. For Catholics, service to the church was a viable form of benevolent work, much as it was respectable for Protestant women to do charitable work outside the home.

Related to lighter courses in the “ornamental arts” the catalog also notes that a focus was placed upon domestic arts for women who would eventually become mothers and wives. Like its non-Catholic counterparts, Saint Mary’s maintained rigorous academic expectations, yet still saw the final goal of its graduates as marriage and motherhood. The catalog indicates such a goal:

Frequent public instructions are given in politeness and etiquette. It is often a subject of reproach, as well as regret, that young ladies, after passing many years at school—well instructed in the accomplishments and sciences of the age—are woefully deficient in those household duties which undoubtedly form the most important part of woman’s peculiar province. … For this purpose, oral instruction in the art of domestic economy in all its branches, practical illustration in the kitchen, bakery,

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24 Ibid.
and dairy of the Institution, with reference for example, to the selection of meats, vegetables, and other articles of food and their preparation for the table will be given in the Senior Department in order to impress, theoretically at least, the importance of these duties on the minds of the pupils.25

In this case one can see the social fears of educated women being unsuitable for marriage. This demonstrates clearly the institution’s attempt to meet the social standards for educated women by including domestic training in their education. Both the section on music courses and on domestic arts courses, which have been pointed to as more frivolous lines of study, are introduced in the course catalog at the end of the section detailing the course programs for each level and the types of courses offered suggesting that while important and included in the total curriculum, the sisters did not find them more valuable than traditional academic subjects. Yet, the sisters were still practical. The role model for Catholic women, in terms of comportment as well as service is Mary the mother of Jesus or often referred to as the Blessed Mother.26 Thus Catholic women are taught from a young age, that their largest role, both within the church and outside of it, is being a wife and mother. For this reason, it is not surprising that while offering a rigorous course work, like that offered to Protestant women at Mount Holyoke, Catholic women were still also educated in courses that would stress and prepare them for marriage and motherhood.

One might ask how those who would never be wives or mothers could emphasis the necessary traits. Within the Catholic faith there was, and remains, a large emphasis on motherhood modeled after Mary, the mother of Jesus. Moreover, marriage is a

26 It is worth mentioning that this particular denotation is a formal title. Mary is recognized by the Vatican as having appeared in no fewer than 10 different forms.
sacrament in which formal preparations are required. The Sisters of the Holy Cross would have prepared Catholic women to be wives and mothers within this world view. In addition there were some women who chose to join the sisters in their religious life. From 1844-1905 there were 26 students who joined the Sisters of the Holy Cross and became teachers, there were 3 in the same period who joined other religious orders and became teachers.27

The dedication to academic studies is noted in the first several pages of the 1867-1868 catalog. These pages lay out the timeframe of semesters, the courses studied, the grade levels, and the time period it would take to complete a degree. It is worth noting that this study examined course catalogs published each year, from 1865 to 1895. While there were some subtle changes in the language used to describe programs, and the physical layout of the sections describing the degree content, as well as a lengthening of the materials required for attendance, the requirements both for attendance and matriculation, as well as the courses offered remained largely the same.28

The course catalogs all begin by describing the geographical aesthetics of the campus, but move quickly to the substantive information that characterized the dedication to a broad and complete education that Saint Mary’s provided. Although the school year was split into two sessions with each session lasting five months, students were received at any time during the year, however, their graduation and sessions depended upon their

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27 Concepta, *The Making of the Sister-Teacher*, 225
28 Materials such as dresses, bedding, etc. See Appendix 3A for a sample list of such materials, photocopied from the Saint Mary’s College catalog by the Archivist at Saint Mary’s College at the request of this researcher. For an example of this lack of change please see Appendix 3B. This is a description of the program of study from 1873-1874 and one from 1890-1891.
start date, and references were required.\textsuperscript{29} To reinforce that rigorous standards were in place, it is also noted that, “at the close of the first session, an examination is held in the presence of the Faculty of the Institution; the principle and public examination takes place during the fourteen days preceding the last Thursday of June on which the Annual Commencement takes place.”\textsuperscript{30} The indication of a public examination before the conferring of a diploma suggests that academics were a top priority. The requirement to display proficiency portrays Saint Mary’s as a school in which the education of women was more important than their financial support, for it would be easier to graduate women based solely upon course grades, than a final examination.

It should be noted that these catalogs were at their very core designed to sell the institution to the students. This emerges when they describe the physical beauty of the campus. They sell students on the quality of their facilities, and sell parents on the safety of their students. At the same time, the fact that the catalogs go to such great lengths to explain the importance of education, retention, and challenging courses of study shows that the sisters recognized (and advertised) their challenge. They did not soften their curriculum.

The catalogs also details the ways in which retention was encouraged by enumerating the awards and incentives for excelling, as well as delineating the coursework.

The Table of Honors, Weekly Notes, Monthly Tickets, Semi-Annual Examination and Bulletins, Annual Distribution of Premiums, Gold crosses and Crowns are among the many means made use of to excite the love of study in the minds of pupils and to reward the diligent.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 4.
It is also noted that “Seven years are required to complete a full course, commencing the Primary Department, and four years commencing in the Senior Department of French and English.”32 This seven year figure included a period of time that would encompass much of what is taught in modern high schools. More time was needed for students who wanted to achieve a degree in classical courses. “Graduating Medals [were] awarded to those only who take the full English and French, or Classical Courses.”33 By using special tables, awards, and metal adornments students were encouraged to reach full potential and complete a full seven years of education.

The catalogs also enumerates the institution’s ability to educate women for seven years by highlighting the excellence of their materials and facilities. To this end it is noted, “the Science Departments receive careful attention. Scientific Literary Lectures are given throughout the year by Professors from the University of Notre Dame, or distinguished visitors.”34 The Saint Mary’s catalogs focus on the fitness of the science laboratories and materials. Specifically the catalog notes, “The Institution possesses an excellent set of Chemical and Philosophical Apparatus, choice and extensive Herbarariums of Foreign and Native Plants and fine Library.” The prominence placed on such facts, and the numerous references, suggests that the institution was aware that women were not usually given the opportunity to study with technical scientific equipment.35

32 Ibid.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
In this case it becomes apparent that not only did Saint Mary’s offer a broader education to women, it also offered unique opportunities. The special relationship that Saint Mary’s shared with Notre Dame made it possible to share faculty and experts, offering the women of Saint Mary’s a chance to learn from male experts in the field. This exchange of professors and ideas was mutual. Despite the interpersonal issues that erupted between the Sisters and Priest of the Holy Cross, as discussed in the previous chapter, the academic relationship between Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s did not suffer. From the time that Notre Dame men could obtain a degree in teaching, through the present, they have been taught at Saint Mary’s. To date Notre Dame has no teacher’s college, rather students who graduate with an education degree from Notre Dame do all of their education coursework at Saint Mary’s. In this example, and that referenced in the catalogs, it becomes apparent that the legacy started from the inception of both Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s the institutions shared resources to enhance educational opportunities for students in both colleges. In the case of the women they had opportunities to enjoy scientific lectures, that their sisters at other schools did not enjoy.

In addition to the emphasis on scientific study there was a distinctive focus on what would be described today as English literature along with composition and platform speaking.

Each department of the institution…, has its own regularly organized Reading Society, (presided over by their respective teachers, ) in which two hours every Wednesday afternoon are devoted to reading aloud carefully selected works from approved authors; the pupils at this time are taught to exercise judicious criticisms, either orally or in writing.37

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36 Initially this was just a sharing of faculty, however after Notre Dame became co-educational, male students began attending class at Saint Mary’s campus. Education courses remain the only co-educational classes at Saint Mary’s.

37 Ibid.
This focus on communal conversation and reading, encouraged women to both read aloud, and be comfortable with sharing thoughts and opinions based on facts. But the focus was not limited to teaching women to be articulate in a communal dialogue, but also in written form.

Great attention is given to Rhetorical Exercises, Letter Writing and other forms of Composition. The ability to read aloud, not only intelligibly and with correctness, but with that elegance and expressive power which brings out the full force and beauty of the subject is a rare and precious accomplishment, and it receives the most particular attention in every department. Compositions are required from all the pupils every week. And while the ability to write letters was expected of women, they were encouraged in the period by social mores to keep up regular correspondence with family and friends, it also suggests a deeper desire to educate women to their full potential. To give them the opportunity to read critically to understand not only the Bible, which was also a significant reason for teaching women to understand the deeper meaning in printed passages, but also to offer them a sophisticated means of expression. However this expression was largely limited to written word, rather than spoken word. This is a noticeable difference between men’s and women’s education. While women were encouraged to read aloud men were given courses on public discourse as well as debating techniques. Men were also encouraged to write letters, but public speaking played a much more noticeable role in their educational curriculum than it did in women’s.

The discussion of the whole range of courses offered, from the ornamental to the more scholarly, supports Geiger’s claims that women were receiving a more well rounded education than contemporaries and scholar alike gave them credit for. It

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38 Ibid.
becomes apparent that at Saint Mary’s rigorous standards were enforced, that math, science, modern language, English literature, as well as religion (which is not covered here) were all required of students and that every effort was made for the full retention of students for all seven years. Furthermore, as the second oldest Catholic women’s college in the United States (both colleges were located in Indiana) it becomes apparent that Saint Mary’s was offering Catholic (and arguably non-Catholic women) new opportunities, that they could not find anywhere else. 39

“With the Solicitude of Mothers”: The General Rules of Discipline

While every effort was given to focus on the instructional aspects of college life the concerns over women, particularly what sort of moral vice could be introduced to mass groups of them, reigned supreme in the social conscious. Thus, before instruction could begin, college organizers had to assure the women’s families that they would be well cared for, as well cared for as they would be at home under the supervision of fathers or husbands, and in turn, that seven years of study at Saint Mary’s would not instill the women with habits that would prevent them from finding a husband. To this end the phrase in parentis loco was often quoted among learned proprietors of academies and colleges to reassure parents, particularly fathers that their daughters would be protected and prepared for the world after their education, and that they would indeed be

39 Non Catholic women were solicited and welcomed, however, they were well aware that they would be required to attend mass and respect the religious observations with decorum. This was the first rule of the General Rules of Discipline in the 1869-1870 and subsequent catalog. Robert Taylor et. al, editors, Indiana: A New Historical Guide, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1996, 536.
molded into model young women.\textsuperscript{40} \textit{In parentis loco} translates to “in place of parents” and reflects the idea that while at school women were under the direct rule of the proprietor of the school. This idea reassured parents that their daughters would be safe while at school and also allowed for a policy that restricted conduct and dress.

The rules published in the Saint Mary’s College Catalog reflect this idea of strict parental oversight. Before listing course options, the catalog laid out the college’s rules and expectations. Twenty-two in all ranging from religious practices to leisure, pocket money, and friendships, all seeking to reassure parents that their daughters would be looked after. In the introduction to the rules, the catalog informs parents that their children, “as soon as they enter the Institution they become the children of the House and the Sisters watch over their best interest with the solicitude of Mothers.”\textsuperscript{41} This alternative to motherly guidance reinforces the idea that parental control was sought for women who would not be under the watchful eye of their biological parents, thus a substitute was necessary.

Furthermore, the rules also offer insight into the social mores of the period for women. The final rule perhaps captures these mores best. It notes, “the pupils must cultivate, or create if they do not posses them, amiable disposition, polite deportment, and gentle, engaging manners.”\textsuperscript{42} This suggests that while educating women shaped the curriculum, the sisters still emphasized the cultivation of women who would remain demure, motherly, polite and ladylike. The socially accepted role for women was the


\textsuperscript{41} Saint Mary’s Academy Course Catalog 1873-1874, Saint Mary’s College Archives, Cushwa-Leighton Library, Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, IN, 8.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 9.
domestic sphere which dictated that women focus solely on that which was associated
with the home, namely childrearing, housekeeping, and morality. 43 Women were seen as
the moral force of the family, and as such young women were expected to protect their
virtue, and were generally the religious members of the family, the link between the
family and the church. This also provides further insight into why the sisters’ own rules
highly regulated their actions, and focuses on propriety and appearances. They wanted
prespective students and their parents to see that they conducted themselves in a way that
was consistent with the social expectations.

The General Rules of Discipline reflect the ideas of separate spheres, stressing
virtue and ladylike conduct (keeping opinions on social issues to oneself in mixed
company, etiquette, and dress.) Regarding conduct, the idea that certain behaviors
would directly contradict the idealized feminine behavior can be interpreted as the root of
certain prohibitions. For example rule ten, which states that no student may lend clothing
or jewelry to another and rule eleven which states that no jewelry other than a “breast-
pin” and earrings may be warn suggest that clothing and physical appearance were an
important part of female deportment. 44 Rule twenty-one also reinforces the importance
of dress, it notes, “neatness in person and great care of clothing and books must be
strictly observed.”45 This is also in line with what Kelley observed in her study of Mount
Holyoke and other north eastern states.

43 For more on the domestic sphere ideology please see: Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in
Victorian America, 1840-1900*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. See also: Linda Kerber,
*Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. Chapel Hill: University of North
44 Colloquially referred to as a broach in modern parlance.
Principals and teachers at these academies and seminaries took on a second and, in terms of women’s visible role in civil society, and equally important instructional task—teaching students how to negotiate between the ambitions generated by their education and the constraints inherent in conventional models of womanhood.46

The rules at Saint Mary’s reflect this balance that Kelley articulates. The sisters crafted rules that would assuage the fears of parents and educate girls on the behavioral traits expected of women, while at the same time educating them in subjects similar to those men studied.

Rules governing punctuality (no. 2) and silence also reflect a premium on how young women conducted themselves. Rules three and four deal with silence stating, “the time of recreation excepted, silence must be strictly observed in all places” and “even during the hours of recreation, silence must be observed on the staircases, in the halls and corridors.”47 The idea that women should conduct themselves quietly reflected the idea that women should be silent and demure, rather than boisterous and prone to public emotional outbursts. It also has religious implications, as silence was a time for contemplation and prayer. This is particularly noteworthy because it strikes such a parallel to the code of conduct for the sisters themselves which is noted in the Book of Customs authored by Mother Augusta and discussed in the previous chapter.48 This silence was also paramount to foster higher religious devotion something that is particularly important to the sisters who saw their responsibilities as educators extended to religious education. For Catholics, quiet reflection is viewed as the primary way to

46 Kelley, 72-73
47 Ibid.
48 Book of Customs. Found on microfilm reel 15 containing information on the Superior Generals. Saint Mary’s College Archives.
listen for the voice of God, to direct one in one’s life. Thus, silence was a means of finding time to converse with God, as well as to discern the status of one’s soul. The rules of the college to observe a respectable silence in public places also has a more practical aim, suggesting that women should become familiar with behaving quietly, demurely and respectably in the public sphere. Similar rules were in place at Mt. Holyoke, and Smith suggesting that this was a social expectation, rather than something limited to St. Mary’s. To this end since there were not male authority figures present, projecting a sense of respectable, quiet, pious religion to the community members of South Bend added a further dimension to the already present social tensions.

Another aspect of ladylike behavior was congeniality. Students were encouraged to be friendly and kind towards most individuals they met, particularly to cultivate a sisterhood with other women within their own class and social standings. This is alluded to by rules fourteen and fifteen, which regulate friendship. Furthermore this idea of a unique sisterhood is in line with the idea that women flourished and were thrilled by forming sisterly bonds in academies. Among Southern women whose fathers generally guarded them in an attempt to protect their virtue, the opportunity to live closely with other women, and to openly share feelings and fears was a thrill many had not experienced before.49 Furthermore these intimate relationships were deemed safe because they were among members of the same sex. This aspect of the rules, which suggests that the Saint Mary’s community fostered these same types of relationships,

suggests that a similar pattern was occurring in the North. The rules suggest that the institution also placed a value on family and reinforced the idea of a model daughter; rule 6 dictates that, “pupils will write to their parents or guardians at least once a week.”\textsuperscript{50}

In the realm of protecting virtue, certain rules were established to continue and in some cases force the development of the young women into morally upright citizens. Perhaps the most obvious is rule number one, which states that “all the pupils attend the Religious Exercises with punctuality and decorum.”\textsuperscript{51} The focus on mandatory religious exercises is consistent with a Catholic institution, but also consistent with helping women to develop into the most religious members of the family, since their religious participation will ensure the participation of children and often times husbands. Also related to this idea of developing piety among young women is rule number 12, which specifies that, “pupils must carefully avoid expressions in the least injurious or disrespectful to religion, their teachers or their fellow-pupils.”\textsuperscript{52} With both of these rules the institution’s focus on religion though not surprisingly becomes apparent. It also highlights the delicate line which the sisters walked. On one hand, sisters had to protect the appearance of propriety and feminine virtues; on the other hand, there ways of doing this, also made it easy for Protestants to suggest that women were being brainwashed in the “papal conspiracy” by the sisters. It was a delicate balance.

Other rules were constructed to avoid the appearance of impropriety and prevented the temptation towards vice. To this end rules sixteen and seventeen regulate visitors and where and when they may be received. “All Calls or visits must be received

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
in the public parlor. No young lady permitted to go to the parlor without the permission or the Prefects of Studies or Discipline.”53 Rule sixteen limits visitation hours to “Thursdays, from 1:30 to 4:30 pm” and notes that visits at any other time must be approved by the Prefect of Studies.54 These restrictions are made with the stated purpose of keeping students focused on their studies, in fact rule sixteen includes such a statement in the rule, “the sisters deem it their duty to state that frequent and protracted visits are highly detrimental to the improvement of pupils.”55 However, knowing the historical interpretations of gender roles, it also becomes apparent that these rules are also a means of controlling outside influence on young women, and the times and locations where potential suitors may come to call, prevent young women from compromising themselves.

Similarly in an effort to protect young women from compromising forces and individuals, rules eighteen and nineteen restrict printed material. Rule 18 notes that “all books brought to the Institution by the pupils or received by them, must be submitted for examination and approval of the Prefect of Studies.”56 The Prefect of Studies referred to here, is likely related to the Jesuit school/college model of discipline in that there is a prefect of studies and a prefect of discipline. The former controlled what would be known today as student life, providing sanctioned acceptable activities, with the latter disciplining students. The rules aimed to prevent young women from reading salacious, immoral, or agnostic literature. Suggesting that the women were being protected from forces that the religious community felt would harm them in some fashion. Along these

53 Ibid., 9.
54 Ibid., 8.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
lines, rule nineteen dictated that, “in order to avoid all objectionable correspondence letters written or received are examined by the Superior or her substitute.” Here too, the women were subjected to rather draconian measures in an effort to prevent them from being exposed to detrimental forces.

There are four other rules that have not been covered here that pertain to institutional matters, regarding care of library books (20), use of the infirmary (8), the prohibition against skipping dinner (13), and the prohibition against home visits during the semester absent an emergency (9). All twenty-two of the rules were in place at the first opening semester of the Academy and remained in place, at least until 1900 which is the date at which this study concludes its focus. Yet, many of these rules existed beyond that date. As an alumnae of Saint Mary’s College this author knows that the right to censor outgoing and incoming mail was common until the first lay president of the college was installed in the 1980s. And restrictions regarding visitors, particularly male, existed when the author was a student from 2003-2007. Men were not allowed to visit before 10 am on the weekdays, noon on the weekends, and had to vacate the dorms by 11p.m. on weekdays, 3 a.m. on weekends. Furthermore, all male guests had to be escorted at all times within the building by a female student.

Yet this regulation of behavior and exposure to vice was not limited to Saint Mary’s or women’s colleges, it was true in most cases of women as a gender throughout the country. They were often regulated in their homes by fathers or husbands, which partly explains why colleges would place similar restrictions. These are not particularly Catholic either. Protestant women saw similar restrictions in the home, Southern women particularly because of issues of gentility which further demanded “lady-like behavior”.
Holyoke had similar restrictions both in this period and up until the modern age. And while many women’s colleges faced scorn and mistrust, Saint Mary’s faced an added challenge of anti-Catholic sentiment. While these rules reinforced Catholic mores, they had the dual purpose of showing good faith towards the community that these women would not be unduly held against their will, that there would be no surprises in the conduct expected from students and to ensure outsiders that these young women would be following the social mores regarding conduct for the period. These rules demonstrate the double-edged sword that the sisters faced in educating women, and they suggest that the sisters were all too aware that their every move was being watched.

This chapter has examined life inside the women’s college. Both in the historical sense of women in general as they attempted to obtain an education for themselves in the nineteenth century and in practical terms of what life was like for Saint Mary’s women in the late 1800s. And it becomes apparent that life in a Catholic women’s college was not all that different than life in a Protestant women’s college. However, it is worth noting that the exercise of comparison is important. If for no other reason that in the 1800s Protestants would have rejected the suggestion that they were similar to Catholics. Moreover, it suggests that Protestant women and Catholic women shared a common experience, whether they were being educated side-by-side or not. They were receiving similar messages, and were exposed to similar social mores that affected what they would be taught and what they could do with their education upon graduation. If Catholic women and Protestant women had different social experiences in the next decade of their lives, as a generation of women saw one of the largest expansions in American history, both in population and geography, it was not because of their education.
Women were educated at Saint Mary’s. The breadth of the curriculum in the latter half to the nineteenth century was similar to that of males, which remains noteworthy. These were women who were being educated in the same way that their male counterparts were in a time when they would not have the same voting rights as those male students. Moreover they were being trained with skills that could be used outside of a home, and in ways to express themselves not only among other women but in the public sphere as well. At the same time the social values of the era, most prominently motherhood and marriageability were preserved as essential to the Catholic faith. It seems that Catholic women’s education was as complicated as all women’s education, making strides while at the same time constrained by the time in which these women lived.
Epilogue: Together In Faith, Separate In Identity: Saint Mary’s And Notre Dame, 1900-Present

Starting with one log cabin in 1843, Sorin overcame the difficulties inherent with starting from a mission in the woods to create a strong college that in its early years grew hand over fist, adding students and new buildings. The sisters accomplished similar things, quickly outgrowing their small community in Bertrand, Michigan. In 1855 the college moved to its current home on the banks of the St. Joseph River in South Bend. The college and the sisters’ community continued to grow.

As the colleges both grew so did the tensions between Sorin and the leaders of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. Things came to a head in 1882 when Rome ordered the Brothers and the Sisters of the Holy Cross split from the novitiate in Le Mans, France. In the same order the sisters sought to have their finances separated from those at Notre Dame. They also sought to change the nature of their primary work from providing domestic support at Notre Dame to focusing on teaching duties at Saint Mary’s. The force of personalities made this transition difficult but the desire to see the success of both colleges and the involvement of neutral parties allowed for the administrative separation of Saint Mary’s and Notre Dame, while at the same time preserving good relations between the two colleges.

With newfound autonomy the sisters focused on creating rigorous curriculum and growing the college. They succeeded in creating an educational experience for Catholic
women that mirrored the educational opportunities available to their Protestant counterparts. And, despite the tense moments in the 1880s between Saint Mary’s and Notre Dame, the two institutions managed to continue to work together towards the common purpose of educating Catholic men and women (as well as a great deal of non-Catholics as well). One physical reminder of the link between Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s is a landmark that is perhaps most often associated with Notre Dame. The Golden Dome atop the administration building at Notre Dame is a gift from the Sisters of the Holy Cross as a thank you to the assistance rendered in the early days of the college, as well as a symbolic reminder of the intuitions’ continued dedication to one another. In fact, the statue of Mary that is in the center of the dome, points down Saint Mary’s Avenue and into the door of the first building, and now oldest residence hall, at Saint Mary’s.

The 1880s is not the only time that the two institutions battled one another. In the 1970s when the decision to make Notre Dame coeducation, the role of Saint Mary’s was once again questioned. The original plan had been for Saint Mary’s and Notre Dame to merge. However Mother Madeleva, then president of Saint Mary’s, decided at the last minute to withdraw acceptance of the offer. This caused much anger and strain on the relationship. Notre Dame’s president Father Hesburgh has been reported as saying “You know, sisters, we're using all the metaphors of marriage, and I get the impression you're in favor of the marriage, but two things are missing. No. 1, you don't want to take our name, and No. 2, you don't want to live with us. That's not marriage.”¹ However, Saint

Mary’s was concerned that they would cease to exist much in the same way that Radcliffe had when Harvard began to accept women, and that they would become a school for students who hoped to one day transfer to Notre Dame. Yet, Notre Dame continued with its plan to admit women and both institutions overcame their differences to remain a close knit community.

Saint Mary’s has remained largely the same since its founding in 1844. It has always been an institution on the forefront of women’s education, and remains such by always updating curriculum and offering a challenging liberal arts courses. Furthermore, there has always been a focus on religion and the importance of Catholicism in education. The dichotomy of how to offer women a chance to reach their full educational and personal potential from the confines of an organized religion that neither prizes nor elevates the role of women has and remains to be one of the most fervent challenges facing Saint Mary’s. It is in this challenge that Saint Mary’s institutional history has a far bigger relevance than to alumnae and Catholics alike. Rather, the fact that such divisive waters have and continue to be navigated, make the institution an important micro study to show trends for the larger history of women and Catholics women’s education.
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Saint Mary’s Academy Course Catalogue 1873-1874, Saint Mary’s College Archives, Cushwa-Leighton Library, Saint Mary’s College, Notre Dame, IN.


Appendix 1A: Alumnae Card

Graduation Pledge
I pledge to continue the mission of Saint Mary’s College by integrating the core values of learning, community, faith, spirituality, and justice into my life beyond Saint Mary’s. With this foundation, I pledge to embrace the challenges of the ever-expanding world and to discern my responsibilities and their consequences. By this commitment, I will strive to uphold the integrity given to all people by the Creator in my daily life and career.

Appendix 1B: Bertrand Community
Appendix 2A: News Papers Consulted

South Bend Free Press, 1844
South Bend Free Press, 1845
South Bend National Union, 1866-1871
Saint Joseph County Forum, 1853-1863
Saint Joseph Valley Register, 1845-1863
Saint Joseph Valley Register, 1865-1875
South Bend Daily Times, 1888
South Bend Morning Herald, 1975-1976

Appendix 3A: Materials List, 1867-1868

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**REGULATIONS FOR WARDROBE.**

Every pupil should be furnished with:

- 6 Towels.
- 6 Napkins.
- 6 Pairs Cotton Hose.
- 6 Pairs Woolen Hose.
- 4 Changes of Under Clothes.
- Winter and Summer Balmorel.
- 1 Bathing Gown.
- 1 Portfolio, Stationery, Stamps, etc.
- 1 White Dress.
- 3 Black Aprons, for every day.

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**SENIOR DEPARTMENT.**

**Winter Uniform.**—Dress and cape of mazarine blue merino; bonnet trimmed with blue.

**Summer Uniform.**—Azure blue French gingham dress, and cape or sacque; hat trimmed in white.

School days in Winter. —Dresses of worsted or woolen goods.

No particular dress required for school days in Summer.

No particular style required for the Uniform, except high neck and long sleeves.

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**JUNIOR AND MINIM DEPARTMENTS.**

**Winter Uniform.**—Dress, cape or sacque of crimson merino; hat trimmed with crimson.

**Summer Uniform.**—Dress, cape or sacque of rose-colored French gingham; hat trimmed in white.

In order to obtain perfect uniformity in the Uniform dresses, parents and guardians are respectfully requested to apply at the Institution for samples of the right shade and material, or to purchase the goods of the merchants in South Bend, who keep a supply constantly on hand.

School days in Winter. —Dresses of worsted or woolen goods.

No particular dress required for school days in Summer.
SAINT MARY’S ACADEMY.

CHARTERED 1855.

St. Mary’s Academy, under the direction of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, is situated on the St. Joseph River, eighty miles east of Chicago, via Michigan Southern Railroad, and two miles from the flourishing town of South Bend.

The site of St. Mary’s is one to exalt the admiration of every beholder.

It would appear that nature had anticipated the use to which the grounds were to be applied, and had disposed her advantages to meet the requirements of such an establishment. Magnificent forest trees rising from the banks of one of the most beautiful rivers in the Mississippi Valley still stand in native grandeur; the music of bright waters and healthful breezes inspire activity and energy, while the quiet seclusion invites to reflection and study.

The landscape is unparalleled in loveliness, diversified by shrub and vine, noble forest trees, bright, deep, green swards, and all that renders rural scenes so charming, united with the embellishments of art which serve to bring out yet not to mar or supersede the perfections bestowed by nature.

Eighty acres are laid out in fine pleasure grounds, where extensive grape arbors, numerous rustic oratories, summer houses and fountains are presented to the eye like fair gems in a rich enamel of verdure.

The building, of brick with stone dressing, spacious and commodious, is one of the best constructed in the country for educational purposes. Every portion of the Institution is heated by steam, and hot and cold baths are connected with the sleeping apartments.

The Scholastic Year is divided into two sessions of five months each. The first session commencing the first Monday of September, and ending the last day of January. At Christmas the regular classes are not interrupted, except the day before and the day after. The second session commencing the first day of February, and ending the last Thursday of June.

At the close of the first session, an examination is held in the presence of the Faculty of the Institution; the principal and public examination takes place during the fourteen days preceding the last Thursday of June, on which day the Annual Commencement takes place.

Pupils are received at all times during the year, and their session commences with the date of their entrance.

The pupils are divided into the Senior, Junior and Minim Departments, each having separate class and recreation rooms, study and dining halls, play grounds and sleeping apartments.
SAINT MARY’S ACADEMY.

The Table of Honor, Weekly Notes, Monthly Tickets, Semi-Annual Examinations and Biannual Distribution of Prizes, Gold Crowns and Crownlets, are among the many means made use of to excite the love of study in the minds of pupils and to reward the diligent.

The Course of Study is very thorough and extensive, embracing all the branches of a solid and ornamental education. Seven years are required to complete a full course, commencing in the Primary Department, and four years commencing in the Junior Department of French and English. Additional time will be necessary where pupils intend to graduate in a classical course. Graduating Medals are awarded to those only who take the full English and French, or Classical Course.

All students entering the Institution will be expected to take the Regular Course, unless allowed, for satisfactory reasons, to pursue special studies. But every possible facility will be afforded to those students who find it desirable to devote their whole attention to single branches, or to a limited number selected with some special reference, either in continuing favorite studies or to fit themselves for future occupation.

The Scientific Departments receive careful attention. Scientific Literary Lectures are given through the year by Professors from the University of Notre Dame, or distinguished visitors.

The Institution possesses an excellent set of Chemical and Philosophical Apparatus, choice and extensive Herbarium of Foreign and Native Plants, and a fine Library.

Each Department of the Institution, (c.e.) Senior, Intermediate and Junior, has its own regularly organized Reading Society, (practiced over by their respective teachers,) in which two hours every Wednesday afternoon are devoted to reading aloud carefully selected works from approved authors; the pupils at this time are taught to exercise judicious criticism, either orally or in writing.

Great attention is given to Rhetorical Exercises, Letter Writing and other forms of Composition. The ability to read aloud, not only intelligibly and with correctness, but with that elegance and expressive power which brings out the full force and beauty of the subject is a rare and precious accomplishment, and it receives the most particular attention in every department. Compositions are required from all the pupils weekly. A certain number of the best are selected to be read aloud at the Weekly Academic Recitation.

In addition to Class Instruction in Letter Writing, every pupil is required to write once a week.

Book-Keeping—The general principles of book-keeping and a simple system of keeping personal accounts are taught to all the pupils in the Senior Department. This course is extended very thoroughly for any who may desire it.

Bulletin of the pupils’ progress sent monthly to parents.

When a student has once commenced any particular branch she cannot lay it aside without the consent of the Prefect of Studies and the Superior.

The Modern Languages are taught by native teachers, and are very familiarly spoken by the inmates of the Institution. The pupils are required to devote certain hours of recreation to conversing with their respective teachers in those tongues. The French forms a portion of the regular course—German, Italian and Spanish optional.

ORNAMENTAL DEPARTMENT.—While the solid studies are regarded as the most important, much attention is given to those lighter and more graceful accomplishments which throw a charm over domestic life, and contribute to essentially to elevate the tone of society at large.

Music, in its various branches, is studiously cultivated. The rudiments of vocal music are taught to all the pupils in the Institution, and the practice of social singing, both sacred and secular, is encouraged to the utmost extent. The Scientific, Vocal and Instrumental Departments are taught by accomplished and experienced teachers.

One wing of the Academy is divided into a large hall for singing and fifty music rooms, each one containing a harp or piano. Independent of the private, weekly lessons, instruction in Harmony and the theory of instrumental music is also given in regularly graded classes, on the European Conservatorium plan. Particular attention is given to pupils who are preparing themselves to become organists. While every facility is afforded to obtain a brilliant and scientific musical education, yet the students are not allowed to sacrifice higher interests to proficiency in branches purely ornamental. Those who, from want of natural talent, make but little progress, are dismissed from wasting time and means which might be used to better advantage.

School of Design.—We are happy to inform our patrons that we have, at length, been able to realize a long cherished desire of opening a School of Design, where choice models in busts, chronicles and oil paintings in the different schools have been collected, and where full courses will be given by efficient teachers in all the various departments of Drawing and Painting.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.—Pupils of all denominations are received; and, while the utmost care is taken in the religious instruction of the children of Catholic parents, there is no interference with the children of other denominations. For the sake of good discipline, all are required to be present at the public religious exercises.

Health.—The remarkable beauty of St. Mary’s location, the salubrity of the climate, and the extensive grounds, interspersed with groves and walks, arbors and fountains for the use and recreation of the pupils, contribute greatly to the uniform excellent health of the inmates of the Institution. Every incentive in the shape of swings, calisthenics, croquet, the graces, archery, and other games, are offered to induce sufficient exercise in the open air to preserve and promote a vigorous physique.

Of the five large halls devoted to recreation, three are assigned to active in-door amusements when the weather will not permit outdoor exercises.

*Every student is required to provide himself with a light and easy-fitting dress, to be worn during these games.
Great attention is paid to the sanitary regulations of the Academy—i.e., in the choice and preparation of the food, the warming and thorough ventilation of the rooms; the hours for rising and retiring—for meals, study and recreation; the rules and regulations affecting personal regimes, etc.

The Prefect of Health is charged with the special supervision of the health of the students, and, in case of sickness, she immediately informs parents or guardians.

Artificial skating ponds are made during the winter in the groves around the Academy, and, in summer, the pupils are encouraged to cultivate beds of luscious strawberries—which is their own property—not to be placed upon the table as a dessert, but to be picked and eaten in their hours of recreation.

While so much attention is paid to the pupils' health, their general deportment is equally the source of unremitting care. Knowing that the charm of what is properly termed good breeding is the aggregate of habits acquired in youth, the teachers will not, on all occasions, to point out and correct their faults against polite, lady-like deportment. In conversation, they are carefully taught to avoid all that is rude, coarse, insipid or trivial—they are instructed how to think for themselves and to express their ideas modestly, clearly and frankly, and taught to use their resources of knowledge, reason and wit with good sense and good taste.

Frequent public instructions are given in politeness and etiquette.

It is often a subject of reproach, as well as regret, that young ladies, after passing many years at school—well-instructed in the accomplishments and sciences of the age—are woefully deficient in those household duties which undoubtedly form the most important part of woman's peculiar province. The young lady at school is not placed in the proper position for successful practice of those duties, yet much can be done toward preparing her for them, and guarding her against the danger of forming tastes and habits tending to unfit her for her allotted sphere—rendering its duties loathsome and repulsive. For this purpose, oral instruction in the art of domestic economy in all its branches, practical illustration in the kitchen, bakery and dairy of the Institution, with reference, for example, to the selection of meats, vegetables, and other articles of food and their preparation for the table, will be given in the Senior Department, in order to impress, theoretically at least, the importance of these duties on the minds of the pupils.

Regular hours for sewing are allotted to all the students for the necessary repairs of their wardrobe and ornamental or plain sewing. The sewing-circles are placed under the direction of competent teachers, who give full and careful instructions to the pupils instructed to them.
The Chapel of Our Lady of Loreto
stands a matchless piece of architecture. It is in the Romanesque style and is unique in plan, the conception of which is due to Very Rev. E. Sorin, Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Cross. The stained glass windows are marvels of artistic beauty, and are from Le Mans, France. The dome of the chapel is richly crowned with the symbol of our Redemption, the distinctive mark of the Order of the Holy Cross.

The Academy Buildings,
of cream-colored brick, with stone trimmings, are spacious, comfortable and commodious—admirably adapted, in every respect, to the object in view at their erection. All parts of the institution are heated with steam, no fire being in any part of the Academy building. Bathrooms, supplied with hot and cold water, communicate with the sleeping apartments. The study-halls, dormitories and class-rooms are well lighted and ventilated. Protection from fire is amply provided for. In addition to the system of water works in the interior—water from artesian wells being driven to all parts of the building through iron pipes, with hose attachment on each floor—iron balconies and outside fire escapes have been erected on all the Academy buildings. These iron balconies are attached to each of the three stories, with iron stairs affording easy communication between the higher and lower balconies, hence to the ground. The declaration of Mr. Saunders, of the New York Insurance Co., before the erection of the balconies, that "the Academy is the most completely provided against fire of any building on the insurance list," is now more than verified.

Railway Communications, Etc.
St. Mary's Academy can be easily reached by railway from any part of the United States or Canada—either by way of Chicago, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Detroit, or directly through South Bend where a stage for Notre Dame and St. Mary's meets all incoming passenger trains.

Through the Vandalia line, South Bend makes direct connections with Cincinnati, St. Louis and Indianapolis; the Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific lines connect with the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern at LaPorte, Ind., for South Bend. The Cincinnati, Wabash & Michigan connections with the Lake Shore line.

for South Bend, are made at Goshen, Ind. A branch of one of the leading railway lines, the Michigan Central, strikes the Academy grounds. On arriving in South Bend, those who prefer a private conveyance to the regular stage or omnibus line can be accommodated either at the depot or by ordering from one of the many livery stables in the city.

The Academy is connected by telephone with South Bend and the University of Notre Dame, and through the Western Union telegraph office communicates with all outside points.

The Scholastic Year
is divided into two sessions, of five months each. The First Session begins the first Monday of September and ends the last day of January; the Second Session begins on the first of February and ends the last Wednesday of June. At the close of the First Session examinations are held in the presence of the Faculty of the Institute, but the principal and public examinations take place during the two weeks preceding the Annual Commencement day. Pupils are received at any time during the year, their session beginning with the date of their entrance and lasting five months; but for obvious reasons it is better, when possible, to enter at the opening of one of the regular sessions.

Departments
The students are assigned according to age, to Senior or Junior Department. Little girls, under twelve years of age, are placed in the Primary or Minim Department, where they are taught according to their capacity. Each department is virtually a distinct institution, with its own study hall, play-grounds, and sleeping apartments.

The Education
given at St. Mary's is of the most practical and comprehensive character. It is intended to train the heart as well as the mind, to form women who will not only grace society with their accomplishments, but honor and edify it by their virtues. Every attention is given to the moral and religious culture of the pupils, and their general deportment is equally the subject of unremitting care. Knowing that the charm of what is properly termed good breeding is the aggregate of habits acquired in youth, the teachers fall not on all occasions, to point out, and take means
to correct faults committed against polite, lady-like deportment. Instructions or lectures on politeness or etiquette are given once a week. Pupils are, in the main, trained to think for themselves, to express their ideas modestly, clearly and frankly; to use their resources of knowledge, reason and wit with good sense and good taste, and to avoid in conversation all that is rude, insipid, or trivial.

Among the many means made use of to promote emulation are the Tablets of Honor, Weekly Notes, Reports published in the Notre Dame Scholastic, Monthly Tickets, Bulletins, Semi-Annual Examinations, Annual Distribution of Prizes and Crowns.

The Course of Studies

in the various departments is as extensive and thorough as long experience in teaching and a large and capable staff of teachers can make it. The best systems of instruction are adopted, and the best authors selected for each branch. If the student begins in the Senior Class, four years are required to complete a full Academic Course; if in the Preparatory, seven years are required for a full course.

The Preparatory Course.

In this Course, pupils remain until they are well grounded in Grammar, Geography, Arithmetic and the elements of Bookkeeping, United States History, Physiology, Bible History, and, for Catholic pupils, Catechism. (See Course of Studies, page 12.)

The Academic Course

embraces a period of four years. Etymology, Rhetoric, Bookkeeping, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Astronomy, Botany, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, History, Literature, Logic, Geology, Mental and Moral Philosophy, and Church History and Christian Doctrine for Catholic pupils. (See Course of Studies, page 13.)

We beg leave to state that we examine all pupils and place them in the classes for which they are best fitted.

Scientific Studies.

The Museum of Natural History and the Mineralogical Cabinets contain a large and well arranged collection of rare botanical, zoological, mineralogical and geological specimens; choice specimens of minerals used as gems and ornaments; a fine collection of geodes, quartz crystals, agates, amazon stones, sapphires, marbles, etc.; valuable ores—gold, silver, copper, iron, lead; petrifications, besides a valuable collection of fossils, illustrative of the different geological ages, and specimens of rock, etc., from the different formations.

The institution possesses also an excellent set of Chemical and Philosophical apparatus, choice and extensive Herbariums of foreign and native plants, and an extensive Library.

Post-Graduate Course.

For the benefit of those who wish to continue special studies the following programme has been arranged: General Literature and General History, Young's Higher Astronomy, Daniel's Physics, Philosophy—Mental and Moral, History of Philosophy, Calculus, (Optional), Chemical Analysis, Biology, (practical work in the Laboratory). Various branches of Natural Science continued in this Class, as well as Latin, French, German, Music and Painting.

Languages.

French, German and Latin may be studied throughout the course, and may be continued in the Post-Graduating Class.

Literature and Criticism.

Each department of the institute has its own regularly organized Literary Society, at the weekly meetings of which, selections from approved authors are read and reviewed. At these reunions lectures are given, and students are taught to exercise judicious criticism either orally or in writing.

Great attention is given to Rhetorical exercises. The ability to read aloud with that expressive power which brings out the full force and beauty of the author, is a rare and precious accomplishment, therefore emphasis receives the most particular attention in all the departments.

At the weekly Academic meetings, choice selections from the French, the German and the English authors are read aloud by the members, varied by Recitations, and once a month, by the reading of original papers edited by the young ladies of the Senior department. German and French have long been adopted as languages of the house; they are, therefore, spoken
freely in the recitations and in the class, besides forming a portion of the regular Academic Course.

The Academy supplements its regular class-work by Courses of Lectures on the following subjects viz.: Philosophy—Mental and Moral, History, Literature, Music, Art and Biology. These Lectures, given by eminent Professors from Notre Dame University and by distinguished visitors, are in themselves a liberal education.

LECTURES DURING THE PRESENT YEAR:


Reverend T. E. Walsh, C. S. C., President of Notre Dame University. "The Papacy."


Rev. A. M. Kirsh, C. S. C., Professor of Natural Sciences.


Prof. N. Ledochowski. Lectures on the great masters, analyses of their works; and musical recitals.

Prof. R. Seidel. Violin Recitals.

The Ornamental Department.

While the solid studies are regarded as the most important, much attention is paid to those graceful, womanly accomplishments which throw a charm over domestic life, and contribute in no small degree to elevate the tone of society.

ST. MARY’S ACADEMY.

Domestic Economy and Sewing.

A celebrated author—one whose name as a writer, has become a household word in America as well as in Europe—has said in one of his books, with reference to the cuisine, "that it is better for women to know how to make home happy than to be able to read Greek." At St. Mary's, the instructions are given in the great and useful art of Domestic Economy in all its branches. The pupils of the Graduating Class spend a portion of their time in the kitchen of the institute, in order to acquire a practical knowledge of this important branch.

Regular hours for sewing are allotted to all the pupils so that they may keep their wardrobe in perfect order. The sewing circles are placed under the direction of competent teachers, who give full and careful instructions to the pupils intrusted to them.

Health.

The salubrity of the climate, the quiet and regular life, the perfect drainage of the land, elevated so far above the rapid current of the river, and the extensive grounds for the use and recreation of the pupils, contribute greatly to the excellent health of the inmates of the Academy.

The sanitary regulations of the Academy are excellent, great attention being paid to the choice and preparation of food, the warming and thorough ventilation of rooms, the hours for retiring and rising, for meals, study and recreation, the rules and regulations affecting personal regimen, etc., etc.,

An experienced Prefect is charged with the special supervision of the health of the students. In case of sickness the Prefect immediately informs the parents or guardians of the student and the invalid is placed under the care of experienced nurses in the Infirmary of the Academy. Medical attendance and medicines are furnished at the physician’s charges.

Religious Instruction.

Pupils of all denominations are received, and anything like an attempt to force the religious convictions of non-Catholics, is scrupulously avoided. But for the sake of uniformity and the preservation of discipline, all pupils are required to be present at the public religious exercises. The children of Catholic parents are, of course, carefully instructed in Christian doctrine and the