



Women of Spirit
A History of Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich
1848-1998



Prologue

This is a chronicle of an educational institution, but it is also the story of women of vision, women of commitment, women of faith and women of spirit. In essence, it is the biography of a family and its passion, motivated by its dedication to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and its search for God's truth and love in the service of others.

The family tree, rooted in the ashes of the French Revolution, was planted by St. Madeleine Sophie Barat in 1800. The Mother Foundress hoped that the Society of the Sacred Heart, her "Little Society," would counteract the influence of the revolutionaries, whose emphasis on reason as the only source of knowledge dominated early 19th century France. St. Madeleine Sophie believed that the education of women would produce a different kind of revolution: the creation of a society founded on a return to spiritual values. Reflecting on the Society's beginnings, she wrote:

As we emerged from the Terror. . . all the hearts which had remained faithful to God—and they arose on all sides once the churches were reopened—were beating as one. And so I came to the primordial idea of our little Society of the Sacred Heart: to gather together young girls to establish a community which, night and day, would adore the Heart of Jesus. . . . And I saw those hundreds, those thousands of adorers as an ideal and universal ostensorium lifted up above the Church. That is it, I said to myself before a lonely tabernacle: we must vow ourselves to the education of youth.

St. Philippine Duchesne brought the Society to the New World in 1818, establishing foundations first in St. Charles, Missouri, and then throughout the Mississippi Valley. Bishop John Dubois of New York and his successor, Bishop John Hughes, had made

repeated requests to Mother Barat to establish a foundation in their diocese. Already financially strapped and her personnel stretched almost to the limit, it was an act of faith that enabled the Mother Foundress to approve opening a school in New York on Houston Street in 1841. This same faith inspired Mother Aloysia Hardey as she expanded the Society's foundations in the New World. In the years ahead, Bishop Hughes would prove to be a good friend to the Religious of the Sacred Heart as the number of their apostolic works increased.

Today, Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich, seems far removed from the struggles of those fledgling houses. The old Steers mansion stretches new wings across its Connecticut hilltop; new generations of students crowd the polished corridors and shout from the playing fields. While programs in italic script continue to be offered, laptop computers and the Internet bring the world and myriad resources into the classroom.

But despite the external changes, the spirit which breathed life into Bleeker Street and 17th Street and Maplehurst pervades Greenwich. The gleaming new science center stands ready for the 21st century. While the sacrifices required to build it were different from those of our predecessors—those founding women who polished wooden classroom floors in a rented house in lower Manhattan—the inspiration remains the same:

When you educate a woman, you educate a family. When you educate a family, you educate the world.

Acknowledgements

This history has been compiled with the help of many people. The School is particularly indebted to Shirley Thormann for her months of research as she pieced together the early days from various sources. Unfortunately, most of the *House Journals* and similar archival material on Bleecker and 17th Streets were destroyed in the Manhattanville fire of 1888. The following have contributed generously of their time and talents:

Victoria Taylor Allen

Ann Conroy, RSCJ

Bea Dinger

Elizabeth Betts Leckie '65

Cora McLaughlin, RSCJ '29

Joan Magnetti, RSCJ

Marilyn Myers

Valerie Moore O'Keefe '61

Stephanie Beaudoin Piper '65

Shirley Thormann

Sources

Alumnae Interviews

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The Greenwich-Maplehurst Archives at Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich, Connecticut

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Graphic Design: Adams Associates, Paoli, PA

I have often said that Madame Hardey will hold the first place of American women in our Church history. Beside her material and visible achievements, what is most striking about her is the extraordinary affection she inspired in the members of her community....Mother Hardey's life will be the history of your community....Erect in your own characters a monument to her glory.

Very Rev. Robert Fulton, S.J. Provincial of the Jesuits to the Superior at Manhattanville upon Mother Hardey's death in 1886

The Foundation

To appreciate the scope of the history of Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich, it is important to begin with the story of the Society's first New York foundation.

New York in 1841 was a city of 300,000 people, nearly half of them immigrants. The promise of construction work in America's burgeoning urban areas had attracted waves of laborers from abroad, particularly from Ireland. For the most part, these new arrivals were poor and they were Catholic.

As newcomers to largely Protestant New York City, Catholics faced suspicion and prejudice. According to the *History of the Catholic Church in New York*, published in 1905,

The great principle of toleration was to be tested and the Catholics were rejected by common hate as the victims of this test. They had been endured when few and helpless. . . . Now they were looked upon with distrust and hatred, because their numbers increased by immigration.

Public education was purportedly nondenominational, but education and religious values were, nevertheless,

inextricably interwoven. The Public School Society (1826), successor to the Free School Society, was challenged first by different Protestant denominations and finally by the Catholic Church in 1840. This latter challenge initiated one of the more bitter disagreements in American educational history. From the Catholic perspective, the Public School Society failed to acknowledge that what was presented as "nondenominational" was in fact "sectless Protestantism." Texts were replete with slurs against Catholicism as well as misstatements with respect to Catholic belief.

New York's Bishop John Dubois had been cautious and diplomatic with the Public School Society, but Bishop John Hughes, his successor, was made of different cloth. Newspaper articles, public debates and legislative meetings provided widespread airing of the issue. As a result of these interchanges, the creation and expansion of Catholic schools became a priority on the agenda of the diocese.

Bishop Dubois had petitioned Mother Barat to open a school in New York in 1827, but at that time



Sent by St. Madeleine Sophie, St. Philippine Duchesne brought the Society to the New World in 1818. She established foundations in Missouri and Louisiana, accepted and trained the first Americans, including Aloysia Hardey, to join the Society, and sent her nuns to new foundations in the United States.

Site of the first school of the Society of the Sacred Heart in New York City at 412 Houston Street.



she was unable to comply. The first Catholic academy established in New York City was founded by the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsberg, Maryland, in 1829. Twelve years later in 1841, Bishop Hughes prevailed upon Mother Barat to open an academy to educate Catholic girls of the wealthier class who had been attending the sectarian “select” schools.

At this time, New York City’s population was centered in lower Manhattan. The City’s water supply was poor, as were its fire protection and police. Carts, wagons and carriages traveled the cobblestone streets and sailing vessels filled the harbor.

It was to this young metropolis that Mother Elizabeth Galitzen arrived from France in 1841, accompanied by her little band of Religious. Mother Galitzen was the Visitatrix or “official visitor” of Mother Barat to the American Houses. What must it have been like for the newly arrived as they disembarked in secular dress, the attire deemed necessary due to the prevailing religious climate?

It is known from the U.S. archives of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis that a residence was not immediately available.

The Sacred Heart nuns resided with the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsberg at their convent across from St. Peter’s on Barclay Street until they could occupy 412 Houston Street. Arriving with Mother Galitzen, the Visitatrix, were Mothers Catherine Thiefry and Johanna Shannon. Within a short time came Mothers Aloysia Hardey and Ellen Hogan from St. Michael’s, Louisiana, and Mother Adeline Boilvin from St. Louis, accompanied by Sister Gallien and Delphine Pratt, a coadjutrix postulant. By July, the Religious were in their own dwelling with Mother Hardey, herself, having “washed the stairs and laid the carpets, all but single-handed in the summer heat.”

MOTHER HARDEY

Mother Hardey, Mistress General of Houston Street, was a graduate of the Sacred Heart School at Grand Coteau, Louisiana. She had entered the Society at age 15 and had served at St. Michael’s on the Mississippi as teacher, Mistress General and Superior before coming to New York.

Sister Cora McLaughlin’s brief autobiographical sketch of Mother Hardey presents an extraordinary woman, who was “the heart and soul



When they first arrived in this country, the Sacred Heart nuns resided for a short time with the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsberg at their convent across from St. Peter’s on Barclay Street. The building is shown as it is today.





This view dating from the mid-19th century looks south from Union Square which stretches from 14th to 17th Streets. In the years from 1848 to 1855, Sacred Heart moved first from Bleecker Street to 14th Street and finally to 17th Street.

of all the apostolic work, the inspiration and guide for the young Religious.” She was a leader who, under the guidance of Archbishop Hughes and St. Madeleine Sophie, established devotion to the Sacred Heart and developed a strong educational system based on a plan of studies begun in France earlier in the century.

Under the direction of St. Madeleine Sophie, Mother Hardey established schools in Canada, the eastern United States and Cuba. The success of these ventures was due to an influx of vocations and to Mother Hardey’s ability to delegate authority. Her business acumen was admired by business leaders and educators in all the cities where convents were established. As an educator, she was so esteemed by the Board of Regents that she was invited to join their ranks.

Tributes at the time of her death spoke of Mother Hardey’s rare gifts, both as a leader and a Religious:

She had the gift of making authority lovable, and where she ruled, the wise and virtuous wished she might always rule. . . . No one ever left her presence without being made braver and better.

An 1865 New York newspaper

summed up her accomplishments:

Few persons have been more instrumental under the blessing of God than Madame Hardey, in propagating conventual life and conventual education in America. When Catholic history comes to gather up the material for our period, a conspicuous chapter will recount the works of Mother Hardey and her convents.

HOUSTON STREET

Mother Hardey, the Mistress General, opened the first Sacred Heart School in New York on September 17, 1841. Our Lady of Sorrows was selected as Patroness of the foundation. Bishop Hughes blessed the building and then went about the diocese helping to find pupils for the new school. For the first six weeks, Mother Hardey had only twelve registrants of whom the first to be enrolled was Rosine Parmentier. By December 1841, forty-six pupils were enrolled. The entry in the 1841 *House Journal* for Christmas records:

We did not have the consolation of midnight Mass, as his Lordship thought it would have a bad effect on this very Protestant city. That was a real sacrifice which we have offered to the Heart of Jesus, happy if it will obtain the grace that we ask



Mother Hardey, Assistant General, Society of the Sacred Heart; Superior Vicar, Eastern U.S.; Superior, Bleecker Street and Manhattanville, founded 25 schools from Halifax to Cuba. While thinking of the future, she kept the balance between tradition and innovation.

Lower Manhattan in 1876. By this time, the streets around the 17th Street Academy were changing from being mostly residential to being mixed use neighborhoods.



of Him so intensely, that He may bring truly Christian sentiments into the hearts of our children. These young people have great enthusiasm for their studies but they are very cold towards God. . . .

The sodality of the Blessed Virgin was established that December for the students, and the Congregation of the Children of Mary received its first group of ladies on the eighth of December. As May arrived, Mother Hardey and her charges set up an altar to Our Lady so that devotions could be held for Mary's month. Bishop Hughes was so taken by the ceremony that he told what he had witnessed throughout his diocese. Parish priests, following the example of their Bishop, initiated spiritual devotions in May for all of the Catholic churches in New York City.

By 1843, the Houston Street Academy was becoming too small for the sixty children now enrolled, one half of whom were boarders. Space was also needed for a Free School, which Mother Hardey wanted to establish. Next to each academy, at which the students paid fees, the Society traditionally established a school for the neighborhood children who were unable to pay. In

addition to needing classrooms and teachers, there were also the other apostolic activities such as retreat work and sodalities to be carried on.

Mother Hardey, conscious of the power of the living witness and the influence Mother Eugenie Aude had had on her own life, did not hesitate to look for new religious workers among her charges at Houston Street. One of those was Sarah Jones, a great grand-daughter of Alexander Hamilton and a convert to Catholicism, who entered the Society of the Sacred Heart at age 20 after a year under Mother Hardey's special guidance. She maintained a close association with Mother Hardey over the years as she served as Mistress of Studies, Mistress of Novices and local Superior before becoming a much loved and respected Superior Vicar. During Mother Jones' tenure, five houses would be founded in the Eastern Vicariate, among them Madison Avenue which was the foundation of the present school on 91st Street. Just as Mother Aude had been the mentor of Mother Hardey, so Mother Hardey was for Mother Jones.

The political climate of New York City became increasingly agi-



In 1844, worried about threats on Catholic schools and churches, Bishop Hughes went to City Hall to appeal to the Mayor for help in avoiding a riot.

tated while the “nativists” (American descendants of Anglo-Saxon Protestants) began rioting in Boston and Philadelphia. In 1844, there were attacks on convents, Catholic schools and churches in those cities. Bishop Hughes was alerted that there would be problems within the New York Diocese as well. Believing that his counterparts in the other cities had been too deferential and conciliatory to local government, he decided to take a different approach. The Bishop went to City Hall, then controlled by a “nativist” mayor as a result of recent elections. He informed the retiring Mayor that dangerous situations could develop if the “nativists” started a riot or attacked Catholic property. “If any Catholic Church is burned here, New York will be a Moscow,” Hughes stated.

The Sons of St. Patrick stood guard within the Cathedral, around the corner from the Sacred Heart Convent, ready to protect life and property. Mother Hardey describes the event in a letter to Mother Barat:

Several parents have removed their children, others left them for our security. For several nights we were prepared to leave in case of attack, but matters did not reach

this point. . . . The general opinion is that we would only have been exposed because of our proximity to the cathedral. . . . I must now tell you, my venerated Mother, that I experienced not even one moment of fear; I thought our Lord would protect us since we protected him.

Mother Hardey’s desire to expand her activities, along with the movement of commerce northward, prompted a letter to Mother Barat in May of 1844 asking for funds to move the boarding school:

As long as we have to pay rent in the amount of 13,000 francs each year, we would only vegetate aside from the fact that our state of health is adversely affected here during the summer and our boarding school has a quarter fewer students between May 1st and October 1st. Ten students left us the first of this month.

Receiving approval from Mother Barat for the move, Mother Hardey began a Novena to St. Francis Regis, a favorite of Mother Duchesne. Her prayers were answered and property was acquired in Ravenswood, in the village of Astoria, Queens. The “Pensionat,” or boarding school, was first moved to Astoria in 1844, then to Manhattanville in 1847. The



St. Patrick’s Cathedral, around the corner from the Sacred Heart Convent on Houston Street, offered protection to the nuns in the event of trouble from anti-Catholic activists.

This was probably the house at the corner of Bleecker and Laurens Streets where the story of Greenwich actually began in 1848.



Convent on Houston Street remained a day school or City House—the term used to distinguish between boarding and day schools. Having long desired to open a Free School, Mother Hardey was able to do so in the space vacated by the boarders.

In April of 1845, City House moved from Houston Street to 114 Bleecker Street, where it stayed until its closure in the summer of 1847. Bishop Hughes then entreated Mother Hardey to reopen the day school. In a letter to Mother Barat in 1847, Bishop Hughes gives the following assessment of the Society's place in his diocese:

... the Community has been all that my heart could wish. That they have already done much for the good of religion, and are destined with God's blessing to do still more. ... At all events, I look upon myself as having, so far as depends on me, adopted your Community as the first school for Catholic education in this diocese ... for I consider myself bound to see that your house shall not go down while I am able to sustain it and that in any event we shall stand or fall together.

BLEECKER STREET

With Mother Barat's agree-

ment, in 1848 another house was rented at the corner of Bleecker and Laurens Streets. It is in this house at 135 Bleecker Street, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, that the story of Greenwich really begins.

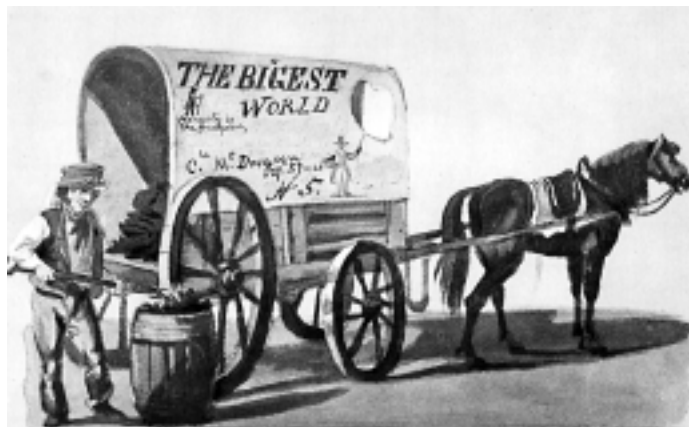
The new day school of 60 pupils was placed in the hands of Mother Sarah Jones who had recently completed the noviceship. Mother Hardey was Superior of the Community. Since the new day school and the boarding school in Astoria had the same Superior, separate *House Journals* were not kept, and all records were kept at Manhattanville, which was Mother Hardey's residence. Much of the material relating to this period was lost in the Manhattanville fire of 1888.

The New York City House took day students under thirteen years of age who would go on to boarding school upon completing their studies. The tuition was \$50 annually. According to the *Catholic Almanac* of 1844, the tuition of \$12.50, paid quarterly in advance, covered courses in religion, English and English literature, philosophy, history, geography, mathematics, needlework and dressmaking, domestic economy, and instruction



St. Madeleine Sophie Barat founded the Society of the Sacred Heart in France in 1800 and guided its expansion until her death. She authorized the foundation at Bleecker Street in 1848. Greenwich rejoices in this direct link to her.





Always short of funds, Mother Hardey was happy to receive a ride from a friendly butcher for her frequent trips between Manhattanville and Bleecker Street. The wagon looked something like this horse-drawn delivery cart.

in the French language. There was a surcharge of \$10 a quarter for music and the use of an instrument and a similar fee for drawing and painting. The Children of Mary had their meetings at City House, since Bleecker Street was the center for any member living in New York City. Mother Jones wrote about Bleecker Street:

We were very poor in New York; we had no regular beds and could not afford fuel for fires except in the classrooms where at night we stretched out on our mattresses. When Mother Hardey came to visit us she was no better lodged than we were. . . .

Not only were economies made with respect to beds and fuel, but Mother Hardey, in her trips between Manhattanville and Bleecker Street, often made use of “the butcher’s wagon” since she could not afford a more conventional mode of transportation. One might imagine Mother Hardey in religious garb with her veil floating behind, but this was not the case. Whenever the Religious stepped outside the convent, they wore secular dress. It was not until the latter part of the century that this practice changed.

The Religious lived poverty

daily. Mother Hardey was ever short of funds for her schools, yet she was expected to send an annual tithe to the Mother House in Paris. Founding and running schools was not for the faint of heart!

By 1851, City House had an enrollment of eighty pupils, and once again there was movement northward, this time to 64 West 14th Street. Parochial work was begun in the basement of the Church of St. Francis Xavier and at the same time the Religious continued to serve the needs of the Academy. The *Journal* recorded, “About 1,000 souls are already receiving graces from the Heart of Jesus through this house.” The number of persons served included those in the Academy, the parish school, the night school and the Sunday school. According to the records, in addition to the eighty students in the Academy, there were more than six hundred in the parish school, seventy working girls in the night school and approximately one hundred and fifty children in the Sunday school. There was also religious instruction for adult women and sodality work.

Mother Hardey, realizing that larger facilities would be required,

By 1851 the School had outgrown its space on Bleecker Street and moved north again. For a short time it occupied the basement of the Church of St. Francis Xavier next to the college on 16th Street.



purchased property on 17th Street. The purchase was not applauded by the neighbors who were unhappy to have a convent in their midst. Problems began to appear daily. Foremost among them was the failure of the bank where Mother Hardey had deposited her funds for the first payments. She appealed to Mother Barat, who replied:

support of the Society. . . . Let all apply themselves lovingly to prayer. . . . Let them place their happiness as much as possible in this holy exercise.

(Summary of the Constitutions and Rules of the Society of Sacred Heart)



During the 1850s, seventy working girls pursued their studies at the night school.

Your letter dear Mother and daughter has caused me much anxiety. I am grieved to learn of the state of your finances, and deep in my solicitude in regard to your present embarrassment. But what is to be done since we are unable to assist you?

Mother Hardey turned to “Him whose help never fails.” As each payment approached, money appeared either as a gift or in repayment of old debts.

For those who live in today’s world, it may seem foolhardy or naive to have embarked on such a financial undertaking with so little material security. For Mother Hardey and the Religious of the Sacred Heart, who were doing God’s work, there was total faith in the power of prayer.

Let all be thoroughly convinced that prayer is the foundation and

Your Sacred Heart education is a way of life which calls you to change and, like Jesus, grow in “wisdom, age and grace.”

Wherever you go, whatever road you may travel, you will always find a home at the Sacred Heart. Your relationships will endure and transcend all confines of time and space because they are founded on faith, hope and love. . . .

*Life at the Sacred Heart
(Rev. 1985)*

Coming of Age

The foundation which had so irritated the neighbors in its developing stages was to be hailed with “elaborate thanks” for giving dignity to the neighborhood. The four-story building on 17th Street opened in March of 1855. The *Annual Letter* gives this account:

The house was completely finished and paid for in November. It cost 135,000 francs! It is very large, well built and perfectly arranged. It has four stories, a Gothic facade and is made of brownstone. A cross and a seal of the Society are over the front door, sculpted in stone. The rooms are large and airy. In all, the entire house can easily hold 700 people.

The Religious of the Sacred Heart remained at 49 West 17th Street for the next fifty years until the move in 1905 to the Ogden Estate at 174th Street and University Avenue in the borough of the Bronx.

FOLLOWING THE TREND

The move northward followed the same pattern as that of many other New Yorkers as commerce and

business expanded. By the late 1850s, New York City was the nation’s commercial capital. Journalism, publishing and advertising were advancing by leaps and bounds. A Philharmonic Society had been established in 1842, as well as an Academy of Music. In 1853, New York held its first World’s Fair and the City received permission from the State to buy the property that became Central Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux. Horse cars or horse drawn vehicles that ran on tracks would soon be jamming the transportation arteries. The “commuter,” a new type of New Yorker, would emerge as the well-off businessman worked downtown and lived uptown. The City also witnessed a severe business slump in 1857 which caused thousands to become unemployed. This period also saw the rise of Tammany Hall, whose name would become synonymous with Democratic politics and, ultimately, political corruption.



In March of 1855, following the northward direction of the City’s businesses as well as its homes, the School moved to a four-story building at 49 West 17th Street, where it was to stay for the next fifty years.

By the late 1850s New York City had become the country's commercial capital. Printing, advertising, retailing and a limitless variety of other business were springing up and expanding.



As the metropolis was experiencing its growing pains, Mother Juliana Pardow, the first Superior at 17th Street, was reorganizing the Day School, the parish school, the sodalities and other apostolic works. *The Catholic Almanac* of 1856 contained information relating to the “Day School Conducted by the Ladies of the Sacred Heart,” indicating the tuition to be still \$12.50 per quarter with eighty-six pupils and fifteen Religious.

Under Mother Pardow's leadership, the activities at 17th Street were expanding rapidly. The Children of Mary saw a yearly increase in membership and expanded their good works to include visitations to the poor and to those in hospitals as well as to prison inmates. This congregation, whose primary focus was directed toward spiritual enhancement, also established libraries, endowed scholarships for future missionaries, and sewed vestments and altar linens for needy parishes. Some of its members, who were of Cuban background, asked Reverend Mother Irene Robinson to open the Convent Chapel on Sundays to a Spanish congregation. The proper ecclesiastical authorizations were obtained,

and on December 8, 1878, the Spanish congregation assisted for the first time at Mass in the Convent Chapel and “heard an eloquent sermon in their mother tongue”— a first in New York City.

The varied activities included the Little Friends of the Sacred Heart (children who attended religious instruction and had recreation at the School), the Consolers of Mary (young women who worked as domestics, were employed in stores or offices or worked at home), and the Sodality of St. Anne (married women). The Tabernacle Society of the Sacred Heart, which was organized in 1874, was the special work of the Children of Mary connected with 17th Street.

The parochial school was directed by Mother Cresence Moser. She was responsible for some five hundred pupils and seven teachers. When the school outgrew its space in the Convent, property was purchased on 18th Street. The cost was to have been paid by the Church of St. Francis Xavier run by the Jesuits, but since they were unable to raise the funds, the expenditure was borne by the Society of the Sacred Heart. The



Rev. Mother Janet Erskine Stuart, sixth Superior General of the Society of the Sacred Heart, was widely recognized as an outstanding educator. Her writings continue to influence educators today.

Sacred Heart nuns would continue to run the parish school until the end of the century.

PLAN OF STUDIES

The education offered at a Sacred Heart academy was one geared to the training of the mind, heart and will. It was an education that Mother Grace Dammann, a former Mistress General of Maplehurst and later president of Manhattanville College, in a 1933 address to the students characterized as “a growing thing, a living thing, not a finished thing . . . but a continuum”

Mother Janet Stuart, an English RSCJ, was one of the leading educators of her time and served as Superior General of the Society of the Sacred Heart (1911-1914). She spoke of the education imparted by the Society as one which “is not meant to turn the children out small and finished, but seriously begun on a wide basis.”

In the early years of the Society, prior to the adoption of *The Plan of Studies*, the following paragraph from *The Constitutions* reflects an important criterion for the Society’s educational focus:

Let religion be at once the foundation and the crowning point of the education they intend to give and consequently the chief subject taught. . . .

A *Society of the Sacred Heart Plan of Studies* was adopted for use throughout the Society in 1820 with prescribed classes, sequence of courses, and teaching methods. The *Plan* was evaluated periodically and revised or expanded in light of educational developments and world conditions of the time. The last *Plan* to which Mother Barat contributed was that of 1852. Its first paragraph stated:

In the revision of this Plan experience has been consulted and, without scorning old methods and rejecting new ones, there has been drawn from both the one and the other whatever seemed to favor true intellectual development. . . .

Mother Barat, aware of the “living” quality of Sacred Heart



Looking down Nassau Street toward the crowded financial district in the early 1900s just about the time that Sacred Heart was moving from 17th Street to “Maplehurst” at 174th Street and University Avenue.

This group of students posed for a graduation picture in 1895 while the School was still on 17th Street.



education, is cited as saying, “It shows weakness of mind to hold too much to the beaten track through fear of innovation.” She understood that if her educational system were to remain alive and healthy it would have to be monitored. And so the *Plan* of 1852 was modified in 1869. This new edition then remained virtually unchanged for some thirty-five years.

Mother Mabel Digby, Superior General, held a Council of Studies at Manhattanville in 1899, which led to the restructuring of the educational program in America. She commented: “We take the *Plan of Studies* as our foundation, to give us lines and principles. But its elasticity allows us to adapt itself to the needs of different countries.”

In order to maintain standards among the different American schools as the new syllabus developed, “comprehensive inter-vicariate” examinations were established for the Second and First Classes. If the students performed adequately on these tests,

they gained entry to the Superior Class. Performing well in the Superior Class enabled students to graduate without further formal testing. However, according to Mother Louise Callan, in *The Society of the Sacred Heart in North America*, if one wanted to finish with honor, local examinations were required in history, literature, philosophy, religion and natural sciences or mathematics. Superior, First and Second Classes refer to the last three years of academic study at the academy.

When the Society sought secular accreditation for its schools, authorities determined that Sacred Heart graduates had already received an education equivalent to the first two years of college.

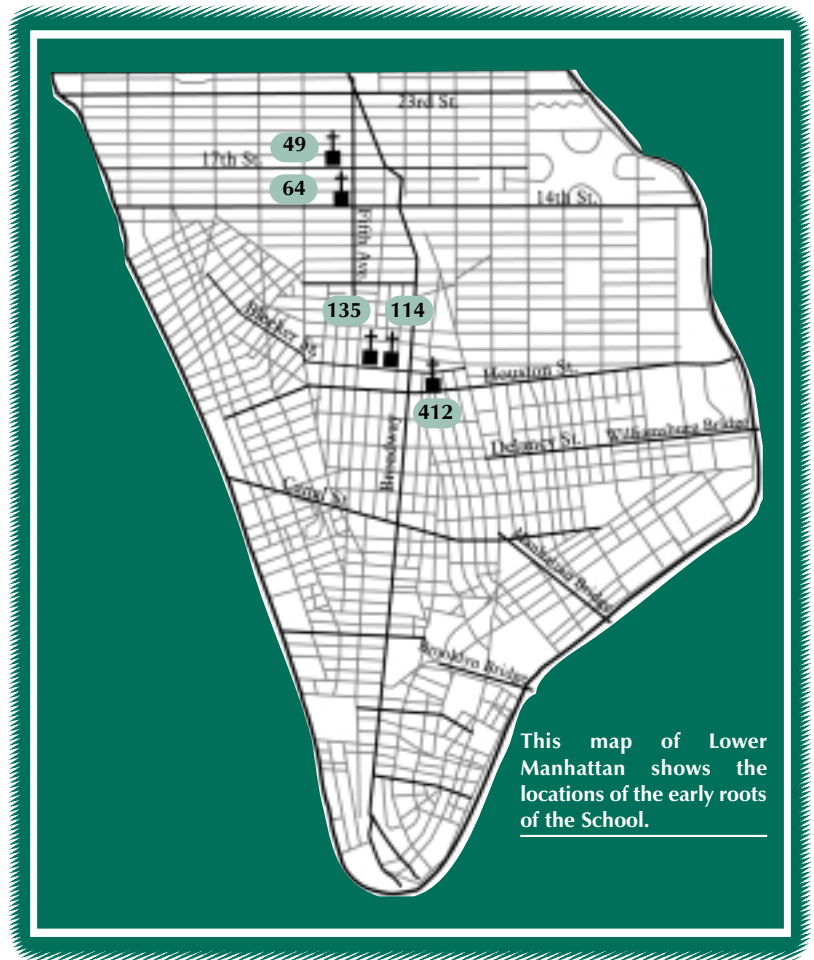
Teachers vowed to the education of youth provided the inspiration for academic excellence. Mother Hardey reminded her Religious that “you must yourselves



Fifth Avenue at 65th Street. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the city continued its northward expansion. The area around Sacred Heart on 17th Street became increasingly commercial and more and more students lived north of 42nd Street. Another relocation would soon be necessary.

love study if you wish to give your children a love of it. We cannot impart what we do not possess.”

Despite changes in the *Plan of Studies* and the development of new teaching techniques, the fundamentals of a Sacred Heart education remained unchanged. Devotion to the Sacred Heart, fidelity to Saint Madeleine Sophie’s commitment to the formation and development of each “single child,” and the fostering of internationality were the firm foundations on which future generations would build.



It is one of the basic characteristics of the education given at Sacred Heart that it has its roots and its fruitage in “Eternity.” This establishes the special form and color, the mass and the line of its development in “Time.” It is a related thing, not something isolated apart from the whole of life or from life in its wholeness—human and divine.

Mother Grace Dammann, RSCJ (1933)

A New Century—A New Location

As the new century approached, New York City continued to expand upward—uptown and skyward. The berthing of transatlantic steamers along the Hudson, the multiplication of shops and the manufacturing

the first subways opened. Millionaires, who had amassed fortunes in the latter half of the nineteenth century, had built showplaces along Fifth Avenue and would donate large sums of money for the benefit of the public.

The commercialization of the area around 17th Street prompted another move north. “Maplehurst,” a gray stone villa at 174th Street and University Avenue, was acquired in 1905. The house was designed by Calvert Vaux and was described in the *Annual Letters of 1905* as follows:

... a most lovely site on a hill so surrounded that our beautiful eleven-acre park is as private as if it were situated far out in the country and yet the car line is but a few steps away.

One of the first endeavors of the Children of Mary was to fund and build a chapel at the new site. The cornerstone was laid in 1907 and Archbishop John Farley gave the blessing. The obvious connections with the former chapel at 17th Street were noted in the altar, the oak paneling, the choir stalls and benches, as well as the sanctu-



New York City's rapid growth and the increasing commercialization of 17th Street prompted the move north in 1905 to “Maplehurst,” a gray stone villa at 174th Street and University Avenue.

expansion all contributed to the changing face of the metropolis. New buildings were erected—Carnegie Hall, Madison Square Garden, the new New York Stock Exchange and the New York Public Library on Forty-Second Street. Automobiles began to appear and





CHILDREN OF MARY 1920s. In the words of Sister Frances Cunningham, RSCJ, Maplehurst 1926, "The moral training was strengthened by the sodalities. Only students in their final year at school could ask to be admitted to the Children of Mary."

ary furnishings which were brought to Maplehurst. Sister Frances Cunningham, RSCJ (Maplehurst 1917-1926) refers to the "visible linkage" of the tabernacle door which was brought from 17th Street to Maplehurst and is now at Greenwich: "On it, among other names, was inscribed my mother's maiden name, Blanche A. Donnelly. Once a year, I was allowed to see the door."

LIFE AT MAPLEHURST

Sister Cunningham's recollections of her student years at Maplehurst speak of it as "a second home," and she refers to the nuns as "a part of our family." The love of the Sacred Heart was an integral part in her life at Maplehurst and "the moral training was strengthened by the sodalities." She belonged successively to the Infant Jesus Sodality, the Aloysia, and the Children of Mary. Organizations for adults which met at the Convent included the Tabernacle Society and the Little Friends of the Sacred Heart. While the adult group of the Children of Mary met at Maplehurst, they continued to participate in Barat Settlement House activities. In closing, Sister Cunningham wrote:

To see the results of a Sacred Heart education, we need only to observe many of our alumnae who

are outstanding leaders in the Church and in various walks of life. The driving force in their lives must come from their deep prayer life and devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Another Maplehurst alumna, Sister Mary Byles, RSCJ (1923-1930) recounted some vignettes from her early days in the School:

We wore blue uniforms with box pleats and white collars, serge in winter, seersucker or gabardine in spring and fall. Black lisle stockings and black loafers or oxfords. We also had white uniforms made to the same pattern for big feasts.

The first event remembered by Sister Byles was the "Reading of the Rule," during the first week of school. (This practice continued until the 1960s.) The Mistress General read it, making comments as she went, while the assembled school paid close attention.

The Maplehurst community included a number of memorable Religious whose names have become part of Sacred Heart history.

Mother Imogene Ryan, Mistress General from 1919 to 1934, was one such figure. "Mother Ryan had tremendous influence on us," wrote an alumna of that period. "She was very business-like. You'd pass her office in the morning and



During the 1920s basketball became a popular sport at Maplehurst.



Mimi Marchev Connolly '44, remembers being interviewed in the parlor, shown above left, by the "formidable" Mother Helen Bourke, Mistress General". . . . My new hat kept slipping off my head. . . . My mother nervously scolded me and apologized for how I looked."

(Above right) The study hall.



she would have *The New York Times* spread out on her desk, checking out what was happening in the world. She brought in very good lecturers for us."

Another alumna wrote:

All of the hundreds of pupils who have attended Maplehurst since 1920 can bear testimony to Mother Ryan's unfailing interest in our welfare, her thoughtfulness, her sincerity, and her very real influence on the formation of our characters. Her interest in us did not stop when we left school.

Mother Helen Bourke, Mistress General of Maplehurst from 1940-45, continued in that post at Greenwich until 1954. Mimi Marchev Connolly, class of 1944, recalled her first encounter with the formidable headmistress:

I was interviewed by Mother Bourke in the parlor of the Gothic mansion on University Avenue. My new hat kept slipping off my head. My mother nervously scolded me and kept apologizing for how I looked. I put my hand on her arm and said, "Mother, they are not going to judge me on my hair." I could feel the interest of the nun as she observed this interaction. After a while, Mother Bourke left to bring Reverend

Mother Benziger into the parlor to make the final decision. I was accepted after all and my mother was thrilled.

Connolly felt Mother Bourke was also a gifted teacher.

She had many advanced ideas for her time . . . the idea of being an instrument of God's work has stayed with me. She taught Christian marriage, which formed the foundation of my understanding of marriage, something I practice after 50 years.

A beloved Superior was Reverend Mother Rosalie Hill. An alumnae bulletin from 1927 notes her departure with sadness:

News that Reverend Mother Hill was to leave Maplehurst spread consternation and sorrow to the ranks of the alumnae, as she had greatly endeared herself to her flock by numberless acts of gracious thoughtfulness and tenderest sympathy. The alumnae did not quite see how they could go on without her gentle guidance.

Excerpts from *Annual Letters, House Journals*, the *Maplehurst Newsletter* and interviews with alumnae offer vignettes of forty years at the "gray stone villa" on University Avenue.



The library at Maplehurst. "You learned to study. I think the most important gifts were real study and a living of faith. It didn't end at three p.m., and it didn't end at graduation, it was a gift for life." (Margaret Mary Sheehan '40)



“. . . a most lovely site on a hill . . . our beautiful eleven-acre park is as private as if it were situated far out in the country and yet the car line is but a few steps away.”

Helen Howe Ritzel, class of 1923, described a congé held on the Mother General’s feast. The entertainment included that favorite Sacred Heart game, cache-cache:

From nine until eleven, we searched for four girls who were hidden. Lillian Cary’s band of girls was the first to find anyone, and they found Rosita Mora sitting in Reverend Mother’s parlor, dressed as a priest. Next, Lillian Tierney was found in the telephone room dressed as an old lady, and after much vain search around the grounds and in the basement of the house, Virginia Frederick was found in Mother Ryan’s room at the top of the closet.

A *Newsletter* from 1926 noted that the School had celebrated the canonization of St. Madeleine Sophie and the Golden Jubilee of Mother Blanche Alden. Mother Alden was a direct descendant of John Alden of Plymouth and had given many years of service at both 17th Street and Maplehurst.

The Depression left its mark on the School. Enrollment was down, according to the *House Journal* of 1932. “School opened with only 95 pupils. . . . Many were received at a great reduction or

gratis.” Jean Stancliffe, class of 1939, remembered another sign of the times: “The nuns must have been feeding the men who were unemployed. I can remember sitting in class and seeing a bread line. Those men were fed every day.”

Internationality had always been a key element in Sacred Heart education. St. Madeleine Sophie, when sending out missionaries, would try to include RSCJs of different nationalities, as she wanted the students to be “world minded.” At Maplehurst, where students and teachers from other countries had always been welcome, World War II focused student attention on the hardships of those overseas. The *House Journal* for March 10, 1943, notes:

The children had sacrificed enough money to buy a chaplain’s kit which they presented to Reverend Mother. . . . Over two hundred dollars sacrifice money bought missals and New Testaments for the soldiers.



Maplehurst at 174th Street and University Avenue, 1905-1945.



Our 1928 Basketball team.

Present-day society will be saved by education, and other means are almost useless.

St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, Conference given in 1850

To Greenwich

New York City's decision to expand the entrance to the George Washington Bridge, practically in Maplehurst's front yard, prompted a search for a new home in the late 1930s. Once again the School moved north. In December of 1942, the former Steers estate, known as



Overlook Farm and consisting of 180 acres on King Street in Greenwich, Connecticut, was purchased from Mrs. Paul Block. The School would not open at the new property until 1945, but the Religious

from Maplehurst used the house as a summer community from 1943 to 1945. The *House Journal* of 1943 described conditions:

The place was very dirty, the plumbing was not in very good shape, and it almost looked as though tramps had lived in the house during the winter. The

grounds were beautiful but much overgrown, as were the paths from the house down to the Byram River.

In August 1945, the move began in earnest. The *House Journal* recorded the activity:

The vans of furniture from Maplehurst began to arrive. Almost all the school desks and chairs were placed in the rooms that will be classrooms. The glass enclosed porch to the extreme left as you come in the front door has been arranged as a study hall with sixty-seven desks. Mothers Louise Hamilton, Vicariate Treasurer, and Margaret O'Rourke, Mistress of Studies from Kenwood, came to direct the movers. They returned to Maplehurst after supper.

From the *Journal* of August 8:

Another moving day! Five vans were unloaded by nine p.m. The contents of the last two were left in the barn until the new building or buildings are finished.

On August 27, 1945, the first of the permanent community left Maplehurst for Greenwich and the Blessed Sacrament came from Noroton in the afternoon. Reverend



St. Michael's, the Army surplus Quonset hut which served as the temporary gym from 1945 to 1990.

Mother Gertrude Bodkin, the Superior Vicar, closed Maplehurst and on September 12, along with five Religious, completed the Greenwich community. The analyst relates:

So the small chapel was made ready; master bedrooms became classrooms, floors were polished, and ninety-eight children who shared the energetic spirit of the Religious were welcomed on the appointed day. Only sixteen of them were weekly boarders who occupied a room on the third floor that served as the dormitory until a cottage, the first of two that were built, was ready.

Some remembrances of Maplehurst made the journey to Connecticut. The chapel pews, the statue of St. Michael the Archangel, the standing crucifix and the tabernacle doors, so fondly remembered by Mother Cunningham, found a new home at Greenwich. Mother Helen Bourke, Mistress General at Maplehurst, continued in that position in the new home until she was replaced by Mother Elizabeth McCormack in 1954.

In May of 1948, a Centenary Celebration of the foundation on Bleecker Street was held at Greenwich in the pouring rain. The

commentary describes the festivities of the day and the gifts received. Nearly three hundred guests were present for benediction which took place in the quonset hut or "St. Michael's." This building served as a "temporary" gymnasium until the new building was dedicated in 1990.

Alumnae of the 1950s recall a school life centered in the old mansion. Sister Kaye Cherry, RSCJ, class of 1953, described the study hall:

In those days, what is now the parlor was the library . . . the entire area now taken up by admissions was the study hall. We students, sixty strong at table-like desks with lids, were meant to keep strict silence for study, but when we wanted to have a discreet, and illegal conversation with a neighbor, we raised the tops of the desks and quietly conversed behind them until the mistress in charge caught on and called out names.

Sister Cherry also remembered some faculty members who made an impression:

Mother Elizabeth McCormack was the best English teacher I ever had. One night in Duchesne, I, a boarder on my way to bed, said to her in all earnestness, "I love Henry V," meaning the play. She responded, "He speaks well of you, too, dear."



The chapel benches were moved from 17th Street to Maplehurst and eventually to Greenwich.



The student dining room was added in 1960 and enlarged in 1999.

The May Crowning of Mary took place on the terrace between the house and the outdoor pool in the 1950s. This terrace and the bathhouses gave way to the new wing in 1960 and the pool was enclosed.



When I was one of those impossibly poor hockey players running around in a knee-length red tunic, a young, serious Ethel Skakel (later Ethel Kennedy) was our teacher for a month or so.

Enrollment rose steadily during the 1950s. In 1958, Sister Margaret Brown, RSCJ became the Mistress General and led the School through a much needed expansion. By 1959, with two hundred and seventy-one students and eighty-nine weekly boarders, the nuns decided it was time to expand. Plans were made for a new wing and an enlarged chapel. The cornerstone was laid on May 22, 1960.

In November, Bishop Lawrence Sheehan of Bridgeport came to bless the completed work. Improvements included:

. . . the new modern wing with its three large study halls, large and airy classrooms, library, science laboratory, auditorium and enclosed swimming pool . . . The original building has been so transformed as to include, beside the beautiful enlarged chapel, parlors, dining rooms for guests and lay teachers, children's refectory, community refectory, and a spacious modern kitchen. On the second floor the one-time classrooms are now children's bedrooms; the third floor is cloister. . . .

(Annual Letters, 1960)

Just as at the previous sites, outreach activities continued. Students visited St. Luke's Convalescent Hospital on the adjacent property and patients who were able attended Sunday Mass at the Convent. The

Drawing of the 1960 addition.





Students line the driveway to wave goodbye to Rev. Mother Sabine de Valon, Superior General of the Society of the Sacred Heart, at the end of her 1963 visit to Greenwich.

Children of Mary had their First Friday meetings at Greenwich. Catechism classes were held for children attending public schools, and retreats and Days of Recollection were held for different groups including parents of children in the School. A day camp was held during the month of July for several summers until replaced by one at Manhattanville.

Greenwich, in the early 1960s, still followed the predictable rhythm of life in Sacred Heart convents throughout the world. Traditions like Primes, congés, First Friday processions, Vicariate examinations and Prize Days marked the passing of each school year as they had for more than a century. Elizabeth Betts Leckie, class of 1965, remembers a landmark event of that era:

An outstanding memory that could only belong to Sacred Heart was the visit of Very Reverend Mother Sabine de Valon, Superior General of the Society of the Sacred Heart, in 1963. For weeks we rehearsed the Magnificat and drilled our curtsies to en masse precision for the formal reception the Reverend Mother would receive at King Street. On the day of the visit, we lined the driveway waving little French flags and

shouting, “Vive Notre Très Révérende Mère.”

CHANGES

But while the rituals of the past continued to be cherished, change was in the wind, Elizabeth Leckie said.

I think our class must have been the last to know the School as it had been, virtually unchanged for generations. A year after our graduation, many of the practices—general instruction, white gloves, orals and ribbons—had disappeared. We even had to remember to call all the nuns “sister” not “mother” as in the past.

The Second Vatican Council brought sweeping changes in the liturgy and the structure of religious orders. The Society of the Sacred Heart, a semi-cloistered order whose nuns rarely left their convents, became an uncloistered community with far greater freedom. “This evolution had an inevitable effect on the life of the school,” said Sister Ann Conroy, RSCJ, who was Senior School Surveillante at Greenwich during the 1960s and later returned as Provincial. She further noted:

Formerly, life in our boarding schools mirrored life in the convent. When the latter changed, the



The Oxfords, the Upper School singing group, in the early 1960s.

Sister Mary Louise Jenkins rehearsing Upper School students for a concert in the 1960s.



school routine also had to be modified. In the mid sixties, ranks became a thing of the past, students were allowed to talk on their way to class, and the study hall remained the only area of total silence. Following the directives of Vatican II, the nuns appeared in new habits. Little did we realize that this was the first step towards adopting secular dress as the norm.

The problem facing the School in the '60s was the maintenance of its "raison d'être" in the midst of frenetic change and the challenge to authority throughout the world. All institutions, even those that are "divinely" inspired (religious institutions), are influenced by their total membership. In this case, the membership included not only the Religious of the Sacred Heart and their respective families, but also students, parents, faculty, trustees, advisors and staff. How to manage change, retaining what was "essential" and altering what was "accidental," to use Thomistic parlance, was not an easy task.

For a school steeped in tradition, these were challenging times. In the words of Sister Conroy:

So much was in a state of flux that alumnae were often bewildered by what they were being

asked to accept. There is no question that our explanations were inadequate, and the long-term implications of changes were not always fully considered. Thirty years later, it is gratifying to see that in spite of the rapid rate of change, the spirit of Sacred Heart education remains embedded in the operations.

The political and social changes that were pulling Americans apart were examined in religion and history classes. "Educational Experience Days" in the '70s were special events. These were days when such topics as "Is Justice Just?" were explored. Regular classes were suspended for the day and outside speakers, who were authorities in that particular field, were invited to speak.

Many curricular changes were introduced in the early '70s by the deft and able Mistress of Studies, Sister Marie Lufkin, RSCJ. Parents were invited to evening presentations. More course choice was offered, and students had opportunities to participate in educational activities off-campus such as the Presidential Classroom, Model United Nations and, during Intersession (a week-long period between semesters), to engage in a



Students decorate the windows of the Upper School Core Center (formerly the senior study hall) for Christmas in the 1990s.

myriad of educational offerings from internships in government and business to quilting class within the School.

While there had often been lay music and physical education teachers in the past, the majority of the teachers in Sacred Heart schools were RSCJs. During the 1960s this began to change as enrollments increased, as the disciplines required more specialists than generalists, and as the importance of providing the students with a variety of role models was recognized. The curricular changes of the seventies, the move of many colleges from single sex to coeducational institutions, and the rapidly broadening career opportunities for women underscored the desirability of not only having more lay teachers and staff members but also of obtaining lay advisors in various areas of school management. Lay Advisory Board structures were developed which eventually evolved into duly established Boards of Trustees.

In 1975, the five American provincials issued *The Goals and Criteria of Sacred Heart Schools in the United States*, a statement agreed upon by each of the nine-

teen schools, which was meant to assure the continuance of St. Madeleine Sophie's philosophy of education in each school. These goals and criteria formalized into policy the basics St. Madeleine Sophie had envisioned for Sacred Heart education—a personal and active faith in God; a deep respect for intellectual values; a social awareness which impels to action; the building of community as a Christian value; and personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom. To ensure that these goals are truly at the heart of each institution as the source of inspiration and the touchstone for decision making, a commission was set up—the Network Commission on Goals—with the responsibility to evaluate each school every five years on its fidelity in living the goals. The Commission then reports its findings to the United States Provincial.

LEADERSHIP

The leadership of Greenwich during these crucial decades merits special recognition.

Heading the School from 1962 to 1967, Sister Ursula Kirk, RSCJ met the challenge of leading the



Mrs. Kathy Williams Dunn with her class in front of Barat House in the 1970s.

Lower School children enjoying art class, 1970s.



School through some of the most radical changes in structure, regulations and discipline. Vatican II, coupled with the anti-Vietnam environment, required strong yet sensitive leadership.

Sister Jean Bautz, RSCJ continued to lead Greenwich's response to the shifts within American Catholicism and the wider world. Sister Bautz led the School from 1967 to 1969 and then stayed on as Superior for a year, while Sister Rose Marie Quilter, RSCJ replaced her as headmistress.

Headmistress from 1970 to 1980, Sister Nancy Salisbury, RSCJ had run the Middle School prior to assuming the headship and was well known to students, parents, faculty and staff. Her belief in the one child, for whom St. Madeleine Sophie had founded the Society, was evident throughout her tenure. Commitment to the fullest development of the individual child led to many curricular and extracurricular changes.

Sister Salisbury saw the blue, green and pink ribbons replaced by student governments. The Lily Procession became the annual Mother/ Daughter liturgy, white

gloves and white uniforms for special occasions gave way to "a nice dress" for Prizes. When considering the challenges Sister Salisbury had to meet, one is reminded of a talk Reverend Mother Gertrude Bodkin, one of the great educators of the Society and Superior Vicar of the New York Province, gave to the Associated Alumnae of the Sacred Heart in 1949:

It is not easy to distinguish the immutable from the ephemeral as the Church and a true Catholic spirit teach us to do. Educators have to be on their guard on this point. They have to be very sure of basic principles to be able to adapt them to what seems to be an entirely new world condition. As Mother Stuart says, "We do not do exactly what Mother Foundress did in her day but as she would do NOW if she were in our circumstances."

Sister Salisbury was sure of basic principles and when she left Greenwich for the Convent at 91st Street in New York, she left a school, a community, a family, that knew what it stood for, was experienced in problem-solving and prepared to meet the future.

DIVERSITY

It was during this decade of the 1970s that the School expanded its



The 1966 field hockey team.





Upper School students enjoying a special congé goûter in the 1970s.

long-standing commitment to teach toward racial unity and justice. The Society of the Sacred Heart's history in the United States beginning with St. Philippine Duchesne, had been associated with diversity. In 1938 Mother Grace Dammann, RSCJ, the president of Manhattanville College, in the *Manhattanville Resolves* issued a clarion call to broaden the composition of the student body and to that end secured scholarship monies to implement her intentions at the College. Annually ten percent of Greenwich's tuition income is set aside for financial aid.

One of the students, who came to Greenwich in those years and is today a practicing attorney working to help change the system, related the following in *Horizons*, the alumnae magazine of Greenwich:

I was one of the first black students to attend Sacred Heart. . . . My four years at Sacred Heart were fabulous. I loved school, learning and being surrounded by caring staff. I loved the sense of belonging, the sense of family, the sense of love that I received from Sacred Heart. For a young girl from the ghetto, that was the life jacket that saved me from drowning.

In the mid 1990s Greenwich

added the new position of a full-time Director of Diversity who serves both children of color and the total school population.

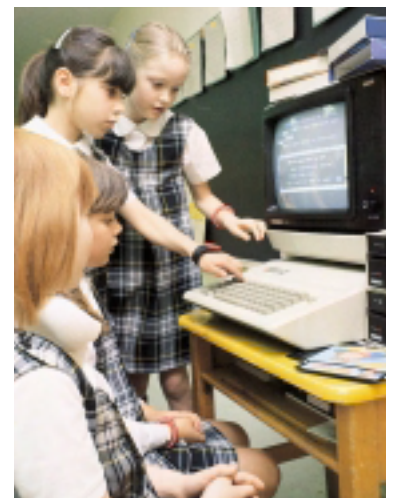
In 1980, Sister Kathleen Conan, RSCJ assumed the responsibilities of headmistress, which she carried until 1990. The challenges she faced were many as she strove to consolidate the changes of the past decade. It was under her leadership, that among other accomplishments, the formal move from a lay Advisory Board to a Board of Trustees was finalized, the academic program was broadened and strengthened, and the second capital campaign in the School's history was launched. The goal of the campaign was to replace St. Michael's, the "temporary" Quonset hut which had served as a gymnasium since 1945. In 1990 after Sister Joan Magnetti, RSCJ became headmistress, the campaign was completed and the gym dedicated.

SPECIAL MEMORIES OF TEACHERS

Every alumna has special memories of a teacher or teachers. Marguerite McGaw's challenging English class and dynamic Joan Maddy's math classes were recalled by some. One remembered Sister



Mrs. Shirley Thormann teaching an Upper School history class in the 1980s.



Lower School students trying out an early computer.

Religious came from Manhattanville to join the Greenwich community for the dedication of the new wing in 1960.



Grace Leslie, RSCJ, the first director of college guidance, for being so patient with her and her essay; another credited her felicity of phrase to Mothers Edna McCaffrey and Helen McClatchy. Sister Patricia Binkert, RSCJ gave another a love of Teilhard de Chardin; and yet another attributed her ability to see the bright side of life to Sister Nancy Boyle, RSCJ, her boarding school director. Peg Melford's exacting and energetic direction led to field hockey and basketball championships in the days prior to leagues being formed. One alumna recalled the fascinat-

ing history classes taught by Shirley Thormann and added, "Mrs. Thormann was a model of willingness to help out wherever she was needed—even to becoming head of the Upper School." Michelle d'Auriac is always a center of grateful past French students when she returns to campus for special events. When a memorial service was held for the inimitable art teacher, Veeps Pomex, the chapel was filled with students and colleagues who shared remembrances of Veeps' kindnesses and her delightful humor. The list of both lay and religious teachers who have had a lasting impact on the lives of their students could go on and on. Suffice to say, these women and men are remembered not only for their interesting teaching but just as importantly because they knew how and when to "be there" for their students.

This is exemplified in the following tribute offered by Carol Madden, class of 1977, and later a teacher and assistant dorm director, to Sister Rosemary Sheehan, RSCJ when she left the Upper School in 1988 after serving as its head for 20 years:

Aspiring thespians entertain the audience in the auditorium during a recent spring Celebration of the Arts.





The farm area as it was when the school moved to Greenwich.

I must confess that as a student I was not a fan of Sister Sheehan. She was part of the administration—an authority figure. I had some difficulty with authority figures. . . . Sister Sheehan challenged us to make decisions we could live with and to choose to act accordingly. She emphasized that we had the ability and responsibility to make choices. When our decisions were not wise, we were not made to feel worthless or evil—we simply were challenged to face what we had done. Sister Sheehan is the only person I know who can silence one hundred and eighty rambunctious teenagers, have them face their wrongs, feel actual remorse, and then start the day with a sense of self-esteem.

Meg Gaillard '91 in an article entitled, “Sacred Heart: What It Has Done for Others—What It Has Done for Me” in *Horizons*, speaks of her experiences at the School and offers the following comment:

Aside from a rigorous course load, Sacred Heart encourages us to be courageous, curious, independent women with great personal awareness. The size fosters a sense of community based on honesty, trust and concern. It also makes the student body much more close-knit than in other schools. It is this factor that cre-

ates an environment of involvement and genuine caring among students and faculty. The School is an extension of home.

THE FARM

Environmental education is an important element in the expansion of the science program. This current commitment to the environment has deep roots at the School and was integral to the Farm Program. The notion of a farm was not new for the acres on King Street, which was originally known as Overlook Farm. Also, in the summers during World War II—between the time the property was purchased and the School opened—the RSCJs had a small farm. Sister McLaughlin remembered being a “reaper” during the summer when the young Religious spent time there.

In the early 1980s, Sisters Margo Morris, RSCJ and Suzanne Rogers, RSCJ of the Greenwich faculty conceived a unique plan for experiential learning, grounded in philosophy and theology, but



A vigorous recent hockey game.

In 1998 the barn was remodeled.



Colleen Mara, Molly Danius, Board Chair James Alban-Davies, Headmistress Joan Magnetti, Bishop Edward Egan, Msgr. Kevin Wallin at the dedication of the new gym.



including science, economics and environmental studies. The energizing vision upon which the Farm Program was based identified “the earth as subject, alive and unfolding, not as object to be exploited.” The offerings at the Farm were structured around environmental education, community development, skill development and attitude development.

mental education classes included in the regular curriculum.

INTO THE '90s

The 1990s continued to see the expansion of the student body as the School grew in “wisdom, age and grace.” Under the direction of Sister Magnetti and a staff of committed faculty, administrative staff and trustees, the student body increased from 295 to 550 girls. Reaching out to students from Yonkers to Fairfield, Danbury, and New City, New York, the sense of family and home was reinforced. Research on the benefits of education for girls in single-sex schools as well as the desire of families for strong religious values centering on the love of God and service of others, drew many families to Sacred Heart.

Changes to the facilities improved the athletic and academic programs. In 1990, as indicated earlier, an athletic facility was built to replace the “temporary” quonset hut. The new building houses a regulation size basketball court, an exercise room and a dance studio. When the boarding school was closed in 1991, the boarders’ rooms in the estate building were converted to Middle School classrooms.

Originally located around the old barn on the School property, this program moved in 1990 to a 100-acre property in Dutchess County, New York. Sprout Creek Farm, as it is now known, offers programs for Network students, for schools in the Poughkeepsie area, for faculty members and for other adults.



The school logo in the center of the new basketball court.

The area on the campus vacated by the Sprout Creek group is currently being used for the School’s Summer Academy, an outreach program which has a farm component; for astronomy classes held in the new observatory; and for the environ-



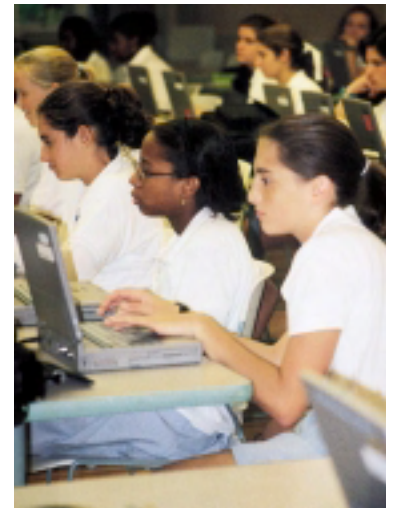
Preschoolers busy reading.

The Religious moved from the third floor into Stuart and the first floor of Barat was remodeled to offer appropriate space for the early childhood program. Barat's upstairs became faculty living quarters.

While the physical changes are striking, even more dramatic are the continuing expansion and strengthening of the academic program. Consistent and constant efforts have been made to offer a challenging, contemporary academic program which leads to students being designated Merit Scholars and Finalists, being accepted in the best colleges they choose and being able to follow the lead of their predecessors in becoming outstanding contributors in a wide variety of professions. Strong Lower and Middle School programs ready the Upper Schoolers to enroll in honors courses and to select from among a dozen or so advanced placement courses. The faculty study the latest research in their disciplines as well as new findings on teaching and learning styles best suited for the education of girls.

The educational program took a huge leap forward in the early 1990s with the expansion of technology. The libraries became Media Centers. Sacred Heart was among the first schools in the Fairchester Association of Independent Schools to have a T1 line. In June 1997, the Board approved joining the Laptops for Learning Program. By the end of the summer all Middle and Upper School faculty members had received laptop computers. They have followed intensive on and off-campus programs on integrating technology and learning. Power-point presentations and more thorough research on the Internet are among the opportunities provided for enhanced learning through the use of laptops. Meanwhile, each Lower School teacher received either a desktop or a laptop for opening up age appropriate technology programs for PreK through grade six students.

The Long-Range Plan of 1996-2000 took up the challenge of improving the sciences for young women. An extensive capital campaign was begun with the goal of building a state-of-the-art science facility. A 25,000 square foot building was designed to complement the integrity of the 1900



Beginnings of the Laptop Program, 1998.



Middle School Prize Day, 1998.

The Eileen Dealy Gillespie '49 Science Center under construction in 1998.



A Lower School student contributes to a recent Food Drive.

The procession to the tent on the front lawn for the Sesquicentennial Liturgy in 1998.



Georgian estate building. It houses six new labs to accommodate the needs of Lower, Middle and Upper School girls, including labs for physics, biology, chemistry and advanced placement courses. The cafeteria was expanded, classrooms renovated, an observatory built, and an entire new roadway and parking facilities were created. Endowment for faculty development and financial aid were also identified as major needs. Parents, alumnae and friends contributed \$13 million to assure that Sacred Heart entered its one hundred and fiftieth year celebration in a position of strength.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The outreach programs at Greenwich have always been a hallmark of the School. Community Service (a graduation requirement for many years) has been expanded, and an Outreach Program with a full-time director involves alumnae, present and past parents and students. The long-standing link with the Carver Center in Port Chester enables the girls to serve in after-school programs and also welcomes Headstart children to campus every week. Greenwich girls participate in the Network of Sacred Heart Schools' service programs each summer, and many graduates have brought their commitment to service to their college campuses by strengthening existing programs or creating new ones. They bear witness to the Gospel adage often quoted by St. Madeleine Sophie Barat, "Those to whom much is given, much is required."

DREAMS COME TRUE

On September 19, 1998, Bishop Edward Egan dedicated the Eileen Dealy Gillespie '49 Science Center and concelebrated the Sesquicentennial Liturgy. Over twelve hundred people gathered under a huge tent on the



front lawn, joined by thirty-eight students and eighteen faculty representing the twenty Network schools in the United States who had participated in a Science Symposium at the School the previous day. Sure of the fidelity of God and the abiding values of Sacred Heart education, the School pledged itself anew to live out those values which Aloysia Hardey first nurtured in lower New York City.

IN CONCLUSION

Sacred Heart, Greenwich, has traveled from Lower Manhattan to the Bronx to Connecticut. Each step of the journey has been guided by the vision of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat and led by committed women of faith, women of spirit. It was a worldwide vision that included children from all countries, different races, different social and economic backgrounds and different faiths. The children would leave school ready to give to their communities and be eager to continue learning and growing throughout their lives. They would be prepared to recognize the need for change and be able to identify effective ways to achieve it. While the Goals and Criteria of the Network Schools were originally

articulated to ensure the continuing implementation of St. Madeleine Sophie's educational philosophy in the schools, the years of integrating them into the life of the School has led to the conclusion that these are indeed guidelines for living—a hallmark of the “child” of the Sacred Heart, be that “child” a teacher, a student, a parent, a trustee or a staff member. The most recent accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges included the following statement, “The Visiting Committee commends the trustees, administration and faculty for their adherence to the School’s stated mission to educate the students in the light of Christian principles and to prepare students for participation in an evolving church in an interdependent world.”

Thanking God for his loving fidelity to Greenwich over the past one hundred and fifty years and asking for the continued outpouring of His love during the journey into the future were the recurring themes of the Sesquicentennial.

(Above left) Mrs. Mary Musolino guides her chemistry students through an experiment, 1998.

(Above right) Enthusiastic Lower Schoolers enjoy the 1998 conge.



Caitlin Fay and Allison Gilbert exchange flowers at the traditional ring ceremony, 1998.

Epilogue

In September 1990, Sister Joan Magnetti, RSCJ was installed as Headmistress of Greenwich. The ceremony took place in the chapel where she had taken her vows as a Religious of the Sacred Heart years earlier. During her presentation to the assembled guests, she said:

Our work, yours and mine, is to help create understanding and wise hearts. Wisdom is a gift of God. It is beyond board scores, I.Q. and class rank. It transcends knowledge and leads to holiness. Holiness in the Old Testament was synonymous with mercy and justice. . . .

Sister Magnetti relates the concept of justice to the “timeless” vision of her congregation. She believes that the education of women relates directly to the issue of social justice.

We educate to view the world through the eyes of Christ. . . . We educate that the wounded heart of Christ may be perceived in humanity. . . . It is a call to women to be repairers. . . .

The task in light of the challenges of the times may seem overwhelming, but to the daughters and children of the Sacred Heart, it is a clarion call to vision, faith and commitment. For one hundred and fifty years Greenwich/Maplehurst has been “the vicinity” where the vision

of St. Madeleine Sophie Barat has been nurtured and has borne fruit. It is testimony to the commitment of the Sacred Heart family that the School has inaugurated a new phase of expansion. Alumnae, parents, trustees and friends are continuing the mission of educating young women to do God’s work. A refurbished and enlarged campus will enable this institution to move forward into the 21st Century, empowering young women to continue their role in transforming society.

Sacred Heart, Greenwich, can look to the future with hope inspired by the vision, faith and commitment of so many. As Sister Magnetti reminded all that day in the chapel:

This is a work of God. Because we are a Sacred Heart school, a school bearing the name of God’s heart, we can have full confidence that we are not alone. God never fails. The Lord has been our cornerstone.



Senior Molly O’Gorman, carrying the Greenwich Sesquicentennial Banner, leads the procession of the banners of the Network Schools to the liturgy, 1998.