

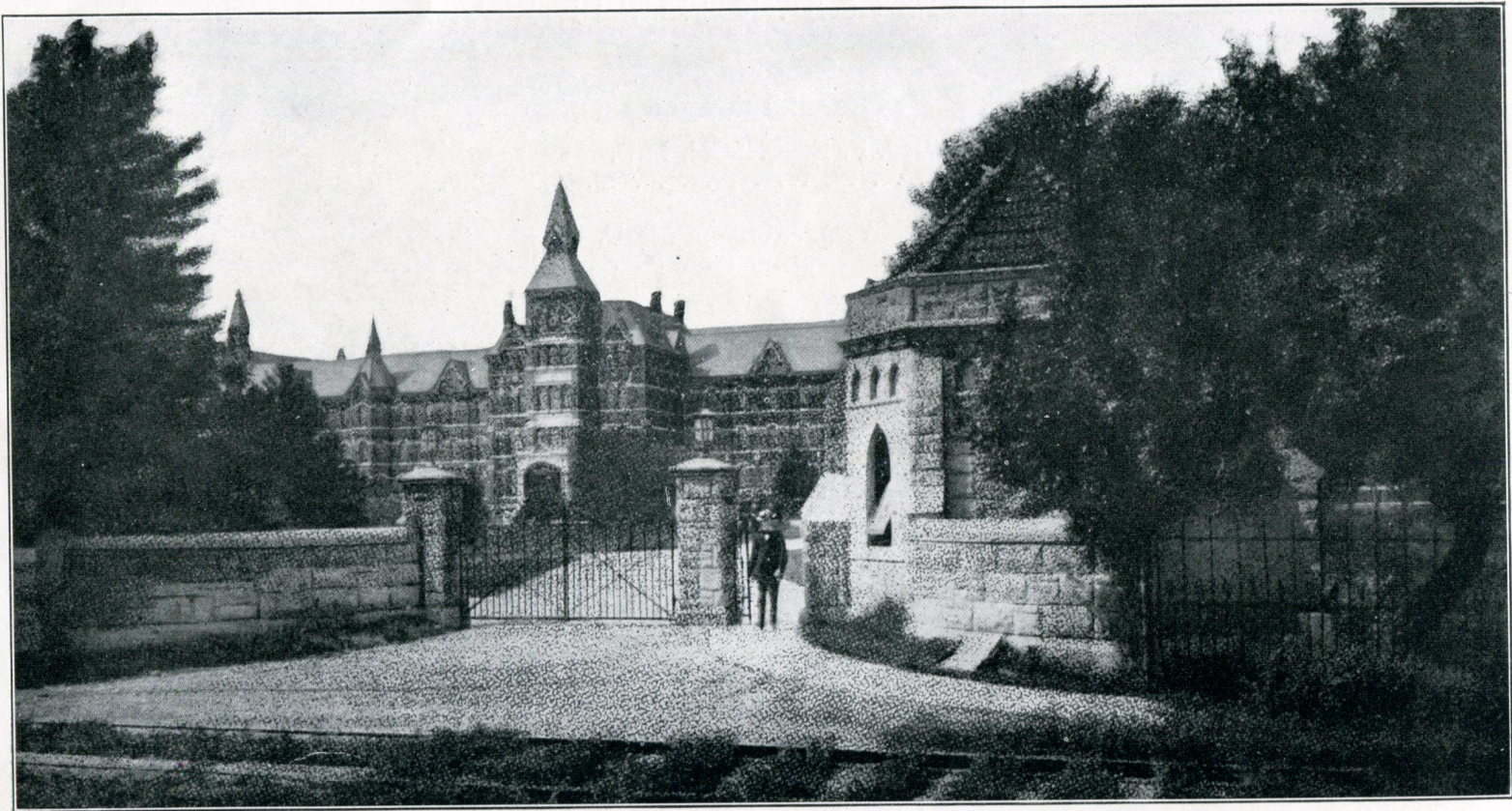
1860

1910

Souvenir of the  
Golden Jubilee of St. Joseph's Retreat  
Dearborn, Michigan

Conducted by the  
Sisters of Charity of  
St. Vincent de Paul



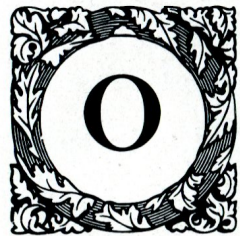


ST. JOSEPH'S RETREAT



# ST. JOSEPH'S RETREAT, 1860-1910

Dr. Justin E. Emerson's Review of Its History and the Conditions  
Which Led to Its Establishment.



ON JANUARY 25, 1910, we celebrated the Jubilee Anniversary of the opening of the "Michigan State Retreat" for the Insane in 1860, a name changed on Nov. 29, 1883 to the "St. Joseph's Retreat." It was first located on Michigan Avenue, in Detroit, a little east of where the Western Boulevard now is, and was continuously occupied as a hospital for the insane till its accommodations were found inadequate to meet the growing demands of the city and state and it became evident that it would soon be unpleasantly crowded by the rapid growth of the city, and the peace and privacy so essential to its work would be lost. Then a fertile farm just west of the village of Dearborn was purchased for the erection of the present commodious and admirable building, which was first occupied in November, 1886.

In reviewing the history of St. Joseph's Retreat for the past half-century, it is essential to note the vastly differing conditions that prevailed at that time and now. In 1850 the population of Detroit was a little over 21,000; in 1854 it was 40,000; and in 1860, 45,600; while at present it is about 465,000.

In 1810, a hundred and forty years after the founding of Detroit, the whole population of Michigan was only 4,762, and in 1830 it had increased to about 31,000; then came a rapid influx of immigrants, largely from New England, New York, and Ohio, so that in 1840 there was a

population of 212,267 in the new state, the twenty-sixth in the Union; in 1850 the population of the state, by the U. S. census, was 397,654, of whom over 341,000 were born in the United States. Yet at this time the average population was only slightly over seven per square mile, the entire area of the state being about 58,915 square miles, with a coast line of 1,600 miles.

In the ten years succeeding 1850 the population of the state had nearly doubled and was over 749,000, yet with an average of only about twelve to the square mile.

The state and the city were in an exceedingly primitive condition; access to the interior in 1850 was almost wholly over roads that were corduroy or mud trails through the forest. In May, 1852, the first train over the Michigan Central R. R. entered Chicago and the same year the Michigan Southern R. R. was completed between Toledo and Chicago.

The first telegraph message from Detroit to Ypsilanti was in Nov. 29, 1847.

The streets of Detroit, if paved at all, were paved with cobble-stones.

St. Vincent's Hospital seems to have been the first hospital opened in the state; this was on Larned Street, in 1845, and moved in 1850 to Clinton Street, near its present location and it was then named St. Mary's Hospital. There it was in 1855 that Sister De Sales and other sisters, first undertook the care of the insane.



Till then there was not in this immense area a single hospital where this class was cared for in a humane way. The only places outside of their own homes where they could be cared for were the prisons and poorhouses, if it could be said that they there received *care*, since these places were more crude and primitive than were the conditions of living of other classes of the pioneer communities of the state. There was no medical attendance and the humane ideas of Pinel had not penetrated the mass of the community.

It is true that in 1848 the State Legislature passed an Act looking to the erection of an Asylum for the Insane. Almost nothing, however, was done to carry into effect this Act until in 1853, when the Legislature began to awaken from its lethargy and appointed a new Board of Trustees for the inchoate asylum, and plans were soon considered by them for the much needed hospital.

In 1854 they appointed Dr. Gray, then acting superintendent of the Utica Asylum in New York, as superintendent of the Michigan Asylum, and he soon drafted plans for the building, undoubtedly with the co-operation of Dr. Edwin H. Van Deusen, who was in 1855 appointed superintendent to succeed Dr. Gray. The Legislature of 1854 also appropriated \$67,000.00 to begin the work of construction, and there was reasonable prospect that soon some relief would be furnished for the wretched insane of the state.

It was then estimated that their number was over 400, while there was not a single hospital within the borders of the state that could give them adequate care.

The following year, however (1855) Sister De Sales, and a few associates, undertook, as has been stated, in connection with St. Mary's hospital, to do what was possible for the care of a few of this neglected class. It was manifest,

however, that this provision was quite inadequate to meet the urgency of the situation and that relief through the State Asylum, which was not looked for under three years, would be only partial, hence it was decided to erect a new hospital for the insane to be under the care of the Sisters of Charity.

The site chosen was on the south side of Michigan avenue near where the Western Boulevard now is. It was then at a sufficient distance from the city to insure isolation and quiet.

The Michigan Asylum, though intended to be opened in part in 1858, was partially destroyed by fire, and was not opened until August, 1859, when 80 female patients were admitted.

Meantime work on the construction of the "Michigan State Retreat for the Insane" had been pushed and on January 25, 1860, its doors were opened under the care of the pioneer Sister De Sales and her associates.

The name at first chosen for the hospital is significant of the scope of its purpose and that it designed to assist in meeting a state-wide necessity.

Yet this need was not fully met even when the Michigan Asylum was completed in 1870, and accommodations were provided within its walls for 300 patients.

It is almost impossible for us now to appreciate the difficulties that these pioneers in the care of the insane encountered and overcame, so prosperous and wealthy has our state become and so liberal is the policy of our legislatures. At that time some of its citizens realized the urgency of the situation but very many did not.

In 1853 an excited meeting was held in the city hall to protest against the building of any more public institutions.



Although the state was endowed with vast natural resources of wealth in its fertile lands, its magnificent forests of pine, whitewood and hard woods, mines of iron and copper, yet money was scarce, the farmers were poor and barely able to wring a hard-earned subsistence from the virgin soil. Malarial fevers were rampant, the farmers' wives were over-taxed, scanty opportunities for social recreation, and access to adequate markets was difficult and expensive, while wild-cat banking made the financial situation even more difficult than it would have otherwise been.

The conditions of the insane in poorhouses and prisons as described by Miss Dorothea Dix when she visited the state before there were hospitals for their care, was almost too horrible for belief; women confined in cells under the care of male keepers, men and women in rags and filth confined in contiguous quarters where privacy was impossible.

Within the memory of the writer an insane man was brought to the Michigan Asylum with no clothing but a blanket wrapped around him, who had been kept chained in a little log cabin for ten years, as a dangerous lunatic; and yet within a few weeks through the influence of sympathy and kindness, he was clothed and cared for, a gentle and grateful patient, who responded to every effort for his comfort.

How can we estimate the value of the labors of Sister De Sales in those far-away years when she and her devoted associates were laying the foundations of the present St. Joseph's Retreat; how sum up the vast total of misery relieved, of lives saved and sorrowing families made happy by the restoration of their loved ones who were lost?

Verily, they know their reward!

Time would fail us to tell of the devotion and self-sacrificing labors of the noble women who have followed in

the footsteps of Sister De Sales and her associates. But surely their names if not inscribed here, are written in the pages of the Book wherein are recorded all those who love their fellow-men.

Their conscientious attention to every detail in the care of their patients, their consecration to their chosen work, their patient kindness and sincerity, due to their religious training, make them ideal nurses.

On the last day of 1908, after a service of thirty-five years in the first hospital building and in the new building, Dr. T. G. Johnson passed to his rest.

The sisters were most fortunate in having through all those years his wise counsel and efficient aid. His personality was a fortunate blending of good judgment and generous kindness. The writer, having served with him since 1888, gladly renders this tribute to his memory.

Verily, the teaching of Pinel has been justified in our day; that Love is the master key to open the hearts of even the most debased, and to alleviate the misery that inevitably attends the dethronement of reason.

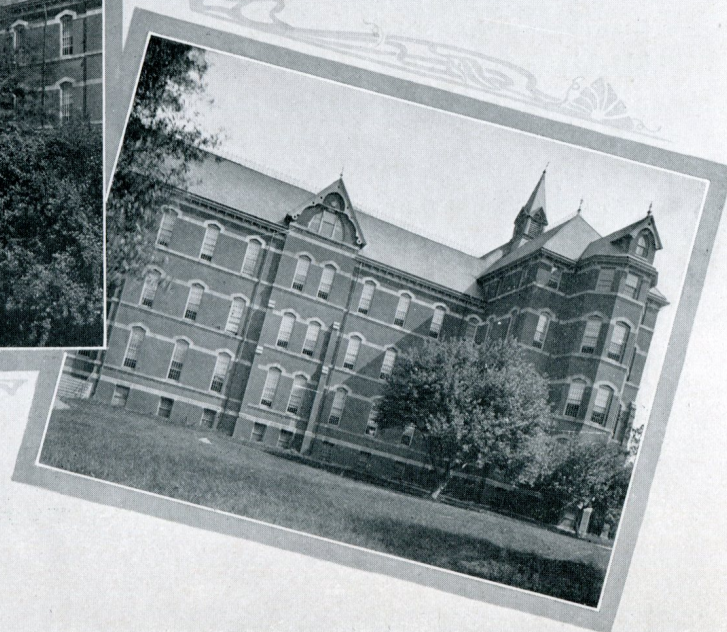
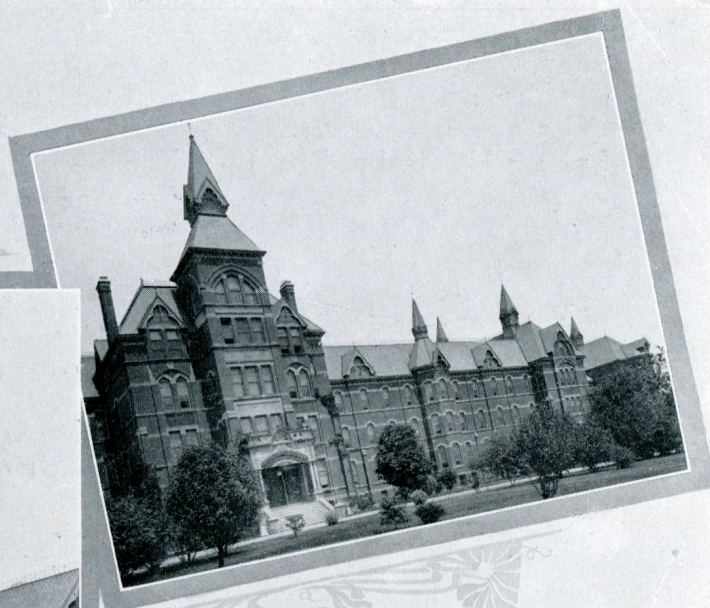
Each generation must learn this truth for itself. May we then with all the multiplied resources and advantages of our luxurious hospitals ponder well this lesson—Lest we forget!

Not fine hospitals cure the insane, so much as the loving, sympathetic service which uses them as its instrument.

May the same Divine Spirit which inspired our predecessors, guide us to follow worthily in the path which they have trod before us.

JUSTIN E. EMERSON,  
Attending Physician.





SECOND WEST WING  
LAWN

CENTER AND FIRST WEST WING

EAST WING  
SECOND EAST WING



# THE MICHIGAN STATE RETREAT

## First Hospital in Michigan for Mental and Nervous Ailments.

FROM A REMODELED FARM-HOUSE TO A GREAT, MODERN ESTABLISHMENT



WHEN the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul undertook, in 1855, to care for demented persons in St. Mary's hospital, Detroit, they were forced to admit that the effort was beset with many disadvantages. It was difficult to do full justice in the same house both to those who were physically and those who were mentally ill. However, a happy solution of the difficulty was found when, in 1859, the Sisters, through Sister Mary De Sales, superior of the hospital, purchased a twenty-acre farm at Michigan avenue and Twenty-fourth street for the purpose of getting fresh milk, eggs, vegetables, and fruits for their charges. On this land stood a small farm-house, which they caused to be remodeled, and thither went Sisters Theresa Dobbins and Lydia Miller with the few demented patients who had been kept in the hospital.

No thought of establishing a Retreat had entered the minds of the Sisters up to that time, but the idea suggested itself forcibly when, immediately after the change was made, applications for admission to the new home began pouring in.

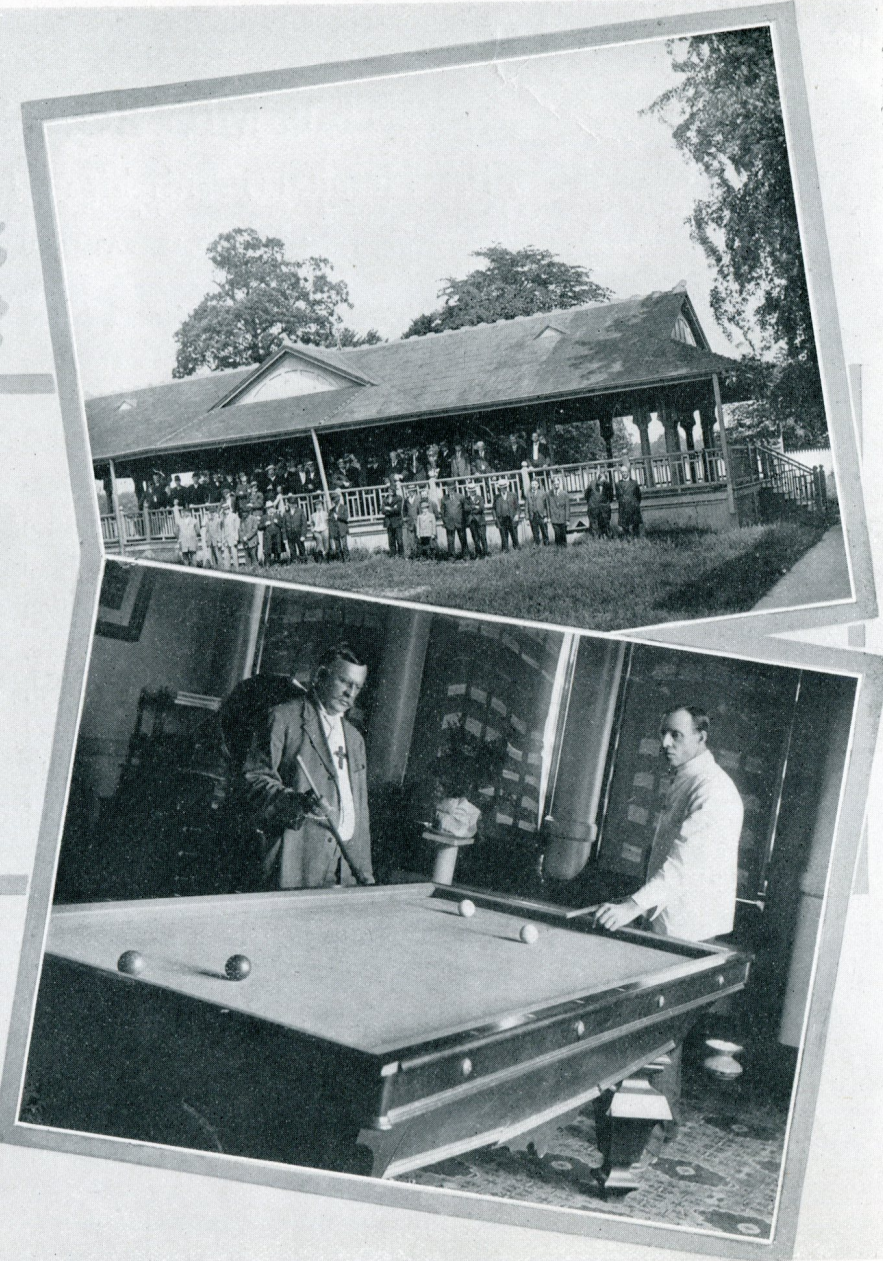
The Civil War, which broke out during the year after the Retreat was formally opened as a psychiatric hospital, had a marked influence upon the fortunes of the Retreat. The United States government entrusted to St. Vincent's Daughters the care of the wounded soldiers sent to Detroit, and, in order the better to carry on this new work of mercy, the Sisters had a temporary hospital to accommodate 130 men erected beside St. Mary's. The money they received from the government for this service was devoted to meeting the increasing demands upon the Retreat. A brick building with facilities for the care of 80 patients was constructed on the farm, and was occupied July 19, 1870. At the same time, Sister De Sales resigned her position as the Superior of St. Mary's hospital, but she continued to direct the affairs of the Retreat.

As the new establishment filled, it was found that the twenty acres would not yield a sufficient supply of farm and garden products, consequently, in 1874, five acres (now city property) were exchanged for 100 acres of orchard, meadow, and grove in Dearborn. Twenty acres were added to the new farm in 1883, and twenty more in 1884.





GENTLEMEN'S PRIVATE ROOM  
ALCOVE

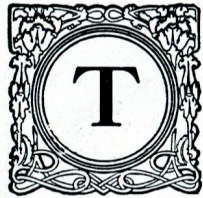


GENTLEMEN'S PAVILION  
BILLIARD ROOM



# ST. JOSEPH'S RETREAT

Its Remarkable Development into an Institution of the Highest Class.



THE present name, St. Joseph's Retreat, was adopted November 1, 1883, when the Sisters filed new articles of incorporation. In July, 1885, Sister Mary De Sales resigned, and she was succeeded by the present superior, Sister Mary Borgia.

It was apparent at this time that the location of the Retreat had become undesirable, owing to the rapid growth of the city, so it was decided to move to the Dearborn farm.

Here, within easy reach of Detroit, could be had freedom from the noises and dust of the metropolis, pure country air, spacious grounds for the patients, and, not least, direct supervision of the fields, gardens, and animals depended upon to yield necessities not easily procurable in a fresh state in urban markets. Steps to effect the change were taken speedily, and the corner-stone of the great structure in which the work is being carried on today was laid on November 1, 1885.

At first, what might be called the main building—now known as the “center”—and the first east wing, with detached steam power and electric light plant, were erected. The house was blessed October 28, 1886, and the Sisters were installed in it a few days later with 99 patients.

The last farewell was said to the city in the following year when the property at Michigan avenue and Twenty-fourth street was sold, the proceeds being added to the resources of the Retreat.

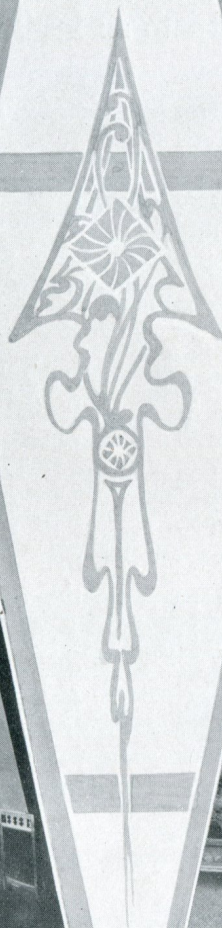
So rapidly did the number of patients increase that in 1887 the construction of the first west wing was begun; this was completed in February, 1888. In the same year was built a commodious and thoroughly equipped laundry. A model brick barn and stable, a large kitchen addition, and pavilions in the recreation grounds were erected in 1894.

By 1896, the ladies' quarters were filled, so the second east wing was added. The same congested condition on the men's side in 1905 made a second west wing necessary, and the exquisitely beautiful chapel was built in the same year.

A cold storage plant, with ice machine, was put in operation in 1909, and the ice house which had done service from the beginning was demolished. In the following winter a greenhouse was built.

As a matter of fact, whenever any addition or improvement has appeared necessary or desirable, it has been supplied as expeditiously as possible, and a mere detailed account of all the betterments would prove wearisome. The rapid increase in clientele noted in recent years will soon render imperative still further additions or the erection of other buildings.





LADIES' PAVILION  
SECOND FLOOR PARLOR

LADIES' PRIVATE ROOM  
FIRST FLOOR PARLOR



## COMFORT AND SAFETY

Both Requisites Provided Without Regard to Economy—Everything Subservient to the Welfare of the Patients.



NO expense necessary for the comfort and general well-being of the patients was spared in the construction of the Retreat. There are no wards. Every room is separated from those adjoining it and from the corridor upon which it opens by a solid brick wall two feet thick which has its foundation below the basement and extends to the attic, so that each tier of rooms is practically a separate building. Metal lath is used in the ceilings; the floors are of hardwood; in every attendant's apartment and in the wardrobe of every hall is fire hose attached to pipes which run from huge tanks of water in the attic; there are seven of these tanks, and they contain at all times 44,000 gallons of water supplied by pumps that never stop; steam is kept up in the boiler-house day and night, summer and winter; scores of chemical fire extinguishers are distributed about the house.

The arrangement of the building, with long wings extending from the imposing center, is such that every room is flooded with sunshine during a part of the day. Every room has its own ventilating shafts, and a copious supply of fresh air comes through flues equipped with steam coils.

The patients are classified according to the nature or extent of their affliction, and provision is made for keeping

each class by itself. To this end, fifteen halls, with broad corridors, spacious apartments, and high ceilings are arranged on each side of the building in addition to the less secluded rooms of the center.

The halls occupied by men have smoking rooms and sunny alcoves, while for those who can enjoy them there are billiards, cards, and other games. In the ladies' halls are large sitting rooms and alcoves, with pianos, house plants, and the knick-knacks dear to the feminine heart. Here the patients beguile the time with music, reading, or sewing.

Every hall is in charge of a Sister who aims at making it a home, and under whose direction the paid attendants must strive for the same end. There is no patient who is not in some degree amenable to kindness, and it is on this that the greatest reliance is placed for the preservation of the peace and contentment that are more potent for cure, or, at least, mental ease, than the most skillful medical treatment.

Even the mildest form of restraint is regarded as undesirable, and is resorted to only when absolutely unavoidable.

No patient, whatever his status or condition, may be treated otherwise than with respect, and even a slighting word from an attendant is held to justify summary discharge.

Behind every expenditure, every arrangement, every rule, there is one object—the good of the patients.



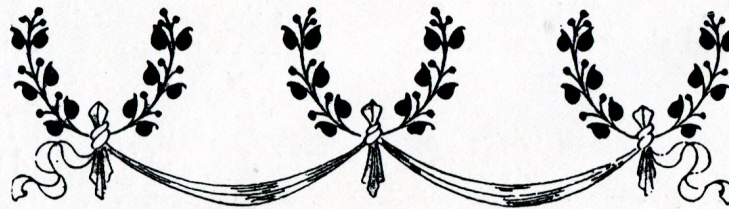
The healthfulness of the patients, physically, has been so exceptional as to elicit from the physicians in one of their reports the following comment:

"The general absence, not only during the past year but during all the years, of ordinary disease from so large an aggregation of individuals must be held, under Providence, to be due to the watchful care of the Sisters for the patients in the matters of diet, personal cleanliness, etc.; also to the methods of heating and ventilation, which are as perfect as the science of the day can suggest, and to the perfect drainage which is rendered possible by the situation of the building on the River Rouge, about 60 feet above its level.

"\* \* \* In a word, the far-sighted wisdom of the Sisters is manifest in everything about the institution."

## THE ENTERTAINMENT HALL

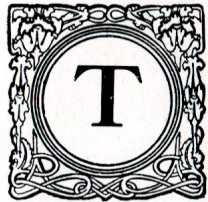
A source of great pleasure for the patients is the entertainment hall, which has a seating capacity of three hundred, with stage, scenery, and all other necessary appurtenances. Concerts, dramas, moving pictures, etc., are presented at frequent intervals. There are always in the institution gifted men and women who find enjoyment in acting or singing for the patients.





## ROMANTIC SURROUNDINGS

Present Site of St. Joseph's the Scene of Many Stirring Events.



THE Retreat is situated on a romantic spot. The road by which it is reached from east and west was at first an Indian trail running from the aboriginal village on the present site of Detroit to the foot of Lake Michigan. It became a route of international importance during the long struggles with the Indians, in the many contests between the French and the British, and in the two wars that were carried on between the United States and Great Britain before American supremacy over this region was established. For this reason it was known even until comparatively recent years as the Military Road. Later it was called the Chicago Road, for an obvious reason, but now it is Michigan avenue in both Detroit and Chicago, as well as in the intervening cities. It is still the state's principal highway.

A mile away are still to be found traces of Fort Dearborn, an outpost of Detroit in the early days. The fort was replaced by an artillery depot that was maintained until the eve of the Civil War, and the arsenal and other buildings of this establishment prove an attraction for sightseers.

A few yards from the rear of the Retreat meanders a branch of the tortuous River Rouge, so named by the French voyageurs who discovered it shortly after the Sieur de la Mothe Cadillac came to take possession of the country for the king of France.

The stream traverses the Retreat farm in graceful windings on its way to the River Detroit. Beyond it are the tilled land, the pastures, and a grove of magnificent oaks, maples, elms, beeches, and tulip trees, many of which gave shelter to the savage in a bygone age. The fields abound in wild-flowers which many of the patients delight in gathering for the decoration of their rooms.

The city hall in Detroit is but ten miles away and is speedily reached through the half-hourly service given by the Detroit & Jackson Interurban Railway. The Michigan Central Railway station, connecting with all the lines of the country, is three-quarters of a mile distant. The telegraph and telephone complete the means of communication with the rest of the world.



# LIVES MADE USEFUL

## Success Achieved in Treating Alcoholism and Drug Addiction.



CLASS of cases treated in St. Joseph's with happy results in a remarkably great number of instances is composed of men and women addicted to the excessive use of alcoholic liquors and drugs. An incalculable number of such persons, who might be rescued and made valuable members of society, are actually killed every year by medical practitioners ignorant of the simplest rules to be observed in restoring them.

Here there is no pretense of administering a "cure" that will prevent the patient from ever again indulging in his

unfortunate habit, but his craving is removed, his health, physical and mental, is re-established, unless shattered beyond repair, so that he has a fair chance to resist the besetting evil. At any rate, his life can be saved, and no patient of this class has ever failed to recover in St. Joseph's unless beyond all human aid at the time of admission.

The halls reserved for these cases are among the most tastefully furnished in the house, and the patients are free from restraint, excepting so much as is necessary to insure attention to treatment, meals, and rest.





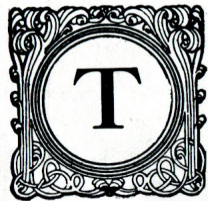


CHAPEL



## SERVANTS OF THE POOR

### Origin of the Sisters of Charity—The Founding of the American Community.



THE COMMUNITY known as the Sisters of Charity had its origin in St. Vincent de Paul's intense, compassionate love for the poor. In 1617, while engaged in ministering to the French galley slaves, he founded the Confraternity of Charity, an association of ladies who bound themselves to such pious offices as visiting the poor who were sick and assisting them in their spiritual and corporal needs. Many branches of this worthy society were established.

Nine years later, St. Vincent deemed it necessary to infuse more ardor into the Confraternities, and, to this end, he sent Louise de Marillac to visit them and exhort them to fulfill their duties with greater zeal and perseverance.

This charitable lady, daughter of Louise de Marillac, the lord of Ferrières, and widow of Anthony Le Gras, Queen Mary de Medicis' secretary, had always desired to lead a life of complete self-abnegation, and when she was refused admission to a cloister because of her delicate constitution, she continued to make the alleviation of poverty and misery

her favorite occupation even when this entailed services of the most disagreeable nature. Naturally, she was most successful in her mission, and many new Confraternities were established as a result of her appeals and her example.

As a rule, however, the ladies of rank thus enlisted in the service of the poor were not qualified to wait upon patients, and, moreover, their duties at home took up most of their time. Therefore, after consultation with Madame de Marillac, St. Vincent decided that girls, members of the Confraternities, should be trained to nurse the sick with a view to devoting themselves entirely to works of charity. Thus it came about that the Community was formed November 29, 1633, in Louise de Marillac's house, with a nucleus of four Sisters of Charity.

The growth of the Community was marvelous; presently there were insistent calls for Sisters from other countries, especially in times of war, famine, and pestilence, and, eventually, they were to be found in every land, pagan as well as Christian.



## THE SISTERS IN AMERICA

The first house of Sisters of Charity in America was established in Emmitsburg, Maryland, in 1809, by Mother Seton, a saintly woman, with the approval and co-operation of Bishop Carroll, of Baltimore.

An effort had already been made to bring a company of Sisters from France, and a number of them were actually on their way from the Mother House in Paris when they were stopped under a provision of the Napoleonic code.

The American Sisters' organization, though distinct, at first, from that which had its inception in France, was one with it in spirit, for it followed as strictly the rules laid down by St. Vincent de Paul. Therefore, union with the parent Community was not only desirable but inevitable, and was finally accomplished March 19, 1850.

For convenience in administration, the Community is divided among "Provinces," each with its Mother House and Novitiate. The Mother House and Novitiate for the Province of North America, exclusive of Mexico, are at Emmitsburg, but the principal headquarters for the whole Community is still in Paris.

## IN THE CITY OF THE STRAITS

It was in 1855 that the Sisters came to open a house in Detroit. First, they established St. Mary's Hospital, on St. Antoine street, between Clinton and Mullet streets, and here it was that St. Joseph's Retreat had its origin. Later, they founded St. Vincent's Orphan Asylum, on McDougall avenue, and Providence Hospital at West Grand Boulevard and Fourteenth avenue.

In each of these agencies for benefiting humanity, the Sisters have always gone to the very limit of their means in providing relief for the suffering poor.





**In Memoriam**



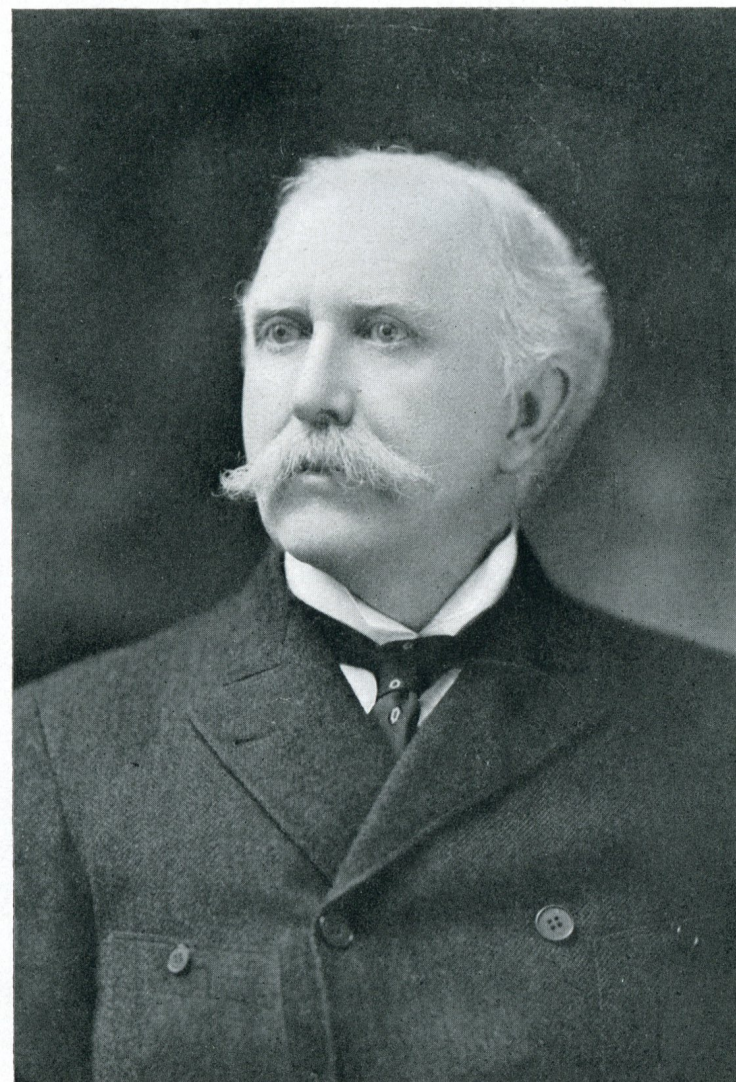
**J. G. Johnson, M. D.**

of Detroit, Michigan

Who departed from this life December 31, 1908



He was the senior member of the Medical Staff of St. Joseph's Retreat for thirty-five years. His death deprived the patients of a sympathetic and skillful friend, and the Retreat of an officer who was devoted heart and soul to its interests. It would be difficult to fittingly panegyryze his character and his deeds, and any attempt to do so would be contrary to what one of the most modest of men would have wished.







LADIES' RECREATION GROUNDS

## VISITING HOURS

9 to 11 A. M., 2:30 to 4:30 P. M. every day, Sundays included.

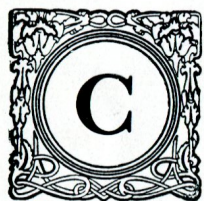
N. B.—No one other than relatives allowed to see patients without a note from the nearest relative or guardian.

Relatives taking patients out to walk will be responsible for their safe return to the Retreat.

Relatives taking a patient out are not allowed to go among the other patients on the grounds.



## REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION OF PATIENTS



CERTIFICATE of insanity, by two reputable physicians, accompanied by an application made by a responsible relative or guardian to the Judge of Probate of the County of which the patient is a resident, is required in every case when the patient does not come voluntarily.

In case of inebriety or the opium habit, if the patient comes voluntarily and is conscious of the act, it will be necessary for him merely to sign an article of application and agreement; also for some responsible person to become security to hold the Retreat harmless for all claims for damages for detention of the patient. A printed form of contract and bond to be executed, will be furnished on application to the Retreat or the physicians.

No deception should ever be used in conveying the patient to the Retreat. Truth should not be compromised by planning a trip to Dearborn to visit the Retreat. Nor should a patient be given the impression that he has come for a few days to see how he likes it, and that he may leave at his pleasure. All this gives the idea of a conspiracy, and he loses confidence, not only in his friends, but in the Sisters, and this makes him all the more difficult to manage.

Let all arrangements be properly made, and with sufficient assistance to control excitement, should any arise. Tell the patient plainly, but kindly, that he is to go to the Retreat. No continued resistance will ordinarily be made; but if it

becomes necessary, better use force than fraud. However, avoid, if possible, calling an officer, or using restraints, such as handcuffs and the like, which tend to stigmatize brain disease as a crime.

The patient should reach the Retreat in day-time and be accompanied by an intimate acquaintance, capable of giving all the particulars of the case; otherwise a written account should be transmitted.

An abundance of underclothing should be brought with every patient, together with suitable outer garments for ordinary wear.

Patients should not bring valuable property when committed, as the Retreat cannot become responsible for its keeping. Such articles should be left at home, unless the patient is fully responsible for their care.

All letters for patients should be placed in an unsealed envelope, directed to the patient, and the whole placed in another envelope, addressed to "St. Joseph's Retreat, Dearborn, Mich."

Neither money nor postage stamps should be sent directly to patients, but may be sent to the Sister Superior for their benefit. No letters written about persons while in the Retreat should be shown them after discharge.

The rate charged is regulated by the character of the disease, special attention required, and the apartments selected. It includes medical treatment, board, and ordinary laundry.



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the footsteps of Sister De Sales and her associates. But surely their names if not inscribed here, are written in the pages of the Book wherein are recorded all those who love their fellow-men.

Their conscientious attention to every detail in the care of their patients, their consecration to their chosen work, their patient kindness and sincerity, due to their religious training, make them ideal nurses.

On the last day of 1908, after a service of thirty-five years in the first hospital building and in the new building, Dr. T. G. Johnson passed to his rest.

The sisters were most fortunate in having through all those years his wise counsel and efficient aid. His personality was a fortunate blending of good judgment and generous kindness. The writer, having served with him since 1888, gladly renders this tribute to his memory.

Verily, the teaching of Pinel has been justified in our day; that Love is the master key to open the hearts of even the most debased, and to alleviate the misery that inevitably attends the dethronement of reason.

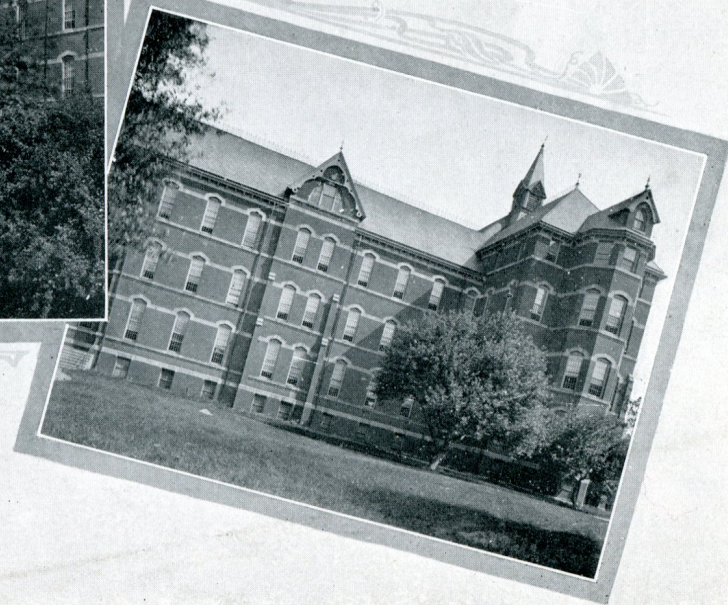
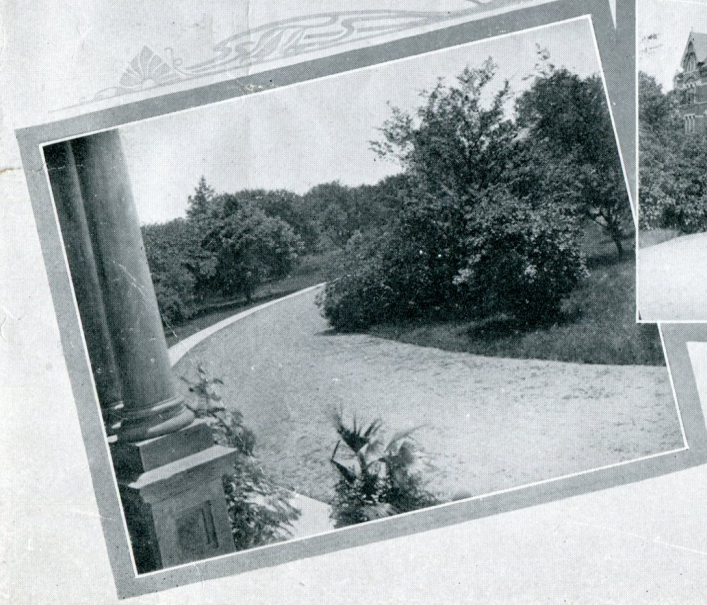
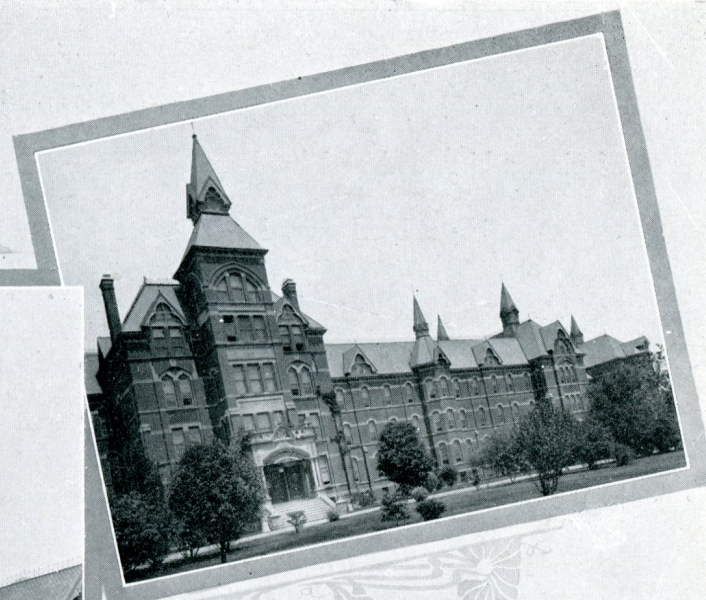
Each generation must learn this truth for itself. May we then with all the multiplied resources and advantages of our luxurious hospitals ponder well this lesson—Lest we forget!

Not fine hospitals cure the insane, so much as the loving, sympathetic service which uses them as its instrument.

May the same Divine Spirit which inspired our predecessors, guide us to follow worthily in the path which they have trod before us.

JUSTIN E. EMERSON,  
Attending Physician.





SECOND WEST WING  
LAWN

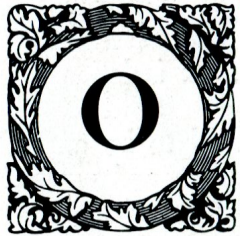
CENTER AND FIRST WEST WING

EAST WING  
SECOND EAST WING



# ST. JOSEPH'S RETREAT, 1860-1910

Dr. Justin E. Emerson's Review of Its History and the Conditions  
Which Led to Its Establishment.



ON JANUARY 25, 1910, we celebrated the Jubilee Anniversary of the opening of the "Michigan State Retreat" for the Insane in 1860, a name changed on Nov. 29, 1883 to the "St. Joseph's Retreat." It was first located on Michigan Avenue, in Detroit, a little east of where the Western Boulevard now is, and was continuously occupied as a hospital for the insane till its accommodations were found inadequate to meet the growing demands of the city and state and it became evident that it would soon be unpleasantly crowded by the rapid growth of the city, and the peace and privacy so essential to its work would be lost. Then a fertile farm just west of the village of Dearborn was purchased for the erection of the present commodious and admirable building, which was first occupied in November, 1886.

In reviewing the history of St. Joseph's Retreat for the past half-century, it is essential to note the vastly differing conditions that prevailed at that time and now. In 1850 the population of Detroit was a little over 21,000; in 1854 it was 40,000; and in 1860, 45,600; while at present it is about 465,000.

In 1810, a hundred and forty years after the founding of Detroit, the whole population of Michigan was only 4,762, and in 1830 it had increased to about 31,000; then came a rapid influx of immigrants, largely from New England, New York, and Ohio, so that in 1840 there was a

population of 212,267 in the new state, the twenty-sixth in the Union; in 1850 the population of the state, by the U. S. census, was 397,654, of whom over 341,000 were born in the United States. Yet at this time the average population was only slightly over seven per square mile, the entire area of the state being about 58,915 square miles, with a coast line of 1,600 miles.

In the ten years succeeding 1850 the population of the state had nearly doubled and was over 749,000, yet with an average of only about twelve to the square mile.

The state and the city were in an exceedingly primitive condition; access to the interior in 1850 was almost wholly over roads that were corduroy or mud trails through the forest. In May, 1852, the first train over the Michigan Central R. R. entered Chicago and the same year the Michigan Southern R. R. was completed between Toledo and Chicago.

The first telegraph message from Detroit to Ypsilanti was in Nov. 29, 1847.

The streets of Detroit, if paved at all, were paved with cobble-stones.

St. Vincent's Hospital seems to have been the first hospital opened in the state; this was on Larned Street, in 1845, and moved in 1850 to Clinton Street, near its present location and it was then named St. Mary's Hospital. There it was in 1855 that Sister De Sales and other sisters, first undertook the care of the insane.



Till then there was not in this immense area a single hospital where this class was cared for in a humane way. The only places outside of their own homes where they could be cared for were the prisons and poorhouses, if it could be said that they there received *care*, since these places were more crude and primitive than were the conditions of living of other classes of the pioneer communities of the state. There was no medical attendance and the humane ideas of Pinel had not penetrated the mass of the community.

It is true that in 1848 the State Legislature passed an Act looking to the erection of an Asylum for the Insane. Almost nothing, however, was done to carry into effect this Act until in 1853, when the Legislature began to awaken from its lethargy and appointed a new Board of Trustees for the inchoate asylum, and plans were soon considered by them for the much needed hospital.

In 1854 they appointed Dr. Gray, then acting superintendent of the Utica Asylum in New York, as superintendent of the Michigan Asylum, and he soon drafted plans for the building, undoubtedly with the co-operation of Dr. Edwin H. Van Deusen, who was in 1855 appointed superintendent to succeed Dr. Gray. The Legislature of 1854 also appropriated \$67,000.00 to begin the work of construction, and there was reasonable prospect that soon some relief would be furnished for the wretched insane of the state.

It was then estimated that their number was over 400, while there was not a single hospital within the borders of the state that could give them adequate care.

The following year, however (1855) Sister De Sales, and a few associates, undertook, as has been stated, in connection with St. Mary's hospital, to do what was possible for the care of a few of this neglected class. It was manifest,

however, that this provision was quite inadequate to meet the urgency of the situation and that relief through the State Asylum, which was not looked for under three years, would be only partial, hence it was decided to erect a new hospital for the insane to be under the care of the Sisters of Charity.

The site chosen was on the south side of Michigan avenue near where the Western Boulevard now is. It was then at a sufficient distance from the city to insure isolation and quiet.

The Michigan Asylum, though intended to be opened in part in 1858, was partially destroyed by fire, and was not opened until August, 1859, when 80 female patients were admitted.

Meantime work on the construction of the "Michigan State Retreat for the Insane" had been pushed and on January 25, 1860, its doors were opened under the care of the pioneer Sister De Sales and her associates.

The name at first chosen for the hospital is significant of the scope of its purpose and that it designed to assist in meeting a state-wide necessity.

Yet this need was not fully met even when the Michigan Asylum was completed in 1870, and accommodations were provided within its walls for 300 patients.

It is almost impossible for us now to appreciate the difficulties that these pioneers in the care of the insane encountered and overcame, so prosperous and wealthy has our state become and so liberal is the policy of our legislatures. At that time some of its citizens realized the urgency of the situation but very many did not.

In 1853 an excited meeting was held in the city hall to protest against the building of any more public institutions.