HISTORY OF ST. MARY'S HOME FOR THE AGED

AND

MERCY HOSPITAL

1891-1976
Dedicated
to
The Servant of God
Mother Frances Streitel
Founder of the Community of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Sincere gratitude is expressed to the following who have been so generous and gracious in assisting with the compiling of the history of St. Mary's Home for the Aged and Mercy Hospital: Venerable Sister M. Oswaldina, Superior, Sisters M. Kiliana, M. Capistrana, M. Jude, Mrs. Edith Bock, reporter for the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern, and Mr. John Challnor, Public Library, Oshkosh.

Sister Mary Josue
HOW WE GREW
(History of St. Mary's Home for the Aged & Mercy Hospital)
Operated by Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother
1892-1960

Late in 1890, Mother Frances Streitel, founder of the
Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, was in Marshfield to open the
second of fourteen American hospitals she was to found in six
busy years when she received an appeal from Oshkosh.

The Reverend Roman Scholter, energetic pastor of St. Mary's
Church, Oshkosh, told of the need for hospital services in the
growing city.

The pastor who was to build a new St. Mary's as a cathedral
before his death in 1911, used his truly persuasive powers to
convince the pious Reverend Mother that her sisters would find a
true mission in Oshkosh. He said several lots, an old house, and
several other buildings were available near the church and
suitable for the sisters' purpose.

Mother Frances hesitated before accepting the invitation.
Oshkosh was close to Marshfield, she pointed out. The work there
was just beginning.

Finally Father Scholter's plea won her decision to make
Oshkosh the third mission of the sisters in this country. She
and her secretary arrived here on a cold February 25, 1891, to
look at the property.

The "Koebbler" property on Merritt Street at Boyd proved to
be a house, remodeled for use as a store and later used as a
saloon. The deserted, two story building was dark and forlorn.
From the dirty wooden floor emanated the pungent odor of alcohol
which endless scrubbing failed entirely to eradicate.

In four days, practical Mother Frances and her companions
were joined by Sister M. Scholastica Demer and Sister M. Alphonsa
Boell. Their work consisted in scrubbing the buildings. By
March 11, the hospital was ready for patients.

After deliberation and prayer, Mother Frances proposed that
no extensive remodeling be done, saying it was her intention to use the existing buildings on a temporary basis only.

She left Oshkosh March 5, returning shortly thereafter to the motherhouse in Rome.

The Sisters moved into the house and began work. The tavern was remodeled by removing all interior partitions and erecting a center wall to create two rooms which served as wards capable of housing fifteen patients. White iron beds were the main equipment of the institution.

The Sisters came to Oshkosh without being able to speak a word of English. They had no idea of how to nurse the sick and were not acquainted with American ways. Here, they were alone with only a few friends upon whom to rely, but they had trust in prayer, and Jesus in the Tabernacle was their source of refuge in their many difficulties.

They confided their problems to the Reverend Scholter. They asked him to find someone to run errands for them, to get their medicines and supplies daily. Father Scholter selected Elizabeth Zuege, now Mrs. George C. Koplitz, for that assignment. Elizabeth, as a school girl, conversed often with the Sisters in their garden, speaking German, a language she was taught in school. This task was added to many that she already performed for the Dominican Sisters who were in charge of the school. Each morning the errand girl mad a trip to the drug store at Main and Merritt Streets, the Schmidt Drug Store, and sometimes in the evening also, to secure the medicines for the little hospital. For her reward she received a small pail of mulberries, and later when the hospital had more patients, the Sisters gave her material for a dress.

The Sisters who established the local unit of the Order kept their premises neat and clean. The space between their property and the church parsonage was used as a garden, in which they grew all kinds of vegetables and fruits. There was an arbor or summer house over which grew vines of grapes. Since hospital routine was not as busy in those days, the Sisters used to sit and read
to their patients to pass the time.

When Mother Frances came from Rome in June, 1891, she stopped at Oshkosh on her way to Marshfield and found the Superior and the Sisters sleeping on straw sacks in the refectory. This was a small room adjoining the kitchen and served both as oratory and dormitory. Holy poverty was much in evidence everywhere. The old frame building resembled anything rather than a hospital or a convent.

In a day when most people got along with home remedies and family nursing, institutional care was a novelty often feared. Early St. Mary's contended with the public attitude, admitting few patients except the elderly in the first weeks of its operation. Without surgical facilities, no operations were performed.

In three years, however, the Sisters found, as Mother Frances had predicted, that a larger hospital was needed.

On August 18, 1891, Reverend Scholter sold a part of lot 3, all of lot 4,5, and 6 to the Sisters.

Beginning with a small surplus from St. Joseph's Hospital at Marshfield, the Sisters engaged E.E. Stevens, later mayor of the city, as architect for the project. In September, 1894, a new hospital with living quarters for the Sisters was begun. Father Scholter supervised the building with the Reverend Joseph Joch, chaplain at St. Joseph's Hospital, as financial adviser.

Building costs, according to old accounts, totaled $25,000, exclusive of furnishings. Contractors and their bids included Joseph Weber, carpenter, $4,048; C. Schneide, mason, $5,775; M. Geip & Sons, plasterers, $1,735; and R.L. Jones, Milwaukee, ironmonger, $920.

The new St. Mary's Hospital was completed in March, 1895, with a bed capacity of 75. It's main entrance faced Merritt Street with the chapel on the north side.

The new edifice was considered a "most imposing and ornamental one" of white clay brick with massive stone trimming, according to a news story of the day. It's four stories had a
frontage on Merritt Street of 86 feet and ran 40.4 feet along Boyd Street.

A newspaper article which appeared in the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern of June 22, 1895, describes the institution:

St. Mary's which has just been erected is a spacious and elegant building. It is almost an ideal hospital. The rooms are large, light and airy, and arranged with a view to perfect comfort and convenience. In the basement are the laundry, kitchen, pantry and dining room, and the boiler room, the entire house being heated by hot water. Here is also a large bathroom where the Kneipp water cure will be given. On the first floor is situated the office, the large parlors, and some of the rooms which will be devoted to the patient. The chapel, with its stained glass windows lends an air of sacredness to the second floor.

The minor operating room opens directly out of the drug room and further down the hall is a room where the most dangerous operations will be performed. The operating table is of glass and enameled iron, and on either side of it sits a chair of white enameled iron. In order that the physician need not touch anything while working with his patient a series of pedals is arranged by means of which the water is turned into the granite basins. The third floor is devoted to private rooms and wards. In the babies' ward are little white iron bedsteads, entirely enclosed, that the wee ones may not fall out. All of the rooms are furnished with bedsteads of white enameled iron, relieved by brass railings and knobs. The fourth floor is as pleasant as any, commanding a fine view of the city and the lake. The Sister's dormitory is a large, airy room, ascetic in the plainness of its furnishing. To perfect the arrangement of the house an elevator has been put in, and a dumb-waiter running from the kitchen to the top story. On each floor is a bell indicator and speaking tube. The closets and bathrooms with their granite basins and porcelain tubs are convenient to all the rooms. All the floors are hard wood and the walls are calcimined.
The increased facilities for performing operations interest ed many of the city's prominent surgeons. Chief among them was Doctor C.W. Oviatt who with Doctor H.M. Mixer moved his surgery from Maple Lodge to the new hospital. Doctor Oviatt paid for the equipment in the new operating rooms aiming at "the last word in modern surgeries and laboratories". He was to be instrumental in improving the professional capabilities of the Sisters.

Shortly after completion of St. Mary's Hospital, Sister M. Pia brought six Sisters to Oshkosh. Sisters M. Cyrilla, M. Amentia, and M. Agatha were in charge of the wards, Sister M. Rose was the "fireman", and Sisters M. Virginia, M. Clara took sick calls for outside nursing. Sister M. Scholastica was in charge of the office, which was later supervised by Sister M. Sebastian. Sister M. Alphonsa was the supervisor. Sister M. Salvatore had charge of the laundry and Sister M. Bartholomea, who came as candidate, did the housework. The Sisters worked long hours; often after caring for the sick or assisting the doctors, they prepared linens in the laundry or the food in the kitchen.

The Community of Sisters, in Oshkosh, at this time numbered ten with Sister M. Boniface as Superior. Under the prudent direction of Sister M. Boniface and by her untiring efforts, many improvements were made.


The story of the Sisters in Oshkosh has much in common with that of any immigrant group except that there were the added factors of public rather than self service in an area not completely acceptable to the public they sought to serve.

Doctor and Mrs. Oviatt did much to open the way for ac-
ceptance on both counts.

It was the doctor who demanded trained nursing from the German peasant girls, most of whom still could not speak English. It was his wife who taught them elementary sickroom diets and American customs.

There were instances of postoperative burns from hot water bottles on patients still unconscious from anesthesia. Law suits threatened.

Another difficulty was the wool habits and veils worn by the Sisters in the operating room.

Doctor Oviatt pleaded in vain for sanitary uniforms, and finally took his patients to St. Agnes Hospital in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, where selected nuns received special training in the care of the unconscious patients and wore cotton uniforms over their habits. At St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, surgical cleanliness was being pioneered and a school of nursing training established.

At St. Mary's in Oshkosh a new Sister Superior, Sister M. Cornelia, evaluated the situation and determined to carry the problem to Rome. Armed with a letter from Doctor Oviatt, she gained the blessing of Pope Leo XIII for the change in habit and the admonition to follow Doctor Oviatt's suggestions as they were made.

Pope Leo blessed a gold medal and sent it to Doctor Oviatt, a declared agnostic, to seal the approval. The doctor wore the medal on his watch chain for the remainder of his life.

Nurses' training began at St. Mary's shortly after Sister M. Boniface returned from Rome. Students were the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother then in residence, including Sister M. Cornelia, the first American to join the Community.

Sister M. Cornelia was a hospital executive of unusual talent in addition to serving as Dr. Oviatt's first assistant. Her discipline of interns and orderlies is still the subject of stories repeated at Mercy.

Doctor Oviatt may have been an outspoken agnostic but he
shared his operating room with a statue of St. Joseph, placed by
the Sisters but paid for by himself.

The doctor equipped the entire fourth floor of St. Mary's
for his surgery and took Sister M. Cornelia and Sister M.
Boniface with him on a buying trip to Chicago.

After touring the best hospitals and supply houses in the
city, the doctor gave the Sisters $100 to buy anything they
wanted. It brought the St. Joseph statue, carefully covered with
valspar varnish so it could be washed.

It was the doctor's wife who convinced the Sisters that salt
pork and cabbage was not the diet to serve postoperative patients
when chloroform was the only anesthetic.

But it was the German Sisters who introduced Mrs. Oviatt to
the tinsel Christmas tree, remembered as the first in Oshkosh.

Tussles with the taxing authorities and the press also are
recorded in the annals of St. Mary's Hospital.

In 1895, city assessors and the council questioned the
hospital's status as a tax free, benevolent and charitable
institution. Debated hotly for two years, the questioned was
resolved in 1896 when a $7,000 assessment was made.

Although the Sisters served without pay except for minimum
housing and food, costs of hospital operation were reflected
then, as now, in charges made to the patients. Costs of patient
care for welfare patients were billed to the city.

Press stories at the time were largely sympathetic, detail-
ing unusual surgical cases, lauding the hospital's low mortality
rates and excellent accommodations.

A howl of anguish arose, however, when one of the Sisters
died suddenly and the Sister Superior refused to provide the
usual obituary material. She reportedly explained the next day
that she was unaccustomed to the ways of the American press and
considered that the Sister had merged her identity in that of the
Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother.

By 1902, St. Mary's was reported outgrowing it's accommoda-
tions and plans were announced for an addition. Built for
twenty-six patients, a house count showed forty-three in the hospital, quartered several to a room and in the parlors as well. Twenty Sisters did all of the work from firing the furnace to assisting in the operating rooms. Patients paid from $7.00 to $25.00 a week.

In the records of the Register of Deeds, J.M. Weisbrod and wife are reported to have sold lot 7 to the Sisters, on February 12, 1902. In August, 1903, lot 8 was sold to the Sisters by Peter Jepson and wife.

Endorsed by many of the city's prominent physicians, plans for a $60,000 to $70,000 addition were undertaken together with an appeal for private subscriptions to meet the costs.

Offered to the public was a plan for permanent charity or free beds in exchange for a $5,000 donation toward the building program. A $300 donation would establish a free bed for a single year.

In the end, the Sisters borrowed most of the capital required to extend their building on the south side toward Merritt Avenue.

The present Mercy Hospital was originally know as Lakeside Sanatorium, a competitor of St. Mary's.

Lakeside with a twenty bed capacity and a small operating room was organized in 1906 under the direction of Dr. M.E. Corbett. It occupied a residence at the northeast corner of Washington Avenue and Hazel Street.

In 1913 Lakeside moved into a new building on Hazel Street, opposite Menominee Park and facing Lake Winnebago. It took the name of Lakeside Hospital and added a training school for nurses. The four story hospital, built at a cost of $75,000 had fifty patients' rooms and was considered practically fireproof in it's day. Latest equipment was claimed for it's operating room.

Four years later, in 1917, Lakeside Hospital was offered sale and offered directly to the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother. Mother M. Wendelina Bauer, vicaress and acting superior at St. Mary's was reportedly lukewarm on the subject of acquiring the
hospital. "Yes, doctor," she commented, "you want to take the rope off your neck and hang it around ours." Rumors were that conflicts and problems had hampered operation of Lakeside.

The Most Reverend Paul P. Rode, Bishop of Green Bay, came to St. Mary's to urge purchase of Lakeside as a maternity hospital. He suggested the name "Mercy" if the Sisters acquired the institution. Many priests of Oshkosh, also, advised the Sisters to buy the hospital.

Stockholders, mostly doctors, continued to press their cause because it proved to be a money losing proposition for them.

The decision was mad in March, 1918, and the property transfer was made in April with purchase price reported at half the cost of construction.

Back to Oshkosh came Sister M. Cornelia after two years at another of the Sisters' hospitals. She became the first administrator and superior at the newly named mercy, serving concurrently as Sister Superior at St. Mary's. She arrived on April 20, 1918.

Six patients at Lakeside were transferred to St. Mary's while the new institution was cleaned and renovated, steam tables installed, and a chapel fitted into one of the sun parlors.

Mercy Hospital opened its doors on June 1, 1918, with the blessing of Bishop Rhode in the presence of Sisters M. Wendelina Bauer and M. Sebastiana Hoerling. Only medical patients were admitted. St. Mary's continued to function as the Sisters' surgical institution.

Doctor Corbett's school of nursing, begun in 1906, as a two year training school, continued by the Sisters at Mercy under the direction of Miss Elizabeth Casey, a lay teacher. The class of 1918 consisted of nine students.

Students went back and forth between the hospitals for training in various departments. Since St. Mary's remained the Sisters' residence until a convent addition could be constructed at Mercy, the Sisters commuted as well.

The sun parlor chapel was blessed on September 8, 1918 by
the Reverend J.M. Wicker, chaplain of St. Mary's who offered Holy Mass there the same day and gave solemn Benediction, a significant hour for the Sisters. Father Wicker offered Holy Mass each Sunday in the improvised chapel until December 14, when the Reverend W.J. Rice came as permanent chaplain to Mercy.

It was perhaps the flu epidemic in the fall of 1918 which made the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother and Mercy Hospital a full fledged part of the Oshkosh Community.

Just a few months after the Sisters had taken over Mercy, a flu epidemic spread so rapidly that St. Mary's and Mercy were unable to accommodate the patients. City authorities opened a saloon outside the city limits as an emergency hospital and requested the Sisters to take charge.

Reverend Mother M. Johanna Ankenbrand appointed several Sisters for this charitable work and asked Sister M. Cyriaca Goetz to take the responsibility.

Sister M. Meinrada Gehring, in charge of nursing students, recorded briefly the history of the epidemic.

"The city police and ambulance took beds and everything else needed to this 'hospital'. We Sisters went back and forth by ambulance and patrol wagon, the same vehicles used to convey the sick and the dead of which there were many. Already on the first day this emergency hospital opened, the house was filled and every patient was fearfully sick. When the police and ambulance men had Sisters in their wagons they would blow their sirens extra loud, making everyone get out of the way."

In September, 1919, construction plans were formulated to more than double the capacity of Mercy Hospital, a move urged by Oshkosh physicians as required to meet community needs.

At first, the Sisters proposed an addition to St. Mary's, their first hospital. An architect, E. Brielmaier, was called into consultation and he advised that the new construction be at Mercy.

Preliminary discussion produced a plan involving expenditures estimated at $250,000 to $300,000 for modern operating...
rooms and additional patient rooms.

Proposing that the city raise the first $100,000, the Sisters presented their plan to the hospital medical staff. They would match the amount, they said.

The Association of Commerce approved the fund raising proposal as did pastors of some of the local churches. The Oshkosh Daily Northwestern wrote of Oshkosh becoming "the Rochester of Wisconsin" if the plan matured.

High costs of building material and labor in 1919 were credited with postponement of the building program, however. The Sisters waited until December, 1921, to revive the project and decided that the addition would be built in the sprint of 1922. It's size would depend upon the amount of assistance forthcoming. Fluor Brothers Construction Company, Oshkosh, was awarded a contract for construction of the north and south wings.

Again a campaign for public funds was postponed and the Sisters underwrote $200,000 for additions considered absolutely imperative to meet immediate needs.

In June, 1922, four years after the Sisters had taken over the institution, work was begun. In mid-August the same year, ground was broken for the chapel and convent.

Into the cornerstone at first floor level went medals, a small statue of St. Peter, and an Agnus Dei, various pieces of money, and a list of Sisters' names. The Reverend Aloys Bastian, pastor of St. Vincent de Paul's Parish of Oshkosh blessed the cornerstone.

In December, 1922, the chapel was under roof and the construction of the north wing well underway.

Both additions to the hospital were to the west with a basement extension on the north end of the main structure.

In June, 1923, the Sisters moved into the new convent and on July 9, 1923, a congregation of about 200 people were present at the dedication of the new chapel at Mercy Hospital.

The chapel was described as being in that part of the building which was erected by the money supplied by the Sisters.
The chapel was considered "beautiful in every sense of the word," with a seating capacity of about 200. It was artistically furnished and the colors blended harmoniously. All of the statues were purchased as a part of it's equipment, except the two large statues, St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary, which were presented by the Sisters of St. Joseph's Hospital, Denville, New Jersey.

Eleven "houses" or institutions of the Order contributed the money which was expended in the construction of the addition to the hospital, including the chapel.

During the remainder of the year, building continued on the new north wing. In April, 1924, overcrowding at the institution had reached such a point that it became necessary to refuse admittance to patients and the Sisters arranged to borrow $100,000 and go ahead with the work on the north wing. It was estimated that this wing would provide 64 additional beds and the fourth floor would consist of operating rooms, laboratory and x-ray departments, a new power house and laundry.

When the project was first taken up it was upon agreement that the Sisters would contribute $200,000 and the citizens of the city of Oshkosh would provide $200,000 and the building of the hospital which would include a north and south wing and other necessary additions.

The total amount of pledges received from the citizens of Oshkosh was $104,490.25. The Sisters had by this time expended $311,000 in construction work. It had cost them $84,000 to do what work had already been done on the north wing, $33,200 having been borrowed by them from local banks with the pledges as collateral.

Up to this time, the cost of construction exceeded the estimate and another $100,000 was required to complete the north wing.

In view of the emergency need, the Sisters voluntarily assumed the burden and arranged to borrow $100,000 to go ahead with the work. This made a total of $411,000 which the Sisters
had invested in Mercy Hospital, not including several thousand dollars which were required to purchase equipment in the new part.

Of the total investment in the institution, the citizens provided approximately $104,000 in pledges; there being some shortage in collection of them. In addition to the new construction, the Sisters invested $73,000 in the purchase price of the hospital and expended about $10,000 in improvements and miscellaneous adjacent property, making a total of over half-million dollars at Mercy Hospital alone. In addition, they built and equipped St. Mary's Hospital at an expense of more than $150,000.

Already in spring, 1924, a wing on the south side of the central unit was being planned. It was estimated that it would probably entail an expense of between $100,000 and $200,000, although there was no drive contemplated at this time.

On November 2, 1924 Most Reverend Bishop P.P. Rhode blessed the new north wing and in December of the same year, full and complete occupation of Mercy Hospital as a general surgical institution took place. Finally, the recently enlarged institution was put into its new use, but surgical patients at St. Mary's Hospital remained there until discharged rather than being moved to Mercy. St. Mary's Hospital was now being used entirely for maternity cases, except for a few elderly patients who were receiving medical treatment.

On January 1, 1925, the first patient for surgery was admitted at Mercy Hospital and on the following day the first operation was performed. From this time on, all operations were discontinued at St. Mary's Hospital and were performed only at Mercy.

With the completion of the furnishings of Mercy hospital, it was considered one of the most attractive and pleasing institutions of its kind. The location of the hospital opposite Menominee Park afforded a beautiful outlook for convalescent patients. A number of the rooms were furnished by various people
and organizations.

On September 2, 1925, the first holy retreat began at Mercy Hospital. It was conducted by Reverend Joseph Putham, an Oblate Father.

It was shortly after the first of April, 1926, that the Oshkosh Public Library introduced a new type of book circulation by inaugurating library service in the two hospitals. Miss Elizabeth A. Lathrop was the head librarian at the time. Miss Margaret Allen, a member of the library staff, was in charge of the new service and visited the hospitals twice a week. She visited each patient by a room to room canvass. Miss Allen continued her services to the hospital until her retirement in January, 1958.

The first National Hospital Day was observed on Thursday, May 12, 1927. Both Mercy and St. Mary's Hospitals conducted "open House" which included programs and public inspection tours through the various departments of the hospital. The underlying object of the Nation Hospital Day movement was to educate the public as to the methods of conduction of hospitals and their activities along curative, custodial, educational, and research lines. It was intended, also, to dispel the old time fear of hospitals that they retarded development, and to convince the visitor that the modern hospital was the most important and essential public utility and a vital link in the public health and wealth program.

Another record of National Hospital Day shows that "open house" and tours were conducted on May 12, 1936. By this time, additional equipment and facilities for various treatments had been added. At 3 o'clock, in the lobby entrance of the hospital, a concert was held by the WPA orchestra, directed by William Novotny.

Visitors who made the tour of inspection through the various departments of the hospital found many improvements completed in the last year. The hospital had installed two ethylene gas machines, each costing about $500; a cooling system for drinking
water, with 15 outlets, and a fourth unit for the kitchen refrigerator had been installed, at a cost of over $3,000; most of the rooms used by patients had been redecorated; new percolators and bread and meat slicers have been provided in the kitchen; and in the heating plant a new stoker had been installed, at a cost of over $2,000.

Pure drinking water was much appreciated by patients at the hospital. The water was provided from an artesian well, piped to drinking fountains on each floor and to all of the diet kitchens. The cooling system maintained a temperature of 45 degrees for the drinking water all year round.

A new cooler had been installed in the basement storeroom, to permit storage of perishable foods, thus assuring variety in palatable and tasty foods for the patients.

Hospital records reveal that 1936 was a busy year at mercy Hospital. There were 2,933 patients admitted, in addition to 916 others who merely received outpatient treatment. There were 1,736 surgical cases, and 855 medical cases. There were 322 babies born in the maternity ward in 1936. Mercy Hospital was considered a Class "A" hospital at this time. The bed capacity was 150.

On the feast of St. Mary Magdalen, July 22, 1938, ground was broken and work begun on construction of a four story wing to the south side of the building; this wing had been planned as early as 1924.

This addition was completed and made ready for occupancy in about ten months time. With the completion of the south wing, Mercy Hospital was now considered as one of the most complete, most modern, hospitals in the state.

In planning the building with the Sisters, the architects gave every consideration to the best methods of construction, facilities, arrangements, and equipment, so as to make it possible to render hospital service with the greatest comfort for the patient.

The south wing measured 56 feet in width and 149 feet in
length, and five stories in height. Because the south wing was planned to balance with the north wing erected some years ago, interesting and attractive octagon bays were repeated. In order to provide for all the facilities for which the south wing was planned, it was necessary to have an additional protrusion on the east side 47 feet long and 7 feet deep, which provided the additional area to accommodate such special features as the nursery and other facilities.

The exterior masonry consisted of hollow wall construction with an air space; this was a new feature being added in better buildings so as to balance the room temperatures better at the outside walls.

For the most part, the ceilings throughout the building were acoustically treated and all of the department separated with sound-proof partitions and sound-proof doors. Another feature for the comfort of the patient was that all of the corridor floors and areas around the nurses' station were covered with a resilient type of flooring. This, together with the acoustical treatment on the ceilings of the corridors, added greatly to the comfort of the occupants of the building.

With this new addition the capacity of Mercy Hospital was raised to 225. Thus from a 45 bed institution in 1918, Mercy Hospital had grown into a large hospital, modernly equipped in every regard, conducting special clinics, pediatric, physical therapy, outpatient, and x-ray departments.

On May, 1939, the new addition was dedicated by the Most Reverend P.P. Rhode in a simple by impressive ceremony. Accompanied by members of the clergy, chanting psalms of the church, his Excellency performed an initial ritual of acceptance of the new wing.

The bishop, clothed in his official vestments, and carrying his scepter, visited all the floors of the newly erected hospital addition, spreading holy water and imparting his official blessing to the structure.

Bishop Rhode was celebrant for the occasion. The Reverend
Aloys Trzebiatowski, pastor of St. Josaphat's Church, Oshkosh, was deacon, and the Reverend Eugene Geimer, assistant pastor at St. Peter Church, Oshkosh, was subdeacon. The Reverend Delbert Basche, of Green Bay, secretary to the bishop, was master of ceremonies.

Bishop Rhode, in a sermon, expressed the wish that "the good people of Oshkosh may cherish this institution as their own, and extend to it their wholehearted moral and material support."

The bishop said that in its functioning, Mercy Hospital becomes more than a structure of stone and brick, more than a place where comforts are administered to the sick in body. He urged the Sisters, nurses and doctors to help the hospital to breathe a spirit of true religion. The bishop emphasized in his talk, that all deserving accomplishments in the world are achieved through religious channels, and the institutions of mercy, such as the hospital, are founded on the creed, "Love thy Lord" and "Love thy neighbor."

The bishop concluded with the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The Sisters' choir sang the "Te Deum".

For a span of approximately ten years Mercy Hospital was adequately equipped to provide care for the patients. However, in 1950 Mercy, again, was reported outgrowing its accommodations and plans were announced for additional construction.

Already before Sister M. Laurentina's appointment as administrator of Mercy Hospital in the summer of 1951, it had become evident that within the near future the institution would be in need of expansion and extensive repair especially regarding fire hazards in the earlier buildings. The building was becoming out-moded and a fire hazard which called for prompt action.

Sister M. Laurentina studied the situation and formulated various plans. She discussed the prevailing conditions and needs of the institution with the higher superiors. Eventually she received the approval of putting into execution the plan which she had presented. The building was begun in 1955. But since more was needed than was planned, the extensive building and
remodeling project lasted for two years.

This included three new wings, including modern operating rooms, additional patients' rooms, administration facility and rehabilitation center. Patients' beds have increased to 260.

A brief account of the newly completed wings was reported as follows:

In a $500,000 Cleveland Street addition, five new operating rooms are housed on the fifth floor together with sterilizing room and scrub-up alcove. Four other surgery rooms have been remodeled and modernized and space was found for a recovery ward.

A double and seven private rooms occupy space on each of the second, third, and fourth floors. They are equipped with lavatories and toilets, telephone connections, and teletalk communication. A single room on each floor has a complete bath.

At first floor level, the addition adds room for 90 in the cafeteria. A doctor's library and morgue replace older facilities.

Across the front of the hospital, a new $750,000 administration wing replaces the former two story entrance with five stories. The hospital now presents a recessed entrance directly off the sidewalk on Hazel Street. It's red granite trim is flanked by planters, and wide expanses of glass invite the eye.

The hospital's pharmacy and central supply room are located on the first floor. The central supply room is also a central station for a pneumatic tube system which carries messages and requests from all nursing stations throughout the institution and to every department. Two dumb waiters in shining steel carry supplies from pharmacy and central supply directly to other floors.

A second floor lobby affords a pleasant view of Menominee park and a restful decor for those who linger there. Also on the second floor is the information desk, the switchboard with twenty-four hour service, various administrative offices, and admittance desk with x-ray. The new elevator is located in the administration wing.

Five private rooms and four double rooms are available on each of the third and fourth floors of the administration unit. Showers are a new feature in
maternity rooms included here.

Air conditioned throughout, the wing's fifth floor houses a radiologist's office, x-ray and film room, deep therapy facilities, tissue room, pathologist's offices, bacteriology laboratory and a large waiting room.

Food hot from the stove or icy from the refrigerator is delivered by the central food service directly to every floor in the house. The $68,000 service utilizes waste space on the first floor and a small addition at the rear of the hospital.

Two dumb waiters are placed with "trayveyors" which carry filled trays from kitchen to floors above ready for service. Trays ride endless belts as they are filled according to the dietician's order from steam and cold tables.

Returning to the central unit, used dishes are scraped at tables centered by waste grinders, then loaded into giant automatic dishwashers. From there they go, hot and dry, to carts ready for the next meal.

Diet kitchens and dumb waiter space on floors above the central food service were utilized to add three patient beds on each of two floors and a mother's room on the fourth floor.

However, perhaps the proudest achievement of the hospital building program is the $418,000 rehabilitation center begun at the south end of the hospital in August, 1956, and put into use in May, 1957.

This one story and basement facility will serve both inpatients and others from the community whose disabilities and ailments can be treated outside the hospital. Completely equipped, it offers the advantages of general hospital supervision and skilled physical therapy treatment.

As planned by the hospital, the rehabilitation center has taken over and expanded the rehabilitation work begun in Oshkosh by the Curative Workshop with a fully equipped facility and trained personnel.

The Oshkosh Curative Workshop, to which doctors of seven counties referred their patients, was housed in a condemned building until the beginning of May, 1957. When a fund raising campaign initiated to raise money for a new building proved unsuccessful, the matter was
referred to the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, with the hope that Mercy Hospital might be able to provide for these patients. According to convent procedure, Sister M. Laurentina Thimm consulted the higher superiors of the Community, receiving the permission to go ahead with the plans of adding the rehabilitation center to Mercy.

The building of a new wing for the patients of this workshop was completed in the spring of 1957. The Curative Workshop of Oshkosh ceased to operate on May 3, and on May 6 the Rehabilitation Center in Mercy Hospital began to take in patients. This center serves the doctors in the seven counties of Winnebago, Fond du Lac, Outagamie, Waukesha, Green Lake, Milwaukee, and Dane.

Mercy Hospital has put no age restrictions on the services, which are available to both adults and children. Patients to be admitted must have references from physicians in the community and surrounding area. All physical restoration treatments are provided under the prescription and direction of the patient's private or clinic physician, who is required to keep in close contact with his patient and the rehabilitation staff members.

Physical therapy facilities occupy 3,500 square feet on the ground floor of the center. For the beginning, three full-time physical therapists are staffing the facility. Under medical prescription, the department is able to perform all forms of physical therapy treatment including ultrasonic, shortwave, indoctritherm and microtherm, radiant heat, ultra-violet ray, electric stimulation, paraffin, hot packs, whirlpool, massage, weight resistance exercise, muscle re-education, posture training, muscle testing, and the like. Limited facilities are provided for speech therapy, which is available primarily for brain injured patients and aphasic adults.

About 1,200 square feet of the ground floor are devoted to the occupational therapy department, providing many forms through it's exercise room, activities of daily living section, wood-working project, sand, crafts, printing, and waving equipment.

Although Mercy Hospital determines and executes the policies of the rehabilitation center, the former directors of the Curative Workshop, who act in an advisory capacity and assist in coordinating the work of outside agencies with the rehabilitation center,
play a vital role in the work of the center.

New construction was not the only project at Mercy Hospital. Presently a new appearance to the passerby, the gable roof of the old section had been replaced with a flat surface, removing unused and unsafe attic space. First and second floors of the old section have been modernized.

In the old south wing, a small gift shop has been provided for hospital visitors and ambulatory patients. It is combined with a coffee shop for the public with room for nine customers at a counter and twenty-six at tables. A gay, little place done in soft pink and gray, the coffee shop has its own kitchen and soda fountain. The former pharmacy on this floor has become a priest's dining room.

Architects for the additions were Hills, Gilbertson & Hays of Minneapolis. Hutter Construction Company, Fond du Lac, was in charge of the work.

On Tuesday, May 21, 1957, the dedication of the three new additions took place. At ten o'clock A.M. a solemn pontifical high Mass of thanksgiving was offered in the hospital chapel by the Auxiliary Bishop of the Green Bay Diocese, the Most Reverend John B. Grellinger, who was assisted by Father Dennis Worzalla, the hospital chaplain; Father Aloysius Trzebiatowski, deacon; Father Francis McKeough, subdeacon; and Father Paul DuCharme, master of ceremonies. After high Mass Bishop Grellinger gave a fitting and forceful sermon. Then, accompanied by his assistants, he went through the building to bless the newly expanded facilities of Mercy Hospital which marked the completion of a two year building program, adding 660,100 cubic feet to the institution at a total of some two million dollars.

A few words for the Bishop's timely sermon after Holy Mass follows:

"Other cities have been forced to conduct extensive drives for hospital construction. These good Sisters have taken that burden upon their own trusting shoulders. By doing so, they have given our physicians the most necessary tool of their healing art, for a
hospital with it's operating rooms, it's trained staff, it's complicated equipment; it's established routines, in themselves, are mammoth tools. But when the whole complex is animated with Christian spirit, it takes on the character of the hand of God's mercy."

Mercy Hospital is fully accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals in the United States. It is an institutional member of the Catholic Hospital Association of the United States and Canada and of the National and the Wisconsin Hospital Associations. It conducts the following fully approved educational programs:

**A Diploma School of Professional Nursing:**

Fully accredited by the Wisconsin State Board of Nursing. It has held State accreditation since 1913. It has been fully accredited by the Accrediting Service of the National League for Nursing since 1956. It is approved for the education of foreign students by the United States Department of Justice and for the education of veterans under Public Law 550. It is affiliated with the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., and holds Institutional Membership in the Conference of Catholic Schools of Nursing and the Department of Diploma and Associate Degree Programs of the National League for Nursing.

**Mercy Hospital School of X-ray Technology**

Inaugurated April 1945
Fully accredited by the American College of Radiology and the American Medical Association.

**Mercy Hospital School of Anesthesia**

Inaugurated September 1956
Fully accredited by the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists. It is fully approved by the American Hospital Association and the American Medical Association.

**Mercy Hospital School of Medical Technology**

Inaugurated April 1958
Fully accredited by the American Medical Association.
October 1958, marks the beginning of a new manufacturing
program undertaken by the hospital department of pharmacy, namely that of manufacturing intravenous solutions. The actual inception of the program began in 1957 when the Pharmacy and Therapeutics committee endorsed the proposal of manufacturing intravenous solutions which was later approved by the medical staff.

Equipment essential in this program included the installation of a Still which produces large quantities of pyrogen-free water, a purity meter to determine the quality of the distillate, a mixing tank having a capacity adequate for the volume of solutions which is intended to be made, working counters, bottle filling unit, bottles, closures, bottle washer, rabbit cages to house the rabbits used in the pyrogen testing and various miscellaneous pieces of equipment.

The program was designed to produce only the more commonly used intravenous solution such as Dextrose, Saline, and combinations thereof. Other solutions which utilize essentially the same equipment are the irrigating solutions which may consist of plain distilled water or more frequently consists of isotonic salt solutions and these are bottled in special containers to facilitate their special usage. Still other uses of this type of equipment found in the parenteral room is to provide the Pharmacy with the room and equipment essential to the small volume parenterals by which it is possible to provide in parenteral form such drugs as Procaine, Morphine, Codeine, Demerol, Dilaudid, water for injection, and others.

Mercy Hospital, general in character, offers facilities for the care of medical, surgical, obstetric, and pediatric patients. In construction, equipment and facilities it is modern and a constant effort is being made to provide patients with the most scientific care. The hospital has an annual registration of about ten thousand admissions and a daily average of approximately two hundred patients.
### SUPERIORS AT MERCY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sister Mary Cornelia</td>
<td>1918-1921</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sister Mary Sebastian</td>
<td>1921-1924</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sister Mary Wendelina</td>
<td>1924-1925</td>
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<td>Sister Mary Remegia</td>
<td>1925-1929</td>
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<td>Sister Mary Rosalinda</td>
<td>1929-1934</td>
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<td>Sister Mary Meinrada</td>
<td>1934-1940</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sister Mary Olga</td>
<td>1940-1943</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sister Mary Laurentina</td>
<td>1943-1945</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sister Mary Aurelia</td>
<td>1945-1951</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sister Mary Laurentina</td>
<td>1951-1957</td>
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<td>Sister Mary Oswaldina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sister Mary Regina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sister Mary Callista</td>
<td>1965-1968</td>
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<tr>
<td>James P. Fitzgerald</td>
<td>1968-1974</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph Ross</td>
<td>1986-1994</td>
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<tr>
<td>Otto Cox</td>
<td>1995-</td>
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**SISTERS AT MERCY HOSPITAL**

(*Sisters presently stationed at Mercy Hospital)

| Sister M. Rosalinda (Schreiber) | Sister M. Edwina (Schlamp) |
| Sister M. Angela (Heckl)        | Sister M. Olga (Christoph)  |
| Sister M. Ottilia (Gehl)        | Sister M. Ambrosina (Kraft) |
| Sister M. Eustochia (Kolb)      | *Sister M. Agape (Rabl)     |
| *Sister M. Raymunda (Hula)      | *Sister M. Ella (Ovel)      |
| *Sister M. Silveria (Schermer)  | Sister M. Margarita (Margraf)|
| *Sister M. Mechtildis (Neumann)| Sister M. Stella (Simon)    |
| Sister M. Gottfrieda (Ortlaufl)| Sister M. Cassiana (Certa)  |
| Sister M. Anakleta (Neuenhausen)| Sister M. Rudolph (Wild)   |
| Sister M. Philiberta (Hammerl)  | Sister M. Amantia (Meier)   |
| *Sister M. Bertha (Achammer)    | Sister M. Leonida (Schleer) |
| Sister M. Virginia (Steger)     | *Sister M. Edberita (Hummel)|
| Sister M. Aquilina (Heckl)      | Sister M. Violetta (Bauer)  |
| Sister M. Aurelia (Kuerinzinger)| Sister M. Anselma (Betzen)  |
| Sister M. Clarena (Weber)       | Sister M. Antonia (Gosar)   |
| *Sister M. Samuelua (Haertl)    | Sister M. Brunella (Hilgers) |
| *Sister M. Arsenia (Schramsky)  | *Sister M. Emmella (Fischer)|
| Sister M. Aloysia (Maurer)      | Sister M. Laurentina (Thimm)|
| *Sister M. Laurentia (Lauth)    | Sister M. Patricia (Sheff)  |
| Sister M. Philippina (Geisler)   | Sister M. Beda (Hack)       |
| Sister M. Marcellina (Reck)     | Sister M. Irenaea (Wittmann)|
| Sister M. Antida (Mosch)        | Sister M. Barbara (Messier) |
| *Sister M. Donatina (Heindl)    | *Sister M. Agnes (Anderson)|
| Sister M. Achatia (Rogawski)    | Sister M. Scholastica (Harrer)|
| Sister M. Oliva (Barth)         | Sister M. Antonetta         |
| *Sister M. Paulina (Bruchin)    | Sister M. Richarda (Sahm)   |
| Sister M. Doretta (Buschmann)   | *Sister M. Winfrieda (Bayer)|
| Sister M. Ancilla (Bezeked)     | Sister M. Luitburga (Sippl) |
| Sister M. Bartholomea (Betzen)  | *Sister M. Febronia (Sandner)|
| Sister M. Kleopa (Kurowski)     | *Sister M. Eleanor (Schuebel)|
| Sister M. Tabitha (Zillich)     | *Sister M. Hyacintha (Goetz)|
| Sister M. Capistrana (Uhl)      | *Sister M. Gerard (Bruder)  |
| Sister M. Emidia (Brendel)      | *Sister M. Jude (Ovel)      |
| Sister M. Adelaida (Paulik)     | *Sister M. Seraphia (Mader)|
| Sister M. Emerana (Argner)      | Sister M. Vitalis (Taylor)  |
| Sister M. Carola (Seidl)        | Sister M. Carmelita (Thomas)|
| Sister M. Agatha (Gerber)       | Sister M. Eustachia (Feihl) |
| *Sister M. Borromea (Regler)    | Sister M. Sylvia (Egan)     |
| Sister M. Cosma (Klein)         | Sister M. Mark (Schilling)  |
| Sister M. Liberata (Fox)        | *Sister M. Paula (Jacobs)   |
| *Sister M. Josue (Marek)        | *Sister M. Stephen (Martens)|
| Sister M. Lipharda (Doll)       | *Sister M. Cornelia (Springob)|
| *Sister M. Paschalis (Muehlbauer)| Sister M. Clarice (Mitchell)|
| Sister M. Mericia (Scheurer)    | Sister M. Brasilla (Barth)  |
| Sister M. Aquinata (Zagrzebski)| *Sister M. Denise (McHugh)  |
| Sister M. Gertrudis (Stimpfe)   | *Sister M. Andre (Vollmer)  |
| Sister M. Gregoria (Libel)      | *Sister M. Alexia (Nuetzel)|
| Sister M. Thomasina (Hepp)      | Sister M. Anatolia (Hilger) |
| Sister M. Rudolphina (Bierschneider)| Sister M. Meinrada (Gehring)|
| *Sister M. Photina (Artmann)    | *Sister M. Octavia (Ochs)   |
| Sister M. Coronata (Schels)     | *Sister M. Christina (Martell)|
| Sister M. Bernice (Hilgers)     | *Sister M. Francisca (Borchers)|
| Sister M. Roswilda (Beitzeiger)| Sister M. Theodora (Regnet) |
| Sister M. Kunigunda (Paul)      |                             |
| Sister M. Suprasia               |                             |
| *Sister M. Oswaldina (Nutz)     |                             |
| Sister M. Corsina (Reinhart)    |                             |
| Sister M. Auxentia (Kurowski)   |                             |
| Sister M. Consolata (Hiller)    |                             |

25
Doctors at Mercy Hospital
(Physicians on Mercy Hospital Staff at present time)

*M.G. Apell, M.D.
L.P. Allen, M.D.
N. Andrews, M.D.
*S.R. Beatty, M.D.
D. Bath, M.D.
*D.B. Becker, M.D.
*N.O. Becker, M.D.
*C.H. Behnke, M.D.
E.F. Bickel, M.D.
*R.H. Bitter, M.D.
F.A. Brei, M.D.
F.J. Brennen, M.D.
*R.C. Brown, M.D.
E. Campbell, M.D.
B. Clark, M.D., Jr.
B. Clark, M.D., Sr.
*W.E. Clark, M.D.
H.J. Colgan, M.D.
C.J. Combs, M.D.
J.M. Conley, M.D.
*F.G. Connell, M.D.
*E.F. Cummings, M.D.
D.P. Cupery, M.D.
*H.J. Danforth, M.D.
Q.H. Danforth, M.D.
K.W. Davis, M.D.
L. Dickenson, M.D.
M.J. Donkel, M.D.
*R.O. Ebert, M.D.
*P.S. Emrich, M.D.
E.G. Fortier, M.D.
R.E. Gerth, M.D.
*V.G. Guenther, M.D.
*L.D. Graber, M.D.
*S.J. Graiewski, M.D.
*B.S. Greenwood, M.D.
*W.V. Hahn, M.D.
R.J. Hansell, M.D.
*M.C. Haines, M.D.
C.P. Haseltine, M.D.
H.J. Haubrick, M.D.
L.F. Heise, M.D.
L. Helmes, M.D.
*H.M. Hillenbrand, M.D.
J.M. Hogan, M.D.
B.J. Hughes, M.D.
D.G. Hugo, M.D.
I.A. Ihrke, M.D.
L.F. Jenk, M.D.
H. Johnston, M.D.
J.M. Johnson, M.D.
E.J. Keifer, M.D.
T.E. Kilkenny, M.D.
H.H. Kleinschmidt, M.D.