St. Francis Academy, Established in 1869, Seventy-Five-Year Educational Stronghold

"For each age is a dream that is dying. Or one that is coming to birth."

In the late 1800s, a twelfth-century dream began to take form. In cold figures the "Century of Progress" was still some thirty-eight years away. Actually, the germ of progress had begun to mature before the "gay nineties" gave way to the 1900s.

There was need in 1890 of a Convent school for girls. Higher education for girls, for the majority of girls, was to be the accepted thing of the future. A small stone building, on an unpaved street, was one of the cradles of that future. There on the corner of Joliet's Broadway and Division, St. Francis Academy began its work.

Charter Granted in 1874

To eyes accustomed to modern conveniences that small school appears pathetically insufficient. To the less sophisticated pupils of those early days, it was more than adequate. Joliet sent its daughters to the Sisters' school; the State granted a charter in 1874. The 70s, began with their activity and growth; the town was thriving, enrollees were increasing. In 1882 the little stone building was exchanged for the larger, gray building on Plainfield Avenue. It was a diversified student body at that time. The Saint Francis girl of today comes armed with a grade school diploma, twelve or thirteen years of living and an adolescent enthusiasm. In 1882, with six year olds trundled on the hill with their eighteen year old sisters and gravely began their formal education. The Academy was for the education of girls and no restriction of age existed. A little more, smaller than many of her peers, took over the administration of the Academy, as Sister M. Stanislaus became principal.

Curriculum Revised

The nineteenth century drew to a close. The new era was to see many changes and improvements, but the coming at least was not promising. For one thing, it was necessary to limit the curriculum, and for eleven years Saint Francis did not function as a complete school unit. There was no abridgment of the art and the music departments, however, nor did the memory of Saint Francis die out in the minds of those interested in education. In 1913 the Academy again adopted a complete program. In the meantime a new wing had been added to the old building on Plainfield Avenue.

Dedication Of Present Building

Today Saint Francis is a day school only. At that time it was both day and boarding school, with the emphasis upon the latter feature. The increase in the boarder as well as in the day-student enrollment necessitated additional facilities, and in the August of 1922 the cornerstone of the present Academy, on Wilcox and Taylor Streets, was laid. On October 14, 1923, the building was dedicated by Archbishop, later Cardinal, George M. Mundelein.

The campus of Saint Francis is a thing of beauty. The shrubs and slender trees that stood silently before the old Academy of 1882 have grown to flourish, towering proportions. In the spring when the apple and cherry blossoms are out the scene is, without exaggeration, magnificent.

Saint Francis has always placed special stress on the power and pleasure of books. The Academy library today is testimony of this fact. Modern Library facilities are available to the student at all times. Today's literary men have a place on St. Francis' shelves as well as have the classic authors of yesterday. There is a complete department of reference works; the magazine section provides current views for the browsing student.

Patriotism Stressed

As a Catholic school, St. Francis has always been interested in the work of the Church. The sodality of Our Lady with its extensive power for good, is her chief interest at that line. It has flourished through the years and has never been more active than it is today whose Catholic Action has become such a part of the young Catholic American.

Guided By Educators

Throughout the years, Saint Francis has had the guidance of a number of interesting, interested, educational women. Sister M. Faustina, who was later to head the College Normal Department, was the first principal of the Academy after it reopened in 1913. The last Sister M. Alforterra, who became first Dean of the College of Saint Francis, filled a brief term as Principal. Sister M. Thomasine became principal prior to her election to the office of Mother General of her community. Sister M. Valeria, last present head on Saint Mary's High School in Columbus, Ohio, succeeded Mother Thomasine in 1925. Sister M. Meroedes, widely known as an educator, was head of the Academy from 1931-1936. Sister M. Renata, at parochial teaching in Chicago, became Principal in 1936, to be followed by Sister M. Anaclet in 1941. General Superior M. Gertrudis during the past summer, with the appointment of Sister Anaclet as Mistress of Novitiate.

Mother-Daughter Team Is Vogue

In Academy Roster of Present

“Like Mother, like daughter” is a variation of the time-honored axiom “like father, like sons.” Old and familiar and sometimes might be added, when the saying is applied to Saint Francis Academy.

S.F.A. in its seventy-five years of teaching has “ schooled” daughters of many families. Some the second and even the third generation are passing through S.F.A. hallowed halls.

Mary Frances and Helen Kennedy proudly mention that their grandmother, Louise M. Adler Lemon, attended St. Francis Academy when it was situated on Broadway.

Mother-daughter teams stud the present S.F.A. roll call. Irene and Virginia Mulligan, sisters, are not backward in announcing that their mother, Irene Connor Mulligan, graduated from the Academy in 1916.

Mother-daughter combinations represented in the upper classes are Susan McCanna Carcich and daughter Mary Frances Carcich; Emilie Gibbons Stephen and daughter Clare Louise Stephen; Ethel Larkin and daughter Margaret Larkin; Lorraine Mergen and daughter Joan Costello; Claire Sherlock Costello and daughter Joan Kostel.

Lower classes who boast mothers that attended the Academy are Lois Testin whose mother is Frances Baile Testin; Mary Margaret Gray, whose mother is Margaret Baskerville Gray; and Mary Jane Connor whose mother is Mary Delavoy Connor.

Especially Fritz Breen, mother of Marilyn Breen, studied art and Sister M. Florence and Sister M. Florence at St. Francis in 1911 and 1912.

Our Lady Sodality Is Strong Force

Of 1944 S.F.A. Catholic Actionists

The Sodality of the Children of Mary, long an active force in Academy affairs, was affiliated with the Prima Primaria in ten years after the Sodality’s canonical establishment in Rome.

The prominence of the S.F.A. Sodality today is indicated by the fact that it reached a new high with 21 student representatives at the 16th annual Summer School of Catholic Action held last month in Chicago.

This year’s Academy representatives at Our Lady were Marilyn Kell- preit, Lorraine Kelly, Nancy Sturken, Mary Frances and Helen Kennedy, Shirley Grunsen, Ann Fiebig, Ann Peters, Emilie Larkin, Mary Fane, Joan Kostel, Kay Mott, Virginia Talbot, Stephen Leck, Carolle Willcox, Dorothee Testin, Susan Mergen, .Mary Kennedy, Bessie Bailey, Jeanne O’Donnell, and adorns Mary Lou Kane.
HOW DID THE FRANCISCAN SISTERS AND THEIR LAY PARTNERS GROW A UNIVERSITY?

Early in 1920, the Joliet Franciscan Sisters petitioned the Bishop of Chicago, Archbishop George Mundelein for a college department to be added to their educational efforts in the United States. The department was to be housed in the building on Wilcox and Taylor Streets in Joliet, at the site of St. Francis Academy.

The Archbishop of Chicago said “yes” and the State of Illinois issued a charter giving the school the right to become an institution of higher education. The background and story is of a little school that began in 1904 with kindergarten and moved to a full curriculum through high school by 1915. It grew into a Normal School, the “New College” by 1920, and on to become Assisi Junior College by 1925 and the College of St. Francis in 1930. So, growing continued, and it is not a surprise to the Joliet Community to realize and to applaud the ‘little school that could...’ on this occasion of its exciting growth, and meaningful crossroad—to university status in 1998. President Doppke announced in the summer of 1997, “Effective January 1, 1998, the College of St. Francis shall become the University of St. Francis.”

The University of St. Francis shall continue to deepen its Franciscan character as it moves into the future, proud of its Catholic heritage and ready to meet its responsibility to inculcate its student for their tomorrows with challenges outlined in Catholic social tradition.
Franciscan Beginnings
Reversal
Relocation
Recognition
"Normal", Art, Music
Assisi Junior College
College of St. Francis
Incorporation 1962
Revision, Rearrangement
Sisters of St. Francis
Some pages are omitted from the digital version of this folder.

Learn more
Mission Integration presents

an exhibit

THE FRANCISCAN ORIGINS
of the
UNIVERSITY OF ST. FRANCIS
1865 - 1962

STUDIO THEATER

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10 &
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11, 1998

9:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

hosted by: Sister Rosemary Small, O.S.F.

• Come and view a magnificent exhibit! Prepared by Sister Marian Voelker, O.S.F., Congregation Archivist for the Joliet Franciscans.

• View primary sources of charters, deed, letters from Rome to OSF, data regarding the OSF connection to the great Chicago fire!

• Was USF really once known as Lewis-St. Francis of Joliet? When? Why?
Franciscan Beginnings
Reversal
Relocation
Recognition
"Normal", Art, Music
Assisi Junior College
College of St. Francis
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Sisters of St. Francis
Some pages are omitted from the digital version of this folder.
Learn more
1933

Czech classes given at Sisters' College, Cleveland, OH by our Sisters Imelda and Virginia. They translated French literature into Czech to be used by for teaching. They also taught Demonstration School.

August, 1933

Announcement of obediences
Mission lists distributed

1933

Public schools Green Creek, Lillyville

1933

Postulants attend regular classes at SFA
6 newly professed Srs. first to attend CSF fulltime
154 enrolled at CSF

March 1934

Sr. Vita Zeman dies; Author of Czech reading series.

1934

CSF has 20 graduates
Jane Pfau, postulant, 1st graduate
SFA 73 graduates
CSF 82 residents, 41 non-residents, 47 religious
Question of date of jubilee from reception or profession
Remodeling of stage in Auditorium

1935

MARY BOOKS BEGIN
Improvement of Motherhouse grounds
Chickens sent to GAH
Tennis courts planned
Gravel walks laid
Christmas market held
CSF accounts audited

1936, March 17

Johnstown flood, Sisters break wall to safety

1936, June 3

Boarding school in Bayfield, WI closed after fire

1936

Auditorium chairs placed
Floors replaced on Taylor wing halls, 2, 3
Porches enclosed joining the 1881-1912 wings
Physics and Bacteriology labs moved
South dining room, former "play room" of 1882-1904 becomes the Novitiate Refectory
Addition outside the Motherhouse kitchen
Men's house improved, shingles, steps, entrances, painted, floors covered, heating & plumbing,
Top floor for hired men to sleep
Main floor a study room for men professors of CSF
Novices have College credit classes in Novitiate

1937, August

Division of authority and space determined in Tower Hall for SFA and CSF

November 1, 1937

Joliet assigns new street numbers
St. Francis Convent becomes "520", no longer "220"

January, 1938

Fires in St. John Convent, St. Joseph Convent, Joliet

May 4, 1938

St. Joseph statue in yard, gift of Dr. John Fahner's daughters
CHARISM AND BACKGROUND OF THE SISTERS OF ST. FRANCIS OF MARY IMMACULATE, JOLIET, IL

WE, THE CONGREGATION OF THE THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS OF MARY IMMACULATE, JOLIET, ILLINOIS, WERE CALLED INTO BEING BY THE GRACE OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH MOTHER ALFRED MOES AND FATHER PAMFILO DA MAGLIANO. IN RESPONSE TO THE PLEAS FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS TO TEACH CHILDREN IN THE MIDWEST, THESE TWO MISSIONARIES ESTABLISHED OUR COMMUNITY AS THE FIRST FRANCISCAN SISTERHOOD IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, IN ACCORD WITH THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR OF ST. FRANCIS. OUR MOTHERHOUSE AND NOVITIATE ARE LOCATED IN JOLIET, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. WE ARE INCORPORATED IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS. WE MAINTAIN A FOUNDATION, WITH A NOVITIATE HOUSE, IN GOIANIA, GOIAS, BRAZIL, SOUTH AMERICA.

FATHER PAMFILO DA MAGLIANO WAS CUSTOS PROVINCIAL OF THE FRIARS MINOR OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION IN ALLEGANY, NEW YORK, WHEN ON AUGUST 2, 1865, THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF ANGELS, HE PLACED MOTHER ALFRED MOES IN CHARGE OF THE NEW FOUNDATION. HE COMMISSIONED HER TO ACCEPT THE FIRST NOVICE INTO THE CONGREGATION, WHICH ALREADY HAD FOUR SISTERS PROFESSING THE FRANCISCAN WAY OF LIFE.

THE STRONG FRANCISCAN TRADITION IMPARTED BY FATHER PAMFILO AND THE CHARISM EXPERIENCED BY MOTHER ALFRED REMAIN VITAL TO OUR SISTERS. DEEP FAITH IN OUR PROVIDENT FATHER, SIMPLICITY OF LIFE STYLE, VERSATILITY OF RESPONSE TO THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH, INGENUITY AND RESOURCEFULNESS IN A MULTILINGUAL COMMUNITY OF APOSTOLIC WOMEN; THESE ARE PART OF OUR HERITAGE AND ARE REFLECTED IN EVERY ERA OF OUR HISTORY.


SINCE OUR BEGINNING MINISTRY AT ST. JOHN, JOLIET, IL, ON NOVEMBER 4, 1863, UNTIL THE PRESENT DAY OUR CONGREGATION HAS CONTINUED IN THE CHALLENGE FRANCIS ASSISI RECEIVED FROM JESUS:

"REBUILD MY CHURCH"
Mother Thomasine Frye
born November 16, 1876 in Europe, came to USA at age 4
entered from St. Boniface Parish, Chicago, IL
died February 9, 1950 at 74. Sister Berchmans, her natural
sister, died 1898 with pneumonia at age 27.
Mission record:
1896-98 Sts. Peter & Paul, Chicago, IL Grades 3,4,5
1898-1904 Sacred Heart,Englewood,Chicago,IL Grades 1,2,3,4
1904-05 St. Mary, Rock Island, IL, Grades 5,6
1905-08 St. John, Joliet, IL, Grades 5,6,7
Residence: Motherhouse
1908-14 St. Boniface, Chicago, IL, Grade 8 and Commercial
1914-21 St. Mary, Columbus, OH, Taught HS every level
Superior and Principal
1921-22 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL
Normal School Instructor
Mathematics Teacher at St. Francis Academy
1922-23 Catholic University, Washington, DC,
Student in Master's program
1923-25 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, Principal
1925-26 St. Mary, Columbus, OH, Superior and Principal
1926-44 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Superior General
1930-38 College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL, President
simultaneously with Superior General
1944-50 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Director of Teacher Training

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1926: 7th centenary of death of St. Francis
Mayslake (Sacred Heart Province)
Portiuncola dedicated

October 8, 1926
GAH moved to new location on Theodore/Plainfield
105 orphans
Ralph Buccarrelli, 6yr, killed in accident with truck

December 22, 1926
Oil paintings donated by Assisi Junior College
students of Classes '26 and '27
Hanging outside Chapel to this day:
1. St. Francis pleading for Portiuncola indulgence
2. St. Francis preaching to the Sultan

June 5, 1927
First Baccalaureate exercises in Chapel
4 graduates, 45 students
Exchange of services with the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Sisters from SFA giving religious instructions at St. Joseph,
Rockdale, IL

1927
Pilgrimage to Assisi by Srs. Stanislas & Camilla
First time our Sisters traveled outside the USA (cf.Diaries)

Nov. 5, 1927
Mexican Sisters in exile, traveled from Martindale, TX,
to live with our Sisters at St. Francis Assisi, Chicago.
Mr. Lewis donated, had built, convent OLGuadalupe

1928:
Graduation speaker, Rev. Daniel A. Lord, SJ

1927-28
Teaching demonstrations given by our Sisters:
Sacred Heart, Englewood, Chicago
St. Clement, Chicago
St. Mary, Columbus, OH
July 8, 1928
Sr. Veronica Harth work with blind students

March 7, 1929
Performance of "Round the clock with Clare"
written by Rev. DA Lord, SJ

1929
Assisi Junior College growing almost 100
Publication of St. Francis Chimes

Dec. 8, 1929
Special celebration of the 75th anniversary of the
Declaration of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception

March 5, 1930
Sister Alcantara Held, Dean requests and receives
accreditation for College, first step

May, 1930
Memorial unveiled in Memphis, TN, for Sisters,
Brothers, Priests who died there during the 1870's
yellow fever epidemics. M. Alexander and S. Stanislas
attend from Joliet.

June, 1930 SFA graduates 72 girls

September, 1930
College of St. Francis is officially opened

October 1930
Chemistry labs moved to bottom floor, Taylor wing

1931
Sr. Clarice, words, Sr. Raphael, music in prize
winning hymn to Immaculate Heart of Mary for contest
run by the Claretian Fathers at St. Francis Assisi, Chicago

1931
Sr. Charles Zieverink's father donates a new harp.
The old one of Srs. Cecilia and Stanislas was more
than 50 years old.

Weidner family, Srs. Cordelia and Estelle, donate radio and victrola

1931
Purchase of Granville, OH property
Our Lady of Mercy, its many faces: 1931-1958, 1970

1931
Two new organs:
Lambeau family donated auditorium
Lagger family donated chapel

Sept. 1931
Postulants sleep across the street at St. Clare's
Aspirants attend classed with SFA girls
SFA has 312 girls

1931: 50 th anniversary of 1881 cornerstone here

1931
Quinquennial report sent from Congregation as Pontifical

January 16, 1932
Sister Zita Behrendt dies unexpectedly while General
Secretary. Sister had her work up to date, last entry
December 31, 1931.

1932
Retirement Annuity paid to Sr. Seraphica by US
Government for her work with the Native Americans.

1933
"Il Poverello" staged by SFA/CSF, with cast of 350
for the benefit of GAH
Sr. Camilla celebrated her Diamond Jubilee and was
allowed to go to Europe with Sr. Aniceta who was to
study in Paris.
MOTHER THOMASINE FRYE (WSKA)
1926 - 1944

Mother Thomasine's zest for life shows through her
eyes as she seems to say,
"Sisters, you will grow to be a great Congregation!"

With the election of Mother Thomasine, the
Congregation entered a new era. Mother Thomasine was the
first General Superior who had not been in the community
with Mother Alfred, our Foundress. She was also the first
Sister elected directly to this highest office without having
served as a Council Member.

Many of the difficulties that had begun with the First
World War continued long after the Armistice of 1918. The
Great Depression and another World War were inescapable
realities. The Sisters' lives were necessarily affected by
these circumstances. Red Cross training, Children Day
Care Center, and Civil Defense Shelters were all part of
the Congregation's involvement in the war effort of our
nation.

Mother Thomasine is well remembered as the first
President of the College of St. Francis. Before there was
an official Sister Formation Program, she sought to educate
our own Sisters and members of many other religious
communities here at our College.

Besides supporting traditional elementary and
secondary schools, in Ohio she accepted Granville, a special
school, and Marybrook, a boarding school for girls referred
by the court system. She also accepted two Public Schools
in central Illinois.

The 75th Jubilee of our Congregation far surpassed
any celebration the Sisters had ever had. The famous
photo of 499 of our 618 Sisters in front of our Motherhouse
during this celebration has never been equalled. This
Jubilee year and especially August 2,3,4 will long be
remembered through all the photos and movies taken in the
course of the festivities. Best of all, each Sister was given
the privilege of visiting her family for three days!

Rome had given permission for Mother Thomasine's
election to a third term in 1938, but when the Chapter
members suggested a petition for her to take a fourth term,
she refused. The last six years of her life, Mother
Thomasine spent as the Director of Teacher Training for
the Sisters. During this time, in spite of her physical
suffering, she completed the fourth revision of the MANUAL
OF PRAYERS, and a new CEREMONIAL.
Funeral services for Mother M. Thomasine Fryeska, former General Superior of the Congregation were held at the Motherhouse on February 13. Bishop Martin D. McNamara pontificated at the Solemn Requiem Mass. Rev. Alphonse Coan, OFM, delivered the sermon. (Copy available upon request)
Burial took place at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Joliet.

Elizabeth Fryeska was born on November 16, 1876, in Jehlenz Kreis Tuchel, West Prussia, to Felix Fryeska and Marzianna Ruhrnke. The family emigrated to the United States and settled in Chicago when Elizabeth was a little less than forty years old. On January 12, 1895, she entered the postulancy of the Sisters of St. Francis, after having worked as a governess for several families in Chicago. Her novitiate began on July 2, 1895 and she was professed on August 2, 1897, with final vows on August 15, 1903. Mother Thomasine celebrated her Golden Jubilee on June 27, 1947, along with her classmates: Sister Hildegarde, Eulalia, Winifred, and Hubertine. Mother Thomasine's sister Eva, Sister Berchmans had entered the Congregation in 1888 and died with consumption in 1898. Other relatives include cousins: Sister Dorothy Matz, and her sisters, Sister Ernestine Matz and Sister Hilaria Matz, the two latter becoming the Foundresses with Sister Solana Lesnys of the the Sisters of St. Francis of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in St. Louis, MO. Other cousins include: Sister Rayneria Korthals, Rev. John Sprengel, Rev. A.F. Korthals, and Rev. Charles Bartoscheck, CSSR.

Mother Thomasine was in the 74th year of her earthly life and the 55th of her religious life. Eulogies and condolences poured in from all over the United States upon her death. Memorial issues of the Interlude, the Marian, St. Mary's, Columbus, and numerous Church bulletins and Diocesan newspapers paid her special tribute.

Mother Thomasine was the major force behind the establishment and accreditation of the College of St. Francis. She served as the First President until 1938. The education of women held a high priority with her. She had received her Master of Arts degree from Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., on June 13, 1923. Sisters from many Congregations were enrolled at CSF due to the foresight of Mother Thomasine.

Mother Thomasine had served 18 years as General Superior when the General Chapter wanted to petition Rome for a fourth term. She was aware of her physical condition, cancer, and declined the request. The final years of her life she remained active until last year. She had completed the 1948 edition of the Community Manual of Prayers, The Ceremonial, and served as Director of Teacher Training for the Sisters.

Mother Thomasine will always be remembered as a great leader. The photographs of the 75th anniversary in 1940 depict this for posterity.
Sermon of Rev. Alphonse Coan, O.F.M. at the Funeral Services
for Mother M. Thomasine, O.S.F.
February 13, 1950

"In all things show thyself an example of good works—in teaching, in piety, and in dignity." My dear friends;

These words were uttered by the great St. Paul, who was laying down a rule of life for his beloved disciple, Titus, who was made Bishop and this was the advice he gave him to guide him in his episcopal work. These words of the great St. Paul find a beautiful application and example in the life of the one whom we are burying this morning. Mother Thomasine could have said in all truth, "In all things I have given an example in good works, in teaching, in piety, and in dignity."

Looking back on the life of Mother Thomasine, it would seem that these words were always in her mind, for she lived them.

Last Thursday, when Mother Thomasine passed away peacefully at the hospital in the presence of the Reverend Mother and some of the Sisters, something went out of St. Francis. Some felt that the heart of St. Francis had gone, had left with Mother Thomasine. So closely was she associated with this institution, so long had she labored here, so prominent a place did she hold in this Community and in the life at St. Francis that we know with her going, St. Francis—this Community of Franciscan Sisters—has lost a prominent member.

Mother Thomasine certainly played a prominent role in this Community. You know Shakespeare said that this world is a stage and we are the players. That can be said just as truly
of every religious community. A religious community is a stage, the members are the players, and every member has a part to play. Every part is different, but every part is important. Some are more important; some are less important; some are very important.

Now Mother Thomasine for the last 25 years has played a very important part in the life of this community. She has seen this community grow and develop and she herself had a great part in the growth and development of this community.

For 13 years Mother Thomasine was the Reverend Mother. She led and guided this community. She took the lead and set the pace for the others. And we know that she did a grand and a noble work. She was gifted with the marks of a true religious—she had vision, she had courage, she had understanding, she had a boundless energy for work, and she did not spare herself. She had the greatest devotion to a cause. And these gifts God had given her, she used in this community in order to spread the glory of God and to spread His Kingdom in this world. And that she was successful, we know.

Mother Thomasine seems to have had a twofold objective in her life. First, she wanted to implant in the hearts of her sisters a deep and solid piety. In order to do that, she herself gave them the example. The ideals expressed in her rule—the ideals of St. Francis—were the ideals that she tried to live; and she did! She lived that rule to the very end, faithfully to the last. But Mother Thomasine was not satisfied
with that. She wanted every Sister in the Community to live
that rule and she stubbornly insisted on the faithful ob-
servance of the rule. She realized that the happiness of the
individual member, that the welfare of the Community depends
on the faithful observance of the rule. So in season and out
of season, Mother Thomasine insisted on the faithful and exact
observance of the holy rule.

The second objective Mother Thomasine sought was to send
the Sisters out to their schools, out to their work, fully and
thoroughly equipped for that work. In order to do that, she
established St. Francis College. At least, she had a prominent
part in the establishment of St. Francis College. She manned
that College with the best teachers she could procure. She
worked for the best rating she could get for it so that it
could stand out among the Catholic colleges for women in the
country as one of the best. She did all that she could to
make that College something in the eyes of the State, so that
there she could train her Sisters that they might be thoroughly
equipped to go out and work in our Catholic schools. Mother
Thomasine's principle was that no Sister should leave to go
out and teach until she was well-prepared and fitted to do her
work. No matter what the demand for Sisters was, no matter
what the need, her first aim was to equip the teacher. And
her ideas, we know, were correct from subsequent events.

Mother Thomasine will go down in the history of this
Community because she has done a world of good for education.
She has trained teachers, has supplied teachers for Catholic
schools, has made St. Francis what it is, not only one of the
finest in the State but in the country. And so Mother Thomasine
deserves to be recognized.

When she was in the hospital, the Bishop stopped in to see
her and she, in her humility, was expressing her unworthiness
of such an honor. The Bishop said to her, "The Church owes it
to you." That pleased Mother Thomasine, and she said, "You
know, we feel that we are working for the honor and glory of
God, and for the Community, and we forget that we are working
for the Church." The Bishop said to her, "Mother, you have
done a grand and wonderful work for the Church." And she did.

In Holy Scripture we read that those who educate many unto
justice will shine as the stars for all eternity. Mother
Thomasine taught many unto justice. She, we know, will shine
as a star for all eternity.

One of the great and striking characteristics of Mother
Thomasine was her love for work, her indefatigable spirit,
her boundless energy for work. She could do so much and do
it with ease. And this went on year after year, until last
year she began to slip. She realized that age and illness were
taking their toll. She was slowing up, but even at that she
struggled on to the very end, interested in everything that
would help the Community and the College. Finally, when she
could go no longer, she was taken to the hospital to receive
special medical care. After she was there about a week, I
stopped in one day and she said, "Father, sit down. I want
to talk to you. You know, I have been getting intravenous
injections, different kinds of medicine, and I have been
anointed—but, I wonder, what is my condition? Is it serious?
No one around here will tell you, and I would like to know."

I replied, "Yes, Mother, it is serious." "Is it very serious?" she wanted to know. "Yes, it is very serious."

"Well, I guess that means--"

"Yes, it may be a few weeks, it may be a few months, or it may be a year, but unless God works a miracle, you have not a chance in the world to get better."

"Thanks. That is all I want to know. And now, this is the strange thing; now that I know that the end will be here soon, I am not worried about death. The thing that worries me is that I do not worry."

"Mother, thank God you are not worried. That is a special grace of God. You will have enough to suffer without mental anguish. You have done a lot of good in your life, but now in these coming weeks you are going to do your greatest work. You are going to suffer a lot. Offer up that suffering in the spirit of resignation. Unite those sufferings with those of the Blessed Mother and her Son, and you will do the greatest work of your life."

She nodded, and said, "I'll try." From that moment on she never showed a desire to get better. She never complained, knowing that each day she was drawing nearer and nearer to death. That was the spirit of Mother Thomasine.

So God gave her a good and a holy and happy death and today as we say the last prayers for her, we have reason to be happy, too, because we know that God was good to her. And while Mother Thomasine's death is a distinct loss to your Community, while we will miss her, remember that she is still with us. Her memory
and love will always linger with you. Her influence will always continue to influence you. Her devotion to the holy Rule, her love for work, and her love for Catholic education—they will always linger here in St. Francis and in this Community. And so, today, as we say our last Requiem for her this morning, as we often whisper a prayer for her during the coming weeks, and when we say "Let perpetual light shine upon her—may she rest in peace"—let us also add the words: may the spirit of Mother Thomasine remain always with us.
Mother Thomasine Frye
born November 16, 1876 in Europe, came to USA at age 4
entered from St. Boniface Parish, Chicago, IL
died February 9, 1950 at 74. Sister Berchmans, her natural
sister, died 1898 with pneumonia at age 27.
Mission record:
1896-98 Sts. Peter & Paul, Chicago, IL Grades 3,4,5
1898-1904 Sacred Heart, Englewood, Chicago, IL Grades 1,2,3,4
1904-05 St. Mary, Rock Island, IL, Grades 5,6
1905-08 St. John, Joliet, IL, Grades 5,6,7
Residence: Motherhouse
1908-14 St. Boniface, Chicago, IL, Grade 8 and Commercial
1914-21 St. Mary, Columbus, OH, Taught HS every level
Superior and Principal
1921-22 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL
Normal School Instructor
Mathematics Teacher at St. Francis Academy
1922-23 Catholic University, Washington, DC,
Student in Master's program
1923-25 St. Francis Academy, Joliet, IL, Principal
1925-26 St. Mary, Columbus, OH, Superior and Principal
1926-44 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Superior General
1930-38 College of St. Francis, Joliet, IL, President
simultaneously with Superior General
1944-50 St. Francis Convent, Joliet, IL, Director of Teacher Training

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1926: 7th centenary of death of St. Francis
Mayslake (Sacred Heart Province)
Portiuncola dedicated
October 8, 1926
GAH moved to new location on Theodore/Plainfield
105 orphans
Ralph Buccarrelli, 6yr, killed in accident with truck
December 22, 1926
Oil paintings donated by Assisi Junior College
students of Classes '26 and '27
Hanging outside Chapel to this day:
1. St. Francis pleading for Portiuncola indulgence
2. St. Francis preaching to the Sultan
June 5, 1927
First Baccalaureate exercises in Chapel
4 graduates, 45 students
Exchange of services with the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart
Sisters from SFA giving religious instructions at St. Joseph,
Rockdale, IL
1927
Pilgrimage to Assisi by Srs. Stanislas & Camilla
First time our Sisters traveled outside the USA (cf. Diaries)
Nov. 5, 1927
Mexican Sisters in exile, traveled from Martindale, TX,
to live with our Sisters at St. Francis Assisi, Chicago.
Mr. Lewis donated, had built, convent OLGuadalupe
1928:
Graduation speaker, Rev. Daniel A. Lord, SJ
1927-28
Teaching demonstrations given by our Sisters:
Sacred Heart, Englewood, Chicago
St. Clement, Chicago
St. Mary, Columbus, OH
July 8, 1928
Sr. Veronica Harth work with blind students

March 7, 1929
Performance of "Round the clock with Clare"
written by Rev. DA Lord, SJ

1929
Assisi Junior College growing almost 100
Publication of St. Francis Chimes

Dec. 8, 1929
Special celebration of the 75th anniversary of the
Declaration of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception

March 5, 1930
Sister Alcantara Held, Dean requests and receives
accreditation for College, first step

May, 1930
Memorial unveiled in Memphis, TN, for Sisters,
Brothers, Priests who died there during the 1870's
yellow fever epidemics. M. Alexander and S. Stanislas
attend from Joliet.

June, 1930 SFA graduates 72 girls

September, 1930
College of St. Francis is officially opened

October 1930
Chemistry labs moved to bottom floor, Taylor wing

1931
Sr. Clarice, words, Sr. Raphael, music in prize
winning hymn to Immaculate Heart of Mary for contest
run by the Clareton Fathers at St. Francis Assisi, Chicago

1931
Sr. Charles Zieverink's father donates a new harp.
The old one of Srs. Cecilia and Stanislas was more
than 50 years old.
Weidner family, Srs. Cordelia and Estelle, donate radio and victrola

1931
Purchase of Granville, OH property
Our Lady of Mercy, its many faces: 1931-1958, 1970

1931
Two new organs:
Lambeau family donated auditorium
Lagger family donated chapel

Sept. 1931
Postulants sleep across the street at St. Clare's
Aspirants attend classed with SFA girls
SFA has 312 girls

1931: 50th anniversary of 1881 cornerstone here

1931
Quinquennial report sent from Congregation as Pontifical

January 16, 1932
Sister Zita Behrendt dies unexpectedly while General
Secretary. Sister had her work up to date, last entry
December 31, 1931.

1932
Retirement Annuity paid to Sr. Serpahica by US
Government for her work with the Native Americans.

1933
"Il Poverello" staged by SFA/CSF, with cast of 350
for the benefit of GAH
Sr. Camilla celebrated her Diamond Jubilee and was
allowed to go to Europe with Sr. Aniceta who was to
study in Paris.
1933
Czech classes given at Sisters' College, Cleveland, OH by our Sisters Imelda and Virginia. They translated French literature into Czech to be used by for teaching. They also taught Demonstration School.

August, 1933
Announcement of obediences
Mission lists distributed

1933
Public schools Green Creek, Lillyville

1933
Postulants attend regular classes at SFA
6 newly professed Srs. first to attend CSF fulltime
154 enrolled at CSF

March 1934
Sr. Vita Zeman dies; Author of Czech reading series.

1934
CSF has 20 graduates
Jane Pfau, postulant, 1st graduate
SFA 73 graduates
CSF 82 residents, 41 non-residents, 47 religious
Question of date of jubilee from reception or profession
Remodeling of stage in Auditorium

1935
MARY BOOKS BEGIN
Improvement of Motherhouse grounds
Chickens sent to GAH
Tennis courts planned
Gravel walks laid
Christmas market held
CSF accounts audited

1936, March 17
Johnstown flood, Sisters break wall to safety

1936, June 3
Boarding school in Bayfield, WI closed after fire

1936
Auditorium chairs placed
Floors replaced on Taylor wing halls, 2, 3
Porches enclosed joining the 1881-1912 wings
Physics and Bacteriology labs moved
South dining room, former "play room" of 1882-1904 becomes the Novitiate Refectory
Addition outside the Motherhouse kitchen
Men's house improved, shingles, steps, entrances, painted, floors covered, heating & plumbing,
Top floor for hired men to sleep
Main floor a study room for men professors of CSF
Novices have College credit classes in Novitiate

1937, August
Division of authority and space determined in Tower Hall for SFA and CSF

November 1, 1937
Joliet assigns new street numbers
St. Francis Convent becomes "520", no longer "220"

January, 1938
Fires in St. John Convent, St. Joseph Convent, Joliet

May 4, 1938
St. Joseph statue in yard, gift of Dr. John Fahner's daughters
January, 1939
Circular letter announces DIAMOND JUBILEE

May, 1939
Tile floor complete on 3 Main hallway

1939-1940
Decision to accept, change of decision about mission schools in Arizona

Jan. through April 1940
Chapel being renovated, painted
Archbishop Stritch to be here in August

August 2, 3, 4, 1940
DIAMOND JUBILEE, BOOKLET, PHOTOS, MOVIES, HOME VISITS

1940
Marybrook Academy, Maumee, OH: 1940-1964

October, 1940
Sisters listened to Pope Pius XII's English language broadcast on the radio

July, 1941
Attendance at HOLY CROSS SISTERS CENTENARY

1941-1945
WORLD WAR II YEARS
Prayers, Holy Hours, Rosary Devotions, Home visits
Sympathy to families, deaths of brothers, cousins, uncles, nephews
Use of our buildings for Civil Defense Shelters
Prep used as day care center for working mothers to leave children in Sisters' care

July 10, 1944
Chapter petitions Mother Thomasine to accept 4th term. M. Thomasine does not accept another postulation.

Sr. Eulogia's failing health

Mother Immaculate's election
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<td></td>
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<td>(1904 Limited curriculum)</td>
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<td>(1915 full proc)</td>
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Some pages are omitted from the digital version of this folder.

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