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Saint Benedict's Buildings, Part 1

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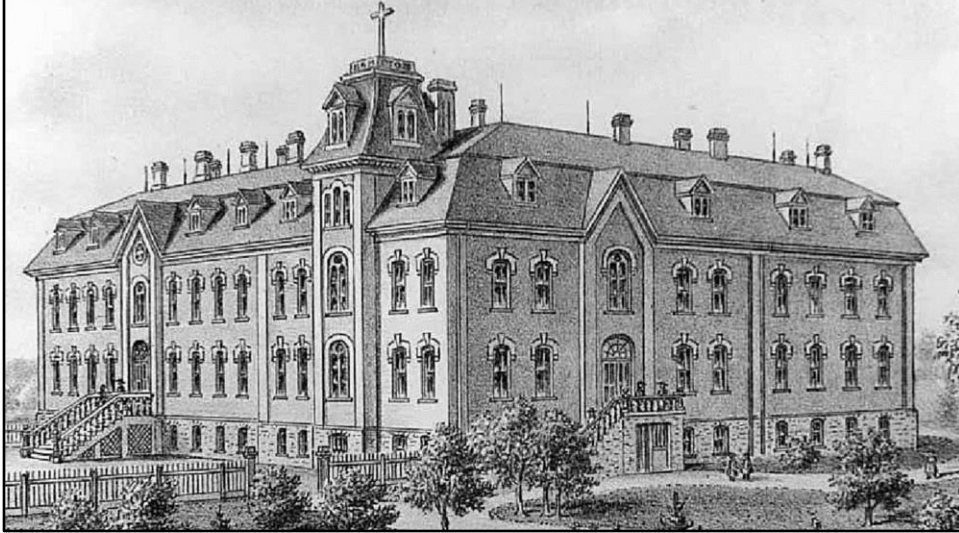
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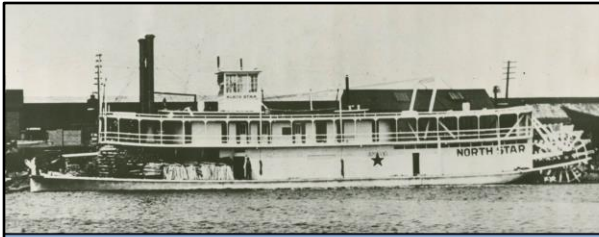
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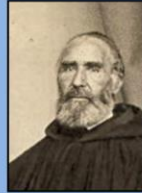
Benedictine Women on the Prairie: (a St. Ben's) **Building History, Part 1**





The six Benedictine women (4 sisters and 2 candidates) travelled from St. Marys, Pennsylvania, by rail and wagon to Pittsburgh, then by boat down the Ohio River to St. Louis, then up the Mississippi to St. Paul.

They were escorted from St. Paul to St. Cloud on the North Star riverboat by Demetrius di Marogna, OSB, the first Prior of what later became St. John's Abbey



The riverboat got stuck two miles below St. Cloud. As noted in a letter by S. Willibalda Scherbauer, "We left [the boat] on the 4th of July about 3:00 in the afternoon and were accompanied by the Rev. Fathers Demetrius, Benedict, and Bruno to St. Cloud."

This gave them the opportunity to stop by the "little monastery" for some monastic fare after three days on the boat without any food. (It cost too much on the boat.)

The North Star Riverboat brought the sisters to St. Cloud

(*With Lamps Buning*: Letter to Boniface Wimmer, p. 24; photo, p. 52e)



Fr. Demetrius found them a room for 8 days in an unfurnished garret (attic) while the priests “wrestled with the problem of what to do with them.”

He arranged for them to rent John Tenvoorde's “boarding house and entertainment hall” (far left) on the corner of St. Germain Street & 5th Avenue. This “first convent on the Midwest frontier” was rented for ten months.

The public schools would only hire lay teachers, so the sisters gave private lessons in music, art, and fancy needlework, and took in boarders.

With Lamps Burning, p. 27-34

John Tenvoorde's “boarding house and entertainment hall”

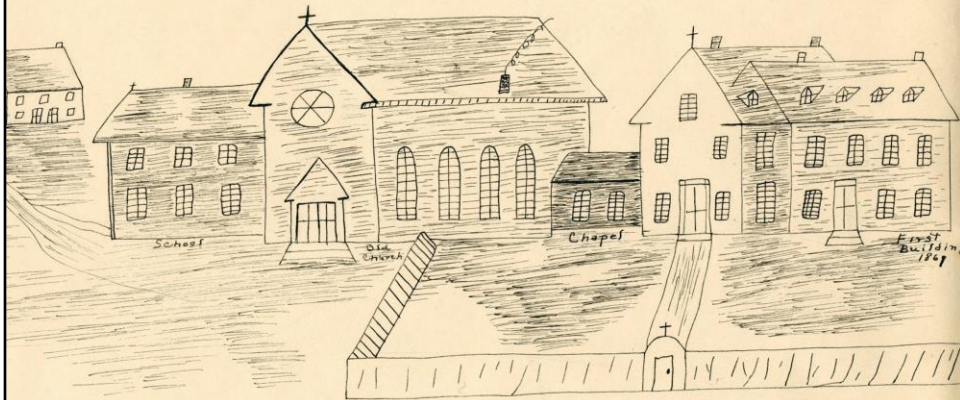
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The following year they were able to move to the renovated St. Mary's Church and Convent.



St. Mary's Church/School/Convent, St. Germain & Hanover (8th Ave.) St. Cloud
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/8> SBM.01f

1863-1869: A new home in St. Joseph



This complex became the home of the Benedictine sisters when they moved from St. Cloud to St. Joseph in 1863. (Sketch from memory by Sister Paula Bechtold, OSB)

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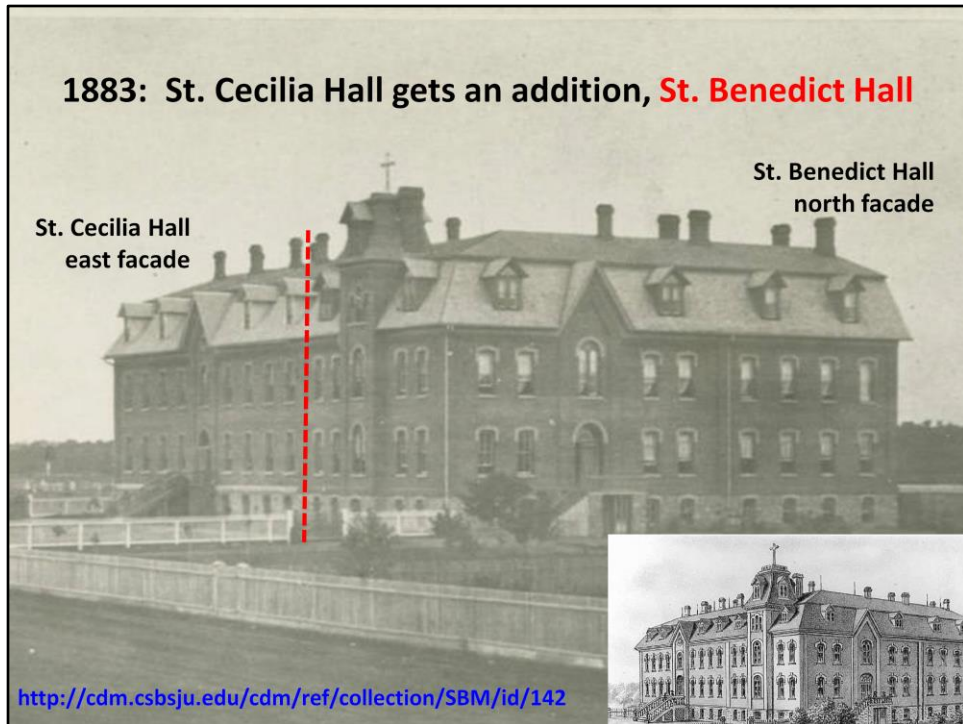
First Benedictine convent complex (1863) in St. Joseph, MN

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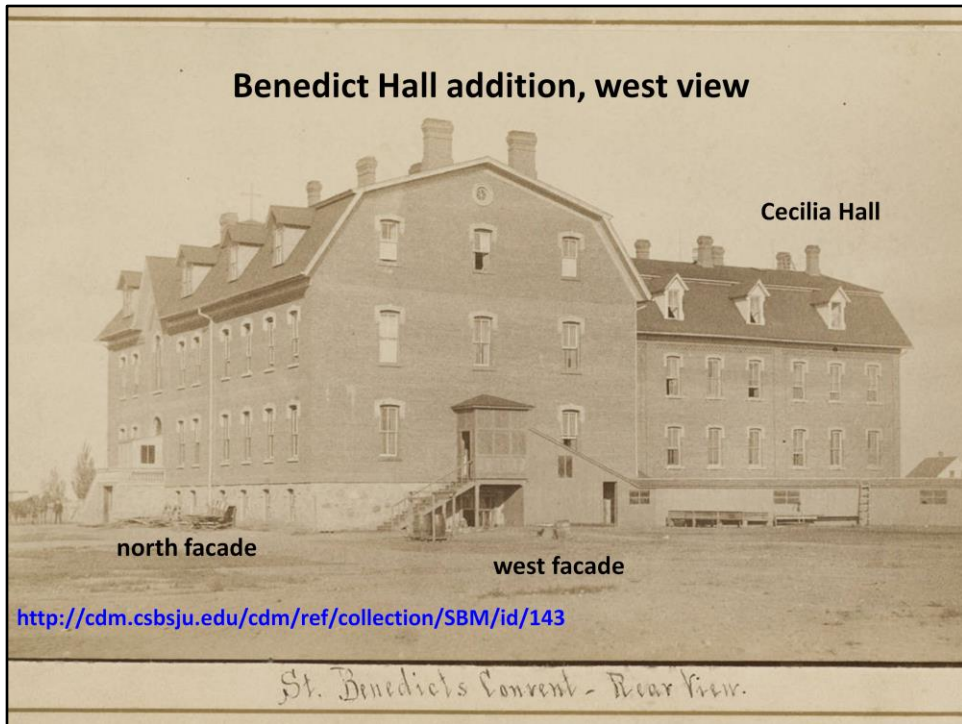
In 1886, the log church and school were completely destroyed by fire. A new convent/academy had already been built in 1881-1882; with its completion, the name was changed from St. Joseph's Convent to St. Benedict's Convent. SBMA; *With Lamps Burning*, p. 59-62, 70-72, 120-122.



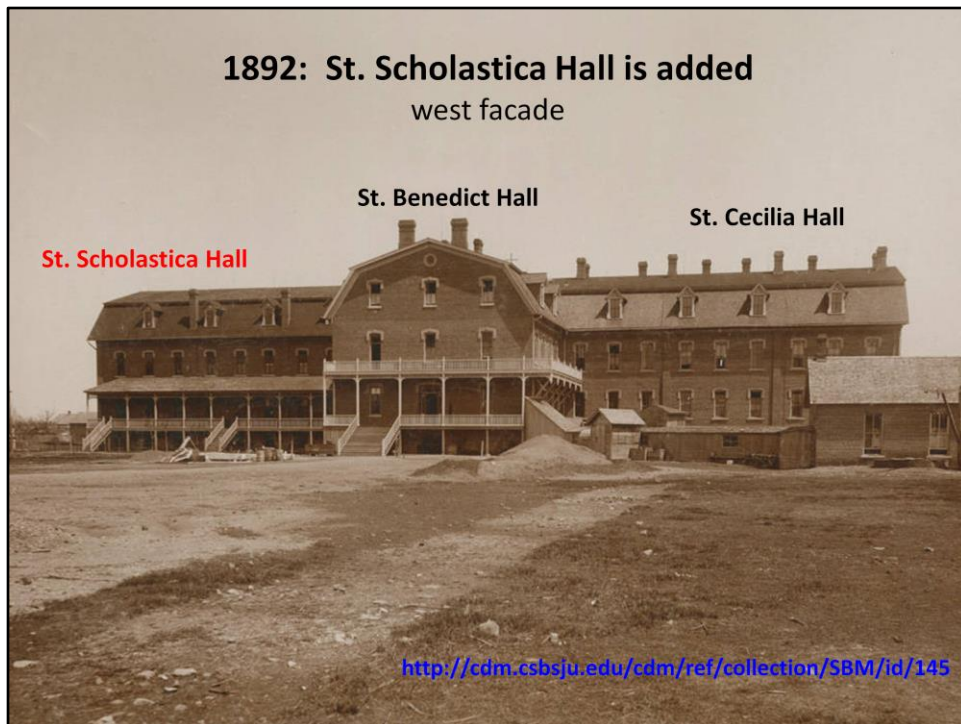
St. Benedict's Convent and Academy, built in 1881-1882: Cecilia Hall



1883: St. Cecilia Hall gets an addition, St. Benedict Hall
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/142>



1883: Benedict Hall is added to the north end of Cecilia Hall



Rear view of the three wings of St. Benedict's Convent in 1892

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/145> SBM.11a03d

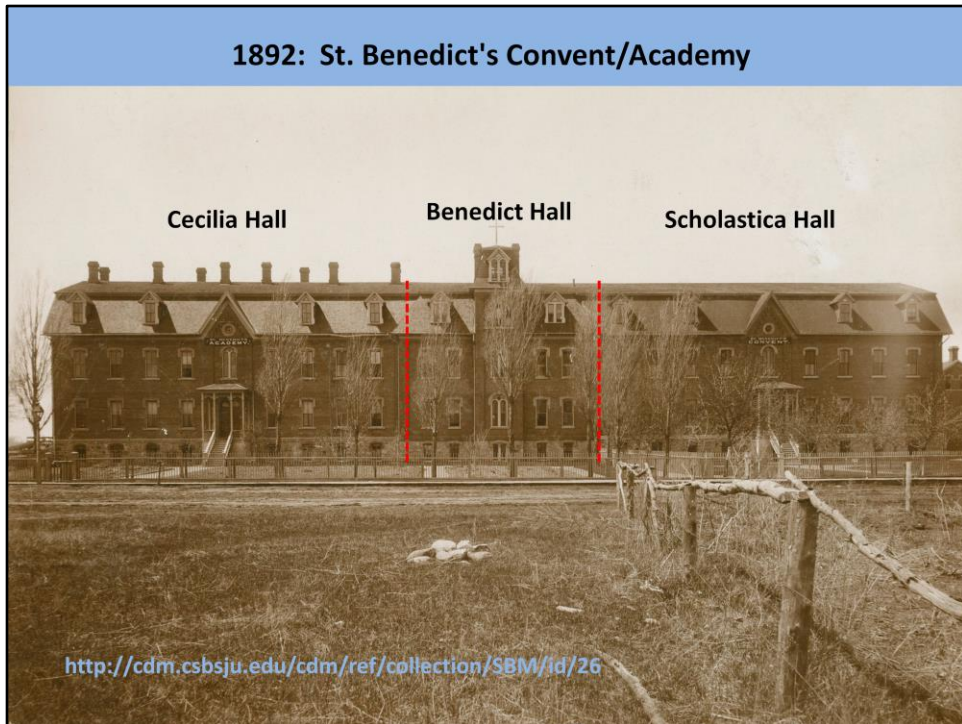


Saint Benedict's Monastery (interior North Court, view from west)
<http://puka.cs.waikato.ac.nz/cgi-bin/cic/library?a=d&d=p505.3>
Photo in 2006 by the Archivist



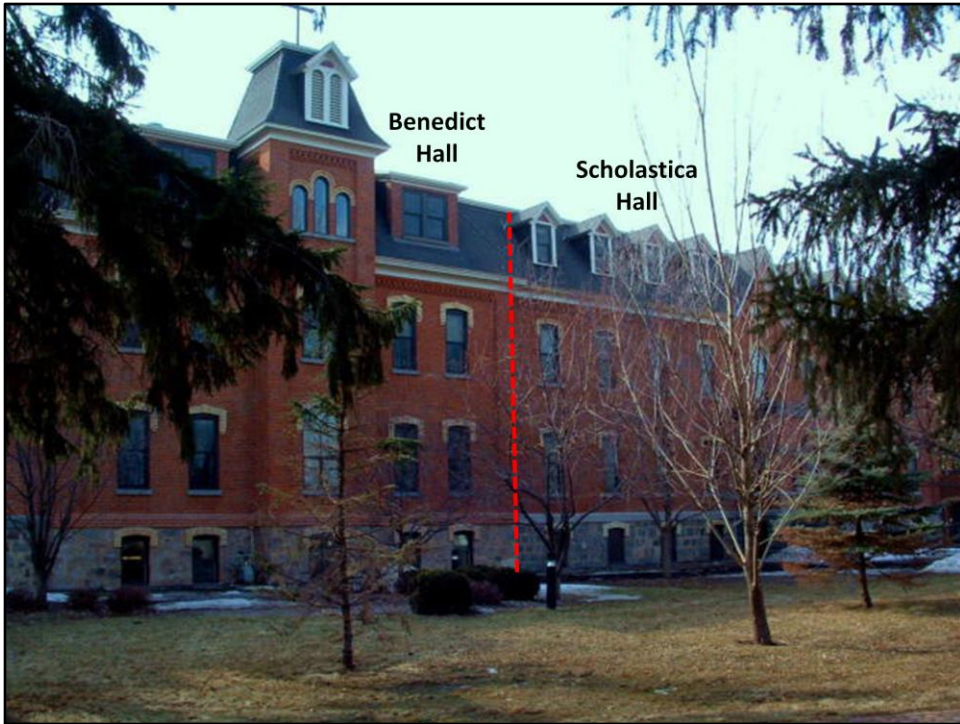
Front view (east entrance) of the three wings of St. Benedict's Convent in 1892
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/144>, SBM.11a03c:

“With the addition of Scholastica Hall in 1892, St. Benedict's Convent had three large wings -- Cecilia Hall (left), Benedict Hall (center) and Scholastica Hall (right)” The third wing, Scholastica Hall, was built primarily for a large chapel, a community room and convent offices. The original plan (in 1911) was that Sacred Heart chapel would be built in front of this convent so that its entrance would have been on the east facing the city street (now College Avenue).”



St. Benedict's Convent/Academy (Cecilia, Benedict, and Scholastica Halls) in 1892
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/26>, SBM.03a

“In 1892 the Convent was enlarged with the addition of St. Scholastica to the northeast corner of St. Benedict, resulting in an elongated ‘T’ configuration. St. Scholastica was designed to mimic the original St. Cecilia in scale and detailing; it is nine bays long and has the same type of window openings, although the dormers are smaller and have gable roofs with only one double hung window. Centered in the façade is a balconied, one-story, flat roof porch. The gable end has a series of double hung sash on each level, while the rear elevation is essentially the same as the façade except for the porch.” --From National Register Report, "St. Benedict's Convent and College Historic District" (1989).



Saint Benedict's Monastery (view from the east)

<http://puka.cs.waikato.ac.nz/cgi-bin/cic/library?a=d&d=p505.1>

Photo by the Archivist



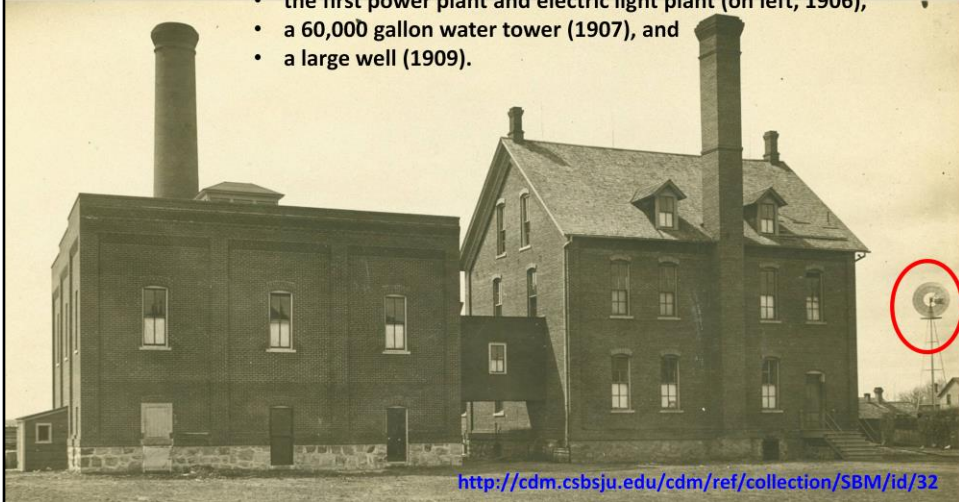
St. Benedict's Convent/Academy campus in 1909
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/34>



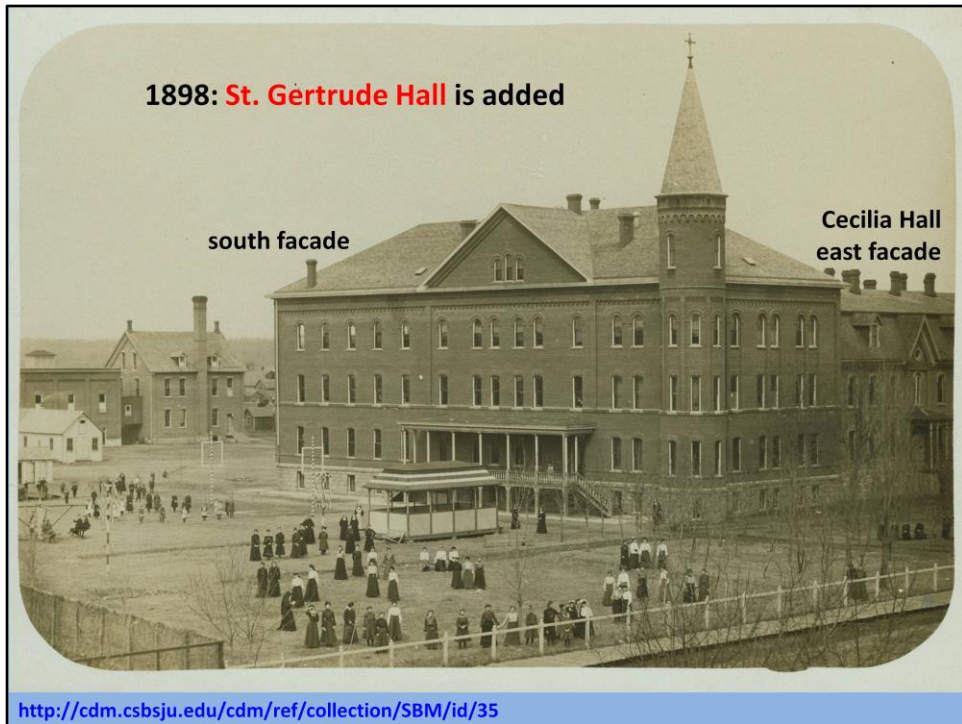
<http://puka.cs.waikato.ac.nz/cgi-bin/cic/library?a=d&d=p413.4>

Like Benedictines in the Old World, the sisters tried to be self-supporting:

- They maintained a farm, gardens, orchard, vineyard, chickens, turkeys, and bees.
- The laundry (on right) was important not only for the sisters and students, but also for the monks of St. John's Abbey for whom the sisters did washing and sewing.
- New developments were added to meet the needs of the growing population of St. Ben's and to help supply the village of St. Joseph, including:
 - the first power plant and electric light plant (on left, 1906),
 - a 60,000 gallon water tower (1907), and
 - a large well (1909).



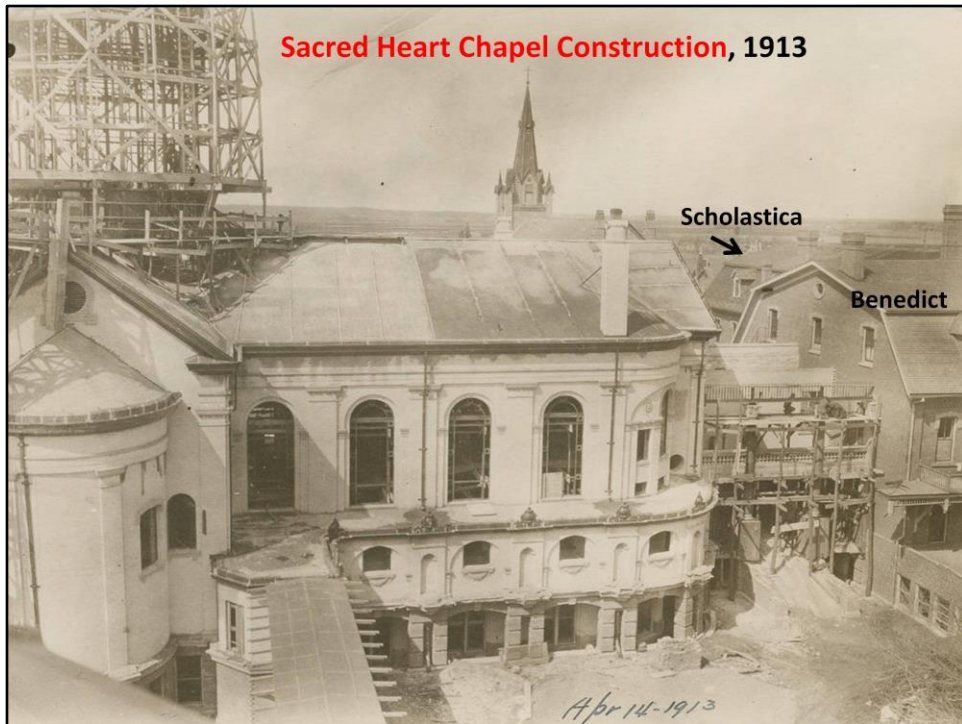
Power Plant/Laundry/Windmill, St. Benedict's Convent, St. Joseph
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/32> SBM.03i



St. Gertrude Hall is added in 1898



Future sites of the Sacred Heart Chapel (west of the convent's Benedict wing) and St. Teresa Hall (north and west of the academy's Gertrude Hall)
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/150> SBM.11b01



Sacred Heart Chapel construction, 1913

The dome, the link between the chapel to the convent, and the south cloister walk connecting the chapel to Teresa Hall were constructed simultaneously. This photo is taken from the roof of Teresa Hall and gives a clear view of the circular cloister walk that surrounds the chapel (April 14, 1913 photo)

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/180>

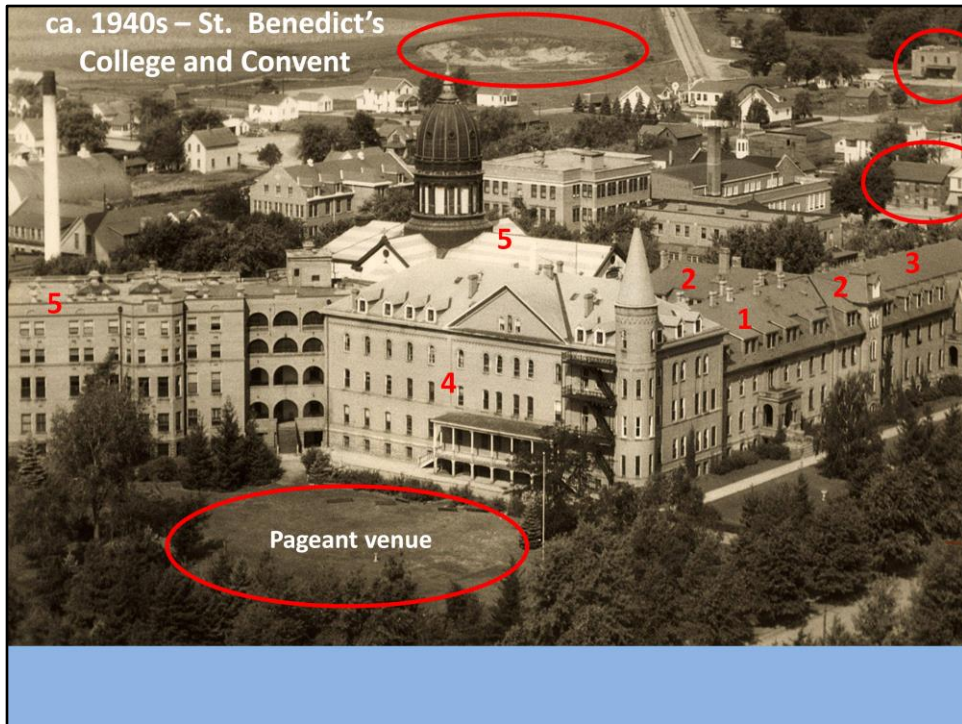
1914: St. Teresa Hall is added

3rd & 4th Floors: the Rotunda (aka "The Ro") - dorm rooms around a skylight
2nd Floor: auditorium/study hall
1st Floor: museum and classrooms for art & sewing
Ground floor: gymnasium (games had to be played around the pillars)



1914: Teresa Hall is added

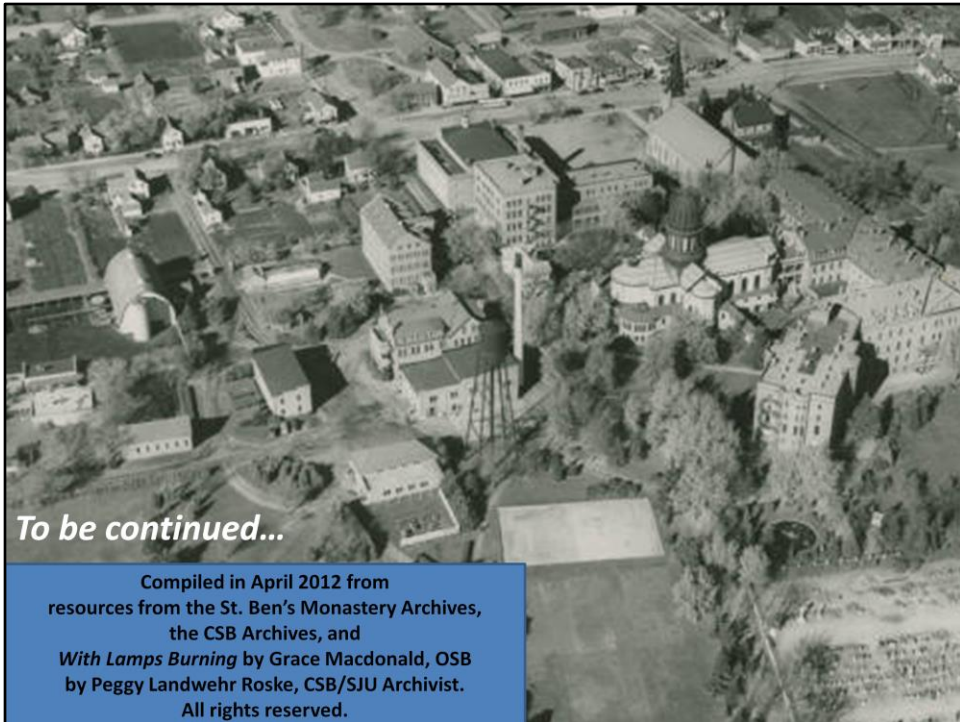
Photo from *With Lamps Burning*, p. 180b.



Convent/College joint facilities, ca. 1940s

Also shown: Pageant venue, future St. Joe Memorial ball park, Linneman's/Loso's stores, & the Creamery

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/503> SBM.19b01



To be continued...

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Aerial view of campus, ca. 1940s, and credits
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/cdm/ref/collection/SBM/id/189> SBM.11b39