

# Heritage Happenings

Archives Office  
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Lest We Forget...



This coming year, Heritage Happenings hopes to take you back to the beginnings of health care in our community. Our charism states: Selfless dedication to the Service of Others. Truly "selfless dedication" served the growing Manitowoc community when it came to health care needs. As history often proclaims: "We are who we are because of those who have gone before us". Meet now some of those who "went before us."

In 1836 the first settlers arrived in Manitowoc followed by a wave of German and Irish immigrants in the 1840's. With such a growing population came the pressing need for health care. The closest doctor was a surgeon at the army post in Green Bay. If someone was seriously ill, a messenger might be sent for help. Because the round trip took at least two days, the patient usually died or recovered by the time the doctor arrived. In 1847 Dr. A. W. Preston became the first resident physician. Two years later he was joined by Dr. Blake. But they had no hospital. Concerned citizens encouraged the energetic, influential pastor of St. Boniface Parish, Rev. Henry Jacobs, to help them campaign for a hospital. Mayor John Schuette, the city Council, the County Board and the editor of the Manitowoc Pilot, John Nagle, gave whole-hearted support...and the funds for such began to flow in. By 1881, despite ethnic squabbling's between the Germans, Irish and increasing influx of the Poles from Poland, a happy combination of prominent community leaders, a determined priest, and a group of dedicated religious women finally succeeded in the desperate need for a hospital.



Dr. Abraham William Preston  
Born Feb. 2, 1822



Died Dec. 13, 1864



On April 1, 1881, a small, twelve-bed hospital called St. Mary's, located on Polish Hill, opened its doors under the care of the Franciscan Sisters. Sister Seraphica Oyen was a German Sister who had just arrived in Manitowoc

in 1875 and had been teaching but while in Germany, she had learned "pharmaceutics" and the care of the sick. Thus she was most qualified to become the administrator of this new venture along with two Sisters to help her. Sister Seraphica kept a ledger of every patient admitted: beginning May 2, 1881 with Christian Birke as the first patient. The ledger listed: Name, Age, Religion, place of birth, how long in USA, in the city, Residence, occupation, Parents names, Disease, results (cured, died, improved), date discharged. She served as the Superintendent of this small hospital from 1881 to 1888.

July 1881	Edward Riebeck	18y.	Cath.	Manitowoc Co. Wis.
July 1881	Rev. Father Meyer	44y.	Cath.	Hilbert City Wis.
July 1881	Chas. Birke	64y. wid.	Cath.	Obenhausen 18. Baden, Europe
July 1881	Andrew Krumpholtz	30y. mer.	Cath.	Bochen 32y. 1/2y. Europe
Aug 6/81	Fred. Madoff	2y.	Cath.	Bochen 1y. 1/2y. Europe
Aug 8/81	Arthur Rock	6y.	Cath.	Newton Mass. Co. Wis.
Aug 11/81	Johann Polak	34y. mer.	Cath.	Baden 1y. 1/2y. Europe
Aug 12/81	Wm. Swede	22y. single	Cath.	Bochen 2y. 1/2y. Europe

Already by the following year the need for expansion was being realized. The minutes of the County Board Meeting of November 27, 1882 show that that Board voted 20 to 5 to sell lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10 and 11 in the city of Manitowoc to the Sisters for one dollar each for the purpose of building a new hospital.



From the writings of Mother Generose: *"The first hospital was an old school house located near the present site of the Polish Church (St. Mary's). It was inadequate in almost every respect... still it rendered very effective service for a time, but the Sisters were poor, the Community small; funds were lacking, and the little hospital faced closure in 1888."* Health care demands were now exceeding the capacity of the little hospital. Twelve beds was no longer enough for the influx of patients. It could have also been the continued conflict between the Polish and the Germans, the land on which the "hospital" stood was wanted by the owners for a new school. The Sisters finally were obliged to vacate and the hospital closed on May 1, 1888. Maria Stangel was the last patient admitted on April 6 and discharged on April 27, 1888. The hospital had served 238 patients during the seven years it was in operation. The youngest was a five month old baby and the oldest a 100-year-old woman.

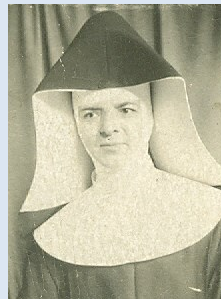


In 1886, in exchange for the park lots between 11th and 12th streets, the Sisters obtained 4 1/2 lots on Marshall Street between 12th and 13th streets hoping to build a hospital here, but such never happened due to finances.

Sorry, we are  
**CLOSED**

This month pictures of 13 Sisters whose names begin with "G" and "H" are being introduced!!

Sr. George Marie Buchman Sr. Georgiana Brey Sr. Gerald Adam Sr. Gladys Bauer



Sr. Gregory Fochtman Sr. Gualberta Muehlbauer Sr. Hedwig Nacel Sr. Herman Joseph Hautzenger



Sr. Hildegard Eisenman Sr. Hortense Rugowski Sr. Hubert Washbisch Sr. Humiliana Stelpflug Sr. Genevieve Kuehbe

