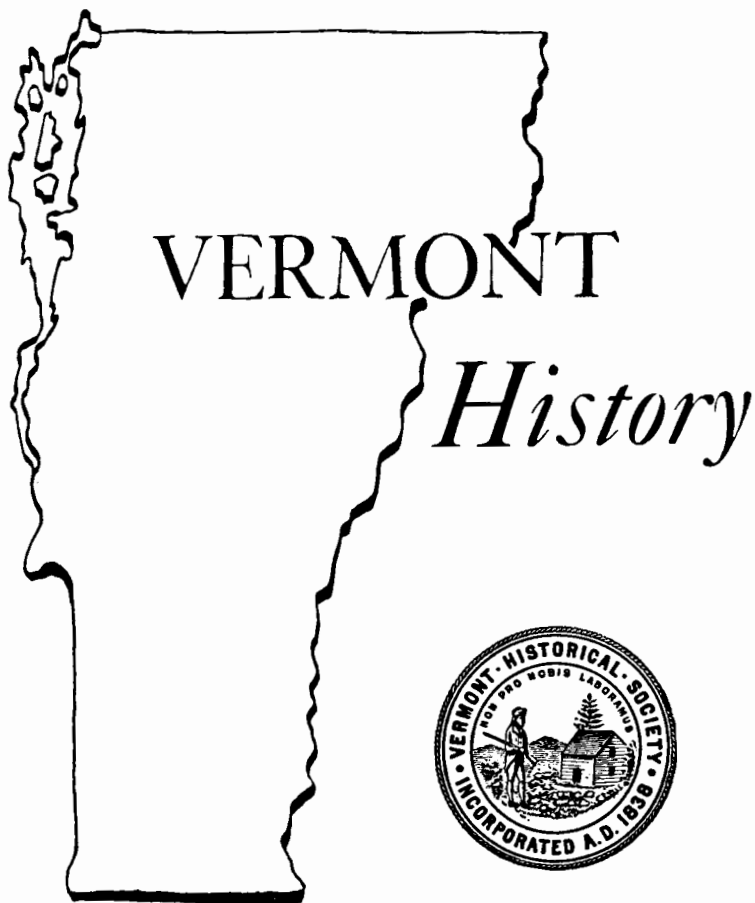


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"The first bishop of the Diocese of Burlington left to [his successor] a well-established school system. In 1892 there were 14 parochial elementary schools . . . serving 3,206 pupils taught by 125 sisters."

The Catholic Parochial Schools of Burlington, 1853-1918

By DAVID J. BLOW

A strong anti-Catholic bias led to the tradition of parochial education that is so deeply rooted in American Catholic history. In the common schools in Vermont and elsewhere Catholic children frequently endured ridicule or abuse because of their religion or nationality. The thoroughly Protestant corps of teachers sometimes used the King James Bible as a textbook, and towns frequently elected Protestant ministers to serve as school superintendents. Catholic leaders and parents wanted their children to receive a Catholic value oriented education, and at substantial sacrifice they mounted a separate school system. That the Catholics of the Diocese of Burlington, according to the Very Rev. Thomas Lynch, the first vicar-general of the diocese, maintained "schools for our children at a great expense to us in addition to paying taxes for the city schools," provided "clear proof" of "conscientious scruples against the public schools."¹

When Louis de Goesbriand became the first bishop of Burlington in 1853, conditions in the diocese did not favor extensive development of Catholic schools. The young and energetic bishop, only thirty-seven years old, nevertheless determined to make a start. Only one Catholic school had existed previous to his appointment. Rev. Jeremiah O'Callaghan, Vermont's first resident priest, founded a small school, taught by laywomen, in Burlington on Cherry Street about 1845. By 1853 it was silent and unused; de Goesbriand had to begin afresh.

In the spring of 1854 de Goesbriand, using money inherited from his father, purchased an old tavern on Burlington's upper Pearl Street. The bishop had invited the Sisters of Providence from Montreal to come to Burlington to operate a home and school for Catholic orphans, which he intended to begin in the Pearl Street house. In 1873 he recalled that he purchased the house on March 27, 1854, the same day he "received from the Bishop of Montreal the announcement that the Sisters of

Providence were willing to come." He paid \$7100 for the house, and "not one cent" came from "the people of the city or Diocese of Burlington."²

The Sisters of Providence came to found "in Burlington a religious establishment which would receive orphaned children of both sexes, instruct the poor youth, and take up the care of the sick at home, visiting the infirm poor."³ For the dual purpose of education and social welfare the Sisters of Providence took possession of the old Pearl Street house and named it St. Joseph's Orphanage and Hospital. In this manner Vermont gained its first group of professional women.

Bishop de Goesbriand then asked the Sisters to establish a school for the children of Burlington's two Catholic parishes, St. Mary's (Irish) and St. Joseph's (French), and for the orphans. A school for small girls opened at once, on September 3, 1854, with eighty-seven girls in attendance. The school was "free for those who have not the necessary means," others paid "at the rate of twenty-five cents per month for beginners and fifty cents for those further advanced."⁴ In December five more Sisters arrived from Montreal, and with their help a school for boys opened with sixty-one pupils.

Four years later the bishop hired a Jesuit-trained schoolteacher, an Irish native from Limerick, Michael Mulqueen. In the fall of 1858 Mulqueen began a school in his home on Cherry Street with ninety pupils. In addition to this, Mulqueen opened the first Catholic bookstore in Vermont. He continued to manage both operations until bad health forced him to cease teaching in the 1870s.⁵

Despite de Goesbriand's efforts, Catholic education made only halting progress until after the Civil War. The diocese had limited resources, and Catholic immigrants came too fast. Only six of the thirty organized parishes formed before 1860 even attempted to establish parochial schools: Burlington (1854); Rutland and West Rutland (1855); St. Albans and Swanton (1857); and Highgate (1858). The schools at St. Albans and Highgate failed within a year; the rest held on with varying degrees of success until they found an order of religious women willing and able to staff them.

Just before the Civil War erupted Bishop de Goesbriand had decided to build a new cathedral in Burlington to replace the inadequate St. Mary's Church, erected 1840-41. The first part of the new structure he planned to build was a semi-detached chapel. This building, St. Patrick's Chapel, was finished off as a temporary school with two classrooms. He expected to move the children of the two Burlington parishes there from upper Pearl Street. But the new structure could not accommodate the 350 children enrolled in the parish school, and some remained in the old house on Pearl Street. "Good Sister Suzanne, who was charged with the first class of girls . . . was obliged to remain in the upper level of a very small and

inconvenient house. There being no other place for her, she had to sit in the doorway, which was the reason why she contracted a malady from which she was never able to recover."⁶ Her class of girls on Pearl Street contained 80 children, while the two other classes in the chapel numbered 270.

During the Civil War two more Catholic schools opened in the Burlington area taking some of the pressure off the makeshift cathedral school. The move down the hill from upper Pearl Street to St. Paul Street created a hardship for those coming from the village of Winooski. "The Irish population of Winooski, finding the distance too great to send their children to the school in Burlington, made an application for Sisters" for a school in Winooski.⁷ Consequently, in 1863 Bishop de Goesbriand made provisions to establish a Catholic school in Winooski. After conferring with the Superior of the Sisters of Providence, Sister Marie du Calvaire took on the task of opening a bilingual school there. In September she rented a hall on East Allen Street for five months to accommodate a class of sixty children. She met expenses by charging twenty cents per month per pupil. This accommodation soon proved too small, and at the end of five months Sister du Calvaire rented an even larger hall on the same street. Even this increased space did not contain her growing school, which reached a total enrollment of 140 by the end of the term.

Stationed at the cathedral in Burlington at this time was a young curate, Rev. Denis A. Ryan, newly arrived from Ireland. Along with the care of the missions in Underhill and Charlotte, he was also assigned to Winooski. Father Ryan took an interest in the work of Sister du Calvaire and spent the summer of 1864 building a schoolhouse in Winooski village. Francis LeClaire, the wealthiest Catholic resident of Winooski, donated the land, and within two months a small frame building stood ready for occupancy. In the first term in this improved situation Sister du Calvaire counted more than 160 pupils. Soon she had an assistant, Sister M. Julie, assigned also from the Burlington convent. This school grew rapidly in the next few years. The Sisters added two more rooms in 1869 to house 200 children, and they also erected a convent building. The enterprise became independent from the Burlington house, responsible only to the Montreal Mother House, and in 1873 de Goesbriand turned the school and convent property over to the Sisters of Providence.

The third school to open belonged to Burlington's French-national parish, St. Joseph's on North Prospect Street. The pastor of this thirteen-year-old parish, the Rev. Hervé Cardinal, knew what difficulties his French-speaking children encountered in both the cathedral parish school and the local public schools. English was the language of the majority in both schools, and the French children had trouble understanding their

English-speaking classmates and in following recitation and discussion. The Sisters of Providence, though French and bilingual, could not devote the extra time to a French minority. Both Father Cardinal and Bishop de Goesbriand agreed that St. Joseph's needed a school of its own.

Their responsibilities for the two schools already in operation and the orphanage overextended the Sisters of Providence. Bishop de Goesbriand turned his thoughts to the religious order headed by his aunt in Paris: the Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Mary. While serving as vicar-general of the Diocese of Cleveland, the bishop had brought some members of this order to Cleveland. Accordingly, he applied to Miss Boucher, Superior of the Cleveland house, for a foundation in Burlington. She made a thorough investigation of the matter and submitted his proposal to the General Council in Paris, which considered it at its meeting of June 14, 1863. The Mother General of the Paris house recommended the Vermont foundation, arguing that "Miss Boucher has the necessary numbers, the parish in which she would conduct the schools is in Burlington itself and is served by a French or Breton priest who ardently desires this establishment. The present resources are small, but," she concluded, "one trusts Providence."⁸ With the approval from France, Theresa Lambert, who became the first Superior in Burlington, set out from Cleveland with three Sisters accompanied by the Cleveland Superior, Miss Boucher.⁹

The Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Mary expected to begin with a school for girls, but the brick schoolhouse under construction on North Prospect Street was not completed when they arrived. Father Cardinal turned over his small rectory to the Sisters where they lived from October to Christmas, 1863. Miss Lambert, not wishing to lose any time, fitted up a woodshed on the parish property as a school, until she could occupy the building the following year. The new schoolhouse, enlarged in 1867, served boys as well as girls. By that time six Sisters were teaching 350 pupils.

All three of the Burlington schools had begun in improvised quarters, but by 1870 the efforts to upgrade them had succeeded, and their facilities equalled those of the Burlington public schools. The establishment in 1868 of St. Francis Xavier parish in Winooski shifted the population center of St. Joseph's parish in Burlington. Although not a serious problem, both the church and school now stood on the extreme east side of the parish. The Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Mary, or the Ladies of Nazareth as they came to be called in Burlington, bought land with their own funds on Allen Street in 1869 and erected a two-story brick school. The first floor contained two classrooms and the second a parish hall. Children over nine years old attended St. Joseph's-on-the-Hill, while the younger ones went to Nazareth School on Allen Street. Until they paid off the debt on this building in 1876, the Sisters charged a tuition of twenty-

five cents per month; thereafter children attended with no charge. In that year the Sisters built an addition to the Nazareth School which increased the number of classrooms to eight, and only the youngest children went to the school on the hill.

The French Canadians believed that only through parochial schools with French as the dominant language would they save their children from the twin evils of demoralization and deCatholicization. The French language represented the old culture, and they wanted the school to transmit their cultural heritage to the children. The problem, however, was the obvious necessity of knowing English to succeed in the United States. The Sisters introduced English language instruction in the parish school at St. Joseph's. They followed the example of Winooski's school and used French in the morning and English in the afternoon. Bilingual instruction became the pattern of education in the French schools of Vermont. The bilingual approach to the problem of preserving the French language resolved the dilemma of trying to maintain traditional values and culture in an alien environment, and the issue of language did not become the major problem for the Diocese of Burlington that it did in southern New England, where the determination to teach French exclusively brought many French-Canadian pastors into conflict with Irish bishops concerned about assimilation into the English-speaking communities.

During the second half of the 1860s Burlington organized as a city. One of the major issues pushing Burlington toward new organization was the schools. The city set about improving its schools and abolished the inefficient district system, placing the independent districts under the central authority of a school commission. Having reorganized the administration of the schools, the city then looked to the improvement of curriculum and teaching. The school commission hired Ellen Burke, a graduate of the Oswego Normal School in New York State to introduce the Oswego method of teaching. She set up a model school in the North Street building and held training sessions. William Henry Hoyt, a Catholic member of the school commission from 1868-69, encouraged the Sisters of Providence and the Ladies of Nazareth to attend the sessions and adopt the method. The Oswego system employed the methods of Pestalozzian object teaching in the primary schools and was much superior to the rote teaching prevailing at the time.¹⁰ Ellen Burke's experiment lasted only a short time. A new school commission in the early 1870s thought her model school cost too much, and she continued her efforts elsewhere. However, a seed of higher quality in teaching had been implanted in both the Burlington public schools and the city's parochial schools.¹¹

When the new cathedral in Burlington began its liturgical life, old St. Mary's Church, diagonally across St. Paul Street, underwent a trans-

formation. A new floor divided the building into two floors, the upper half of which served as a parish hall, while the lower housed the parish school. The former sacristy, a wing to the south, became a parish and school library. The parish did not long have use of the renovated facility, for early in the evening of March 29, 1871, a fire completely gutted the structure. Armed with \$5000 insurance money, the parish began reconstruction at once in preparation for the fall term. The rebuilt building contained four classrooms on the ground floor and a 500-volume library. The second floor was a parish hall, while the third contained a number of rooms to house visiting clergy in Burlington for retreats, conferences, synods, and other meetings. Three hundred children occupied the four classrooms taught by four Sisters of Providence and a layman, John Kennan. Michael Mulqueen still taught a class of boys in his house, but they came to the new school when he retired in 1876.

Boys went to school only when they had nothing else to do. They worked at odd or menial jobs whenever they had an opportunity to earn money. In winter, with fewer jobs available, they attended school. Vermont's child labor laws slowly changed that situation. In 1867 legislation¹² provided that no child under ten years old could be employed and no children under fifteen could be employed more than ten hours a day. The new law also stipulated that any child to be eligible for employment between the ages of eight and fourteen had to attend school at least three months in each year. Although these laws provided no means of enforcement, they probably helped to account for the steady rise in the Catholic school attendance records. In 1888 the Vermont legislature raised educational requirements for children under fourteen to a minimum of twenty weeks a year,¹³ and in 1904 the state raised the minimum employable age to twelve. A year later, in 1905, legislation provided that children under sixteen could not be employed unless they had completed nine years of elementary school.¹⁴

After two decades in the diocese the Sisters of Providence had more to do than they could reasonably manage. The school of cathedral parish alone counted over three hundred pupils. Besides the school for orphans on upper Pearl Street, the Sisters also taught 175 children in Winooski. Seeking help for the Sisters of Providence, Bishop de Goesbriand turned to an Irish order, the Sisters of Mercy at Manchester, New Hampshire. While in Cleveland, Ohio, he had formed a friendship with Sister Francis Xavier Warde, the American founder of this religious order. Now as the head of the Manchester community, she came to his rescue.

Four Sisters of Mercy arrived in Burlington on September 13, 1874.¹⁵ They were headed by a remarkable woman, Sister Stanislaus O'Malley. She was born in Ireland on August 6, 1848, as Margaret, the only child

of Martin and Anna O'Malley. After completing her education in Ireland, she came to the United States and entered Mount Saint Mary's Convent at Manchester, New Hampshire, as a postulant on December 2, 1868. She received her habit as a Sister of Mercy on March 13, 1868, and took as her name in religion, Mary Stanislaus. She professed her final vows in 1871.

As a postulant Sister Mary Stanislaus taught in the boarding school in Manchester. When the Sisters of Mercy attempted a foundation at St. Johnsbury, Vermont, in 1872, she went as local superior until that house closed in 1874. Bishop de Goesbriand specifically asked Mother Warde to transfer Sister Mary Stanislaus to Burlington where she became the local superior. The Sisters of Mercy first lived in small houses on North Street and then on Pine Street. They eventually occupied the third-floor rooms of St. Mary's School in 1875.

By the fall of 1874 the number of students in the Cathedral School had reached 500, and the rector, the Very Rev. Thomas Lynch, determined that the time had come to build a larger structure. The plans for the new facilities included a convent for the Sisters of Mercy on the third floor. The three-story building contained classrooms and a library and cost \$18,000. Mother Francis Xavier Warde came from Manchester for the occasion of its dedication on July 4, 1876. While many Vermonters celebrated the centennial of the United States, Bishop de Goesbriand named the new edifice St. Patrick Convent. On the same day the first profession ceremony of the Sisters of Mercy in Burlington took place in the cathedral when three Sisters took perpetual vows during mass. Everyone had much to celebrate on that Independence Day.

The next day Burlington's Catholic community held an especially memorable ceremony when the Sisters of Mercy in Burlington were formally separated from the Mother House in Manchester and became an independent foundation, the first independent Mother House in Vermont.¹⁶ On this occasion Sister Mary Stanislaus became the first Mother General appointed by the bishop. The election of the Mother General was usually held in the summer with the bishop presiding and the entire community voting. Mother Stanislaus had already held this position for two terms when in 1882 she was elected Superior for a three-year term and re-elected again in 1885. After that no one Sister held more than two consecutive terms. Mother Stanislaus was not elected again until 1890-93, and, after a term off, she served again from 1896 to 1902. In 1914 in the absence of a majority vote, Bishop Joseph J. Rice appointed her Superior for her last term. She died in 1921.¹⁷

Mother Stanislaus, a thrifty and capable Irish woman, was an intelligent

and experienced administrator, accustomed to conceiving of a project, its possibilities, and the means of realizing it. To help support itself and not become a burden on the diocese, the Mother House opened a boarding school in the new convent in September, 1876. The boarding school eventually evolved into Mount St. Mary's Academy.¹⁸ This academy provided young ladies with a systematic and practical education, and it also served as a novitiate for postulants to the order as well as a "finishing school" for girls. The curriculum expanded upon the traditional elementary subjects and placed added emphasis on conversational French, basic Latin, and the fine arts. At an extra cost a student could enjoy lessons in voice, piano, and guitar. Mother Stanislaus divided the academic year into two sessions beginning on the first Tuesday in September and the first day of February.

Mother Stanislaus wanted the academy to provide educational opportunities beyond the primary level. In 1884 she "invited Mrs. Ella Baird, then conducting a private select school in the Howard Opera House to organize, classify and systematize the academy into a high school." Continuing "her policy of keeping the Sisters abreast of all educational advancement, she also engaged Mrs. Baird to teach the Sisters the Herbartian methods then in vogue, as being the best pedagogical practice known to the teaching profession."¹⁹ The Herbartian methods, formulated by Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841), emphasized the importance of relating new concepts to the experience of the learner so that there would be less resistance to appreciation of new ideas. He stressed the need for moral education through experience.²⁰

Bishop de Goesbriand retired from active guidance of the diocese in 1892, and the Rev. John Stephen Michaud, a Burlington native, became his coadjutor with the right of succession. The first bishop of the Diocese of Burlington left to Michaud a well-established school system. In 1892 there were 14 parochial elementary schools in the diocese, serving 3,206 pupils taught by 125 sisters. The diocese had also accepted the challenge of keeping pace with public schools and abreast of new educational ideas. The great concentration of Catholic school attendance was in Burlington and Winooski; development lagged in other parts of Vermont.

By 1892 the diocese of Burlington had nine different Orders of Religious Women (See Table 1). These teaching orders brought a more substantial and permanent character to the parochial schools of Vermont. They introduced a comprehensive system of elementary school teaching. The typical day consisted of two learning periods separated by an hour break for lunch and recreation. The two sessions were devoted to mathematics, geography, writing, spelling, history, religion, and English grammar. The French schools also offered instruction in the French language.

TABLE 1
 Diocese of Burlington
 Teaching Orders of Religious Women
 1854 - 1892

- Sisters of Charity of Providence
 - 1854 - Burlington
 - 1863 - Winooski
- Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Mary (Sisters of Nazareth)
 - 1863 - Burlington
 - 1873 - Swanton
 - 1875 - Montpelier
- Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame
 - 1869 - St. Albans
 - 1879 - St. Johnsbury
- Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary
 - 1870 - Rutland (left in 1883)
 - Sisters of Mercy
 - 1872 - St. Johnsbury (left in 1874)
 - 1874 - Burlington
 - Sisters of St. Joseph
 - 1873 - Rutland
 - 1875 - Brattleboro
 - 1876 - Bennington
- Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns)
 - 1877 - St. Johnsbury (left in 1879)
- Sisters of the Holy Cross
 - 1886 - Vergennes (left in 1907)
 - 1889 - St. Albans
- Sisters of the Presentation of Mary
 - 1886 - Island Pond

Each teaching order had its own organization, usually independent of the diocese, and little communication took place among these different orders. Language and national origin separated many, while each zealously promoted its own tradition and approaches to pedagogy, fostered through its individual teacher training program. Each teaching order tended to think of its schools as a system unto itself. More uniformity in textbooks, curriculum and methods of instruction existed among the schools of a single religious order, even in a national context, than among the schools

of the Diocese of Burlington. While the parochial schools in Vermont compared favorably with the public schools in terms of buildings and professionalism of staff, they obviously needed better coordination.

The Third Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1884 promulgated an important ecclesiastical law when it enacted positive legislation to stimulate interest in the development of parochial schools and provide for a pattern of organization and supervision. Prior to this, efforts concentrated on erecting schools, and "not too much thought was given to the interior organization of the system."²¹ This council made recommendations concerning the establishment of school boards whose members were charged to examine schools and make reports to the bishops. The council also urged that each diocese form a board of examiners to oversee the qualifications of teachers.

Bishop de Goesbriand attended the Baltimore council and sat on the committee which produced the Baltimore catechism; it appeared in various editions well into the 1960s. However, he waited six years to institute reforms in his own diocese. In 1890 he appointed a board of examiners, consisting of two pastors from each of the four theological districts of the diocese: White River Junction, Montpelier, Rutland, and Burlington. The bishop charged them to examine all the Sisters staffing the parochial schools of their districts and issue certificates to those who qualified during July of each year. In practice one of the two priests in each district was French.²²

The following year Bishop de Goesbriand established a diocesan school board consisting of Reverends Patrick Cunningham, Henry Lane, and Norbert Proulx. In their hands he placed the responsibility of unifying the school system by coordinating the curriculum, school texts, and examinations.²³ Among its first actions to bring the parochial schools together, the new board inaugurated the annual Summer Institute at Burlington, where teachers from the entire diocese came to week-long conferences devoted to curriculum and teaching methods. This helped bring the Sisters of different orders together, though isolationism nevertheless remained endemic. The conferences reported on teaching innovations and sponsored addresses by nationally known educators, both religious and secular.

The members of the diocesan school board visited every school in the diocese annually and made various pertinent recommendations. Its work no doubt helped to improve the system, but these nineteenth century, Catholic school boards suffered limitations. Many members could not be released from their respective parish duties to devote the required amount of time necessary to meet increasing demands of school problems.²⁴ In 1898 the board turned over some of its prerogatives to the orders

whose very independence had created some of the problems of coordination. In that year the board reported that it had added to the "subject matter for the teacher examination," formerly prepared by the diocesan school board, "a certain amount of questions on each subject . . . prepared under the supervision of the Superiors of the Rutland and Burlington convents."²⁵

Because of the rapidly growing parochial school system (See Table 2), it proved impossible for the examiners to perform the required annual inspection of schools. Gradually it became the custom to appoint one of the members to fulfill this duty in the name of the entire board. This procedure served as a precedent and a forerunner to the office of superintendent of schools. Eventually the two boards began to disintegrate or simply not to function. In the Diocese of Burlington, they continued with diminishing effectiveness until Bishop Matthew F. Brady appointed a diocesan superintendent of schools in 1943.²⁶

TABLE 2
Enrollment of Burlington and Winooski Catholic Schools
1857-1920

	<i>Cathedral</i>	<i>St. Joseph's</i>	<i>Winooski</i>	<i>Total</i>
1857	150	90	—	240
1860	310	80	—	390
1870	350	200	140	690
1880	550	400	285	1235
1890	570	530	369	1469
1900	583	700	445	1728
1910	583	541	489	1613
1920	756	682	667	2105

Educational development under Bishop Michaud's episcopate came slowly, but changes in Vermont law during the tenure of the Rt. Rev. Joseph John Rice accelerated change. New state laws concerning teacher qualifications, the establishment of accrediting agencies and educational associations all had a very direct effect on the Catholic parochial schools, even though in most cases they were not subject to the laws. Despite the resistance of some clergy, the need for accreditation of most Catholic schools to position their students for admission to higher studies gradually forced the accreditation of all the Catholic schools in Vermont. Accreditation, in turn, required higher standards for the teachers and the improvement of school libraries.

Beginning in 1913 Bishop Rice authorized the religious communities in the state to send about ten Sisters a year to the University of Vermont Summer School to work toward a degree.²⁷ While at first only the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St. Joseph took advantage of this, it established an important precedent. By the 1920s teachers from all the orders in the diocese were pursuing graduate courses at leading Catholic and secular universities, including Loyola University, the University of Montreal, Catholic University of America, Villanova University, St. Louis University, and the University of Vermont. Under Bishop Rice the diocese established minimum standards governing qualifications of all elementary teachers. These included a satisfactory completion of the required normal school training course prescribed by the religious community to which they belonged.²⁸ By the time the first diocesan superintendent of schools assumed office in 1943 all teachers in the high schools had to meet the minimum requirements fixed by the Vermont State Board of Education, which included the bachelor's degree from an approved college and professional educational courses. In addition all Sisters teaching in diocesan schools had to provide evidence of possessing a knowledge of educational laws of the State of Vermont and of the required state program of studies.

In the early years of the twentieth century the Diocese of Burlington had not yet fully addressed the issues of secondary education. The *Official Catholic Directory for 1910*, for example, listed only three academies for boys and six for girls, each with grammar and high school programs, and the listing blurred the distinction between the two levels. The public school system had developed high schools during the late nineteenth century, but Catholics had not set up a parallel structure. They lacked the funds, and the absence of adequate coordination among the individual parish schools frustrated attempts to establish a strong secondary program. The growing compulsory school movement and the opening of more public high schools brought the need for Catholic high schools sharply into focus.

Under Bishop Rice the diocese worked to establish the opportunity for Catholic high school training for all the graduates of the parish elementary schools. In 1906 the Vermont legislature passed a law providing free instruction in high schools for all qualified schoolchildren. The ramifications of this law gradually became clear to Catholic authorities: a Catholic secondary school system now became a necessity, not a luxury. Bishop Rice also understood the declining value of the two-year school, or academy, and emphasized the need for more four-year schools. He designated the existing academies as high school centers open to Catholics from surrounding areas as well as those belonging to the parish in which the high school was located. Each parish paid nominal tuition for its high school students.

The first Catholic parochial high or secondary school opened in Swanton in 1914—St. Ann's Academy. It received accreditation from the Vermont Board of Education that same year and from the New York Regents in 1916.²⁹ Planning for a modern, well-equipped Catholic high school in Burlington began in 1913 when cathedral parish purchased a large lot immediately north of the cathedral facing Pearl Street. The next year the consultors of the diocese voted to authorize the bishop to incur a debt against the diocese of \$60,000 to build Cathedral High School.³⁰ Construction of a \$100,000 building began in the fall of 1916, and the new school opened in September, 1917.

Bishop Rice appointed the first principal, the Rev. William Henry Cassidy, a twenty-nine year old graduate of Laval University and curate at the cathedral. Cassidy proved an excellent choice. He sympathized with the progressive educational movement of the period and agreed with secular educators that the traditional "classical" course taught in the average high school and academy did not provide an adequate preparation for life in the modern world. He began his work by assisting the Sisters of Mercy to reorganize the curriculum of the "grammar school" to prepare students for the new curriculum at Cathedral High School. At the high school Cassidy adopted the elective system, and developed curricula, programs, and sequences of units and credits closely resembling those in vogue in public and other private institutions.

Initially the plans called for the new high school to be exclusively for boys. The authorities thought that Mount Saint Mary's Academy, now relocated on Mansfield Avenue in a building dating from 1886, could absorb all the girls of the Burlington area. To this end Cassidy acquired accreditation with the New York Regents for both Cathedral High School and Mount St. Mary's Academy. However, the plan for two separate schools never reached fruition despite a determined effort. Only St. Joseph's parish sent its girls to "the Mount."

In June of 1917 Father Cassidy set off to spend the summer studying the parochial high schools of metropolitan New York to learn about their methods and management. In New York he was the guest of the Reverend R. J. Tierney, S.J., editor of the Catholic magazine *America*. As a result of this summer of study, Cassidy abandoned the idea of separate boys' and girls' schools. Thus Burlington became one of the first diocesan high schools in the United States to provide a Catholic education for both sexes in the same classrooms with the same teachers.

Bishop Rice introduced another important innovation: tuition-free Catholic high school education. In a pastoral letter he announced that non-resident students at Cathedral High School would be accepted and charged \$36 per year. At the same time he authorized the pastors of their

home parishes to take the tuition monies from the current income of the parish; the families need not pay.³¹

Cathedral High School opened in September of 1917 with a freshman class of sixty students. Each subsequent year a new class entered until the full four-year course was in operation with a total of 130 students in 1920. (See Table 3.) The building, among the most modern in Vermont

TABLE 3
Cathedral High School Enrollment

1920 - 130
1930 - 297
1940 - 334
1950 - 630

at the time, contained classrooms, a library, laboratories, a large gymnasium, an auditorium seating 900 with facilities for showing films, and locker rooms and showers for both sexes. Designed to be a parish social center also, the building had bowling alleys, billiard tables, and a fully equipped kitchen for parish suppers. The parish schools of the City of Burlington were brought into affiliation with Cathedral High School, and their graduates who went on for secondary studies passed up to it after examination. It became a central high school, while remaining an integral part of the parish school system under the control of the head of the diocese.

Thus, by the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, the Roman Catholic Church had established in Burlington and elsewhere in Vermont an alternative school system. The parochial schools achieved the vision of Bishop de Goesbriand and provided for Catholic youth educational opportunities the equal of those in the public school system.

NOTES

¹ *Burlington Free Press*, June 29, 1872.

² Archives, Diocese of Burlington, Burlington, Vermont, Orphanage file, "Notes of value regarding the Providence Orphan Asylum and Hospital," Rt. Rev. Louis de Goesbriand, 1873. Hereafter Diocesan Archives.

³ *Ibid.*, *Chronique de l'Orphelinat St. Joseph*, copy of the original French and an English translation by William Goss, page 2 of the translation.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8. Before 1864 free tax-supported schools did not exist in Vermont. There had been various systems of raising money for schools and teachers in the state, but practically all of them placed the burden upon the parents of children in school. Lorenzo D'Agostino, *The History of Public Welfare in Vermont* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1948), p. 182.

⁵ *Burlington Free Press*, November 11, 1941. "Many Vermonters Took Pride in the Fact they were educated here under Michael Mulqueen," by Vincent A. Alden.

⁶ Diocesan Archives, *Chronique de l'Orphelinat St. Joseph*, Goss translation, p. 17.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸ *Ibid.*, *Livre de Conseil* 19 Nov. 1859 - 25 June 1866, meeting of June 14, 1863, p. 52. Copy in Historical File, Religious Orders. The original is in French, Goss translation in English.

⁹ *Ibid.*, de Goesbriand diary, p. 21. All attempts to learn the first name of Miss Boucher have failed.

¹⁰ Gerald L. Gutek, *A History of the Western Educational Experience* (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 220-221.

¹¹ William Henry Hoyt Papers, Diary, February 7, 1869, Special Collections, Bailey-Howe Library, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt., *Burlington Free Press*, December 11, 1868 and January 9, 1869.

¹² State of Vermont, *Acts of 1867*, No. 36; and No. 35.

¹³ State of Vermont, *Acts of 1888*, No. 9, Sec. 154.

¹⁴ State of Vermont, *Acts of 1904*, No. 55 and *Acts of 1906*, No. 52, Sec. 1.

¹⁵ Diocesan Archives, de Goesbriand diary, p. 79. Bishop de Goesbriand indicated five, but all other sources state four.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹⁷ *Burlington Free Press*, November 9, 1921.

¹⁸ *Vermont Catholic Tribune*, June 12, 1962.

¹⁹ *Our Sunday Visitor*, May 18, 1947.

²⁰ *Columbia Encyclopedia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), p. 880.

²¹ Sr. M. Laurina Kaiser, *The Development of the Concept and Function of the Catholic Elementary School in the American Parish* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1935), p. 64-65.

²² Diocesan Archives, Pastoral Letter, February 25, 1890.

²³ *Ibid.*, March 17, 1891.

²⁴ John M. Voelker, *The Diocesan Superintendent of Schools: A Study of the Historical Development and Functional Status of His Office* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press, 1935), p. 11.

²⁵ Diocesan Archives, Annual Report of the Diocesan School Board, 1898. The Superiors referred to were the Sisters of St. Joseph and Sisters of Mercy, the only orders having independent headquarters in Vermont.

²⁶ Arthur M. Leary, "The Place, Function and Present Status of Diocesan School Board," M.A. Thesis, Catholic University, Washington, D.C., 1955, p. 17.

²⁷ Diocesan Archives, Bishop Rice Papers, Bishop Rice to Mother Agnes, Mt. St. Joseph, Rutland, September, 1914.

²⁸ *Our Sunday Visitor*, September 25, 1949, p. 2A. For example, when they were well into middle age, teachers like Sister Margaret Mary Markham studied at the Catholic Summer School at Cliff Haven, N.Y. and under Dr. S. S. Curry of Boston at the University of Vermont Summer School.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, June 15, 1947, p. 4.

³⁰ Diocesan Archives, Pastoral Letter, July 25, 1917; and *Vermont Catholic Tribune*, Feb. 28, 1959.

³¹ Cathedral Parish *Monthly*, August, 1917.