The cover depicts the arrival of the seven sisters and the two orphans at the wharf in St. Martinville as described in the chronicles of March 7, 1881. This subject will be the central theme of the official commemorative poster by Phyllis Weitzel.
THERE WAS A TIME...

The Mercy Order in St. Martinville
1881-1981

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St. Martinville, La.
March 1981
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SISTERS OF MERCY WHO SERVED IN ST. MARTINVILLE

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance and cooperation of Sr. M. Hermenia Muldrey and Sr. M. Denise Fortier in the compilation of this booklet.
Excerpt from the March, 1881, Chronicles of the Convent of Mercy, St. Martinville, Louisiana

March 1, 1881--

Mardi Gras--Sisters Mary Philomena [Butler] and Mary Dolores [Generally] left St. Alphonsus Convent of Mercy [in New Orleans] en route for St. Martinville, La. to assist in establishing a branch of the Order of Mercy in this place after many invitations from the Reverend Pastor, Father Jan, and his pious congregation, who promised to give us deeds to the place.

The Morgan Ferry left the wharf at the foot of Elysian Fields about noon, and in a half an hour landed near the depot of the Morgan Line on the opposite [bank of the Mississippi River]. There were at least twenty passengers, among whom we will mention Miss Eleanor Richardson, a schoolmate of St. Mary Frances Vitteman, and a person whom we supposed was a parson from his conversation, but who introduced himself as Dr. Moss of Victoria, Texas, a dentist; there is a striking resemblance between him and Freddie Knapp.

The Sisters, the young ladies, and the dentist were in the same car; the dentist seemed very anxious to speak to us, and at last broke the silence by asking if we had any Catholic reading. We passed him a copy of the Catholic World and an Ave Maria. He expressed himself very grateful and passed the next two hours in perusing their contents; he had a copy of Milner's Controversy with him which belonged to Marcella Robinson, whom he was sure we knew. After taking a slight repast and beverage from his bottle, he went into the next car; while [he was] there, a friend of his emptied the bottle, which caused a titter in the car.

At New Iberia he took out our luggage for us and then said Good Bye. The young lady bade Adieu at Morgan City, where they were keeping Mardi Gras. At Gretna one poor fellow was nearly hoisted on the horns of an ox with great detriment to himself, his blue swallow's and his yellow beaver.
INTRODUCTION

The Sisters of Mercy have been in St. Martinville for so many years that it is difficult to imagine the community without them. There was a time, however, when the establishment of a Convent of Mercy in St. Martinville was nothing more than a seemingly impossible dream in the hearts of two dedicated and determined people.

Sr. Mary Xavier Durand, the first Sister of Mercy from St. Martinville, was distinguished by her grace, sweetness and intelligence; but, above all, by her deep desire to have a Convent of Mercy in her hometown. Although St. Martinville was considered a most unlikely place for the order to establish a community, Sr. Xavier, through her quiet energy, prayers and sacrifices, was to realize her dream in less than ten years after she entered the religious life. Unfortunately, this remarkable woman did not enjoy the fruits of her labor very long, for she died on December 3, 1881, only nine months after the arrival of the first sisters.

Rev. Ange Marie Felix Jan, the pastor of St. Martin of Tours, was a man of outstanding education and brilliant intellect who was also completely dedicated to the dream of bringing the Mercy order to this parish. Pere Jan had made several requests to the motherhouse for the establishment of a convent on the banks of the Teche and even offered to provide a "desirable house" as their home. It was not until March 1, 1881, however, that the sisters began the two-day journey from New Orleans by ferry boat, railroad car and steamboat, that brought them to the "pink house" as the first convent was called.

The details of that journey and the important events in the daily lives of the sisters during the succeeding years are recorded in a journal, "The Chronicles of the Sisters of Mercy." The following excerpts from that journal help to illustrate the warmth and humor of those pioneer sisters under circumstances which could be best described as less than pleasant.
At New Iberia we were met by Sr. Mary Xavier (Durand)’s friend, Mr. Fontelieu, at whose house we were hospitably entertained by himself and daughter; the other members of the family being in the city for the Carnival. The train reached New Iberia at seven p.m.

March 2--

Ash Wednesday—went to early Mass in the pretty little church of New Iberia and had the happiness of receiving Holy Communion. The ashes were distributed at the nine o’clock Mass. There were seven persons including ourselves at the early Mass; but the High Mass was well attended.

At 9:30 we set out for St. Martinville. We had a strong Jersey Wagon, a fine pair of horses, and a Colored driver. Owing to the dreadful condition of the roads, he had (to proceed in) a round about direction, which lengthened the distance from eleven to fifteen miles.

The plantations along the road, though bare, presented a picturesque appearance. They were alive with men and women plowing, hoeing, cleaning and planting; the bad weather and the severe winter will make the crop rather late next season.

In a lonely part of the road our horses took fright at some old clothes and rags fluttering in the wind from an oak tree by the roadside. Only for the Mercy of God, who gave the driver a cool head, courage, and a strong arm, we would not have escaped with whole bones. After ten minutes he succeeded in getting the animals under control and then made a detour so the fluttering of rags would not be seen. We can assure you we said a fervent Deo Gratias. At another place we were obliged to get out of the carriage and walk the length of a square holding on by the fence rails, to keep us from falling into the ditch; then we had to make a big jump, which was anything but graceful.

The wind was high, and we had to keep our veils fastened else they would be torn to shreds on the pointed wire fence. Without any more adventures except coming across carcasses of cows, mules, calves, and pigs which had perished from the cold and which
made our horses shy, we reached St. Martinville about one p.m.

There we were most cordially received by Mrs. Mouton and her family. When the greetings were over, we went to our rooms and got off the mud and made ourselves presentable. When we went downstairs, we found Fr. Jan waiting to see us. He expressed great delight and gratitude at our coming. He remained more than an hour telling us matters and things and making inquiries about the Bishop and Priests of New Orleans.

After dinner we made our visit to the Convent where we found a Widow and a Virgin who had been attending to the cleaning of the place, assisted by Father Jan's two boys, John Battle and Joe Stanton. We went through the place and decided how we would arrange things. We remained about an hour, and then returned to Mrs. Mouton's and wrote our first account to Reverend Mother. [Austin Carroll].

March 3--

Mass and Holy Communion offered for the home intentions and thanksgiving for the benefits received. After spiritual duties etc., we went to the Convent and arranged it, as well as could be expected, in conventual style. The Virgin and the Widow made some blue curtains for the front door and assisted as well as they could. Father Jan paid us a visit, sent his boy to help, and expressed great satisfaction at all he saw. In the afternoon he called again and said we should not fast. Some of our pupils called also.

On our return to Mrs. Mouton we were handed a postal which made us very happy. We answered it immediately and gave our second account of the place. We received letters from Reverend Mother [Austin], Mother Mary Teresa [Gourrier], and Sister Mary Xavier [Durand].

March 4--

Weather very cold. Mass and Holy Communion as usual for home intentions. Put some more things in order at the Convent; fitted up an oratory where we said prayers. The kitchen table is the altar. Went on our first sick call--Mrs. Halphen, who has not left her room for six months; she has eight living children, many of whom will be our pupils. The poor
lady is a pious member of the Church. Our visits seemed to afford her great consolation. On our return home we met Fr. Ian, who told us that he had secured a house for the school and gave us an altar for our oratory. He is quite anxious lest the Sisters will have difficulty in getting here. This evening we were made glad by receiving letters from Rev. Mother [Austin] and Mother M. Teresa [Gourrier], and Sister M. Baptist [Brophy], for which we rendered our most heartfelt thanks and which we will answer at our earliest opportunity. The same evening we dispatched our fourth epistle to Reverend Mother [Austin Carroll].

March 5--

Weather still very cold and wet. After Mass we went to the Convent as usual and put up beds for the night, then received several persons who came to make school arrangements for their children. Among the number was an old gentleman who introduced himself as Dr. Hart. He is very tall and thin, with gray hair and, if I am not mistaken, he looks like the picture of Mrs. Partington's son, Ike. The old Doctor settled for his Lucy and bade us Good Morning!

At four p.m. Pere Jan in full pontificals blessed the convent. Mrs. Mouton had a grand supper prepared for our Sisters whom we expected, but no Sisters came. Children, young ladies, old ladies, and ladies of various ages went down to the wharf when the boat landed to meet them, but had to return without them. A postal from Sister Mary Carmelita [St. Amand] explained the delay of their arrival.

March 6--

Mass at seven o'clock, three decades of the Rosary for the Conversion of sinners. After first Gospel, Pater and Ave for the living and another with the De Profundis for the dead, then the pastoral letter; after Mass the De Profundis again. At ten o'clock High Mass, three decades of the Rosary again; after first Gospel, prayers and pastoral concluded with the De Profundis and the Angelus.

Returned to Convent, wrote letters, had some of our spiritual exercises. At six p.m., Acts of adoration, thanksgiving, public examination of conscience, Confiteor, and acts of Contrition, faith, hope and
Charity, after which the whole Rosary and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

No Sisters [arrived]--letters from Reverend Mother (Austin) and Sisters Mary Raphael (Woolfolk), Baptist (Brophy), Louis (Farrell), and Madeleine (O'Connell).

March 7--Feast of St. Thomas of Aquin*--opening of the school. Weather very bad--storm of rain, wind, thunder and lightening.* Noon--weather fair and one p.m. --arrival of our dear Sisters; a happy reunion. At three Mrs. Mouton sent a grand dinner which was relished by everyone. Had a jolly recreation. Eight House very poor--one pair of blankets and three colored quilts for eleven people. As it is cold, we cover ourselves with our baskets and valises. Great fun at recreation. Postal from Sister Mary Xavier (Dunand).

Our seven Sisters, viz. Sisters Mary Paula (Sebastian), Mary Augustine (McGuire), Mary Frances (Vittman), Mary Carmelita (St. Amand), Mary of Mercy (Wiendahl), Sisters Gabriel (Lavin), Sister Maggie (Borcy) a postulant, and two little Orphan girls* reached this place at two o'clock.

Troubles followed them in setting out; they were to leave New Orleans Saturday morning the fifth, but were put off from starting--first on the steamboat on the first (of the month), then did not get away from New Orleans until twelve o'clock on the fifth. Reverend Mother (Austin Carroll), Mother Mary Teresa (Gourrier), Sisters Mary Cecilia (Moran) and Liguori (Duncan) and Sister Mary (Briscoe) came to the Ferry, and left us about ten o'clock; but we never left Algiers before two o'clock.

When we reached the depot, the crowd was as great trying to get into the cars as it had been leaving the Ferry; the poor Sisters were literally carried on by the crowd; there was not even room to look back. Each Sister had fears not only of losing her bundles, but of being put into a jelly--poor Sisters M. Paula and Gabriel, who carried a big covered basket with twenty pounds of coffee, several dozen bananas, and Sister Maggie's (postulant) cap, were not able to see or hear each other; although they *indicates spelling as it is in the journal
felt the weight. At last they got out of the crowd onto the wharf and to the [railroad] car Depot at Algiers—but we tagged along slowly and were not the first served. Every car, some twenty, was filled—one was pointed out to us as being empty; we got pushed up the steps, but once in could not move either way; we found a dense crowd within and another in the rear.

At last we got extricated and went in search of another car. We got into a plain looking one, [which] proved to be the emigrant train—Scotch, English and Germans. We felt out of place but resigned, thinking God had intentionally sent us amongst the poor. We commenced to make acquaintances, gave medals, etc., petted the children, gave them bananas, and tried not to see the inconvenience of things, but were far, very far, from comfortable. When the Conductor came around, we inquired for our trunks, but were not comforted by him or the baggage Master who would not leave his car to answer our queries. All our remonstrances did not touch the Conductor either.

A big bucket with water and a quart measure, which was passed around (among the) emigrants, was the only convenience in that line—and one of which we did not avail ourselves. We watched the emigrants eating, drinking milk, and dressing and undressing babies all day—at five o’clock, after many stoppages and disappointments, we were in Morgan City and remained there until six o’clock—no possibility of getting a lunch and everyone very hungry and tired. Still no news of trunks—every inquiry brought new disappointments.

At Franklin the cars were moving [fully half an hour] back and back, then forward a little and back again. A big fat man sitting opposite to us was devouring bread and ham, which our Sisters beheld with increased hunger and our two poor little Orphans were nearly crying from the pangs of hunger. Sr. M. of Mercy [Niendalh] looked and asked for the man who passed around the cakes, etc., but the delay of the train was so great that every crumb had been sold. Our poor little Orphans were crying for hunger. Things were not improving—all queries failed in giving us any hopes for our trunks or in the hour of landing or being expected in New Iberia. We passed
Jeanerette in moonlight, but could not send a telegram, this being the last station before New Iberia. Reverend Mother had desired us to do so, but the train did not stop, it being the through train to Texas.

Many inquiries were made concerning Hotels in New Iberia; but no one seemed able to give the desired information. We resigned ourselves to our fate, thinking we would have to pass the night at the Depot in New Iberia. But to our great joy, when the train stopped to put us out, everyone else being destined for a further point, a friendly voice called for the Sisters of Mercy, a man being sent by the Sisters of Mount Carmel, who had been out to meet us by the morning train, and being disappointed, had called on Mr. Burke, who was there like an Angel, lantern in hand, to conduct us to the Convent. A long mile trudging through lanes and uneven pavement, brought us to the convent gate at twelve o'clock p.m. Mr. Burke and his Negro put down our bundles and set to ringing for admittance. After what seemed like half an hour one of the nuns came out, evidently greatly startled. Seeing who were the intruders, she welcomed the poor travellers, but seemed surprised to see seven sisters instead of three and two Orphans. After some delay we were marched out of their parlor and up the stairs into a large room containing six beds, great walking around to procure sheets, blankets, chairs, etc., etc. At last we got settled and tucked in our Orphans as snugly as possible and raised a sheet to divide them from our beds. Hungry, tired, sleepy, disappointed, etc., we all slept soundly on the beds soft with moss and fresh straw, and were up in time for Holy Communion, which we received before Mass at New Iberia Church.

On our return, whilst waiting for breakfast, we walked up and down under a large tree and said our Rosary. When the meal was announced we were not sorry, but here again a cross. (The Sisters having expected only three) there was not sufficient on the table to feed nine hungry persons. All were too hungry to help themselves, lest the temptation was too great not to take more than her own share. We all looked at each other, wondering who would make
the first attack. Well, we all did and left some in the dishes for manners. Then we walked and talked with the good Religious until time for High Mass. The Church is quite spacious but plain; the music, both instrumental and vocal, was excellent. Our dinner was in no way more abundant than the breakfast, even though we knew the poor little Sisters must be emptying their larder.

In the evening we went to Vespers and assisted at a Negro funeral whilst waiting for supper. One of the kind Sisters went out with Sr. M. of Mercy (Wiendahl) to look out or inquire for the missing trunks, but got no news or satisfaction. Two of our Sisters got lost in going home from Mass. We all suffered fatigue, but were glad to get into bed to sleep it off and to be up at first sound of the boat’s whistle, which came at one the next morning. One of the kind nuns got a lantern and sent their man to carry our bundles to the boat just the other side of the Bridge. Captain Burke came to the rescue, but there was [little] room on the boat; so we all put our bundles, etc., etc. in the middle of the room and sat down [on them] tired and sleepy.

When we got to Fausse Pointe, the boat landed and Father Coughlin came on board to invite us to visit his grand church, or rather, the foundations. He must have seen how tired we were for he invited us into his house, to a room which served as parlor and kitchen. The boat having moved upstream, we had to walk to the next landing a few acres off. On our way we were invited into another home, where we were not only kindly welcomed, but a servant soon appeared with a huge waiter upon which were glasses of homemade cherry bounce. Nearly all tasted, but the Postulant emptied the glass to the silent amazement of the Sisters. Our two little Orphans, Katie and Nelly, got a glass. They enjoyed the beverage because they had never tasted the like. We had Scarce-ly time to make our obeisance when the whistle of the boat urged us on. Good Father Coughlin left us at the water’s edge. We were scarcely in the cabin when a cabin boy announced breakfast, which all enjoyed greatly. Some of us were so hungry that we had to restrain ourselves for religious decorum, etc,
When we were about eight miles from St. Martin a terrible rain storm burst upon us, and greatly retarded our arrival in St. Martin; but Deo Gratias at two o'clock p.m. we were opposite the landing. Great disappointment--no one to meet us, and without kind Captain Burke's assistance, we had to carry all our bundles, even the green coffee, ourselves. Our Sisters wisely kept aloof from the wet which we went through courageously--so glad to get with our own. We did not heed mud, nor cold, nor the absence of the welcome we had expected. Our little Convent, though small and dilapidated, was not noticed--so happy were we to be with our Sisters, dear Sisters Mary Philomena (Butler) and Mary Dolores (Generally) who were waiting for us. We made a little visit to the chapel--the kitchen table covered with a sheet and six glass candlesticks and a small brass crucifix--but still our hearts were lightened. We opened for the occasion a little bill until such time as we found a bag big enough to hold our treasure--a few dollars Sr. M. Philomena had and two which Sr. M. of Mercy had. We had sufficient with cheese and bread, and it was not necessary to invite anyone. We soon had all that was needed although there was no news of our trunks. The venerable pastor, Father Jan, called on us early in the evening and expressed great delight at the arrival of the good Sisters. We had a fine meal prepared and sent to us by kind Mrs. J. Mouton, the sister of Sister Mary Xavier (Durand). It was a meal we all did justice to.

March 8--
Mass and Holy Communion--usual intentions in thanksgiving for safe arrival of our sisters. Jolly recreation at meals. Many called to pay their respects and make arrangements for children. Father Jan sent a box of candles and a box of sugar. Mrs. Landry gave curtain material for dormitory and chapel.

March 9--
Several new pupils--arrangements for others--other prospects encouraging. No tidings of trunks. Sent a telegram to Morgan City concerning them--answer returned, they were not there. Sent another telegram to Mother M. Teresa--no answer. Father Jan
paid his respects twice today. No news from home.

March 10--


March 11--

Mass and Holy Communion--Thank God. Weather wet and dreary. St. Martinville a skating rink. Sr. M. of Mercy quite a proficient skater. Skated on Main Street--her feat discussed by the village before night. Preparations for our first confessions in French. Translation of the Examination of Conscience and forms of confession into that beautiful languo. Arrival of Father Jan--Sister M. Augustine has the gift of tears. Sister Gabriel answered "yes" to all the Pere asked her. Sister M. Frances told all her French sins in English everyone else spoke French. Several little presents among which was a "sally."

March 12--

Larder empty, purse empty. Called on our spiritual advisor from whom we borrowed fifty dollars. Two of the colored delegation called on us. Agreed to open the school [for colored] March 21st. Rented two rooms in house opposite convent for that purpose. Sister Gabriel overjoyed with the present of a clothes pole. Mass and Holy Communion. Sisters busy washing. Got in our piano today. Had to go after it ourselves--no one polite enough to go to warehouse to have it removed. Colds are quite the order of the day. Sr. M. Philomena very busy with school.

March 13--

Mass is quite the same. No meat today for the butcher said he had to go and kill some calves. Kate and Nelly opened their eyes in amazement when they saw oxen drawing a wagon and thought they were cows. Several colored boys for catechism.

March 14--

A dog walked into our refectory and helped himself to a piece of codfish in the safe which was put away for Friday dinner. Katy is besieged going to market and has to hold the basket over her head to prevent the dogs from snatching the meat from her. She is sometimes quite bewildered.
March 15---
Weather cool and rainy. Mass as usual very late. Easter communion already quite numerous. The piety of the people of this parish is truly quite edifying.

March 16---
Requiem Mass at 10:00--some sisters were present this being the only Mass of the day and got home at twelve exactly. We were the only white persons present as the ceremony was for some colored person. School as usual--a few new scholars. Children really good and anxious to please sisters. Joe Stanton, Fr. Jan's boy, came over to cut wood for us.

March 17---
Mass as usual--nothing to remind us of St. Patrick, dulness all around. Many new flowers on altar and a letter from Rev. Mother tonight.

March 18---
Nothing much to notice--everything the same as usual. Mrs. Louque and Mrs. Delahoussaye come often to see Sr. M. Dolores and are anxious to assist in every way.

March 19---
This house is no whispering gallery. No one can be heard knocking at front door. We have appointed Sr. Maggie portress. An old Negro is still saving a half cord of wood. Little Maggie cleaning washboards. We are anxious for groceries--what we get here is poor and dear, St. Joseph.

March 20---
Sr. M. Augustine keeps our little chapel very nice--always fresh flowers. Had to get a man to drive down hoops around cistern. Cost $1. Little room back of refectory used as a pantry, tool room, refectory for our two little orphans. Also for umbrellas and rubbers--in one word it is a real "curiosity shop." Mass and Holy Communion about 7. Got in pots and crockery today--some buckets, hoe, rake and axe.

March 21---
Our first music scholar, Miss DeBlanc, daughter of Judge and Mrs. Alcibiades DeBlanc--quite a person of distinction. School for colored children opened. Three were present--of the number, Senators Vavasseur

March 22--
Mass as usual. Fr. Jan is quite fatherly--often inquires what he can do for us--sends his boy to do little jobs. Colored school slim--only five. We are striving to clean the house. There's a smell of dust all about and lots of rain just before it. Sr. M. of Mercy has her second or third slip (fall).

March 23--
Sr. M. Dolores not very well but quite busy. Everyone charmed by her. A Miss Bienvenu has presented herself as a postulant. Several others speaking but afraid to move, to leave friends, etc. Groceries received today and placed in our grand store-room. It is about our grandest room. Sr. asking for a recreation in there--anxious for a candy pulling, but no means as it is Lent. Spiritual exercises same as usual. Weather very cool and windy.

March 24--
Mass, etc. as usual. Sr. M. of Mercy made bookcase of empty boxes placing one above the other. Little community room quite full. Weather cool--no surplus of covering unfortunately. Our sisters getting along quite well with their French confessions. Sr. M. Augustine has a cry before and after--thinking of home I suppose. Dogs are quite troublesome. Horses ditto.

March 25--
This is the land of flowers--we get them every day from school children. Mass late as usual. Got a present of roses for use in chapel and some nice vegetables. Weather cool and windy. Carpenters busy enclosing portion of gallery and moving a certain little building from its present conspicuous position.

March 26--
Sisters very busy as schools are increasing. Even Sr. M. Frances has to assist. Several ladies called to see about placing their children as boarders. Sisters gone to see Mrs. Halphen who is quite low. Several presents of eggs and vegetables from colored friends. Two little orphan boys adopted by Mrs. Hadley called to see Sr. M. Dolores. God has been good in giving the poor children a good home.

March 27--

Sr. M. Philomena and M. Dolores gone on a sick call--a Mrs. Lacoeur who told a doleful tale about a cat setting fire to her bed. This amusing tale was the cause of a merry recreation at night. Sr. M. Paula quite sick--had to send for Dr. Lynch. No change in hours of Mass. Instructions in church on First Communion---Sisters will open and take charge of both colors, both sexes next Sunday. Over ninety on rolls.

March 28--

The two men employed for repairs got through today--the cost was about $30. Fences, gates, ditches, galleries, rooms and basement all in bad condition. Dogs travel around in grand security. When ordered to go away, merely stare at one which caused one little girl to say they did not understand English. When they learned to say "passe" the canines were more obedient. Every morning and evening cows, horses and mules, etc., had to be driven off of premises. The fruit trees have consequently suffered terribly. Very little of orange trees are left after severe winter. Flower garden like the rest--sadly neglected. Mass as usual, very late and very slow.

March 29--

Mass at usual hour about 7:00 a.m. A sister has always to remain at home--we take it by turns as much as possible. Our little girls are too inexperienced to be depended on for anything. There is no end to the blunders they make when sent to market or on errands. Employed a man to clean up around the place. Sisters had to search up a man to attend to the cistern which was leaking. Great fear of being out of water.

March 30--

Mass as usual and Holy Communion. Devotions at
church in the evening. Carpenter came this morning for our tabernacle and steps to make remainder of altar. Price is exhorbitant--$30. Hope something will turn up later to our advantage that we will not be obliged to put out such a sum, for we have it not being already in debt to Rev. Father Jan for $50 loaned to us to assist in getting necessaries. Weather still cold and frosty.

March 31--

Sr. M. Philomena very busy closing accounts. Disappointed in not getting books from home. Called in the evening on Mrs. Durand and Mouton. All (are) joyful, but expecting many difficulties as much has yet to be done.

FOOTNOTES

1 Refers to a blue swallow-tail coat and yellow beaver hat.
2 Mrs. James E. Mouton, nee Heloise Durand, sister of Sr. M. Xavier Durand.
3 Refers to the sisters' daily prayers, such as meditation, psalms of the day, rosary and spiritual reading. Spiritual duties and spiritual exercises are used interchangeably.
4 Mrs. Joseph Oscar Halphen, nee Zoelina Chretien, who died later in 1887.
5 Fernand, Marie Therese, Joseph Oscar, Michel, Andre, Louise Fanny, Pierre Robert, Marie Noelie and Pierre Albert Halphen. A daughter, Marie Zoelina, was deceased.
6 Daughter of Dr. Fredrick W. Hart and Elizabeth Johnston. Graduated in 1888. Noted in local newspaper as first female to be employed as a store clerk. Employer was Stanislaus D'Abadie.
7 Probably the public wharf at the foot of Port Street.
8 Scheduled time for rest and relaxation.
9 Nellie Dawson and Katie Bowlen.
10 Although the writer of the chronicles is never clearly identified, it is obvious that at this point the writer changes and is one of those in-
involved in the second journey.

11 Probably Patrick Burke, captain of the steamboat Chambers, who is referred to elsewhere in the chronicles.


13 Silence at meals, except on special occasions, was the customary rule for religious until the 1960's.

14 Skating was very popular in the 1880's. The first issue of "The Messenger" of Feb. 27, 1886, comments "Skating is all the rage these days" and notes that Mr. Felix Olivier opened a skating rink that week.

15 Probably a salamander stove—a small portable stove.

16 Jefferson C. Vavasseur and Victor Rochon.

17 Amelie Bienvenu who later became Sr. Martina.
CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

March 2, 1881 - Arrival of first sisters in St. Martinville.
March 4, 1881 - First sick call or home visit.
March 5, 1881 - Blessing of the "pink convent."
March 7, 1881 - Donation of convent building and property to Sisters of Mercy by Pere Jan. Opening of "Convent School" for girls.
March 21, 1881 - Establishment of Colored school.
April 16, 1881 - Arrival of first boarder.
April 30, 1881 - First Mass in convent chapel.
September 5, 1881 - Opening of boys' school in Attakapas College building--corner Washington and Honore streets.
March 24, 1882 - Purchase of Martial Bienvenu home to house girls' school.
April 6, 1882 - Girls' school moved to Bienvenu house.
November 8, 1884 - College building (present parish hall) moved to church square. Sr. M. Liguori Duncan was the director of the boys' school.
November 10, 1884 - Blessing of boys' school by Pere Jan.
September 1, 1885 - Newly constructed colored school opened.
May 8, 1892 - Sisters highly honored by invitation to staff public schools of St. Martinville, but did not accept.
January 30, 1895 - Solemn dedication of new convent which was built in 1894. The building, located just behind the original pink house, provided accommodations for boarders.
March 28, 1895 - Sisters moved into new convent.
July 30, 1895 - Pink house razed to provide a nice lawn for the boarders.
October 2, 1896 - Old school house sold to Mr. T. Labbe.
October 3, 1896 - School furniture moved to new school, called St. Philomena's.
April 12, 1899 - Sisters purchase Old Castillo Hotel for use as girls' school.
1924 - Mercy High School receives state accreditation.
1926 - St. Joseph Negro school closed.
1927 - Boarders' department dropped.
1952 - Construction begun on new elementary school.
May 1, 1953 - Solemn dedication of elementary school building.
March 2, 1956 - Pageant commemorating the 75th jubilee of the Mercy order in St. Martinville.
1963 - Construction of the cafeteria and classroom annex near the elementary building and a library and science laboratory near the high school.
1968 - Restoration of interior of the convent completed.
March 22, 1981 - Community celebration commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Mercy order in St. Martinville.
SISTERS OF MERCY FROM ST. MARTINVILLE

Sr. Mary Xavier Durand
Sr. Mary Martina Bienvenu
Sr. Mary Mercy Bienvenu
Sr. Mary Consuelo Guildry
Sr. Mary Ursula Barras
Sr. Mary Claudia Hebert
Sr. Mary Anna Fournet
Sr. Mary Stanislaus Guildry
Sr. Mary Irene Broussard
Sr. Mary Redempta Schwan
Margaret Schwan was an orphan who had been adopted by the Sisters. She was a 1920 graduate of Mercy. d.12/3/1960.
Sr. Mary Dymna Judice
Sr. Mary Cecilia Voorhies
Sr. Mary Winifred Lassaigne
Gertrude Lassaigne. Daughter of Lucien Lassaigne and Marie Broussard. b.7/13/1901.
Sr. Mary Dolores Duchamp
Sr. Mary Clare Voorhies
Sr. Mary Austin Bienvenu
Verna Bienvenu. Daughter of Terville Bienvenu and Almee Abadie. b.1/15/1907.
Sr. Mary Lucie Voorhies
Sr. Mary Danile Voorhies
Sr. Mary Anacletus Lassaigne
Sr. Mary Davida Duchamp
Sr. Mary Roland Bienvenu
Graduates of Mercy High School

1917
Madeline Barras
Jeannne Delassus
Genevieve Delassus
Irene Bienvenu
Deulah Fournet
Lillian Duchamp

1918
Marie M. Durand
Verna M. Durand
Louella Broussard
Marie E. Duchamp

1919
Marguerite Baslin
Margaret deMaloire
Therese Olivier
Rhona Resweber
Anne Bell Morais

1920
Genevieve T. Hebert
Corine C. Bienvenu
Margaret Marie Fournet
Pauline Marie Duchamp
Terese Marie Durand
Sophie Inez Mariaist

1921
Grace Barras
Margaret Bienvenu
Stephanie Durand
Lucie Durand
Juanita Mariaist
Gertrude Thomas

1922
Etise Barras
Rowena Fournet
Loula Mae Lovas
Evelyn Dugas
Theresa Duchamp

1923
Lawrene Duchamp
Odette Bienvenu
Claudia Voorhies
Della Guirard
Enola Durand
Flavie Blanchard

1924
Lilly Rumore
Thelma Winchell
Vivian Pellerin

1925
Frances Voorhies
Agnes Barras
Cecile Barras

1926
Enola Durand
Verna Bienvenu
Mildred Dessens
Louise Generelly

1927
Lucille Guirard
Ada Miller
Isabelle Blanchard
Neil Broussard

1928
No graduates

1929
Mary H. Durand
Verna M. Durand
Louella Broussard
Marie E. Duchamp

1930
Marjorie Baslin
Margaret deMaloire
Therese Olivier
Rhona Resweber
Anne Bell Morais

1931
Genevieve T. Hebert
Corine C. Bienvenu
Margaret Marie Fournet
Pauline Marie Duchamp
Terese Marie Durand
Sophie Inez Mariaist

1932
Grace Barras
Margaret Bienvenu
Stephanie Durand
Lucie Durand
Juanita Mariaist
Gertrude Thomas

1933
Etise Barras
Rowena Fournet
Loula Mae Lovas
Evelyn Dugas
Theresa Duchamp

1934
Lawrene Duchamp
Odette Bienvenu
Claudia Voorhies
Della Guirard
Enola Durand
Flavie Blanchard

1935
Lilly Rumore
Thelma Winchell
Vivian Pellerin

1936
Frances Voorhies
Agnes Barras
Cecile Barras

1937
Enola Durand
Verna Bienvenu
Mildred Dessens
Louise Generelly

1938
Lucille Guirard
Ada Miller
Isabelle Blanchard
Neil Broussard

1939
No graduates

1940
Mary H. Durand
Verna M. Durand
Louella Broussard
Marie E. Duchamp

1941
Marie C. Durand
Phyllis J. Durand
Anna Mary Foti
Gertrude N. Gauthier
Sophie J. Guidry
Madeline Lapourouse
Roberta M. Martin
Irene Anna Melancon

1942
Cludia Guidry
Clair Cecile Durand
Rose Mary Melancon
Phyllis L. Fournet

1943
Mary Lois Barras
Marguerite C. Fournet
Elsie Mae Lasseigne
Mildred L. M. Martin

1944
Rose Aimee Roy
Agnes Borns

1945
Joelvyn Aubry
Camille T. Bienvenu
Jeanne C. Bienvenu
Constance B. Guirard
Yola A. Lavoilette
Mable T. Melancon
Gertrude M. Robertson

1946
Renée Aubry
Barbara Feyt
Lorraine Chataignier
Elizabeth Durand
Lilly Belle Guirard
Regina Mariaist
Verna Mae Metzel

1947
DoTeres Bienvenu
Kathleen Broussard
Doris Chataignier
Rita Labbe

1948
Doris Barras
Leola Bienvenu
Micky Bienvenu

1949
Doris Barras
Leola Bienvenu
Micky Bienvenu

1950
Diane Marie Bienvenu
Sisters of Mercy who have served in the town of St. Martinville, Louisiana

Sisters Mary
Agnes Fortier
Agnes Marsh
Alberta McDermott
Alphonse Louis
Ambrose Dyer
Anacletus Lasseigne
Anastasia Cochran
Angela Henegan
Anita M. DeSalvo
Anna Fournet
Annunziata Bistes
Augustine McGuire
Austin Bienvenu
Barbara Provost
Benedicta Williams
Beatrice Breaux
Bernard Bernard
Betty Ann Elner
Borgia Holton
Camillus McDermott
Caravelita St. Amand
Caroline Dietrich
Caroline Macready
Catherine M. Keller
Catherine O'Regan
Catherine Vaughn
Cecilia Moran
Cecelia Voorties
Clare Voorties
Claudia Hebert
Clément Anderson
Clément Fian
Clothilde Bayard
Colette Baker
Consuelo Guidry
Columba Calman
Cornelia Miniken
Cyril Morlas
Damian Burke
Davida Voorties
Davida Duchamp
d'Chantal Farley
Denise Fortier
Denise Wetta
Diane Kinnie
Dolores Duchamp
Dolores Generaly
Dymna Judice
Elaine Brein
Elizabeth Vanko
Emmanuel Fortier
Evelyn Fournet
Francis Vittetoon
Francesca Kissgen
Frederick Becker
Fredericka Turnbull
Gabriel Lavin
Gabriel Lynch

Sisters Mary
Gerard Clarke
Genevieve English
Gentile D'Olive
Gervas Geffner
Gonzaga Albert
Gregory Finan
Helena Curtin
Helvise Norton
Henry Simonen
Hermonia Golden
Hyacinth Fox
Ignatia Schell
Jeanne Houlioux
Joseph Bassett
Juliana Heffernan
Kicran Grogan
Laura Garcia
Letitia Owens
Ligouri Duncan
Lorraine Ingram
Lucia Voorties
Lucretia Feth
Madeleine Thebeaux
Marcella Hannigan
Margaret Dicke
Margaret M. Labashte
Martha Bienvenu
Marylin Duvall
Mel Gordy
Mercedes Chandler
Mercey Wiendahl
Michael Peres
Mildred Murray
Patricia Clarke
Patrick Fanning
Paul Fenerty
Paula Sebastian
Perpetua Donnies
Philip Rogers
Raphael Wootolk
Remedpe Schwan
Regis Quealy
Robert Tracey
Roland Bienvenu
Rose M. Foret
Scholastica Ward
Sebastian Klein
Stanislaus Guidry
Stephen Costello
Teresa Fox
Teresina Kearney
Thecla Fanning
Thecla Kurtz
Thelma Crotty
Theresa H. Dupreau
Ursula Barras
Victor Allain
Vincent Labry
Wenceslad Lasseigne
Xavier O'Connor
ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Phyllis Malczyk Weitzel, who received her training at the Chicago Art Institute and the University of Chicago, works out of her studio in Lafayette, Louisiana, where she has resided with her husband and two daughters for the past eleven years. Mrs. Weitzel's work includes water colors and oils as well as many silk screen festival posters.
1982
Stacy Arton
Franca Barras
Cherie Bernia
Gina Bienvenu
Danielle Blanchard
Renee Bonin
Ellen Boudreaux
Jackie Boudreaux
Becky Broussard
Julie Delahoussaye
Faye Dore
Annette Durand
Elaine Fournet
Julie Fournet
Ginger Kately
Liz Lasseigne
Teri Ledoux
Rosa Saddler
Maria Thibodeaux

1983
Janise Anthony
Camille Bienvenu
Robin Bertrand
Monique Blanchard
Claudia Boudreaux
Linda Bourda
Melanie Bourda
Karen Bryant
Leslie Bulliard
Mary Bulliard
Julie Castille
Denise Delauney
Chante Delcambre
Janis Fournet
Angela Fuselier
Venus Gardner
Michelle Guidry
Sally Hebert
Robin Hulin
Leslie Lafferty
Patty Laviolette
Daryn LeBlanc
Anne Olivier
Andree Pratt
Leslie Romero
Rachel Thibodeaux

1984
Mia Barras
Janet Bernis
Margaret Boggs
Tressy Dugas
Kealer Gardner
Bridgette Landry
Toni Laperouse
Stephanie Lasseigne
Demetria Narcisse
Michelle Narcisse
Lisa Robichaux
Carla Valsin

1985
Caroline Barras
Catherine Barras
Gladys Bourda
Susan Broussard
Amanda Champ
Consuella Charles
Donna DeRouen
Terri Duchaine
Annette Fontenette
Miriam Garrett
Marguerite Gaudin
Kim Inzerella
Amanda Kately
Claire LeBlanc
Melissa Lewis
Charlene Matthew
Desiree Narcisse

1986
Peggy Bienvenu
Carrie Bonvillian
Melanie Boudreaux
Florence de Capele
Belinda Fontenette
Melinda Fontenette
Terri Gondron
Sue Ann Lewis
Anne Viator
Michelle Voorhies

1981
Kathleen Akers
Zina Bourda
Julyette Broussard
Dina Castille
Jacqueline Duteil
Michelle Francois
Yvette Francois
Elaine Gardern
Paula Gaudet
Sonya Hardy
Harriet Labbe
Belinda Laviolette
Linda Oubre
Detra Pierre
Karen Tailey
Melanie Theriot
Tracy Thibodeaux