

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received FEB 15 1984

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NAZARETH HISTORIC DISTRICT

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 3 miles north of Bardstown off Route 31E not for publication

city, town Nazareth Bardstown vicinity of

state Kentucky code 021 county Nelson code 179

3. Classification

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | NA in process | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | NA being considered | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property

name Sisters of Charity of Nazareth

street & number

city, town Nazareth vicinity of state Kentucky

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Nelson County Courthouse

street & number E. Stephen Foster Avenue

city, town Bardstown state Kentucky

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title KY Historic Resources Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date Autumn, 1983 federal state county local

depository for survey records Kentucky Heritage Council

city, town Frankfort state Kentucky

7. Description

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | |

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Historic District is located at the center of the Nazareth religious community, a 320 acre complex owned by the Catholic Order of the Sisters of Charity since they relocated here in 1822 from nearby St. Thomas farm. The district lies approximately three miles north of Bardstown, the county seat of Nelson County and site of the oldest Catholic Church in Kentucky. U. S. Highway 31-E, the old road from Louisville south past Nashville, provides access to the community from the east.

Nazareth is situated on an open expanse of beautiful farmland that once encompassed a vast tract of over 1,000 acres. In recent years the order has sold a substantial part of their farm holdings, including a 1930s dairy operation which still borders the district to the north. The historic core of Nazareth, which presently consists of seven primary and five ancillary buildings, is enhanced not only by its pastoral setting but the beautifully landscaped and ornamented grounds as well. The nominated area includes several grottoes, a gazebo, the community cemetery and various commemorative statues. Contemporary buildings located to the south and west of the historic district are not included in this nomination.

With the exception of the guest residence all of the primary historic buildings at Nazareth have interconnecting walls (see map). ST.VINCENT DEPAUL CHURCH (1), built in 1850-1854 and substantially modified in 1925, is the earliest surviving building and the ecclesiastical center of the community. It is, by virtue of its medieval Gothic design, the most distinctive structure at Nazareth.

St. Vincent was designed by William Keely, a relatively unknown Irish Catholic architect who may have been related to Patrick Keeley, a contemporary practitioner noted for his Gothic designs in the antebellum south.¹ Stylistically St. Vincent is typified by an eclectic blend of medieval Gothic forms that Keely undoubtedly believed were appropriate for a Roman Catholic Church of the period. Rather than use the single spired versions then popular among Episcopalian congregations, Keely adopted the twin towered formula as a way of differentiating the Catholic and Anglican faiths. The lancet and loophole windows are commonly identified with the French Lancet period while the central window at the front of the nave is distinctly reminiscent of the Flamboyant Gothic mode. The castellation on the nave simply serves to reinforce the eclecticism of the overall Gothic design.

St. Vincent originally was a free-standing sanctuary measuring 98' long and 36' wide, with twin octagonal towers flanking the west front entrance. The building was properly sited in an east-west direction. In the mid-1920s the church was extensively renovated and enlarged in order to meet the needs of the growing religious order. A deepened transept, rear sacristy and new carrara marble alter were added, along with two interior columns and a double gallery which provided access for the sisters confined to the infirmary. The two interior columns in the nave feature scagliara shafts and Tennessee marble bases. The Stations of the Cross are oil paintings by Costigini, whose artwork stands in the U.S. Capitol. A Gothic style cloister passageway connects the east end of the convent to the north elevation of the church. In 1925 the original stuccoed brick walls were completely covered with a veneer of smooth cut Bedford limestone. With the renovation completed St. Vincent measured 168 feet in length and 85 feet at its widest part.

8. Significance

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian |
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900– | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | |

Specific dates c.1850–1925 **Builder/Architect** Wm. Keely; D.X. Murphy; C.S. Mergell

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Historic District, located on property owned by the order since 1822, is significant for its historical associations with the founding of the Sisters of Charity in America and as it represents one of the most important and best preserved collections of ecclesiological architecture in Kentucky. The significance of the Sisters of Charity convent and academy also is predicated on its context within the early development of Catholic faith and education in Kentucky, from its inception as a school in 1814 until 1970, when Nazareth College closed its doors and moved to Louisville. Bardstown was the location of the first Catholic see in the transappalachian West, and the Sisters of Charity, founded by Bishop David and Mother Catherine Spalding at nearby St. Thomas farm in 1812, was one of four institutions established by Catholics in the area during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.¹ Architecturally, Nazareth contains the representative works of three important architects, including William Keely, and a noted nineteenth century engineer, Albert Fink. Today Nazareth continues to thrive as the motherhouse of this international religious community.

The first group of Catholics to arrive in Kentucky came from Maryland and settled near Bardstown, Nelson County in 1795. During the following decade settlement increased as a result of the anticlerical fervor of the French Revolution and the lure of Kentucky lands. Bishop Carroll and French emigres living in the Baltimore diocese became keenly interested in the potential of this rapidly growing new state. In 1793 a young Stephen Badin made his inaugural visit to Kentucky, followed in 1805 by Father Nerinckx, a native of Belgium and another victim of French persecution. About the same time Father Edward Fenwick, journeyed from Maryland to Nelson County where he soon established the first order of Dominicans in the United States and later the first Catholic College in the west. With the Catholic presence firmly established, the Pope in 1808 officially designated Bardstown the first Catholic see in the west and one of only five in the United States.

In May, 1811, Kentucky's first bishop, Father Benedict Joseph Flaget arrived in Bardstown from Maryland with his close friend and associate, John Baptist David. Bishop Flaget immediately set forth toward the construction of a new cathedral, while David, a fellow Frenchman and exile of the Revolution, focused his efforts toward organizing a seminary and a religious order of women. Early in 1812 Father David successfully established the first clerical school in the west, St. Stephen's Seminary, at Father Stephen Badin's home in nearby Marion County. The seminary soon relocated to Bardstown where it became known as St. Thomas's Seminary.

Around this time Father David had been moved by the fact that a group of Marylander women, under the leadership of Father Nerinckx, had founded the motherhouse of the Sisters of Loretto in Marion County. Their success gave David new inspiration, and on December 1, 1812, with the assistance of two young women, David established the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. The Society had its beginnings in a small log structure on the seminary farm at St. Thomas, a location reverently known as the "Cradle of the Catholic Church in Kentucky."²

9. Major Bibliographical References

After a Hundred Years 1812-1912. Motherhouse and Academy of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. Nazareth, Kentucky, 1912.

Boles, John B., Religion in Antebellum Kentucky. U.K. Press, 1976.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property Approx. 40 acres

Quadrangle name Bardstown

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

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Verbal boundary description and justification

Starting at a point 30' south of the Our Lady of Wisdom Statue; thence 650' west to a point 40' south and 40' west of the Marietta Gazebo; thence north 1250' along the western edge of the parking lot and service road; thence east northeast 750' along the service road;

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|-------|------|--------|------|

| state | code | county | code |
|-------|------|--------|------|
|-------|------|--------|------|

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Steve C. Gordon, Historian

organization Kentucky Heritage Council date December, 1983

street & number 9th Floor, Capital Plaza Tower telephone 502/564-7005

city or town Frankfort state Kentucky

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Mary Cuman Appel

title State Historic Preservation Officer date February 10, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Melores Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 3/15/84

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
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The twenties renovation was so sensitively performed that it is extremely difficult to distinguish it from Keely's original design. Few major changes were made to the existing exterior fenestration. Original features include the heavy oak Gothic doors with hammered booge pintles, the Gothic nave window (although the panes were removed in 1968) and the buttresses. Keely's interior vaulting of the nave and transepts is largely intact and seems to be a creative, nineteenth century plaster version of fan vaulting and Tierceron rib decoration.² The twin towers too are essentially intact except for the removal of the finials, which were replaced by metal domes. The Nativity window at the western end of the transept was built at the same time the church was enlarged. In 1928 a stained glass window representing The Agony in the Garden was installed over the main altar. A pipe organ built at the rear of the church in 1928 was removed during a 1968 renovation and in 1974 the Order constructed a new copper roof. The oak pews with quatrefoil decoration are c.1925 features. During a recent renovation of the church the teakwood statue of St. Vincent dePaul was placed at the rear of the church.

Despite these modifications St. Vincent remains an exceptional example of Gothic architecture. The continuity of its design, especially the lancet railings on the gallery, the altarpieces and the stained glass windows, coupled with the soaring nature of the columns and the vaulting, make St. Vincent a truly uplifting visual experience.

The MOTHERHOUSE or ADMINISTRATION BUILDING (3) stands at the heart of the Nazareth community. It is flanked by O'Connell Hall to the west and the infirmary to the east, with the front elevation oriented south toward the Hold Family Statue and the entrance promenade. Erected in 1904-1906 on the site of the original academy, the Administration Building is one of three structures at Nazareth designed by the Louisville architectural firm of D. X. Murphy. This firm is best known for its numerous commissions in Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky.

The Motherhouse is a generally symmetrical 3 1/2 story brick structure distinguished by a raised foundation, buff brick wall treatment and colossal Ionic order portico. All of the decorative trim, including the jack arch lintels, keystones, water table and quoins are dressed in smooth cut Bedford limestone. The raised ashlar limestone foundation, which is enhanced by brown striations, is pierced by large two-over-two window sashes. These windows provide a substantial measure of light for the basement cafeteria area. Both the second and third floor bays exhibit wide two-over-two windows with jack arch lintels, while the first floor bays are arcaded with blind masonry transoms. The classical cornice is ornamented with small dentils and scrolled modillions.

The front elevation is embellished by a raised colossal portico which consists of fluted limestone columns surmounted by Ionic capitals with egg and dart treatment and carved anthemions in relief. At the facade the columns become pilasters. The entablature, which is surmounted by a stone balustrade, repeats the egg and dart motif employed on the columns. The main entrance to the motherhouse is accentuated by a beveled glass doorway and metal girandoles. Above the portico and within a niche in the pediment stands a carved marble statue of St. Vincent dePaul. Internally the building is relatively unchanged, still exhibiting the period woodwork, fixtures and door transoms. Of special interest is the stained glass window at the rear of the main hall which depicts a pelican feeding its young.

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Immediately east and juxtaposed between the motherhouse and the church is the INFIRMARY, (2), a multi-storied brick structure built in 1899 and enlarged toward the north in 1938. Designed by D. X. Murphy, the Infirmary is, by virtue of its confined setting, best observed from an east or rear courtyard vantage point. Stylistically the building can be described as institutional vernacular, exhibiting a five story front wing and four story central wing and addition. The two-over-two window sashes are accentuated by segmental arch lintels and limestone lugsills. Brick corbelling is employed immediately below the cornice. A sensitively placed four story brick wing with steel veranda was added to the rear elevation in 1938.

Immediately northwest of the motherhouse and attached to it by a three story, 20' x 40' passage is O'CONNELL HALL (4), a magnificent three story brick Gothic structure designed by William Keely in a modified H floor plan. Completed in 1855, O'Connell Hall features a symmetrical front elevation that is divided into a series of 16 arcaded bays, each of which is accentuated by wide pilasters and modified Tudor arches. At opposite ends of the 200' wide facade are projecting pavilions surmounted by monitor shaped pediments. Within the pediments are louvered cloverleaf-type vents. All four exterior elevations feature heavily corbelled cornices which support the original limestone sill plates and wooden gutters.

With the exception of the central bay, all of the window bays consist of paired, double hung sashes with unusual four-over-ten lighting arrangements. The upper sashes are stationary while the lower sashes open to the inside via an ingenious semi-circular track that accurately gauges the opening of the windows. The window bays also feature decorative Gothic spandrels and oculus panes, in addition to brick jack arch lintels and bush-hammered limestone sills. The center bay has a triple window at the second and third floor and a magnificent three-part Gothic entrance. This stylistic element consists of a Gothic transom window and sidelights, which are set into Gothic muntins. The door frames are dressed in bush-hammered limestone while the doors have raised quatrefoils and period graining. The hand-painted, etched window panes are original.

The front and east entrances to O'Connell Hall are also important for their classically detailed cast iron porticoes. Added to the building in 1868, these porticoes feature Greek anthemions and other decorative classical elements. Surmounting the ribbed metal roof are two octagonal cupolas with eight pane windows and what appear to be wooden pilasters.

The interior spaces and fittings in O'Connell Hall are remarkably well preserved. A long transerve hall runs east-west with the entrance hall intersecting it at the center of the building. At the north end of the first floor is the refectory, a spacious room that is flanked by two three-story stairwells. The stairwells consist of heavy wooden balustrades with quatrefoil spindles and newelposts. The first floor of the west pavilion, presently divided at the front by the mission office, originally served as a large assembly hall. This majestic space is divided at the center by quatrefoil shaped cast-iron columns. The doors are triple paneled with six-pane interior transoms. Woodwork in the front hall and throughout the east passage is grained and probably original. Attenuated colonettes flank the interior door frames and a large inside door with wavy glass transom and sidelights marks the division between the main part of O'Connell Hall and the wing which connects it to the motherhouse.

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SCHOLASTICA HALL (5), commonly known as the Music Building, is situated between the Auditorium and O'Connell Hall. Built in three stages during a fifteen year period (1855-1870), the Music Building is, by virtue of its Keely design, nearly a mirror image of the fenestration employed on O'Connell Hall. The original building, completed c.1855, was two stories high and lacked the single bay wing which later connected it to the Exhibition Hall. In 1868-69 a third story dormitory was added along with the cast-iron porticoes.

Like O'Connell Hall the front elevation of the Music Building is divided into a series of arcaded bays, but here the bays exhibit single rather than double window sashes. Both the front and rear elevations exhibit virtually identical fenestrations, including the pilastered bays and Tudor arches. The iron portico at the front entrance is similar to but less detailed than those on O'Connell Hall.

Inside the Music Building again features a long transverse hall flanked by a series of small individual music rooms, a stairwell and an elevator shaft at the northeast corner. Except for the accoustical tile on the second floor ceiling the building has undergone very few modifications. The first floor doors are surmounted by six pane transoms while those on the second floor have four pane transoms. Each practice room has double door entrances; all interior openings have bracketed lintels and attenuated colonnettes. The stairwell still retains its original balustrade with turned spindles and ash stairtreads. Other details include stained glass windows in the stairwell, a pressed metal ceiling on the third floor and oak grained woodwork. Immediately north of the rear elevation is a corrugated metal speech and hearing building which was erected in 1969.

At the western end of the Nazareth complex is the AUDITORIUM (6), a three-story, rectangular plan brick structure measuring 70' x 165'. Built c.1870, the auditorium, or EXHIBITION HALL as it originally was known, exhibits a symmetrical five-bay gable ended facade with multi-bayed side elevations. The exterior fenestration again resembles the distinctive Gothic motif of the earlier buildings, except that here the architect, C. S. Mergell, employed rectangular and arched bays rather than the more medieval Gothic forms. Mergell's use of the arcaded brick hoodmolds on the first and third floors of the front elevation reflects the growing influence of the Italianate style. Window sashes at the side elevations are six-over-six throughout with flat stone lintels and sills. The front gable end agains utilizes the monitor shaped parapet while a corbeled cornice extends around the three main elevations. Large basement windows and deep limestone wells reflect the size of the interior spaces. Among the building's most distinctive features are the use of recessed blind arcades at the front elevation and Greek crosses between the second and third floors.

The interior of the auditorium is divided into two large recreation rooms on the first floor and a 1,000 seat auditorium on the upper floor. A proscenium stage is located along the rear north wall with a double stairwell inside the south wall. Of particular importance is the wooden balcony which forms a horseshoe around the auditorium chamber. Rather than being supported by iron columns stationed below, the balcony is held in place by a series of slender iron rods suspended from the tie beam in the attic. The balcony floor is white pine and both it and the simple benches appear to be original. In 1941,

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however, the auditorium floor was raised and new seats were installed in place of the old plank chairs. At the same time a new hardwood floor was built and a single story brick wing added to the rear.

In addition to the buildings described, the Nazareth historic district also includes a Guest House, Rectory, Laundry and associated dependencies. The GUEST HOUSE (7), formerly the rectory, is situated just south of St. Vincent dePaul Church. It is transitional style two and one-half story brick double pile dwelling with two story ell. Built c.1869, the Guest House is distinguished by a five bay front elevation, segmental attic windows, a rubble limestone foundation and a denticulated cornice with modillions. The segmental arches extend around the building, forming a continuous brick stringcourse. Window sashes are two-over-two on the front elevation and six-over-six on the side elevations. All of the windows are capped by stone shelf lintels. The frontispiece consists of an oval transom window and narrow four pane sidelights. The interior is characterized by 14' ceilings on the first floor with Doric architraves. Most of the rooms have been paneled and the fireplaces covered over. Historic photographs indicate that the Palladian windows and Colonial style porch are twentieth century alterations. Around 1920 the side porch was enclosed and a porte cochere constructed.

At the eastern edge of the grounds and behind the church are three buildings; the RECTORY, LAUNDRY, and a small garage. The RECTORY (8), built in 1900, is in simplest terms a two-story brick dwelling characterized by a semi-octagonal facade bay and stretcher bond wall treatment. Segmental arches accentuate the bays while the cornice is supported by slender wooden brackets. The foundation is faced with concrete ashlar blocks. There is a two story shingle sided addition to the rear.

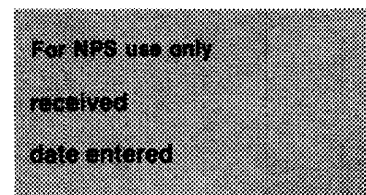
The LAUNDRY BUILDING (9), also built in 1900, was designed by D. X. Murphy, the same architect employed in the planning of the motherhouse and the infirmary. It is situated near the edge of a shallow ravine and just east of the Infirmary. Architecturally the Laundry follows the same stylistic simplicity of Nazareth's other service buildings. A series of segmental doors and window bays marks the south elevation while an open porch set on piers is located along the north wall. Few major changes have been made to the exterior of the building.

Behind the motherhouse and O'Connell Hall are six additional buildings, four of which are included in the nomination. Two of them, the kitchen and food storage building, are structurally attached to the motherhouse while the Carpenter's Shop (13) and Ignatius Hall (14) are free standing. The kitchen and food storage buildings were built in 1906. Both convey an institutional function through their simple architecture. The Carpenter Shop, built in 1937, is an unembellished two story brick structure with gable roof. Immediately behind O'Connell Hall stands IGNATIUS HALL, a 35' x 118' brick building built as a gymnasium in 1924. This structure exhibits a repeated version of the arcaded bays employed on O'Connell Hall.

In addition to the buildings in the historic district the nomination includes the convent cemetery, several statues, a shelter house, two rubble limestone grottoes and a Holy Rosary Shrine (23).

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The CEMETERY (24), located along the eastern edge of the convent grounds, has been used as the Society's burial ground since 1822. It is a neatly arranged reserve surrounded by a low cast-iron fence. Within the cemetery lie the remains of Bishop John Baptist David. Fourteen Gothic stations of the cross line the path which leads from the driveway to the cemetery entrance. Immediately west of the cemetery stands the HOLY ROSARY SHRINE (23), a vertical board, circular plan structure with octagonal roof and lancet bays. This 12' wide structure was erected in 1870 in thanksgiving for preservation during a storm at sea. First located in the cemetery, the shrine was moved to its present location in 1914.

The principal statues on the Nazareth grounds include the bronze Holy Family Statue, erected in 1896 (18); Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, erected in 1907 (22); and the two commemorative statues erected in 1912 in honor of the Society's two founders, Bishop David and Mother Catherine Spalding (17). Both statues consist of carved marble figures resting on limestone obelisks.

Two rubble limestone grottoes, the Annunciation Shrine (19) and the grotto of the Immaculate Conception (20) are located on the lawn south of O'Connell Hall. Both grottoes were erected in 1902 in honor of the jubilee of Mother Cleophas Mills. St. Ann's Shrine, also built in 1902 and the St. Marietta Murphy Shelter House (1917) are located near the southwestern corner of the convent grounds.

Further beyond the proposed district boundaries are located several non-contributing structures built during the past thirty years. These include, among others, the Boiler House (1950), Spalding Residence Hall (1959), the Science Building (1950) and a group of modern dwellings built in the past two decades.

NOTES

¹The basic plan and appearance of St. Vincent's is strikingly similar to Patrick Keely's St. Peter's Church in Memphis, Tennessee (1852-1858).

²Patrick A. Snadon, Architectural Historian, University of Kentucky.

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FEMALE ACADEMY OF NAZARETH, BARDSTOWN, KY.

*All Communications respecting this Academy, addressed to the Rev. J. Haseltine, Superior, or to Miss Catherine Spalding,
Mother Superior, Nazareth, near Bardstown, Ky., will receive immediate attention.
F. M. Kay, Merchant, Louisville, Ky., is Agent for the Academy, to whom remittances may be made.*

W. C. Peters Lith.

Nazareth Academy, looking north, c. 1835.

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Nazareth, c. 1855.

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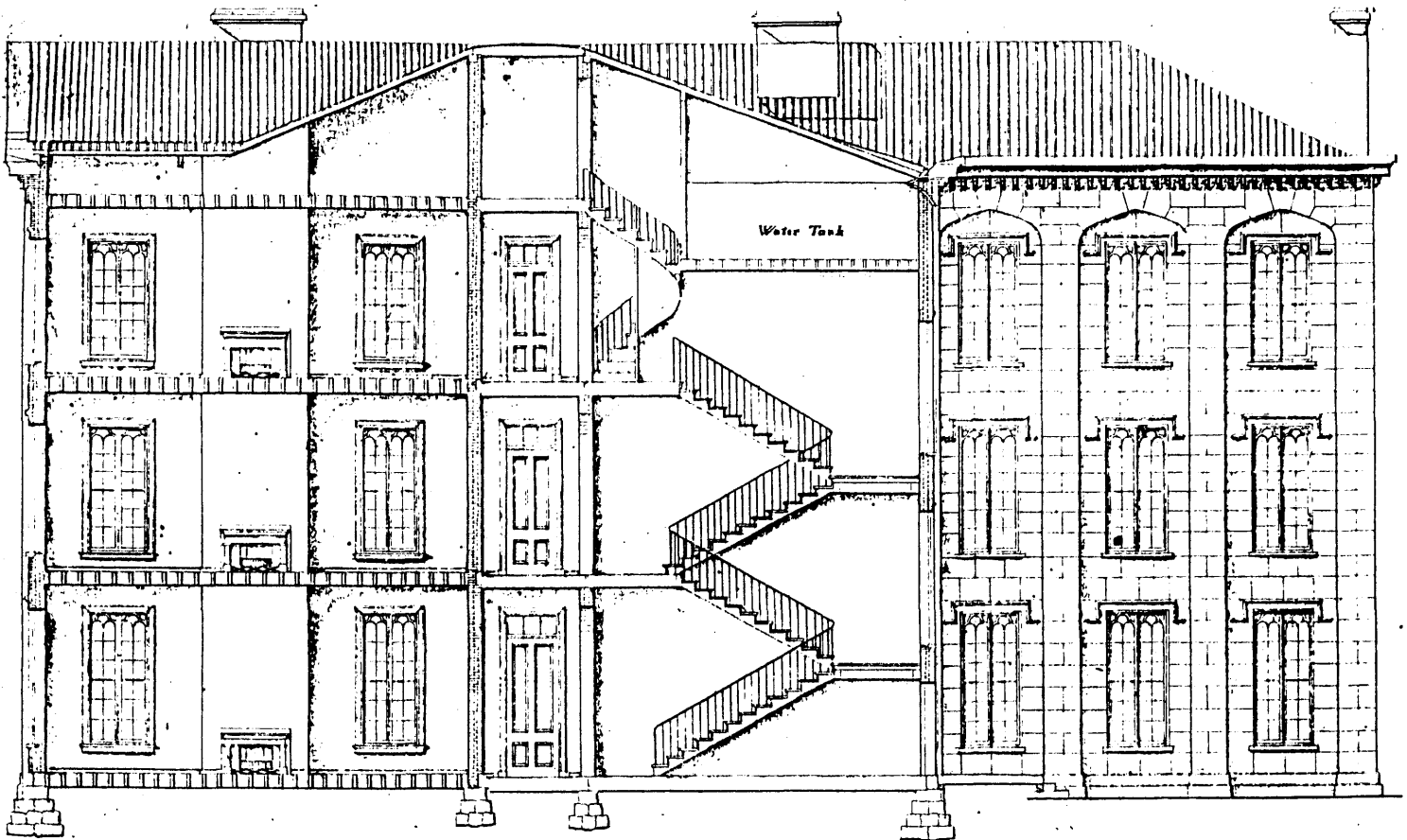
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Transverse Section of Nazareth Academy

Keely's original plan for Nazareth Academy

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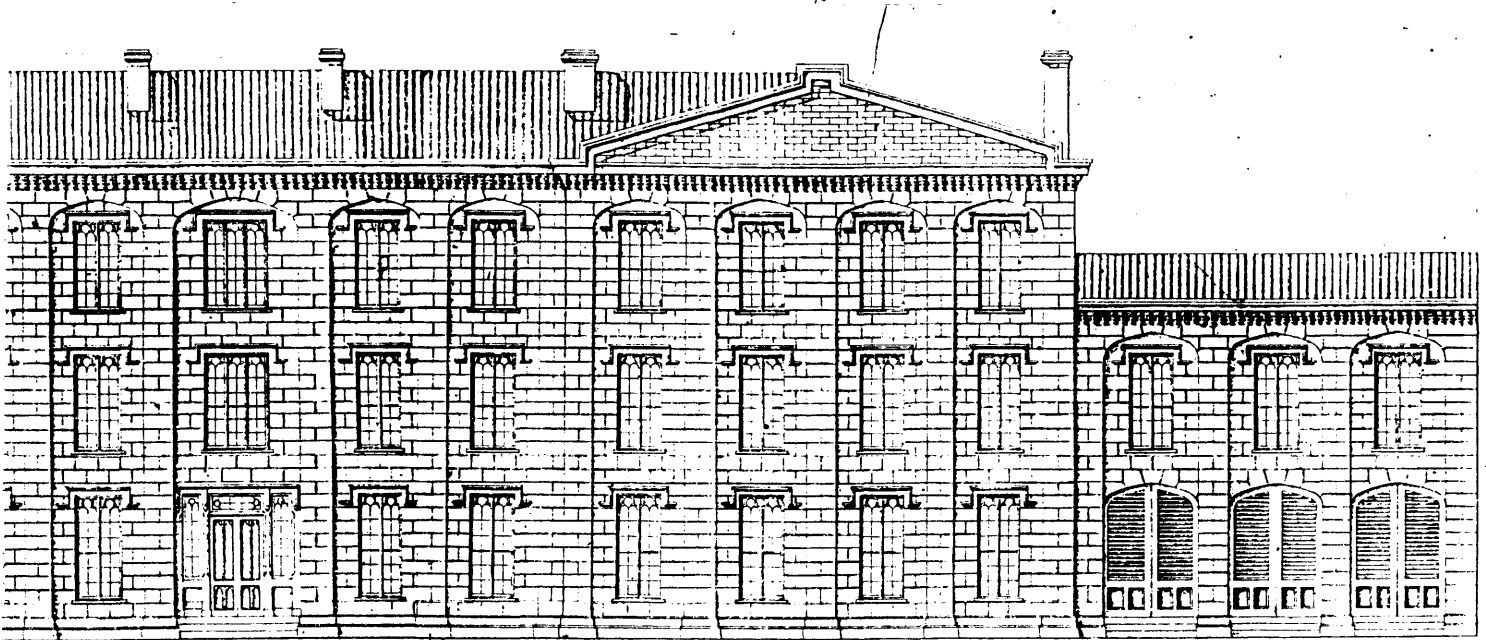
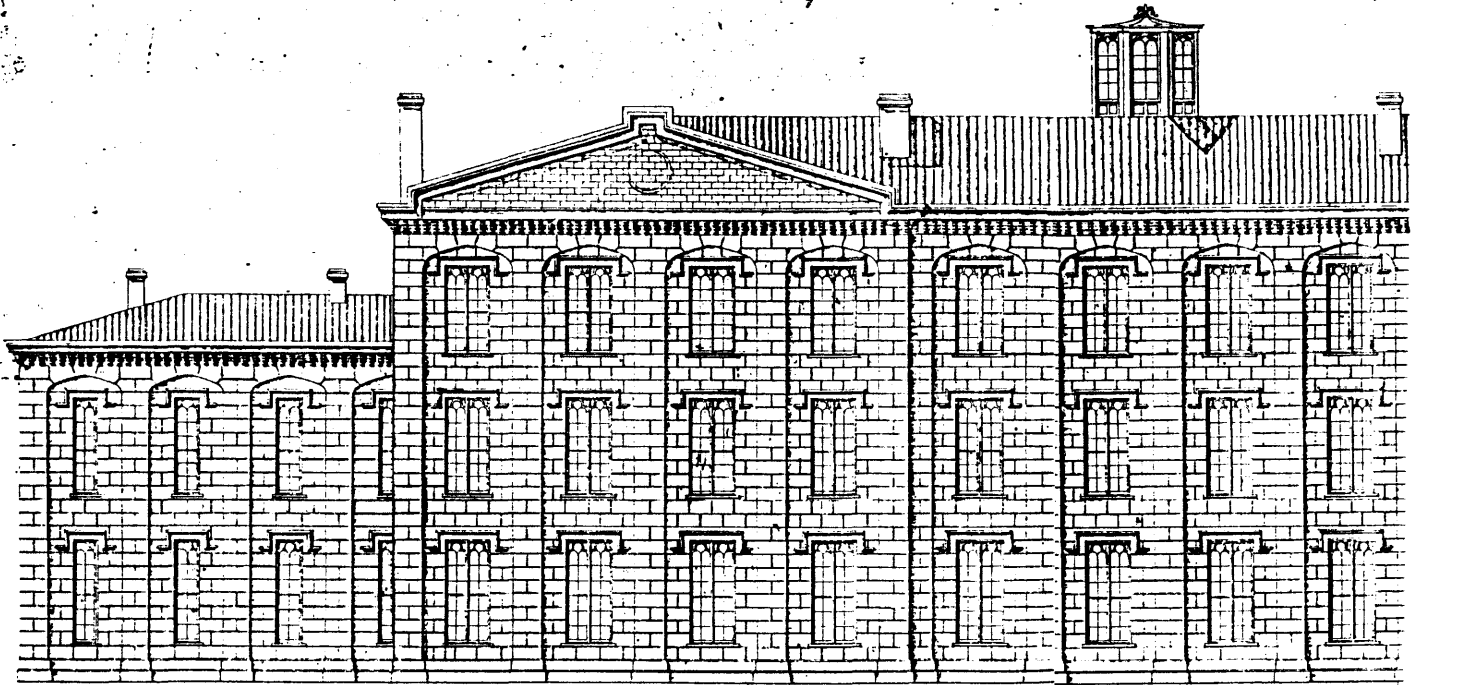
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Front Elevation of Academy of Nazareth.

by W. Healy, Architect

Keely's original elevation scheme for Nazareth Academy, c. 1853
(note the rustication and side wings)

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Picture taken soon after 1925
note barns and orchards

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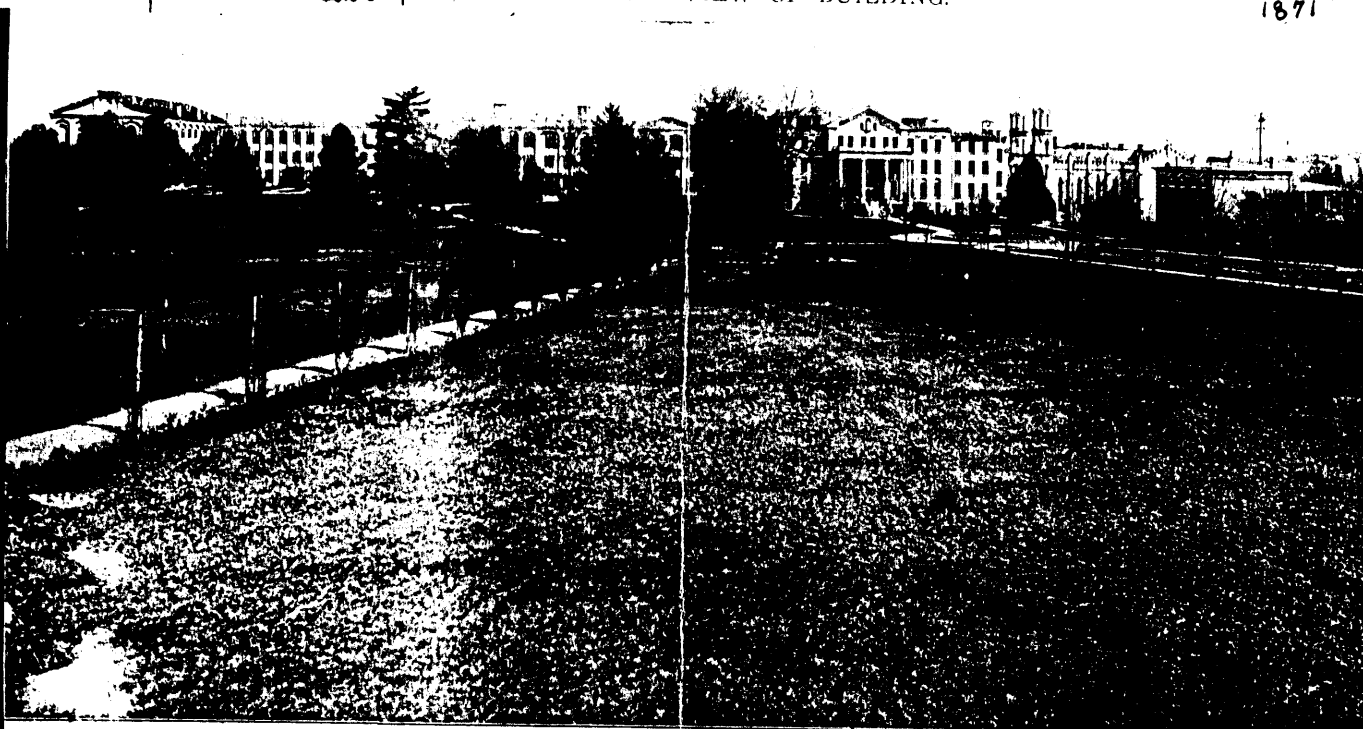
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1869--Chaplains Residence

1871 Auditorium - Academy and College - 1855
1907 Administration Building - 1654 St. Vincent Ch. - Rectory - Guest House
Luncheon Entrance
GENERAL VIEW OF BUILDING.



Front View of Convent and Academy—Frontage, 1,000 ft.

1906

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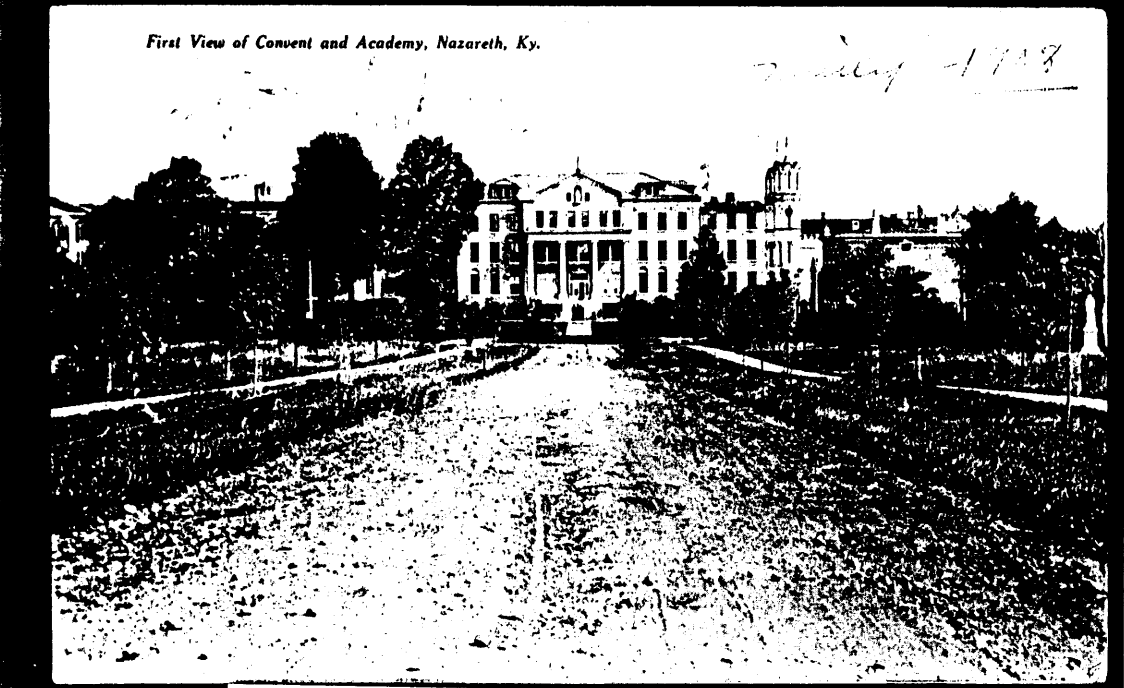
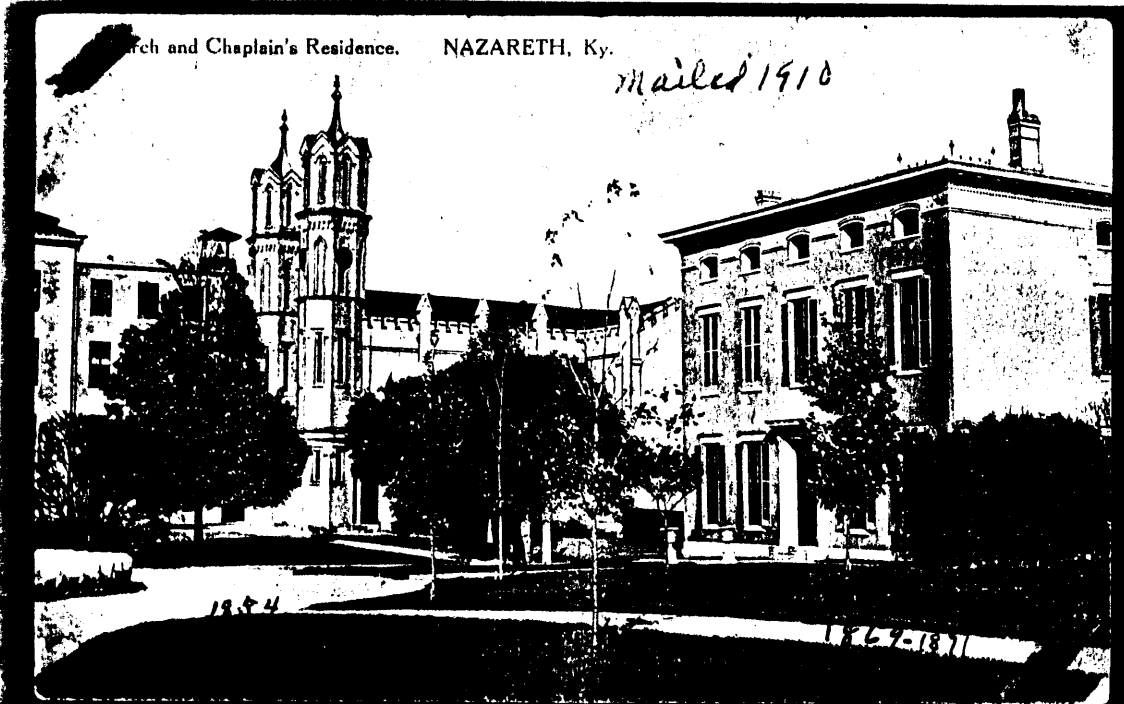
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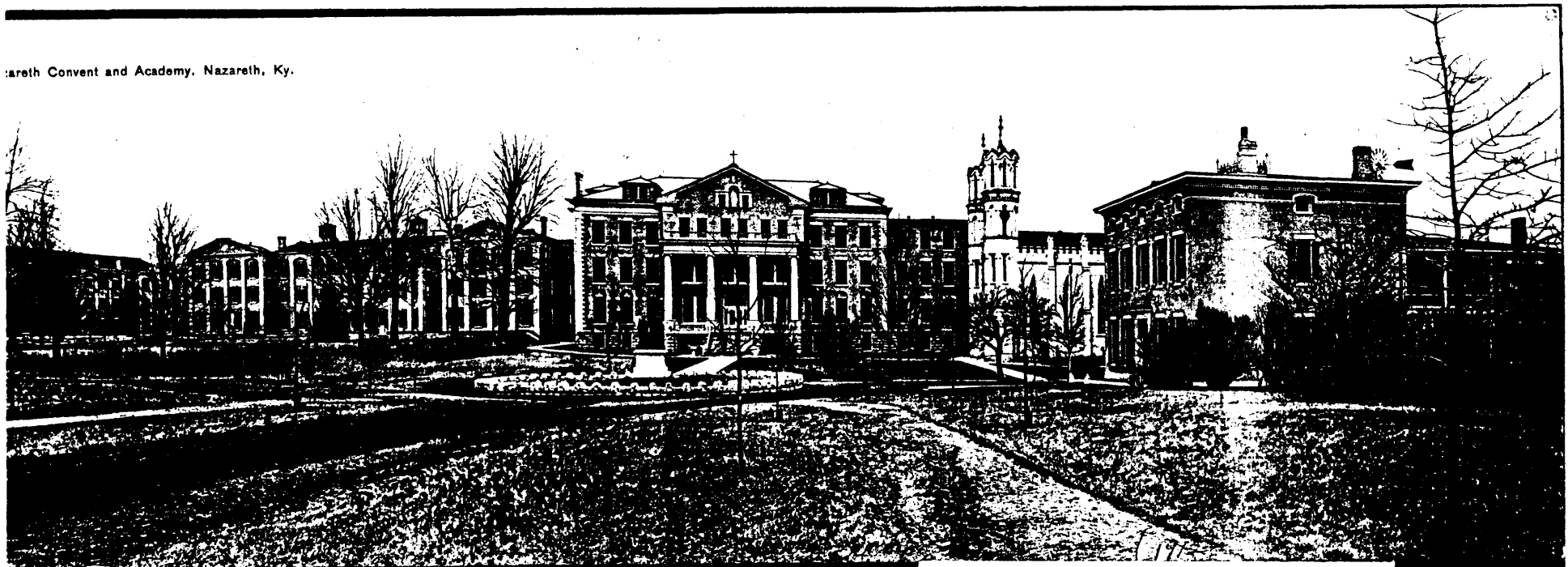




ST. VINCENT CHURCH, NAZARETH, KENTUCKY.

*Interior view,
Photo taken after 1917.*

Nazareth Convent and Academy, Nazareth, Ky.



Picture about 1912- Holy Family circle enclosed by stone wall. Trees small



Motherhouse, Built 1904-1906.

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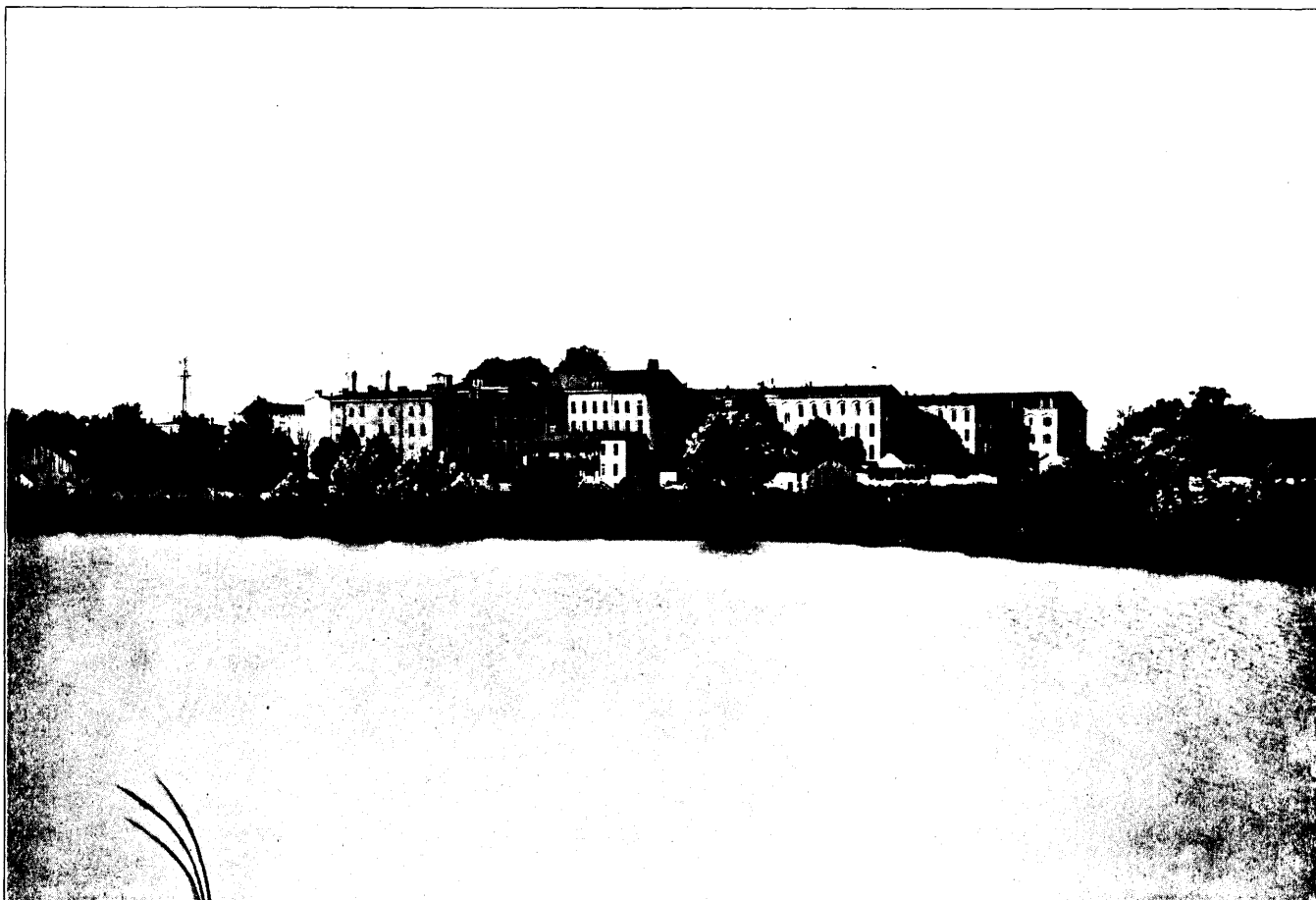
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Northeast View, Across the Lake

Centennial photo, 1912.

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Convent Church

Centennial photo, 1912.

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West Front

Centennial photo, 1912.

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Aerial view, ca. 1940.

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Early in 1813 the Sisters of Charity were joined by Catharine Spalding, a native of St. Charles, Maryland, who would become prominently associated with the community until her death in 1858. Father David, meanwhile, had chosen the name Nazareth for the first convent and it was his inspired work that the religious body be called the Sisters of Charity in honor of the works of St. Vincent de Paul. Although their ascetism was less rigid than the Sisters of Loretto, the Sisters of Charity were committed to the education of the poor and the care for the sick. In a few short years Nelson County and the area around it had seen the founding of a see, a Dominican priory, a seminary, and the motherhouse of two benevolent societies.

The establishment of a permanent school was an early order of business for the Sisters of Charity. In August, 1814, through the assistance of Ellen O'Connell, the first classes had been given, and two years later a brick structure was erected for formal class instruction. Around this time the sisters adopted a religious dress, and the first attempt at colonization made by the community occurred at Bardstown in 1819. An unsuccessful attempt to establish a school then occurred in Breckinridge County, but a happier result followed upon the opening of St. Vincent in Union County.

As the Society's membership grew, and the success of the institution seemed assured, plans were made for purchasing a suitable location away from the confines of St. Thomas farm. The choice was made for a 273 acre tract of land set among the rolling hills just north of Bardstown. Acquisition of the property was made possible through the generous assistance of Sister Scholastica O'Conner, a young widow and convert to the Catholic faith. When the Sisters of Charity finally moved to their new home on June 11, 1822, they numbered 38 members and had under their 25 boarding pupils. Bishop David wrote, "Our sisters have just bought a plantation. . . The new place is two miles and a half in a fine locality."³

The education provided by the Sisters of Charity grew in reputation during the 1820s. Female students, particularly those of the upper classes, soon came to Nazareth from Ohio, Indiana, and Tennessee, and as far away as Louisiana. In addition, young sisters were prepared at Nazareth for their future work in teaching and nursing. A three-story brick Federal style convent and academy building was erected c.1827 and in 1829 the school officially was chartered under state law as the Nazareth Literary and Benevolent Institution. The official articles of incorporation were amended in 1861 when the Society acquired additional property and established schools at Paducah, Owensboro, Louisville, Lexington, Covington, and Vincennes, Indiana.⁴

In 1831 the Society of Charity had expanded, establishing an academy and the first hospital and orphanage in Louisville, Kentucky's largest and fastest growing city. During the cholera epidemic of the early 1830s the Society devoted itself toward assisting the ill and impoverished in Louisville and the Bardstown areas. From 1830 to 1849 the academy at Nazareth gained considerable renown as a finishing school for young ladies. Under the leadership of Mother Spalding the cornerstone of a new church, St. Vincent de Paul, was laid at Nazareth in 1850. It was the first of three major buildings designed for the community by William Keely, an Irish Catholic architect who was just completing work on the Cathedral of the Assumption in Louisville. Keely's other commissions at Nazareth included the Academy (1855) and the Music Building (c.1855-1870).⁵

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During the Civil War the Sisters of Charity operated with the fear that the great conflict would spill over onto the college grounds. In order to insure its protection, President Lincoln early in 1865 issued a directive that "no deprecation be committed upon the property or possessions of the Sisters of Charity at Nazareth Academy, near Bardstown, Kentucky."⁶ Fortunately Lincoln's order was never challenged, and following the war the Sisters of Charity and the Academy's 250 pupils could again resume their educational and philanthropic programs. The late 1860s brought major physical changes to the college, including construction of a new auditorium, a new rectory and a third floor addition to the Music Building. It was during this period that the iron porticoes were added to the convent and the academic buildings.

The Sisters of Charity continued to prosper during the late nineteenth century, so much so that a post office was established at Nazareth in 1888. A few years later a visitor arriving at Nazareth by train described the community as "an oasis in the desert," expressing surprise that buildings so "extensive and imposing (could exist) in the backwoods of Kentucky."⁷ Further improvements were ushered in by the turn-of-the-century with the construction of a new infirmary (1898) and the demolition of the old convent (1903). In its place the sisters erected a magnificent new convent and administration building. The architect selected to oversee the project was D. X. Murphy, a well-known Louisville practitioner who also designed the Infirmary, the Laundry, and the old power station. It was about this time that the spacious grounds were improved and more formally ornamented with shrubbery, shrines and statues commemorating the founders and mother superiors.

In September, 1910, the Sisters of Charity received the formal approbation of the Holy See in Rome. The Society then numbered over 800 members with 55 branch houses across the United States. The Society operated three homes, four hospitals and Infirmaries, caring for 8,000 sick; 16 Academies with 3,000 pupils; five Orphan Asylums sheltering approximately 500 orphans; 51 Parochial Schools attended by nearly 13,000 children, making a total of about 17,000 taught by the Sisters.⁸ In 1914 the academy department became affiliated with the Catholic University of America and in 1929 Nazareth College gained membership in the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

Plagued by declining enrollments, the academy finally closed its doors in 1963. Nazareth College moved to Louisville in 1970 where it became known as Spalding College, but not before the one-hundredth commencement exercises were held in the Auditorium. Today the sisters are involved in educational and nursing programs throughout a six-county region. Their other activities include work among migrants; alcoholics and poor in the inner cities; Montessori schools and pastoral team work in the surrounding parishes. There are approximately 140 sisters in residence and an additional 90 living in retirement. Collectively, the Sisters of Charity have a membership of over 1,100 sisters and 300 associates engaged in benevolent work in India, Nepal, Belize and North America.

¹In addition to the Sisters of Charity, Catholics founded the Sisters of Loretto (1812), St. Stephen's Seminary (1811) and the Dominican Order of St. Rose (1806).

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²St. Thomas Farm National Register file, Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, Kentucky.

³Motherhouse Archives, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth.

⁴Acts of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Session of 1829-1830, pp. 24-27; Session of 1861, pp. 128-129.

⁵Other churches in Kentucky attributed to Keely are the St. Rose Priory in Washington County; St. Theresa, near Rhodelia in Meade County; and St. Augustine in Grayson County.

⁶Mother Columba Carroll, Sister of Charity of Nazareth 1810-1878, February, 1973, p. 10.

⁷William Seton, "A Famous Convent-School of the South-West, Nazareth, Kentucky". Catholic World (January 1893): 475.

⁸1812-1912 - After a Hundred Years, n.p.

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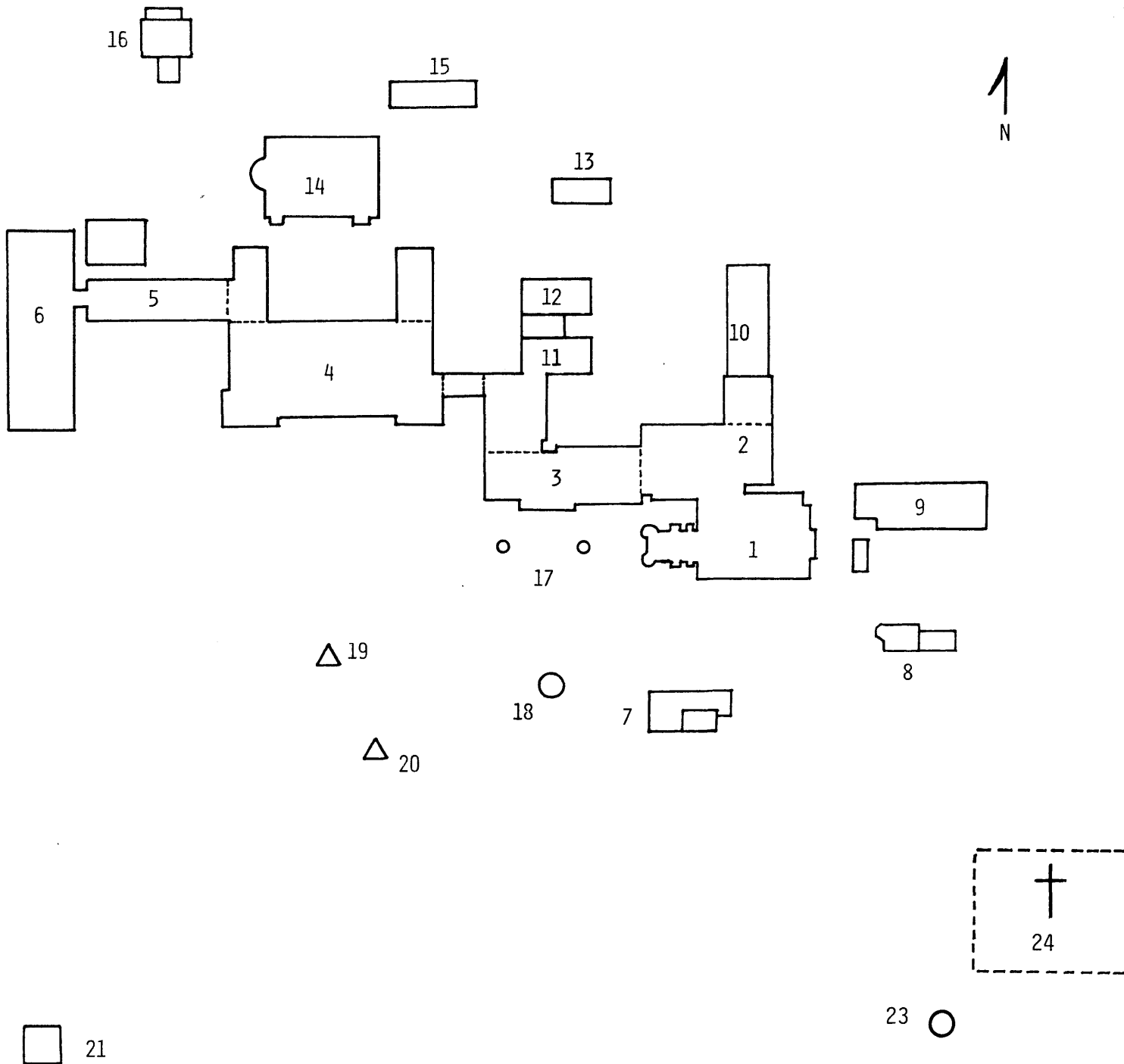
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thence south 500' along the service road; thence 575' east along the north side of the laundry building; thence 700' south southeast going behind the cemetery to the Main Road; thence west 825' along the south side of the road to the point of origin. The boundaries have been drawn to encompass all of the Nazareth College buildings which are fifty years old or older. Omitted are post World War II dormitories and dining halls on the west; a modern sewage disposal plant, garage and mechanics shop on the north, a water filtration plant, modern office building on the east, and Russell Hall on the south.

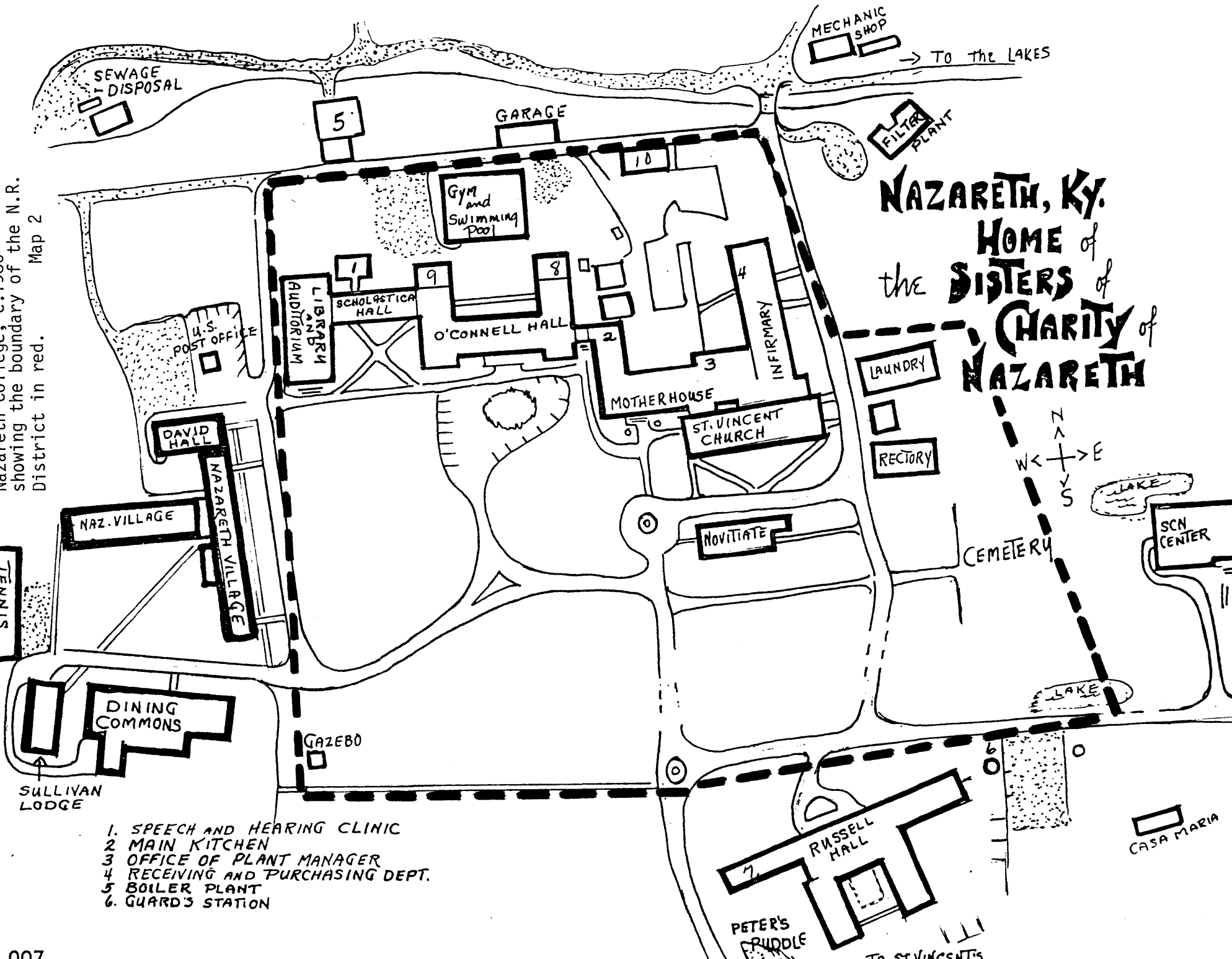
SISTERS OF CHARITY OF NAZARETH HISTORIC DISTRICT



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|----|--|
| 1 | ST. VINCENT DE PAUL CHURCH | 12 | FOOD STORAGE |
| 2 | INFIRMARY | 13 | CARPENTER'S SHOP |
| 3 | MOTHERHOUSE | 14 | IGNATIUS HALL |
| 4 | O'CONNELL HALL | 15 | GARAGE (not in nominated area) |
| 5 | MUSIC BUILDING | 16 | BOILER HOUSE (not in nominated area) |
| 6 | EXHIBITION HALL | 17 | FATHER DAVID AND MOTHER SPALDING STATUES |
| 7 | GUEST HOUSE | 18 | HOLY FAMILY STATUE and CIRCLE |
| 8 | RECTORY | 19 | ANNUNCIATION SHRINE |
| 9 | LAUNDRY | 20 | IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SHRINE |
| 10 | INFIRMARY ADDITION | 21 | MARIETTA SUMMERHOUSE (GAZEBO) |
| 11 | KITCHEN | 22 | OUR LADY SEAT OF WISDOM STATUE |
| | | 23 | HOLY ROSARY SHRINE |
| | | 24 | CONVENT CEMETERY |

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth
 Historic District
 Nazareth College, c.1980
 showing the boundary of the N.R.
 District in red. Map 2



NAZARETH, KY.
 HOME of
 the **SISTERS** of
CHARITY of
NAZARETH

1. SPEECH AND HEARING CLINIC
2. MAIN KITCHEN
3. OFFICE OF PLANT MANAGER
4. RECEIVING AND PURCHASING DEPT.
5. BOILER PLANT
6. GUARD'S STATION