

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name St. Vincent's College Building

other name/site number St. Vincent's Seminary

2. Location

street & town 201 Morgan Oak Street N/A not for publication

city or town Cape Girardeau N/A vicinity

state Missouri code MO county Cape Girardeau code 031 zip code 63702

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mark A Miles 16 AUG 05
Signature of certifying official/Title Mark A. Miles/Deputy SHPO Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is: Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

St. Vincent's College Building
Name of Property

Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1 | | buildings |
| | | sites |
| 1 | 2 | structures |
| | | objects |
| 2 | | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use
Historic Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

- EDUCATION: College
- EDUCATION: Education-Related Housing
- EDUCATION: Religious Facility

Current Function

(Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT (Work in Progress)

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- COLONIAL: Georgian
- MID-19TH CENTURY: Italian Villa

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- foundation STONE: Limestone
- walls BRICK
- roof ASBESTOS
- other WOOD

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 7

St. Vincent's College Building
Name of Property

Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State

8. Description

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION _____

RELIGION _____

SOCIAL HISTORY _____

ARCHITECTURE _____

Period of Significance

1843-1910

Significant Dates

1843, 1853, 1871

1859, 1865, 1910

Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Lansmon, Joseph

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 8

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

SEM; City of Cape Girardeau; Cape Girardeau Library

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 9

St. Vincent's College Building
Name of Property

Cape Girardeau County, MO
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5.7 acres

UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 11/6 277/6/5/3/0 4/1/3/0/8/4/0
Zone Easting Northing

2 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

3 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

4 / / / / / / / / / / /
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Property Tax No. N/A

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

See continuation sheet(s) for Section No. 10

11 Form Prepared By

name/title Sally F. Schwenk, Partner; Kerry Davis, Associate; Elizabeth Rosin, Partner

organization Historic Preservation Services, LLC date February 7, 2005

street & number 323 West 8th Street, Suite 112 telephone 816-221-5133

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64105

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps **A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.**

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs: Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items: (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

name/title Southeast Missouri State University C/O Dr. Kenneth Dobbins, President

street & number One University Plaza, ACA Hall 205, Mail Stop Code 3300 telephone 573-651-2222

city or town Cape Girardeau state MO zip code 63701

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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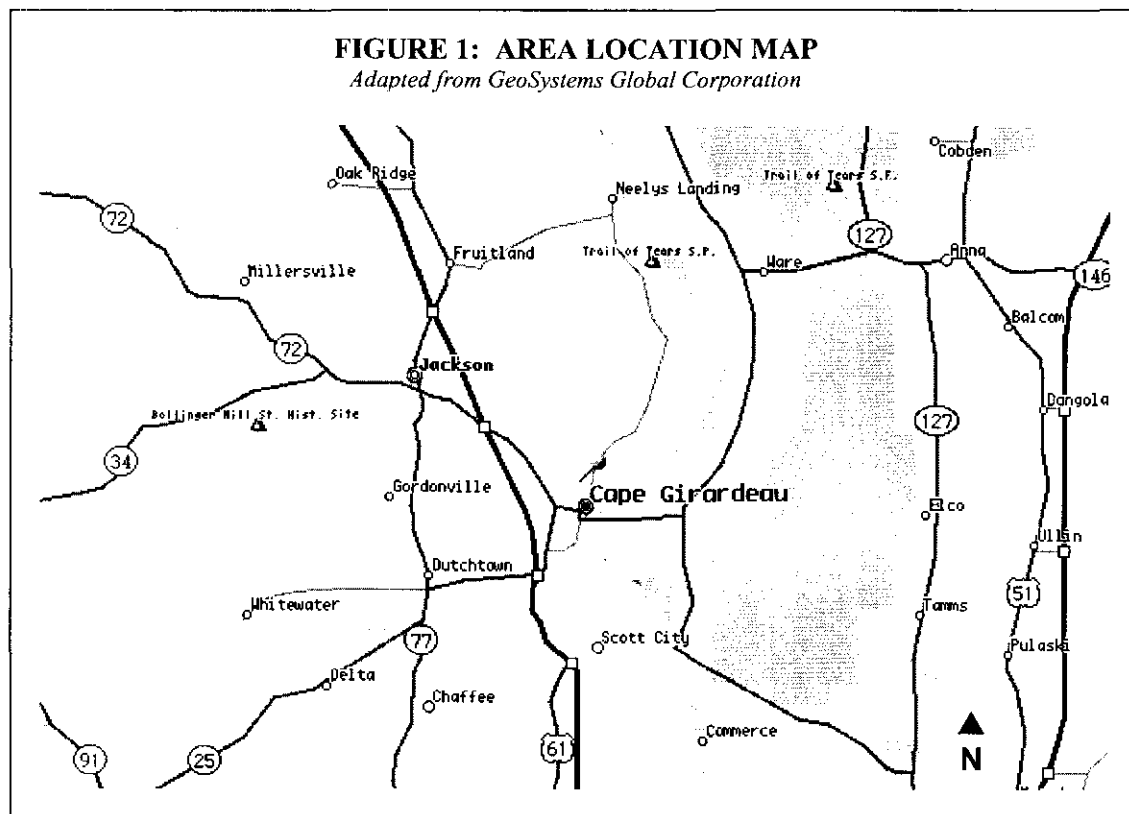
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Number 7 Page 1

St. Vincent's College Building
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The historic St. Vincent's College Building is on a bluff south of Morgan Oak Street overlooking the Mississippi River to the east. The important character-defining extant historic elements composing the College's historic grounds relating to its period of significance as a college include one building and one structure. Dominating the property is the College's main residential, classroom, and chapel building constructed between 1843 and 1871. The 52,000-square-foot, L-shaped building has a limestone foundation, red brick walls, and an asbestos shingle roof. The symmetrical fenestration of the three-story building and its additions reflect the influences of Colonial American Georgian architecture and the popular mid-nineteenth century Italian Villa style. Further defining the nineteenth century appearance of the complex is the circa 1843 double handball court. The historic main building, the handball court, and the informally landscaped grounds occupying 5.7 acres reflect the period from 1843 until 1910 when the facility functioned as an institution of higher learning.



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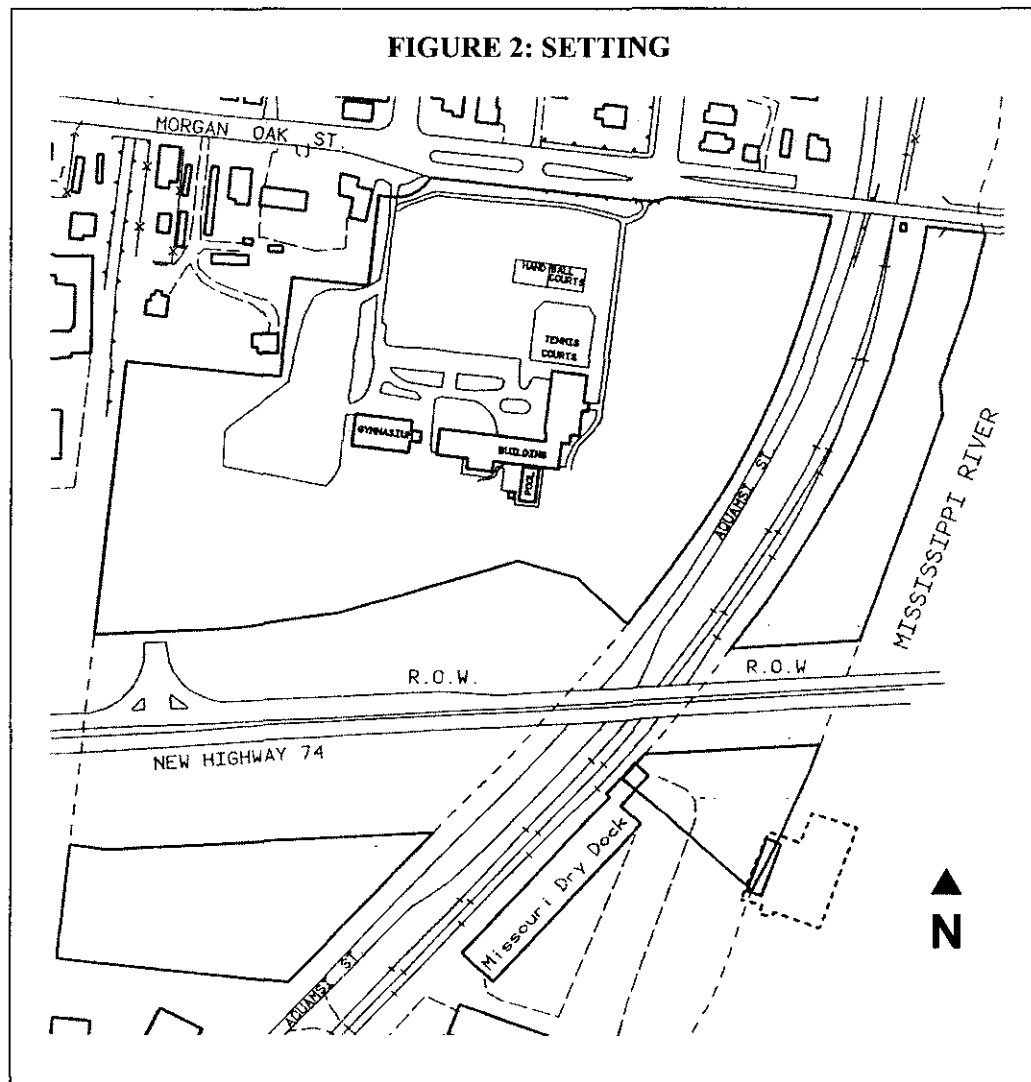
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St. Vincent's College Building
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri

ELABORATION

SETTING

The historic college grounds are south of the central business district. The neighborhood in the adjacent area to the north is residential and includes residences dating from the early nineteenth century through the 1950s. Morgan Oak Street, which forms the northern boundary of the college grounds, was a major east-west thoroughfare, which led to a toll bridge crossing the Mississippi River. Today, its replacement, the modern four-lane US 74 highway bridge, spans the river and connects to a new road system immediately south of the historic college campus. The college grounds slope downward in a series of



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St. Vincent's College Building
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plateaus toward the river to the east and toward the new road system and railroad tracks to the south. The land gently rises to the west. These open areas included wooded areas and open swards (Photographs 19, 20, and 21).

A tree-lined driveway extends south from Morgan Oak Street and then curves to the east to form a parking circle located in the ell created by the western and southern elevations of the main building. At



the center of the parking circle, a flagpole rises from a low, concrete platform. Only the historic handball courts and the modern tennis courts interrupt the expansive lawn north of the main building and east of the entrance driveway (Photograph 18). East of the main building, a sidewalk extends south from Morgan Oak Street. There is a slight drop in grade on the east side of the sidewalk and the level area extending south from Morgan Oak Street reflects the original entrance driveway to the main college building. Mature trees shade this area and the portion of the open lawn that slopes eastward toward Aquamsi Street and the railroad tracks, both of which run parallel to the Mississippi River.

Non-historic structures include a concrete swimming pool located near of the main building's southern elevation, tennis courts immediately to the north of the main building and south of the handball courts, and the circular driveway at the main building's west elevation. To the west of the entrance driveway

is a gravel parking area. At the south end of the entrance driveway is a 1930s gymnasium, restroom facilities, and an undated storage facility, all of which have associations with the property when it functioned as a private high school.¹

¹ The buildings are scheduled for demolition in the spring of 2005. As a result of consultation with the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office relating to Section 106 of the National Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the

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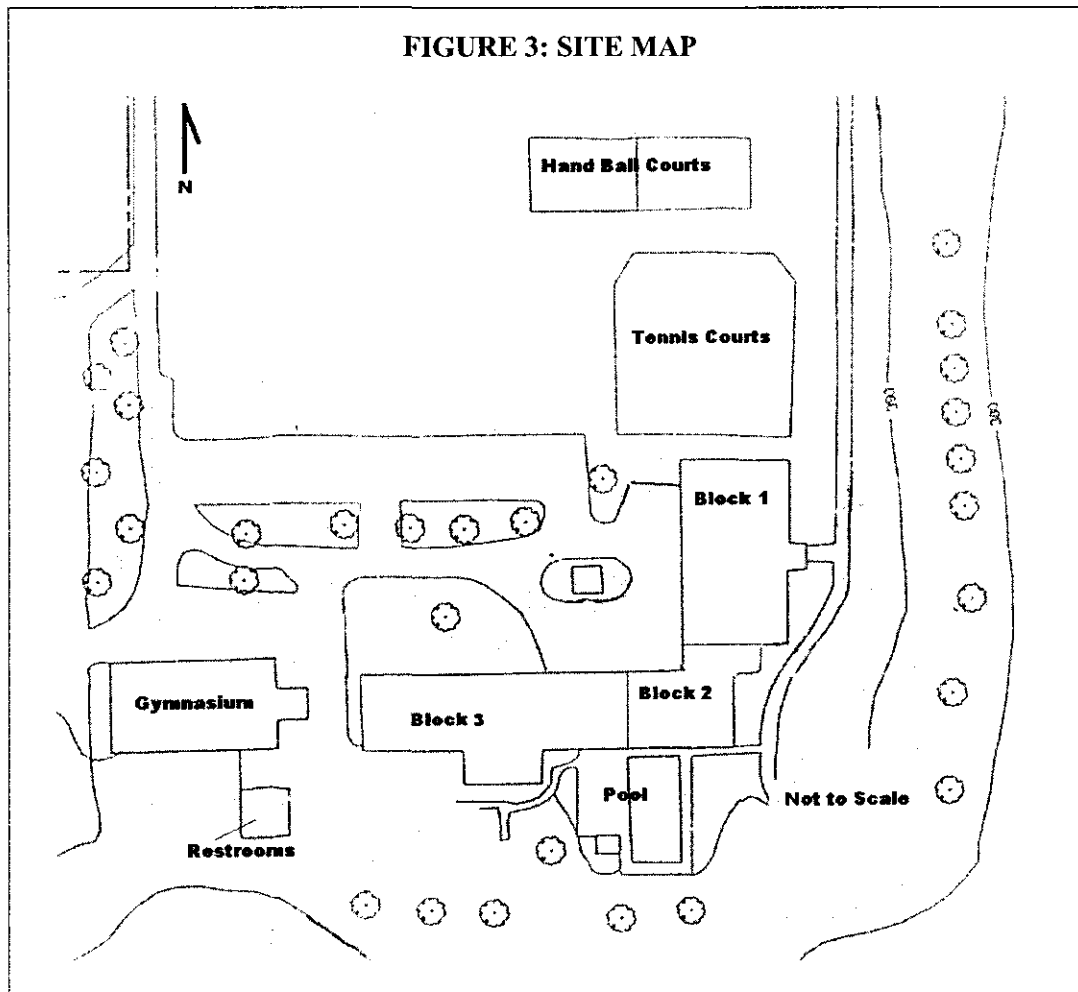
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St. Vincent's College Building
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri

ORIGINAL CLASSROOM/RESIDENCE HALL/BLOCK 1 – 1843

Exterior

The original three-story, side-gabled classroom and residence building constructed in 1843 faces east toward the Mississippi River. The building has a raised limestone foundation and brick walls that rise to a shallow gable roof. The dressed finish of the coursed ashlar foundation of the front (east) elevation contrasts with the rough cut, irregularly coursed foundation with raised grapevine mortar joints on the west and south elevations. The red brick of the building's walls is laid in a common bond pattern, with



owner initiated and completed documentation of the gymnasium in accordance with Historic American Buildings Survey Guidelines in the fall of 2004.

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St. Vincent's College Building
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single courses of header bricks punctuating the running bond every fifth course. Stone cornice returns in the north gable ends are flush with the brick wall. Dentils line the deep frieze bands on the front (east) and rear (west) cornices. Historic photographs show that each of the end walls had parapets that incorporated pairs of chimneys. The removal of the north end parapet dates to a period prior to 1939.² The south end retains half of its parapet. The removal of the other half dates to a time prior to the 1853 addition (Block 2). Asbestos shingles laid in a diamond pattern cover the roof.

The symmetrical fenestration of the 1843 building (Block 1) features eleven bays on the front (east) and rear (west) elevations and four bays on the north elevation (Photographs 1, 5, and 4 respectively). The 1853 addition (Block 2) connects to the south elevation (Photograph 2). The front (east) and rear (west) elevations have central entrances. With the exception of the four stained-glass windows that filter sunlight into the small chapel at the northwest corner of the second story and double-hung sash units at the third story, aluminum replacement windows with triple-hung sashes fill the single window openings in each bay. Historic photographs show that the original first- and second-story windows contained double-hung sashes with twelve-over-twelve lights. The double-hung sashes in the third-story windows originally had eight-over-eight lights.³ All of the window openings have stone sills and jack arch headers. The first-story headers have one-and-a-half courses of brick and the second- and third-story headers have single courses of brick. There are rectangular openings containing louvered vents in the attic level of the north elevation (Photograph 4).

Both entrances to the 1843 building (Block 1) reflect alterations performed over a period of time. The front (east) entrance retains its original wood panel door and deep, recessed surround. A fixed multi-light transom is above the door and sidelights flank the door. The flat-roofed entrance porch features a paneled fascia, brick pilasters, and square brick posts. The concrete floor rests on a concrete block foundation. Concrete steps flanked by wrought iron railings lead from the sidewalk to the one-bay central entrance porch. A door in the south side of the porch's raised foundation provides access to the basement (Photograph 1). Historic photographs show that the entrance porch once had paired square wood posts at the front corners and paired wooden pilasters at the rear corners as late as 1943.⁴ The flat roof and paneled fascia appear to be unaltered.

The secondary rear (west) entrance has a one-bay central entrance porch with a flat-roof. Arched openings rise from square brick posts and pilasters. The porch has a raised concrete foundation and brick-

² Tom Neumeyer, private collection of historic postcards, early 1900s to 1955, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Martin V. Moore, "A Century of Service in Catholic Education," commemorative pamphlet, circa 1943, Kent Library Archives, Southeast Missouri State College, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

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St. Vincent's College Building
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faced concrete stairs with wrought iron railings. The railings connect to brick newel posts at the top of the stairs. A brick wall extends one bay to the south from the south side of the porch. The wall shelters a basement door, which is below the stairs. The brick wall and the newel posts may date to an early 1970s renovation (Photographs 4 and 5).

On the north elevation, in addition to the removal of the parapet, which resulted in an off-center gable peak, several other minor alterations and additions occurred over the years, including the addition of an exterior metal fire escape and the installation of four S-shaped tie rods at the top and bottom of the attic level, in the approximate locations of the original chimneys. With the exception of the fire escape, these changes are historic alterations occurring during the period of significance (Photograph 4).

Interior

The interior of the 1843 building (Block 1) features a central north-south corridor on each of the three floors. Most recently, the chambers lining the corridors served as offices, classrooms, residential quarters, a chapel, and a library. The floors are narrow tongue-in-groove hardwood boards. Beadboard wainscoting lines the corridor walls on the first and second floors. The original openings and woodwork remain and many of the openings retain their original doors. These doors feature two recessed panels beneath large single panes of glass and three- or four-light transoms. The upper walls and ceilings of the corridors and many of the chamber walls are plaster. Masonite paneling, carpeting, linoleum, dropped ceiling tiles, and fluorescent light boxes obscure the original architectural elements and materials in most of the rooms, especially on the upper floors. Stylistically, these changes appear to date to an early 1970s renovation of the property. However, it appears that much of the original building fabric remains beneath these later alterations.

On the first floor, an east-west passage, which connects Block 1's primary and secondary entrances, bisects the main corridor (Figure 4). The main (east) entrance foyer reflects the building's original mid-nineteenth century character. The wood floor has a concentric pattern. The plaster walls rise above the ten-inch-deep ogee wood baseboards. A picture rail is approximately seven feet above the floor. Recessed panels adorn the doorways between the foyer and the adjacent chambers.

The main staircase is opposite the main (east) entrance foyer, and south of the rear (west) entrance (Photograph 11). Beadboard wainscoting lines the stairway walls. On the first floor, the staircase features a simple octagonal newel post and a slightly convex handrail capping a balustrade of thin, tapered, cylindrical spindles. While local oral tradition and secondary sources document that this is the building's original stair railing, the physical design suggests that only the newel post dates to the mid-nineteenth century. Because of the uniformity and distinctive taper of the spindles, they appear to be

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machine-produced balusters dating from the early twentieth century Colonial Revival period. The configuration of the handrail and the manner in which it connects to the newel post is not characteristic of railings associated with faceted newel posts found in the mid-nineteenth century. While the smooth terminus and convex form were found on early nineteenth century Federal Period stair rails, this element may also date to an early twentieth century alteration.⁵

The first-floor rooms off of the main corridor most recently accommodated offices, a meeting room, and the library. The second-floor rooms on the east side of the building were residential chambers. On the west side of the hall and to the south of the stairway is the recreation room. To the north of the stairway a small chapel is in the northwest corner of the building, with adjoining spaces to the south for the sacristy, an office, and storage. The finishes of the second-story chapel are typical of the renovations of the 1970s and include carpeted floors, non-historic wood panel walls, and acoustic ceiling tiles applied directly to the plaster ceiling. This room retains stained-glass windows in the four openings that line its two exterior walls. Medallions at the center of each upper sash punctuate the geometric floral designs that adorn the double-hung windows. Renovated during the 1930s, the recreation room features a buff-colored brick fireplace mantel that dominates the south end of the room. Inscribed in the bricks on each end of the mantel are the names of St. Vincent's Seminary's teachers and students dating from 1934 until the closing of the high school program in 1979. Built out from the walls, low cabinets topped by bookshelves line the interior walls. Square pilasters adorned with capitals and bases divide the shelves into bays.

RESIDENCE HALL/BLOCK 2 — 1853

Exterior

The first addition to the original college building dates to 1853 and has three components. The primary three-story block has an east-west orientation and has five bays on its north elevation (Photograph 7) and seven bays on its south elevation (Figures 4, 5, and 6). The east elevation has three bays and a front gable (Photograph 3). A connecting stairwell on the north side of the 1853 addition (Block 2) and the south side of the 1843 building (Block 1) has windows in the west elevation that create two bays (Photograph 6). This building component contains a stairway and egress to the west courtyard area and direct egress on each floor to the bell tower. The third component of the 1853 addition (Block 2) is the bell tower at the south end of 1843 building (Block 1) (Photograph 2), which links Block 1 with the stairway and foyer of the 1853 addition (Block 2).

⁵ Stephen Calloway, general ed. and Elizabeth Cromley, consultant ed., *The Elements of Style: A Practical Encyclopedia of Interior Architectural Details from 1485 to the Present* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991),

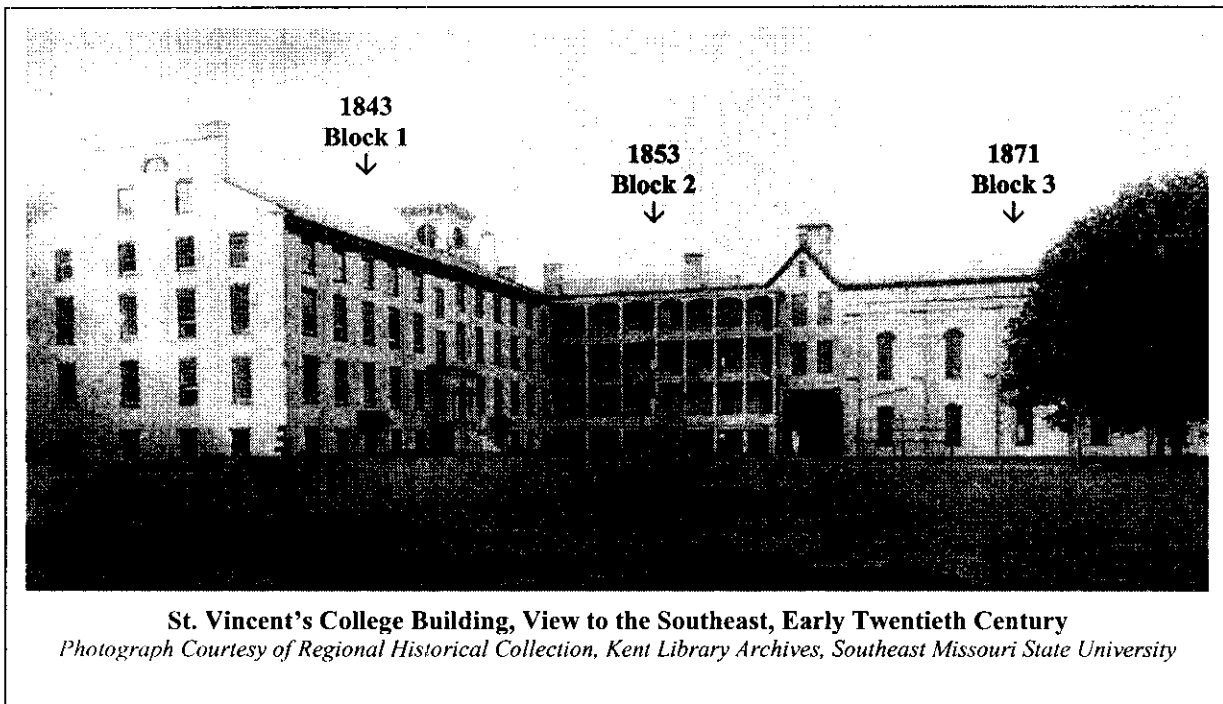
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St. Vincent's College Building
Cape Girardeau County, Missouri

Like the 1843 building (Block 1), the 1853 addition (Block 2) has red brick walls laid in a common bond pattern that rise from a parged ashlar limestone foundation. The asbestos shingles cladding the roof are identical to those found on the 1843 building (Block 1).



St. Vincent's College Building, View to the Southeast, Early Twentieth Century

Photograph Courtesy of Regional Historical Collection, Kent Library Archives, Southeast Missouri State University

Distinguishing design elements at the south elevation include a limestone water table that separates the basement from the first story, and the window and lintel treatments that vary by story. The basement windows have rectangular openings with limestone windowsills. The first-story windows have slightly projecting brick window hoods composed of soldier bricks that form a segmental arch. The window units are aluminum frame triple-hung sashes with one-over-one-over-one lights. The second-story windows have rectangular openings with limestone windowsills. Brick infill replaces spandrels previously located above each second-story window and below each corresponding third-story window. The window units are aluminum frame triple-hung sashes with one-over-one-over-one lights. The third-story windows each have full arches composed of a brick soldier course and limestone windowsills. Square aluminum window frames occupy the space under the arch and contain double-hung sashes with one-over-one lights. The arches contain infill material painted white (Photograph 10).

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St. Vincent's College Building
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The east elevation has three bays (Photograph 3). The first story has three bays defined by an elevated central entrance flanked by at-grade arched entrances. The arched entrances once led to a recess that provided access to the lower level of the building. Brick now fills both of the arched entrances. Above each entrance arch is a circular window opening with non-historic, square, aluminum louver vents. The entrance has a wood frame that incorporates a transom and a non-historic wooden door with six lights. The concrete entrance porch with non-historic metal handrails is accessed by a steep stairway of eight steps. The second story has three rectangular window openings with limestone windowsills. Brick infill replaces spandrels previously located above each second-story window and below each corresponding third-story window. The window units are aluminum frame triple-hung sashes with one-over-one-over-one lights. The third-story windows each have full arches composed of a brick soldier course and limestone windowsills. Square aluminum window frames occupy the space under the arch and contain double-hung sashes with one-over-one lights. The arches contain infill material painted white.

Historic photographs show that a full-height gallery porch originally spanned the north elevation of the 1853 addition (Block 2) as late as 1931. By 1939, historic photographs document the removal of the porch.⁶ The north elevation has five bays created by window openings (Photographs 6 and 7). At the first story of the north elevation, metal poles support a one-story, standing-seam metal canopy awning that currently spans the full width of the elevation. At the east end of this elevation, where the main block adjoins the bell tower, wood-grain vinyl siding clads a one-story, one-bay vestibule with a flat roof. The north side of the vestibule contains a door. The basement windows have rectangular openings with limestone windowsills. The basement windows have square wood frames and contain double-hung sashes with two-over-two lights. A narrow limestone water table separates these windows from the first story. The first-story windows have brick segmental arches. The window units are aluminum frame triple-hung sashes with one-over-one-over-one lights. The second- and third-story window openings are rectangular with brick segmental arches. The window units are aluminum frame double-hung sashes with one-over-one- lights.

The bell tower has a hierarchical treatment of openings on its five levels (Photograph 2). A dressed limestone water table encircles the bell tower between the basement and the first story. Arched door and window openings pierce the first-story walls. The brick arches rise from brick piers capped by limestone stringcourses. The full arch entrance retains a multi-paned fan light transom. A narrow, projecting brick belt course encircles the bell tower between the first and second stories. The second-story window openings are rectangular and have simple brick lintels. The openings contain triple-hung aluminum sashes with one-over-one-over-one lights. The third-story window openings are arched and contain

⁶ Neumeyer.

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St. Vincent's College Building
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double-hung aluminum sash windows with one-over-one lights. At the fourth story, four-light circular windows are centered within recessed brick panels. At the fifth story, pairs of louvered wood shutters fill the wide arched openings in each elevation. At the base of each arch are two narrow limestone stringcourses. Simple brackets adorn the wide eaves of the bell tower's hipped roof.

Interior

As in the 1843 building (Block 1), the plaster walls and ceilings and the wood floors reflect the original finishes in the 1853 addition (Block 2). Later renovations, most dating from the 1950s to the 1970s, cover most of the original elements.

Physical evidence suggests that the first and second floors of the 1853 addition (Block 2) were originally open rooms. A single row of thin cast iron columns extends down the center of each floor. The column shafts are fluted. Ornamentation of the capitals includes acanthus leaves and paired brackets (Photographs 15 and 16). On the first floor, the open space is intact. The second floor contains partitioned residential cubicles. The Masonite paneling, boldly striped wallpaper, and carpeting clearly date the cubicles to renovations in the early 1970s. A similar warren of cubicles fills the third floor, and there are no visible cast iron columns on this floor.

A direct connection between the 1843 building (Block 1) and the 1853 addition (Block 2) occurs through the 1853 bell tower addition. Each floor of the tower serves as a transitional vestibule space between the 1843 building (Block 1) and the 1853 addition (Block 2). Adjacent to the west and open to the bell tower's interior space is a stair hall. The terrazzo landing floors and steps and metal pipe railings flanking the stairs reflect mid-twentieth century renovations.

CHAPEL AND AUDITORIUM/BLOCK 3 — 1871

Exterior

The second addition (Block 3) dates to 1871. It contains two distinct components. A narrow three-story section with a front-gabled roof is three bays wide on the north elevation and two bays wide on the south elevation. This section serves as a stair hall that connects the 1853 addition (Block 2) to the 1871 chapel to the west. The chapel section rises to the three-story height of the 1853 addition (Block 2), but contains two stories capped by a hipped roof (Photographs 7, 8, and 10).

Like the 1843 building (Block 1) and the 1853 addition (Block 2), the 1871 addition (Block 3) has red brick walls laid in a common bond pattern that rise from an ashlar limestone foundation. Cladding the roof are 1930s-era asbestos shingles.

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St. Vincent's College Building
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The three-bay, front-gabled section has a north-south orientation. In the north elevation, the tall rectangular window openings have brick segmental arches and limestone windowsills (Photographs 7 and 8). The windows in the south elevation create two bays (Photograph 10). On the first two stories, the window placement reflects the location of the interior staircase landings. The basement windows have square openings with limestone sills and contain glass block infill. In the westernmost bay of the first story, a small square window opening with a limestone sill contains glass block infill. The remaining windows have tall rectangular openings with limestone sills. These openings each contain a window unit with an aluminum frame and sash, which has four horizontal divisions, creating five horizontal panes in each window. Centered in each gable is a recessed, narrow rectangular window with a brick windowsill containing a double-hung wood sash with one-over-one lights. Simple wood frieze boards mark the gable ends. Crowning the front-gabled section is a square cupola with a hipped roof with a copper cross. Wood-grain asbestos shingles clad the cupola. Boards cover the window openings in the four walls of the cupola. Historic photographs show that the first story of this section originally housed an open storage or carriage shed. Scrollwork brackets framed the large opening, which was intact as late as 1943.⁷

West of the front-gabled section is the large two-story chapel section with a hipped roof. Shallow buttresses with stone caps and amortizements⁸ divide this unit into six bays on the north and south elevations (Photograph 8). Corbelled brick forms a dentilated cornice. Below the cornice are three bands formed by successive corbel courses. This section of the 1871 addition (Block 3) was specifically designed to house a chapel and meeting spaces. On the north elevation, arched leaded glass windows with aluminum frame storm windows fill the upper-story openings (three of the openings contain frosted replacement glass). The first-story contains segmental arch window openings with stone windowsills. The openings contain triple-hung aluminum sashes with one-over-one-over-one lights. In the south elevation, arched leaded glass windows with aluminum frame storm windows fill the upper-story openings. The first-story contains rectangular window openings with stone windowsills. These openings contain aluminum sashes with four horizontal muntins. Because of the drop in grade, the basement level is a full story in height and features rectangular window and door openings. Located in the fourth and fifth bays from the west end of the block, a small concrete block addition has a shed roof and contains multi-light steel casement windows. A metal fire escape fills the west end bay. Doors occupy the basement and first-story openings in this bay.

⁷ Ibid.; Moore.

⁸ The sloping top of a buttress or projecting pier.

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The west elevation contains a central second-story window that matches the corresponding windows in the north and south elevations. At the southwest corner on the first story, a segmental arch opening has wood panel infill (Photograph 9).

Interior

The design of the 1871 addition (Block 3) features an auditorium/dining hall space on the first floor and a two-story chapel on the upper floor. The front-gabled section of the 1871 addition originally housed storage areas and a stair hall that links the 1853 (Block 2) and 1871 (Block 3) additions. The most recent use of the former storage space on the second and third floors is as large communal bathrooms accessed by doors leading into the residential spaces on the second and third floors of the 1853 addition (Block 2). The fixtures and materials in the bathrooms and the stairway reflect the period in the 1930s when extensive renovation took place when the building functioned as a high school seminary.

The first-floor auditorium is a large open room. Traversing the length of the space are two rows of parallel cast iron columns. These columns have smooth cylindrical shafts and cast capitals that have four facets (Photograph 14). Various styles of globe light fixtures hang from the ceiling between the columns. A stage at the west end of the room rises approximately four feet above the floor. The manner in which the stage intersects the windows and the plain thick columns at the front of the stage suggests that the stage was a later addition to the room.

Directly above the auditorium is the two-story chapel. The visitor enters the chapel through a pair of ogee-arched doors at the east end of the room below the choir loft. A cove ceiling has decorative molding. At the west end of the chapel, two steps lead up to the altar/chancel area. The back wall of the chancel creates a sacristy. Renovations in the 1970s substantially altered the chapel. An acoustical tile ceiling, paneled walls, and red and gold flocked wallpaper cover the original plaster ceiling and walls; carpeting covers the hardwood floor. Much of the 1970s paneling on the back wall has been removed, exposing some of the original architectural elements and materials encapsulated during the renovation (Photographs 12 and 13). The original light fixtures are extant. Historic photographs show that the plaster ceiling received additional support from a delicate truss with knee braces at either side wall, approximately bisecting the space.⁹ Where acoustical tiles no longer remain, the original cove ceiling is visible, suggesting that much of the original fabric may be intact beneath cosmetic alterations. The remaining finishes in the addition are generally in keeping with those found in the other blocks dating to the 1970s. Wallpaper, dropped ceilings, and carpeting cover the original plaster walls, ceilings, and wood floors, respectively.

⁹ Neumeyer.

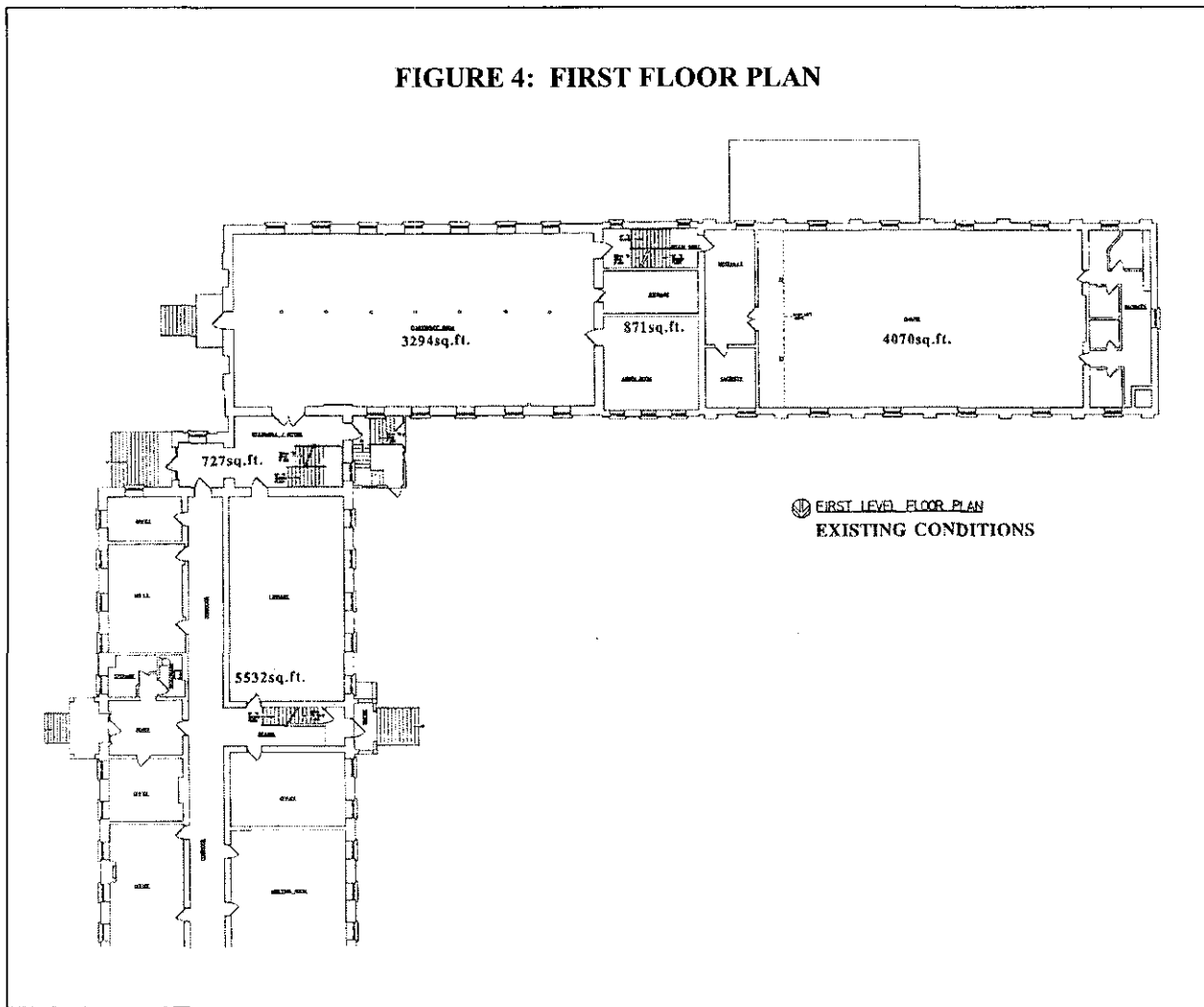
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FIGURE 4: FIRST FLOOR PLAN

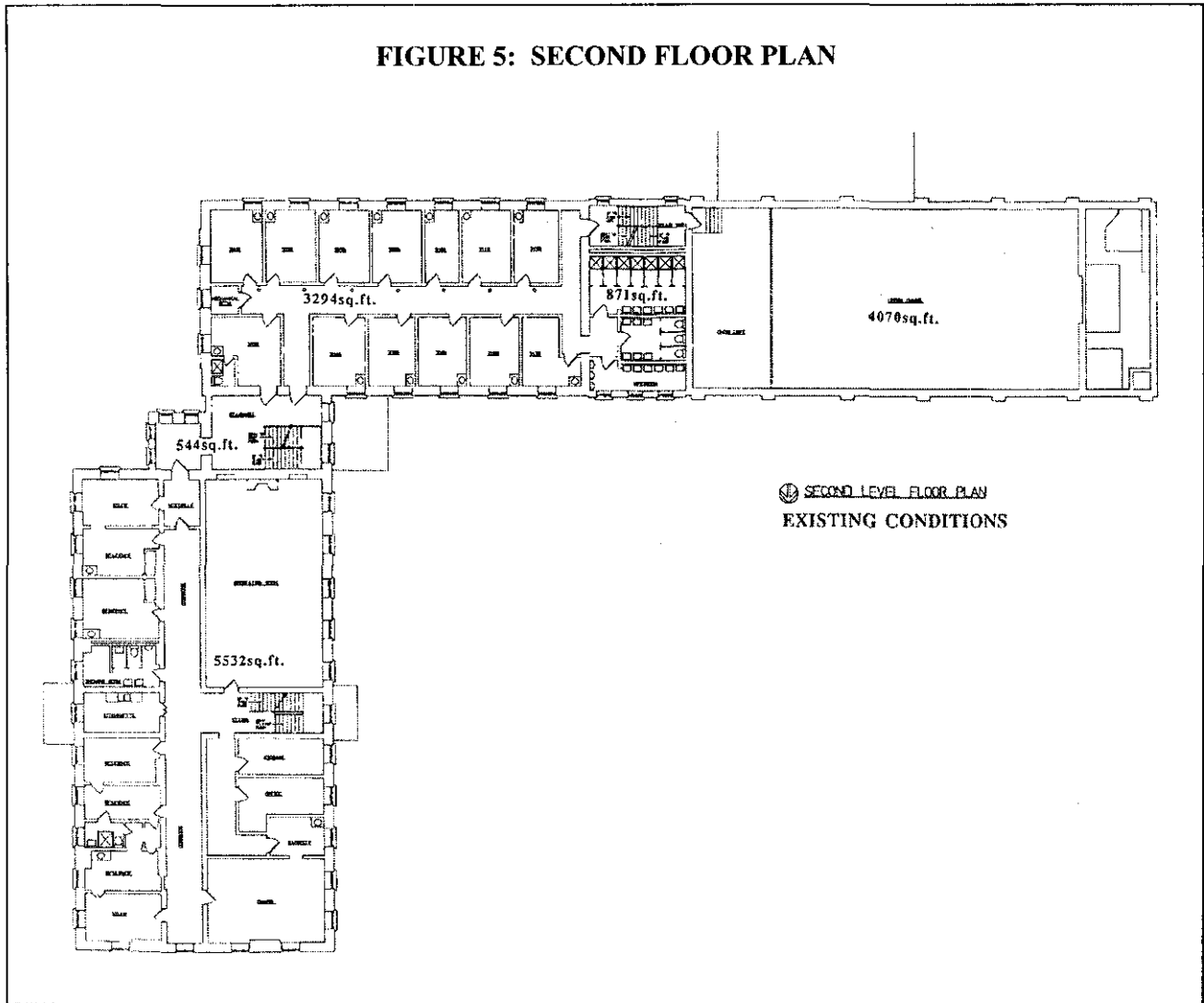


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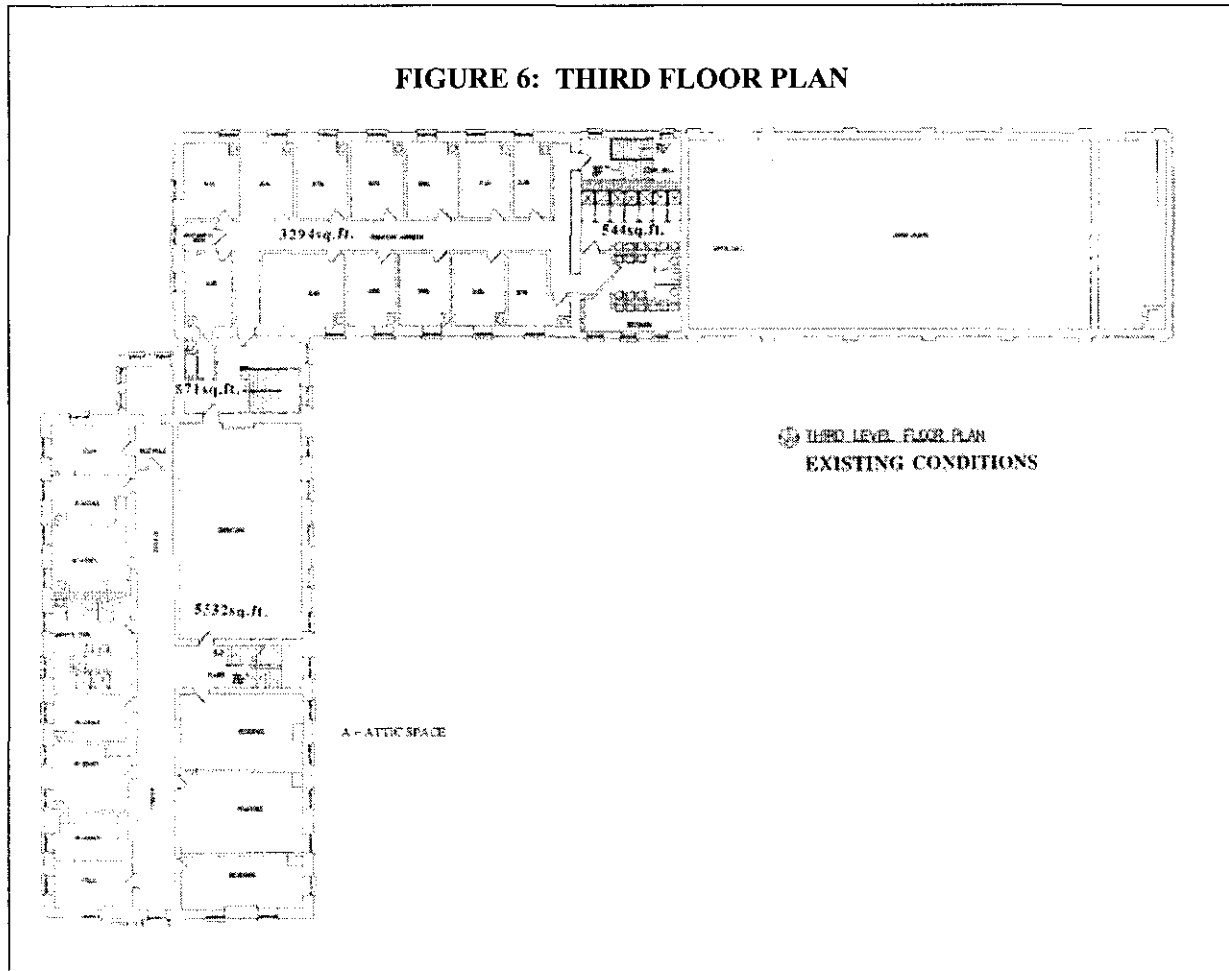


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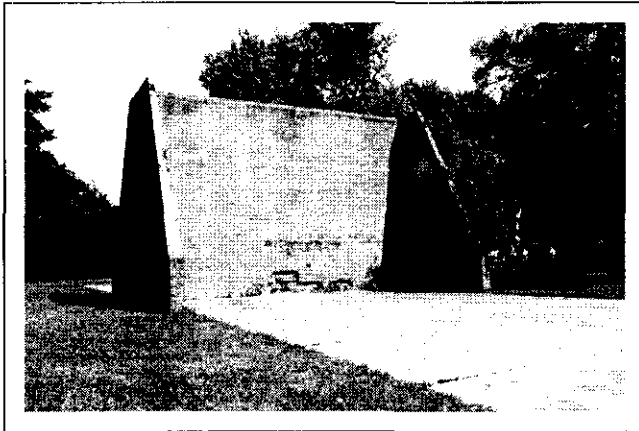
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HANDBALL COURTS

Near the center of the north lawn is a three-dimensional brick structure (Photograph 17). When constructed in 1843, this was reported to be the first handball court west of the Mississippi River. At the north and south ends of the structure are flat-topped triangular side walls that are approximately twenty-seven feet long and have truncated base corners. Capping the vertical side walls where they begin to



slope upwards is a canted limestone block set within the brick. The side walls are connected at their midpoint by a perpendicular wall that is approximately twenty-nine feet long. All of the walls are approximately twenty-five feet tall. Extending approximately thirty-three feet from each side of the perpendicular wall, poured concrete forms the ground-level surface for the two handball courts. Historic graffiti remains on the brick walls and includes legible dates as early as 1871.

TENNIS COURTS

Between the north end of 1843 building (Block 1) and the handball courts is a pair of asphalt tennis courts (Photograph 18). Sections of a ten-foot-tall chain link fence are at the north and south ends of the tennis courts. The courts' striping remains visible, but the nets are no longer extant. The tennis courts at this location date to the 1930s, the same period during which renovations resulted in the addition of a swimming pool and gymnasium.¹⁰

SWIMMING POOL

A below-grade concrete swimming pool is adjacent to the south side of the 1853 addition (Block 2) (Photograph 19). A concrete deck surrounds the pool on three sides. The pool first appears on a 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map. It has the same orientation as the present pool and appears to be of the same dimensions. Research indicates that the pool was altered or rebuilt in the 1950s. A chain link

¹⁰ Moore.

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fence borders the concrete deck on the south and east sides of the swimming pool, and a wood fence extends along the west side of the concrete deck (Photographs 19 and 21).

INTEGRITY

Major changes to the college's buildings and grounds occurred at several points in time, generally coinciding with changes in mission and function. One significant period of change occurred in the mid-to late 1930s and included the addition of asbestos roof shingles, the installation of the narrow hardwood floors, the renovation of the library, and the addition of hot water showers and communal bathroom facilities in Block 3. The tennis courts and swimming pool date to this period. Alterations to the front and back entrances occurred after 1943. Another major renovation occurred between the late 1960s and early 1970s, possibly in response to the edicts of the Vatican II Council. In addition to renovation of the chapel alter area, other changes were cosmetic and included the installation of bold wallpapers and Masonite paneling, dropped ceilings, carpeting, and aluminum windows.

Throughout the over 160-year history of the college, the dominant feature of the campus was the main 1843 building (Block 1) with its 1853 and 1871 additions (Blocks 2 and 3), which served residential, educational, administrative and religious uses. It is important to note that the appearance of the campus varied greatly during its historical period of significance and during subsequent eras. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps and other archival records document the addition and demolition of buildings and structures that occurred over time. For example, additional buildings on the property shown on a 1900 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map included a two-story brick dormitory to the west of the 1843 building (Block 1); a two-and-a-half story laundry; a one-story woodshed/icehouse; a one-story slaughterhouse; and several other unidentified one-story buildings. Then, as now, the focus of the property was the three-story 1843 building (Block 1). The remaining auxiliary structures supported the college's activities and reflected the available technologies of the time.

In the 1930s, to meet the needs of the site's high school program, the addition of a large gymnasium and auxiliary buildings significantly changed the appearance of the property. The addition of an entrance driveway and drive court to the west of the 1843 building (Block 1) also significantly altered the appearance of the grounds and the functional orientation of the facility away from the primary façade and the Mississippi River.

The portion of the college grounds to the east of the current entrance driveway retains a significant degree of integrity of setting, location, design, and materials from the period that the property functioned as an institution of higher education. The greatest and most egregious impact on the property's integrity is the

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location by the Missouri Department of Transportation of the four-lane US 74 highway bridge in close proximity to the building's primary façade and view shed (Photographs 6¹¹ and 22). Nevertheless, the historic building successfully communicates feelings of the periods of construction and its associations with the college during its period of significance. The 1843 building (Block 1) and its 1853 (Block 2) and 1871 (Block 3) additions retain a high degree of integrity of plan, scale, spaces, workmanship, materials, and other character-defining design features present during its period of significance. The greatest losses are the window units, original roof material, and damage to the brick walls caused by the removal of stucco. The age of the original building and the uniformity of the design created by the two later additions directly reflect associated historic contexts relating to the evolution of the educational mission of the Vincentians. This degree of integrity and the campus' proximal location and orientation toward the Mississippi River convey a clear impression of an institutional property dating from the mid-nineteenth century as well as its evolution through the years

¹¹ Note the bridge pylons above the roofline of the building.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

St. Vincent's College Building located in Cape Girardeau, Missouri is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for the areas of EDUCATION, RELIGION, and SOCIAL HISTORY and under Criterion C for the area of ARCHITECTURE. The property meets the National Register program's CRITERIA CONSIDERATION A: RELIGIOUS PROPERTIES, as it derives its primary significance from architectural and historic importance.

St. Vincent's College Building is significant under Criterion A for its association with patterns and events in the educational, cultural, and religious history of Missouri by virtue of the broad impact of the Vincentian order in addressing the educational, charitable, social, and religious needs of the State of Missouri through the establishment and administration of St. Vincent's College. In particular, the property is significant for its associations with the development of educational institutions of higher learning in Missouri. Chartered in 1843, St. Vincent's College is one of the earliest colleges west of the Mississippi River.¹ Between 1843 and 1910, the College served students from throughout the Mississippi Valley at a time in the region when Roman Catholic schools were few and institutions of higher learning were even scarcer. During this period, the College's tradition of providing both religious and secular courses mirrored the evolution of both non-sectarian and religious institutions of higher learning in Missouri. The College is also significant for its important role in the history of religion in Missouri. The College was an outgrowth of the missions undertaken by the Roman Catholic Church's Vincentian priests who, in 1818, established their first motherhouse in America — St. Mary's-of-the-Barrens in Perryville, Missouri. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the first decade of the twentieth century, the College served as the training ground for a generation of diocesan and Vincentian priests in the Louisiana Territory, educating most of the Roman Catholic clergy in the West. Priests trained at St. Vincent's College laid the foundations of many of the great parishes of St. Louis, Chicago, New Orleans, and countless other communities.

The design and construction of the building is significant under Criterion C and represents a significant institutional example of the work of master builder Joseph M. Lansmon. Its architecture embodies distinctive characteristics of adaptations of the Georgian and Italianate architectural styles, demonstrating

¹ The first university chartered west of the Mississippi River was St. Louis University. A number of institutions of higher learning, such as seminaries (Concordia Seminary) and finishing schools (Lindenwood) were open to students prior to 1843. St. Vincent's College was the second college chartered west of the Mississippi River. Charles van Ravensway, ed., *Missouri: A Guide to the "Show Me" State* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941), 302, 320, 522; "Listen . . . the Bell History of St. Vincent's College Cape Girardeau," *Cape Girardeau (MO) Bulletin*, 11 September 1968, Vertical Clipping File, Cape Girardeau Public Library, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

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the transition in institutional architecture from popular eighteenth century Colonial American design motifs to widely accepted nineteenth century architectural forms. St. Vincent's College Building possesses sufficient historical integrity to successfully represent distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction. In addition to the retention of distinctive characteristics of its style as applied to college buildings, the use of a raised limestone foundation, brick walls, and cast iron columns reflects a continuum of nineteenth century construction techniques and the availability of local materials and craftsmen.

The property's period of significance, 1843-1910, reflects its continuous use as an institution of higher education and represents its early contribution to higher education in the State of Missouri, as well as the development patterns of institutions for higher education during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century. Significant dates associated with its construction are 1843, 1853, and 1871. Significant dates associated with its educational mission as an institution of higher learning are 1859, 1865, and 1910.

HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

St. Vincent's College Building serves as a physical example and representative resource that reflects certain cultural themes in the history of the State of Missouri and in the region. It is significant because of its unique relationship to and impact on the historical development of the region. As such, its importance must be understood in the context of certain national and statewide historical events and trends. Among these contexts, the most significant are: the beginnings and the development of nineteenth century institutions of higher education in Missouri; the history of Catholicism as a culture in Missouri; the cultural/educational roles of the Vincentian order in southeast Missouri; and the influences on and characteristics of nineteenth century institutional architecture and design.

**THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS IMPACT OF CATHOLICISM IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY**

The significance of St. Vincent's College goes beyond its status as one of the earliest colleges in Missouri. Its establishment and evolution were important contributions in the reestablishment of Catholicism as a religion and culture in the region and in the West during the nineteenth century. The resurgence of Roman Catholicism in this part of the country came at a time of tremendous cultural and religious upheaval, and its impact on cultural and educational institutions is best understood when viewed

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in the context of the history of the Catholic Church in eighteenth and nineteenth century in the Mississippi Valley.

During the eighteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States was a small but culturally diverse institution quietly adapting to a Protestant country. During this time, just like Protestants, Catholic lay people ran their parishes and usually hired and fired their pastors. In larger cities in the East such as Baltimore and Philadelphia, Catholicism gained a certain intellectual and social cachet.² Nevertheless, from its inception in America, its separation from the broader secular national culture defined Roman Catholicism. The central concepts of Catholicism — its dogma, hierarchical structure of authority, and medieval ceremonies — directly challenged the assimilative yet individualistic style that defined the evolving American character.³ This was particularly true where each westward advance of the Euro-American settlement line created a process of continual rebirth — a return to primitive social conditions. This environment encouraged autonomy of thought and action, and all classes of citizens found an increasing voice in public and private institutions, including their churches. For the most part, the independent settlers who abandoned the comforts and conventions of established towns and cities to seek their fortunes in border lands preferred their religion to be without formal creeds or rituals and they responded most frequently to denominations that included a democratic structure, a personal approach to God, quick salvation, and an immediate invitation to membership.⁴

The wave of Catholic immigrants in the first decades of the nineteenth century changed the American Catholic Church, which had been a minority religion on the East Coast. The impact of growing numbers of Catholics in a predominately Protestant nation spawned a new nativism, deepening the old English colonial attitudes of suspicion and suppression of Catholics. Augmenting these conditions was the fact that the lack of native-born clergy required the American Catholic church to depend more heavily on foreign-born priests and foreign mission organizations for funding to train American priests. All of these factors contributed to the perception of the Catholic Church as a foreign institution in an age of growing American nationalism.

The westward movement of Euro-American settlers did little to alleviate these conditions. The influx of immigrants and the phenomena of the westward movement prompted the Roman Catholic Church to launch missionary efforts to reestablish a Catholic presence in the Mississippi Valley where, during

² Morris, i.

³ Ibid., viii.

⁴ Sarah F. Schwenk, *Interpreter's Manual: A Social, Political and Economic Overview of Western Missouri 1830-1855* (Lee's Summit, MO: Jackson County Parks and Recreation Heritage Programs and Museums, 1989), 94.

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earlier periods of French and Spanish occupation, it was the dominant religious and cultural institution. The impact of Anglo-American Protestantism coming into direct contact with new Catholic missionary efforts in the Louisiana Territory reinforced the view of Catholicism in the context of French and Spanish colonial efforts.⁵ It was within these contexts that Catholicism took shape in the Louisiana Territory in the nineteenth century, and it was into this arena that the Catholic Church introduced the Vincentians to America.

The Vincentians in Southeast Missouri

When Bishop William Dubourg, Roman Catholic Bishop of Louisiana, traveled to Rome in the early 1800s to recruit priests to establish missions in the Louisiana Territory, his actions were part of the larger effort to reestablish a Catholic presence in the region. Priests were not only needed to convert the newly arriving settlers, they were also needed to minister to and revitalize eighteenth century Catholic missions.

In what is now Missouri, these Catholic enclaves dated from the close of the seventeenth century when French priests from Canada visited the region to convert the native peoples and, later, when French missionaries crossed the Mississippi River to minister to and convert the lead miners and salt workers in southeast Missouri. Representing the efforts of the early Jesuit clergy in the area were the St. Francis Xavier mission established around 1700 near present-day St. Louis; a chapel erected in 1723 at Fort d'Orleans in Carroll County; and the 1755 church in St. Genevieve.⁶

The transfer of the territory west of the Mississippi River to Spain in 1763 required all French priests (particularly Jesuits) to leave the Upper Louisiana area. The subsequent religious ministrations of Spanish clergy in the Louisiana Territory were infrequent and haphazard. Catholic Spanish officials, needing settlers to protect their territory against native tribes and possible expansion of the United States, allowed settlers who only nominally embraced their religion into the region.⁷ Thus, Catholicism did not experience a revival in the region until 1818 with the arrival of Jesuits and members of the Order of the Sacred Heart in present-day St. Louis and of Vincentian priests in southeast Missouri.

Bishop Dubourg recruited a select group of French and Italian Vincentian priests led by Felix De Andries to establish a mission in the vicinity of the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers in what is today southeast Missouri. The group set sail from Bordeaux, France in 1818; landed in Baltimore, Maryland;

⁵ Richard Joseph Janet, "St. Mary's of the Barrens Seminary and the Vincentians in Southeast Missouri 1818-1843" (Masters of Arts thesis, Southeast Missouri State University, 1979), 3-5.

⁶ van Ravensway, 118.

⁷ Ibid.

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continued on to New Orleans; and then traveled north, up the Mississippi River to what is today Perryville, Missouri. There, they established their motherhouse — St. Mary's of the-Barrens. A contract drawn up in Rome to guide the relationship between Bishop Dubourg and the Vincentian clergy called for the order to establish missions and to administer parishes as well as to train clergy.⁸

The introduction of the Community of the Mission (Vincentians) into the Mississippi Valley constituted the order's first presence in the New World. Their motherhouse, St. Mary's-of-the-Barrens, became the order's first American headquarters. The group acquired its name from St. Vincent de Paul, the apostle of charity who founded a community of co-workers in Paris in 1625. The order's central objective was to assist the needy through the establishment of missions to the materially poor. From this came the formal title "The Congregation of the Mission" and the initials "C.M." By the eighteenth century, the order's main areas of emphasis were in service to aid the clergy and foreign and domestic missions.⁹

The Vincentians began a series of systematic attempts to serve the needs of Catholics in the area.¹⁰ Between 1818 and 1843, the order was the only Catholic presence in the area and their early efforts laid the foundation for the growth and development of the Catholic Church in a region that went without the services of a priest for long periods of time. During the next two decades, the priests of St. Mary's-of-the-Barrens journeyed throughout southeast Missouri, western Illinois, and northern Arkansas holding services and establishing churches. The order rejuvenated old Spanish and French Catholic outposts and established full-fledged parishes and centers for Vincentian missionary activities. As a result, St. Genevieve, Richwoods, Old Mines, French Village, Fredericktown, Perryville, Apple Creek, Jackson, Cape Girardeau, Tywappity Bottoms,¹¹ and New Madrid in Missouri became established Catholic enclaves.¹² During the same period, the seminary at Perryville educated an entire generation of clergy for the diocese as well as for their own order.

As the direct successors of the eighteenth century French and Spanish missionaries who labored in colonial Louisiana, the Vincentians should be recognized as representatives of a church that was both vigorous and persecuted. The order conducted their missionary work and educated priests amid continued escalation of anti-Catholic propaganda, particularly in the Mississippi Valley. Opponents of immigration and, in particular, of the religious beliefs of immigrants, viewed the Catholic activities in the

⁸ Janet, 70.

⁹ Ibid., 73.

¹⁰ Ibid., 70.

¹¹ In the vicinity of Commerce, Missouri.

¹² Ibid., 1-3, 69.

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West as an initial effort by the Catholics to advance their plan for papal conquest of the area. Nativist editors and writers singled out two European Catholic mission groups as part of this plot — the Association for the Propagation of the Faith and the Leopold Association. The fact that the Vincentians in Southeast Missouri depended heavily on these foreign groups for their funding further escalated sectarian paranoia.¹³

An 1832 article that appeared in *The Southern Religious Telegraph*, a Presbyterian newspaper, illustrates the prevailing Protestant attitude toward the successes of the Jesuit and Vincentian orders in Missouri.

The influence of the Roman Catholics is great in this state. Besides the schools and churches in what may be called French towns, they have several important seminaries of learning. They are divided in this state. The influence of the Jesuits prevails in the northern part of the state . . . On the other hand, Bishop Rosati . . . is at the head of the other party, who are opposed to the Jesuits. This party (that is the Bishop's side) have the large female and male school near Perryville in the more southern part of the state. There is a large number of youths receiving an education there. Among them are 25 young men preparing to be priests. They talk of erecting another institution of a similar kind in the same region. The prospect is, I think, that between them, the Jesuits and the Anti-Jesuits, they are likely to have control of education in the state. The Protestants have attempted only two measures of general importance, and which are likely to keep the people from the permanent influence of Popish superstition. One of these is the general distribution of the Bible; and the other is the effort which they are now making to establish Sunday schools in every neighborhood¹⁴

Taking into consideration the circumstances of nineteenth century American Catholicism, the Vincentians were, nevertheless, better suited than most orders to undertake the task of promoting Catholicism in southeast Missouri in the early nineteenth century. From the beginning, the priests of the Congress of the Mission exhibited a strong tendency to avoid extremes. Moreover, the order developed a reputation for their dedication to serving the poor. Their avoidance of involvement in secondary issues and their close and consistent focus on missionary goals created a pragmatic, flexible approach to their programs. For example, letters written by Vincentian leaders during the establishment of a parish in Cape Girardeau

¹³ Janet, 70, quoting Ray Allen Billington, *Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1938).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 72, quoting Frederick John Easterley, *The Life of Right Reverend Joseph Rosati, C.M., First Bishop of St. Louis, 1789-1843* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1942), 134.

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contain many references to the need to accommodate local needs and prejudices while maintaining conformity in spiritual matters. The order's unquestioned religious orthodoxy also removed them from the political controversies so characteristic of Jesuit history. While this practical, conservative approach often discouraged a high level of individual intellectual scholarship, the order demonstrated a refreshing lack of internecine rivalry that impacted the work of other religious orders. In particular, the American Vincentians became known for their willingness to yield their missions to any other Catholic order that could do as well or better.¹⁵ Their work in southeast Missouri illustrates this attitude. As a greater number of secular and diocesan clergy became available during the 1830s and 1840s, the Vincentians relinquished more and more of their missions, schools, and parishes to other orders. As a result, they earned the respect of Catholic and non-Catholics in the region. And, despite the long-term suspicion and prejudice of nativist groups, it was not unusual for Protestants as well as Catholics to gather when the Vincentians celebrated Catholic liturgy.¹⁶

The talents and expertise of the Vincentian clergy also contributed to their success during their first quarter-century in America. Most of the early Vincentian priests received their education in Europe and enjoyed contact with the ecclesiastical houses of Paris and Rome. In addition to their steadfast devotion to their mission, their sophistication and education had a stabilizing and civilizing effect on the tiny settlements on the Euro-American frontier.¹⁷ The ecclesiastic promotions of the priests who initially located in southeast Missouri and their contributions to the national religious and educational culture demonstrate their talents and influence. Joseph Rosati, the first superior of the Barrens, became the first bishop of St. Louis in 1827. Father John Timon, the Irish priest who guided the establishment of St. Vincent's College and served on its first board of trustees, entered the Vincentian Seminary at the Barrens in 1823 and became an ordained priest in 1825. He became the Visitor General of the Vincentians in America in 1835 and the Bishop of Buffalo, New York in 1847. Father Timon also served as the Prefect Apostolic of Texas. Father John Odin received a classical education at French schools and Sulpician seminaries. He continued his education at the Barrens and became an ordained priest in 1823. For the next decade, he served as a professor at the school at the Barrens. In 1833, he served as the Provincial Council of Baltimore's emissary to Rome. He remained in Rome for two years before returning to the Cape Girardeau mission where he founded St. Vincent's Male Academy in 1838 and served on the first board of trustees for its successor, St. Vincent's College. At that time, he also served as the Vicar Apostolic. Four years later, he assumed the position of Bishop of Galveston and, in 1860, Bishop of New Orleans. Father Thaddeus Amant, president of St. Vincent's and superior of the Barrens seminary in the

¹⁵ Ibid., 71-74, quoting Stafford Poole, *A History of the Congregation of the Mission: 1625-1843* (1973), VIII.

¹⁶ Ibid., 75.

¹⁷ John Tracy Ellis, *American Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 18.

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1840s, became Bishop of Monterey in 1854. Father S. V. Ryan, president of St. Vincent's College in Cape Girardeau in the 1850s, followed Father Timon as Bishop of Buffalo. Also serving the missions at Cape Girardeau and the Barrens was Father Michael Dominic, who became the second Bishop of Pittsburgh in 1860.¹⁸

By mid-century, the growing number of foreign and American-born clergy energized the American Catholic Church. Between 1808 and 1843, the Catholic Church grew from 68 priests and 80 churches to 561 priests and 560 churches.¹⁹ In Missouri, the presence of a diocesan²⁰ seminary in St. Louis and the growing number of diocesan priests, the soundness of parish churches, and the stability created by a large influx of German Catholics in the southeast portion of Missouri allowed the Vincentians to begin to concentrate more fully on their primary mission of educating the clergy.²¹

By the 1840s, the increased number of Catholics and resulting factions within the Catholic Church, as well as a growing mistrust of foreign-born priests, prompted individual dioceses to fund their own seminaries to ensure a supply of young curates shaped by local value systems. Nevertheless, a growing number of men wished to enter the holy orders directly, rather than attend a locally supported seminary.²² To a young man with upper-middle-class aspirations, priesthood offered security, social rank, and was much more accessible socially and financially than other professions of status, such as medicine or the law.²³ At the same time, the perceived need for an elite group of trustworthy, educated laymen and laywomen to support the Catholic Church in local parishes and in the political and commercial arenas prompted the establishment of Roman Catholic colleges.²⁴ The establishment of St. Vincent's College in 1843 reflected these conditions. The selection of Cape Girardeau as the location for the college reflects the geographic location of the community and the relationship between the Vincentians and the community that developed during the early decades of the nineteenth century.

The Vincentians in Cape Girardeau

Cape Girardeau's location on the first high point above the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers gave it strategic importance in the river trade. Located approximately 150 miles downstream from St.

¹⁸ Janet, 61.

¹⁹ Ibid., 8.

²⁰ The term refers to a local jurisdiction under a bishop; in this case, a seminary under a local bishop's governance as opposed to a seminary of a particular religious order.

²¹ Janet, 1-3, 76.

²² Morris, 114.

²³ Ibid., 115-116.

²⁴ Ibid., 114.

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Louis, the community became the educational and commercial center of southeastern Missouri by the second half of the nineteenth century.

Traditional lore attributes the name of the community to Girardot (sic), the name of a French ensign stationed in the region around 1704 who settled on "the Cape," a rocky point north of the present-day city. Maps dating from 1765 show the site variously as "Cape Girardot" or "Girardeau." Documentation of the area's history begins around 1786 when a band of the Shawnee and Delaware nations and French-Canadian trader Louis Lorimer moved into Upper Louisiana. In 1792, as the Spanish agent for Indian affairs, Lorimer moved to the present site of Cape Girardeau and established a trading post. Later, when the Spanish organized the District of Cape Girardeau, Lorimer served as the commandant, implementing the Spanish colonial policy of encouraging Anglo-American immigration by offering free, tax-exempt land. In payment for his services, Lorimer received extensive land grants and exclusive trading privileges.²⁵

The first Euro-American settlers into the Spanish colony were families from the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Later, German settlers immigrated to the area. When Spain ceded Upper Louisiana to the United States in 1804, Lorimer's post became the seat of government for the district. In 1806, Lorimer initiated the platting of a town. By this time, the thriving river settlement's population was 1,650.²⁶ However, the town's growth slowed when the United States Land Commission rejected Lorimer's land titles, invalidating all the titles to lots in the city. Further hindering growth was the decision in 1815 to relocate the county seat to Jackson. It was not until 1836, when the United States government recognized Lorimer's land titles, that Cape Girardeau experienced a rebirth.²⁷ Despite the fact that Spain was a Catholic nation and that Lorimer, founder and commandant of Cape Girardeau, was Catholic, the Euro-Americans who dominated the first wave of immigrants were either Protestant or were indifferent to religion.²⁸

As early as 1818, the Vincentian priests at St. Mary's-of-the-Barrens desired to establish a parish in the small river settlement of Cape Girardeau, despite the fact that the settlement had only eight Catholic families. Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, Catholics continued to remain a small minority. An early

²⁵ van Ravensway, 199-200.

²⁶ Floyd C. Shoemaker, "Cape Girardeau, Most American of Missouri's Original Five Counties," *Missouri Historic Review* 50, no. 1 (October 1955): 51.

²⁷ van Ravensway, 200.

²⁸ Shoemaker, 54.

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church report noted that "religious prejudice at Cape Girardeau was very bitter and the few Catholics who were at this place were so intimidated that they scarcely dared own themselves publicly as such."²⁹

The Vincentians began to escalate their missionary efforts in Cape Girardeau in 1825 when Father John Timon, C.M., one of the first graduates of St. Mary's-of-the-Barrens, initiated periodic visits to the community. Timon established a congregation in Cape Girardeau and, assisted by Father J. M. Odin, served as its priest from July 1827 through January 1835. During this period, the Catholic congregation steadily grew through conversion of members of other faiths and from the numerous Catholic immigrants from eastern states and Europe. In July 1833, Timon converted a warehouse near the present site of Old St. Vincent's Church into a chapel. By 1836, the congregation included eighty-seven families and preparations began to establish a permanent parish with a priest in residence. In the spring of that year, construction began on a new church and the Vincentians began plans to educate the congregation's children by contacting the Sisters of Loretto to send nuns from St. Louis to manage an elementary school.³⁰ In 1838, the Vincentians opened St. Vincent's Male Academy, a boarding and day school for high school-age Protestant and Roman Catholic boys. A year later, the small Catholic congregation laid the first corner stone for their church. Upon completion of the church building, the congregation included sixty-nine communicants and approximately eighty-two non-communicants. From Cape Girardeau, the Vincentians established a number of small missions and communion stations, evidence of growing importance of Cape Girardeau as a Catholic and Vincentian center of activity.³¹

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
IN MISSOURI 1820-1855**

To understand the establishment and evolution of institutions of higher learning in the State of Missouri and the significant associations of St. Vincent's College in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, it is important to understand the early development of religious institutions in the region. While the primary impetus of religious groups centered on their local church and the salvation of the soul, the first promoters and patrons of education in Missouri were the various religious denominations that established themselves during the territorial period in Missouri's first villages and towns.

Almost immediately after the United States assumed control of the Louisiana Territory, Protestant ministers for the first time entered what had been the domain of the French and Spanish Catholic priests.

²⁹ Janet, 33.

³⁰ Ibid., 37-38.

³¹ Ibid., 33, 39-40.

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It was not long before diverse religious groups began to vie for the souls of the territory's new settlers. Denominations that emphasized an educated clergy and congregations capable of accepting elaborate theology and doctrine (Presbyterians with their ties to Scottish Calvinism; New England Congregationalists with their roots in Puritanism; Episcopalians with their dependence on the English Anglican Church; and Roman Catholics with established colonial missions) competed against the more functional and democratic American evangelical sects (Methodists, Baptists, and Disciples of Christ churches) that flourished during Missouri's initial settlement period.

The Methodists and Baptists, by virtue of their organizational structure and evangelistic nature, soon gained the advantage in the competition. Requiring no theological degrees, relatively large numbers of their preachers went to isolated areas to establish churches. Catholics, Anglicans, Congregationalist, and Presbyterian churches required extensive training of their clergy, a practice that did not allow any of these groups to "field" as many ministers. By 1850, most Missourians residing in newly developing rural communities held membership in one of the more evangelic Protestant sects. The more structured religious denominations, such as the Catholic and Episcopalian, continued to maintain enclaves in urban areas that developed along Missouri's river system.³²

During this period, both Protestant and Catholic clergy acted as the first promoters and patrons of education in Missouri. Religious denominations supplied the leadership, organizational effort, and financial support for institutions of higher learning. As a result, numerous colleges sprang up throughout Missouri during the first half of the nineteenth century. Established initially to train ministers, many of the church-related colleges soon expanded their programs into other fields.³³

Development of educational institutions in Missouri mirrored national trends. By the mid-nineteenth century, one-fifth of the nation's population — five million individuals — received instruction in the various educational institutions of the different states. Religious denominations played a central role in establishing colleges throughout the nation and by the late 1850s, forty-nine Presbyterian, thirty-four Methodist, twenty-five Baptist, twenty-one Congregationalist, fourteen Catholic, and eleven Episcopal (Anglican) colleges provided advanced educational courses.³⁴

The Right Reverend Louis William DuBourg, Roman Catholic Bishop of Louisiana, laid the foundation for the first university west of the Mississippi River in 1818 when he helped organize a Latin school

³² Schwenk, 94.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

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known as the St. Louis Academy.³⁵ Renamed St. Louis College after an enlargement of its curriculum, the institution received its charter as St. Louis University in 1832 from the Missouri General Assembly. Managed by the Society of Jesus, the institution initiated a graduate program in theology in 1824, a post-graduate medical program in 1836, and a law department in 1843. Organized by the Vincentian order at Perryville, Missouri in 1818, St. Mary's-of-the-Barrens Seminary, another early Catholic educational institution, continued to train Roman Catholic priests after statehood and, in 1823, the Vincentians opened a secular college program there.³⁶

Subsequently, the Missouri General Assembly chartered a number of private religious colleges. Chartered in 1831, Marian College near Palmyra opened a Presbyterian theological seminary program in 1835. The Vincentian Brothers from St. Mary's-of-the-Barrens established St. Vincent's Academy in 1838, which the Missouri legislature chartered as St. Vincent's College in 1843.³⁷ The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod founded Concordia Theological Seminary in 1839 in Dresden. In St. Charles, Major George C. Sibley and his wife Mary launched a finishing school for young ladies in 1829, which the State of Missouri chartered as Lindenwood College in 1856. The General Baptist Association established William Jewell College in Liberty in 1850. Presbyterians founded Fulton College in 1851 to provide young men with a higher education and, upon receiving a state charter in 1853, changed its name to Westminster College. The Disciples of Christ Church founded Christian College for women (Columbia College) in 1851 and sponsored Christian University (Culver-Stockton College) in Canton in 1853. That same year, the General Assembly chartered the Eliot Seminary in St. Louis (changed to Washington University in 1857). Central Methodist College in Fayette, chartered as Central College in 1855, admitted its first students in 1857. Columbia Baptist Female College (Stephens College) in Columbia also incorporated that year.³⁸

The University of Missouri-Columbia was the state's only public institution of higher learning before 1860 and, because the General Assembly failed to provide it with any public financial support, it was not

³⁵ Perry McCandless, *A History of Missouri, Volume II 1820-1860* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 194. Before the advent of colleges, the private academy provided the most advanced educational opportunities in Missouri. Chartered by the state legislature and managed by a private board of trustees, these institutions relied upon stock issues, tuition, and donations to erect permanent buildings and hire a professional staff. Most provided boarding facilities. State charters required these academies to be co-educational and to admit children of the poor free of charge. The Missouri General Assembly granted charters to over ninety academies prior to 1860 and approximately one hundred additional private academies operated without charters from the State of Missouri.

³⁶ Janet, 1-3.

³⁷ van Ravensway, 203, 267; McCandless, 198-199.

³⁸ McCandless, 201-202.

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a particularly flourishing institution. In 1839, the Missouri Legislature approved the Geyer Act, which authorized the creation of the University of Missouri-Columbia, giving it the distinction of being the oldest state university west of the Mississippi River and the third oldest west of the Allegheny Mountains.³⁹

THE HISTORY OF ST. VINCENT'S COLLEGE

Father Timon laid the groundwork for the establishment of St. Vincent's College in Cape Girardeau in 1833 when he purchased a 40-acre tract of land from Ralph Daugherty for \$3,500.⁴⁰ The transaction represented the order's first purchase of land outside of the Barrens in Perryville. Father Timon negotiated a loan from John Casey of Potosi, Missouri due to Bishop Rosati's preference to approve the purchase on the condition that diocesan funds not be used at that time.⁴¹ On January 24, 1837, Father Timon also purchased 40 acres of adjacent land from Moses McClean that became part of what was known as the "Lower Farm." At the same time, he purchased what was known as the Dumais-Menard tract, which became known as the college's "Upper Farm."⁴² The order grew produce for use by the various Vincentian programs and for sale to fund other mission activities.

The original tract purchased from Daugherty dates to a Spanish Land grant to Louis Lorimer. On September 5, 1810, Lorimer sold 45 acres, which included the future college property, to John Risher, a blacksmith. According to records in the Vincentian Archives in Perryville, Missouri, Risher platted the land in 1812, officially establishing the town of Decatur. A formal dedication deed dated May 13, 1818 indicates that Risher sold some of the lots located to the south of the original 40-acre college property. It also appears that Risher collected taxes for the properties in his new city, but did not turn the money over to the county officials. Ensuing lawsuits resulted in findings against Risher who defaulted on the payment of the judgments. On December 11, 1828, Ralph Daugherty purchased the 39.42 acres, which he sold on March 28, 1833 to the Vincentians.⁴³

By 1840, the popularity of St. Vincent's Male Academy led the Reverend Michael Domenech, C.M. to begin plans to build a larger building and to include college courses. Although there were only a few

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Diana Steele, "City of Cape Girardeau Historic Landmark Application Form," 24 April 1996, City of Cape Girardeau, Missouri Planning Department, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

⁴¹ Janet, 36.

⁴² Timon did not convey the title to the College until 1852 when he was Bishop of Baltimore. He also served as the Bishop of Buffalo, New York.

⁴³ Steele.

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Catholics in the territory at the time, Domenech felt that the College's location near the Mississippi River — the main transportation artery for the region — would draw students from more distant places.⁴⁴

At the same time that Domenech began to develop plans for a college, the Vincentians moved their novitiate (a preparatory seminary consisting of two priests, two students, and three brothers) from the Barrens to Cape Girardeau. It appears that shortly after the purchase of the property in 1833 and before the establishment of the academy in 1838, Reverend Odin wrote to Timon from Italy concerning the transfer of the novitiate from the Barrens Seminary to Cape Girardeau. The decision to pursue Domenech's plan to build a secular college at Cape Girardeau made this venture a short-lived one, and the order moved the novitiate program back to the Barrens.

Father Timon, Provincial Visitor of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States, approved the plan of founding a Catholic college for males on the tract of land he purchased in 1833.⁴⁵ The availability of land owned by the Vincentians in Cape Girardeau and the growth of the St. Vincent de Paul Parish also made the town a logical location for the expansion of Vincentian educational programs.

Cape Girardeau, by this time a prosperous agricultural commercial center, provided an attractive location for the college. The town prospered from its river location, serving as a regional market center where wholesalers and "middlemen" bought cotton, grain, livestock, and other processed goods from the steamboats plying the river and resold these goods to other towns in the region. The town's cotton gin, flourmills, and sawmills attracted farmers from areas as far as one hundred miles away. A number of local limestone and marble quarries and brickyards produced the building materials for the growing community. The town featured a small business center with brick commercial buildings near the waterfront. The brick and limestone houses of the prosperous merchants and owners of manufacturing concerns lined the nearby streets.⁴⁶

The Reverend Thaddeus Amant, later Bishop of Los Angeles, became the first president of St. Vincent's College. Work began on the college buildings in 1842 with the quarrying of stone at the south end of the

⁴⁴ Janet, 40; Martin V. Moore C.M., "A Century of Service in Catholic Education," circa 1943, Kent Library Archives, Southeast Missouri State College, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Thomason and Associates, "Cape Girardeau Historic Preservation Plan Cape Girardeau, Missouri," (Nashville, TN: Thomason and Associates, January 1999), 7.

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school grounds. At the same time, the contractor began molding and firing the bricks.⁴⁷ On February 27, 1843, the Missouri General Assembly chartered St. Vincent's College as a degree-granting institution, empowering it to confer academic and collegiate degrees. Actual construction of the three-story brick college building (Block 1) began later in the spring. In May of 1844, as the building neared completion, the Vincentians transferred St. Mary's-of-the-Barrens's College Department, which consisted of seventy-five lay students, to the new campus. For the next sixty-six years, the facility served as an institution for higher learning.⁴⁸

A series of calamities marked the first six years of the College's history. The flood of 1844 destroyed many of the Lower Farm's buildings and all of the crops, which were the College's chief source of income. Shortly thereafter, an epidemic afflicted most of the student body and left two faculty members dead. On January 4, 1848, the explosion of the *SeaBird*, a boat loaded with gunpowder anchored in the river just below the College, damaged the school building to such an extent that portions had to be rebuilt. Workmen barely completed the repairs when a tornado struck the town and the College in November of 1850. The storm destroyed all of the College's smaller buildings and blew away the roof, both parapet gables, and the walls at the southwest corner of the main building. After completing these repairs in 1853, the trustees commissioned an addition at the south end of the main building.⁴⁹

The mission of the lay college changed in the summer of 1859 when the Very Reverend S. V. Ryan, C.M., who was then Provincial of the Congregation of the Mission, acting upon the wishes of the Most Reverend P. R. Kenrick, Archbishop of St. Louis, and the bishops of the St. Louis Province, requested that the St. Vincent College's board consider the possibility of converting the facility into an ecclesiastical seminary for the archdiocese. The trustees voted to disband the students on June 30, 1859 and to reopen the facility on the first day of September as a theological college.⁵⁰

As in other Vincentian seminaries, the program at St. Vincent's College accepted, as a matter of practice, those men who had already attained a general scholastic and theological education. And, while the order discouraged prodigious scholarship unless it served to further Vincentian efforts, the order maintained a rigid and rigorous six-year course of study.⁵¹ The facility remained exclusively an ecclesiastical college

⁴⁷ "Listen . . . the Bell History of St. Vincent's College Cape Girardeau," 11 September 1968, quoting the Day Book located at St. Mary's-of-the-Barrens in Perryville, Missouri, Vertical Clipping File, Cape Girardeau Public Library, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

⁴⁸ Janet, 41.

⁴⁹ Moore.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Janet, 74.

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until after the Civil War when the trustees reintroduced lay academic courses and admitted non-ecclesiastical students as well as seminarians. In this capacity, the school would train most of the Roman Catholic clergy of the West.⁵²

Because of its strategic location on the Mississippi River, the Union Army occupied Cape Girardeau throughout the Civil War. The river town served as a supply base and an outpost to protect the army's communications network. In July 1861, Union soldiers began occupation of Cape Girardeau and erected fortifications at the four approaches to the town. Although the troops successfully defended the fortifications from a Confederate attack on April 17, 1863, the main effect of the war was the interruption of the river trade and the plundering of the rural backcountry by raiding troops and guerrilla bands.⁵³

The war divided the community. The early settlers who came from the Border States were, for the most part, secessionists. Others, especially the German immigrants, were Unionists. The same divisions marked St. Vincent's College. In June 1861, the seminary suspended classes and most of the students returned to their homes, many entering the armies of the North and the South. The next fall, the seminary opened as usual and, through extensive negotiations with the federal authorities, remained open throughout the hostilities.

After the war ended and steamboat traffic resumed, Cape Girardeau returned to its earlier prosperity. In 1865, St. Vincent's College began accepting students seeking a classical education, now offering a collegiate department and a theological department, each independent of the other. The creation of the two departments helped the College to flourish and, by 1871, the increased enrollment required the erection of another wing to the main building.⁵⁴

The next two decades saw St. Vincent's College move to the fore as a prominent institution of learning. The theological department during these years consisted of a full course of ecclesiastical studies. Serving on its faculty were some of the ablest Vincentian scholars in the United States. Many associated with the College gained individual distinction in other fields. Professor James Knowd, an instructor in higher mathematics at the College for twenty years, enjoyed a national reputation. The Reverend John F. McGerry, a professor of natural science, was a noted botanist. The Reverend Abraham J. Ryan, a famous poet and author, taught at the College before the Civil War. Students, such as Dr. John Murphy, a famous

⁵² "College Here Second Oldest West of River," *Cape Girardeau (MO) News*, 11 March 1935, Vertical Clipping File, Cape Girardeau Public Library, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

⁵³ van Ravensway, 201-202.

⁵⁴ Moore.

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Chicago surgeon, contributed to the professional, religious, and commercial life of communities throughout the Mississippi Valley and beyond.⁵⁵ Mark Twain commented on the reputation of the College in his 1883 book *Life On the Mississippi* that, "Uncle Mumford said it had as high a reputation for thoroughness as any similar institution in Missouri." At this time, the College offered both secular and religious degrees and boasted a library of over thirty thousand volumes.⁵⁶

The liberal arts college program had an average annual enrollment of around one hundred, attracting students from Missouri, Illinois, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas. Both the theological department and the liberal arts department awarded Bachelor of Arts degrees for four-year courses of study. The trustees also added a two-year business course that awarded certificates based on maintaining a certain grade point average. Each of the college departments — theological, classical, and commercial — operated as completely separate schools until 1893, when the theological department and its faculty moved to St. Louis when the Kenrick Seminary opened.⁵⁷

Late Nineteenth Century Trends in Higher Education

The post-war growth and changes in the courses offered at St. Vincent's College in the second half of the nineteenth century reflected general trends in higher education in the United States. The evolution of colleges in the nineteenth century was an ongoing process of distinguishing between the functions of a broad liberal education and the more specialized roles of professional and vocational education. During the first half of the century, the curriculum of American colleges had a limited scope and relied heavily on courses in classical studies, by the last quarter of the century, college offerings provided a variety of specialized degree courses. This reflected the demands of the middle classes for professional training, which gradually displaced the interests of the "educated classes" from America's wealthiest strata of society who expected of colleges to provide only a broad exposure to the classics. The period after the Civil War and on into the twentieth century marked significant changes, including stricter admission standards, departmentalization within colleges, expansion of the elective system with an organized curricular graded course of study, and examination standards for the awarding of degrees.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ "College Here Second Oldest West of River."

⁵⁶ Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* [Book online] (Boston, MA: James R. Osgood and Company, 1883) available at http://www.online-literature.com/view.php?life_mississippi/26?term=cape%20girardeau; Internet; accessed 31 January 2005.

⁵⁷ "College Here Second Oldest West of River."

⁵⁸ Russell Thomas, *The Search for a Common Learning: General Education, 1800-1960* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1962), 11-18.

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St. Vincent's College in the Twentieth Century

The tremendous expansion of knowledge, a growing and more mobile public, a shift of population to urban areas, and the proportionately high percentage of young, middle-class adults stimulated tremendous growth in the number of colleges, both private and public.⁵⁹ By the turn of the century, admissions at St. Vincent's College began to decline. Catholicism was at this time an urban phenomenon. Almost half of all Catholics lived in the Northeast. While 30 percent of all Catholics lived in the dioceses of New York, Brooklyn, Chicago, Boston, and Philadelphia, another 30 percent lived in the Midwest north of the Ohio River. Outside these areas, the largest concentrations were in San Francisco and New Orleans. The presence of Catholic colleges in these areas and the existence of colleges in every city of any size made it increasingly difficult for St. Vincent's College to enroll students from outside the region. In 1902, the college ceased recruiting students and received no new students except those living in Cape Girardeau. The classical and commercial departments remained and continued degree programs until 1910.⁶⁰

At this time, the Vincentian Order considered closing the College and selling the property. Instead, they closed the College and moved the minor seminary program — a high school program for young men desiring to become Vincentian priests — from Perryville to the facility at St. Vincent's College. Between 1910 and 1979, upon completion of their grammar school years, students from throughout the western United States attended the high school seminary program at St. Vincent's College in order to prepare for entrance into the Novitiate course and the first year of college in Santa Barbara, California. The remainder of the four-year seminary course was taken at St. Mary's in Perryville. In 1979, twelve boys constituted the minor seminary's graduating class.

That year, the Vincentians closed the high school program and the Vincentians used the facility as a center for religious retreats and meetings. In 1989, the order put the property up for sale. Between this date and 1998, the Colonial Cape Girardeau Foundation attempted to finance purchase of the property. In 1998, B. W. Harrison, a native of Cape Girardeau, pledged funds to the University Foundation to purchase the property for use by Southeast Missouri State University as a fine arts campus. With the approval of the Missouri Board of Regents, the University Foundation purchased the property.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Ibid., 42-43.

⁶⁰ "College Here Second Oldest West of River"

⁶¹ "History of St. Vincent's College," n.d., Vertical Clipping File, Cape Girardeau Public Library, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

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Social, Religious, and Educational Significance

From 1843 to 1910, St. Vincent's College operated as an institution of higher learning, providing one of Missouri's earliest college courses. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the College's seminary department educated most of the Catholic clergy in the West. In this capacity, its trustees and teachers shaped nineteenth and twentieth century American Catholicism. Through these forces and the number of Catholic laymen who studied at St. Vincent's, the College has strong associations with the establishment of Catholicism as an important component in the social history and culture of Southeast Missouri and the larger Mississippi Valley. In addition to the impact of the theological curriculum, which shaped the culture of Catholicism in Missouri and the Midwest, graduates of the College's secular classical and commercial degree programs educated civic and business leaders throughout the Mississippi Valley.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Evolution of the Property

The St. Vincent's College Building occupies a tract of land purchased by the Vincentian Order from Ralph Daugherty in March 1833.⁶² To this original purchase, they added more land, which is referred to as the "Lower Farm" and the "Upper Farm." The order purchased the first 40 acres of the Lower Farm from Moses McClean, who received a patent on the land on January 24, 1837. The non-contiguous 850 acres known as the "Upper Farm" belonged to Peter Dumais, whose father obtained it from the French before Don Louis Lorimer came to Cape Girardeau.⁶³ The College's trustees added additional acreage to the Upper and Lower Farms, assembling vast tracts on which they raised crops to feed the students and finance the operations of St. Vincent's College and St. Vincent's Academy for girls in Cape Girardeau. As the order needed funds to maintain programs or to establish more missions and schools, they also sold sections of their land.⁶⁴

The St. Vincent's College Building dates from three periods of construction — 1843, 1853, and 1871. The extant brick handball courts located to the north of the building date from the 1843 period of construction. Throughout the years, a variety of buildings and structures that no longer remain met

⁶² "Listen. . . the Bell History of St. Vincent's College Cape Girardeau," 11 September 1968.

⁶³ "Listen. . . the Bell History of St. Vincent's College Cape Girardeau," *Cape Girardeau (MO) Bulletin*, 25 September 1968, Vertical Clipping File, Cape Girardeau Public Library, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* From the Lower Farm they sold acreage to the Missouri Dry Dock, Federal Materials, Standard Oil, Shell Oil, Houck Railroad property, White Cross Company, and portions of the Marquette Cement operation. A large amount of the river property washed away during various floods. Properties sold from the Upper Farm in 1920 included present-day St. Vincent's Park, Capaha Gardens, Cape Rock Hill, Cape Rock Country Club Place, the original 60-acre Cape Girardeau Country Club, and a private farm.

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specific needs of the College. By 1850, the site also included brick servant quarters that housed slaves and a two-story frame building used as a tailor and shoe shop, as well as for storage.⁶⁵ On the southern border of the property, the order established a cemetery for the College. (When a rail spur to a nearby factory encroached upon the burial grounds, the Vincentians moved the remains to St. Mary's Cemetery on Perry Avenue.) Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps dating from 1893 to 1915 show a large dormitory building with a north-south orientation to the west of the 1843 portion of the building. In the area to the southwest of the building, there were a variety of utilitarian buildings, including root cellars, an icehouse, woodsheds, laundry facilities, a slaughterhouse and miscellaneous storage and farm buildings.⁶⁶ By 1915, with the exception of one large storage building and the root cellar, all were gone, including the dormitory. Sometime in the early twentieth century, the Vincentians approved the application of stucco to the exterior of the building, which remained on the building until 1954. During this same period, St. Vincent's Church in Cape Girardeau also received a stucco covering.⁶⁷

Other changes occurred after the facility ceased to function as a college. The vacating of the entrance driveway from Morgan Oak Street to the grounds on the east side of the St. Vincent's College Building occurred in the 1920s when the toll bridge across the Mississippi River opened. After this time, the main entrance driveway from Morgan Oak Street was on the west side of the college building and it approached what had been the rear courtyard, created by the "L" shape of the main buildings. Many changes reflected the facility's use as a minor seminary and high school after 1910. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps show a swimming pool on the south side of the 1853 building (Block 2) in 1931. Between that time and the institution's one-hundredth anniversary in 1943, numerous renovations and improvements occurred annually. Exterior improvements included new fireproof roofs. Interior renovations included the installation of hardwood floors throughout the college building's main floors and the installation of concrete floors, a hot water system, and shower facilities in the basement. Repainted walls and new rubber floor tiles gave the student chapel a fresh appearance. Corresponding

⁶⁵ Moore; "Listen. . . the Bell History of St. Vincent's College Cape Girardeau," 25 September 1968.

⁶⁶ Felix Eugene Snyder and Earl Augustus Collins, *St. Girardeau: Biography of a City* (Cape Girardeau: Ranfree Press, 1956), 138; "St. Vincent's College of Cape Girardeau, MO. Operated by the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian Fathers) Since 1843," n.d., Vertical Clipping File, Cape Girardeau Public Library, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

⁶⁷ The owners removed the stucco from the church in 1952.

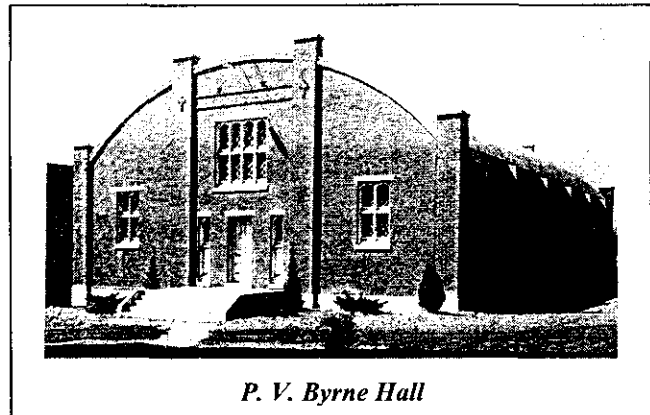
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improvements in recreational facilities included the erection in 1938 of the P. V. Byrne Hall, a barrel roof gymnasium building, to the west of the 1871 wing (Block 3); two asphalt tennis courts north of the 1843 building (Block 1); a baseball diamond northwest of the 1843 building; and improvements to the swimming pool south of the 1853 building (Block 2).⁶⁸



P. V. Byrne Hall

In the 1950s, two significant changes occurred.

The Vincentians initiated an exterior renovation of the St. Vincent's College Building, including the removal of the stucco treatment to return it to its original appearance. Around that time, the high school students built the primitive rock grotto approximately forty-five feet to the southeast of the 1853 building (Block 2). In April of 1971, architect Henry Creighton began renovating the chapel in the 1871 addition (Block 3) in compliance with the Vatican II edicts.⁶⁹ By the end of 1972, other renovations to the college building included replacing the original wooden windows with aluminum sash units, paneling the student dormitory wards with Masonite boards, and installing a drop ceiling in the faculty dining room in the 1843 building (Block 1).

When the Vincentians put the property up for sale in 1989, the campus consisted of 23.38 acres and a separate 4-acre tract with river frontage. On the campus grounds proper were a 52,000-square-foot main building with approximately 75 rooms, a 5,000-square-foot gymnasium, the 1843 handball courts, the 1930s tennis courts, the grotto, a small swimming pool, and miscellaneous outbuildings.⁷⁰

Architectural Significance

The St. Vincent's College Building is significant in its design and construction. It successfully represents distinctive characteristics of both a type and period of construction. Its architecture embodies distinctive elements of the popular Georgian and Italianate architectural styles, demonstrating the transition in institutional architecture from common eighteenth century Colonial American design motifs to popular

⁶⁸ Moore.

⁶⁹ Steele.

⁷⁰ Kent M. Bratton, Ken Eftenk, and John Goddard, "Report to the City Manager: Analysis of the Potential Purchase of the St. Vincent Seminary Grounds by the City of Cape Girardeau" (Cape Girardeau: Cape Girardeau Division of Planning Services, 2 January 1996).

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nineteenth century architectural forms. As applied to the college building property type, the St. Vincent's College Building reflects the influences of popular residential architecture on educational facilities.

The 1843 building's (Block 1) symmetrical building design and form, shallow eaves, and brick construction on a raised stone foundation are common design elements most closely associated with Georgian style architecture found in the southern and middle colonies in the eighteenth century. The vernacular use of these idioms continued into the early nineteenth century, especially in remote, newly settled communities in the then western part of the country.⁷¹ The use of brick in Cape Girardeau dates from the first years of settlement. Brick construction appeared in certain parts of Missouri soon after the Louisiana Purchase (prior to this brick was used in chimneys). During this time, itinerant brick makers and masons burned bricks at the building site, as suitable clay could be found in nearly every part of Missouri.⁷² The early settlers in Cape Girardeau quarried native limestone for their foundations and used the native clay to make bricks for their homes and business houses. German craftsmen who came to the area established businesses producing bricks for construction work. Initially, they formed bricks by hand by pressing clay into molds and drying them in the sun. Later, they used small kilns to fire the bricks. By 1851, brick makers were so prolific in the community that the City of Cape Girardeau passed an ordinance regulating the size of bricks.⁷³

It is difficult to provide an analysis as to the choice of style. The Vincentian priests were all Europeans and, as early as 1827, they erected the Italian Renaissance style Church of the Assumption at St. Mary's-of-the-Barrens. Moreover, within the Catholic Church in Missouri, Italian priests introduced Italian Renaissance styles to their buildings as early as 1828 (i.e., St. Joachim at Old Mines) and the third church in St. Genevieve circa 1831-1837. Jesuit buildings in the original St. Louis University also reflected the academic style.⁷⁴ And yet, the design for the new St. Vincent's College Building in Cape Girardeau mirrored eighteenth century American design influences. This departure could be attributed to the builder, Joseph Lansmon. Coming from Europe as a young man and traveling through the port cities of Baltimore, Maryland and New Orleans, Louisiana,⁷⁵ Lansmon had exposure to both European and American eighteenth century high style architecture and to the vernacular adaptations that evolved from

⁷¹ Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (New York: Times Mirror New American Library, 1980), 18-28.

⁷² van Ravensway, 188-189.

⁷³ K. J. H. Cochran, "Early Brick Craftsmen of Cape Girardeau," *Cape Girardeau Bulletin*, 4 September 1980, Vertical Clipping File, Cape Girardeau Public Library, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

⁷⁴ van Ravensway, 189-199.

⁷⁵ Diana Craig Bryant and Sharon K. Sanders, "A Comparative Timeline of Joseph Lansmon's Career and Personal Life," (Cape Girardeau: Unpublished Research, May 1999).

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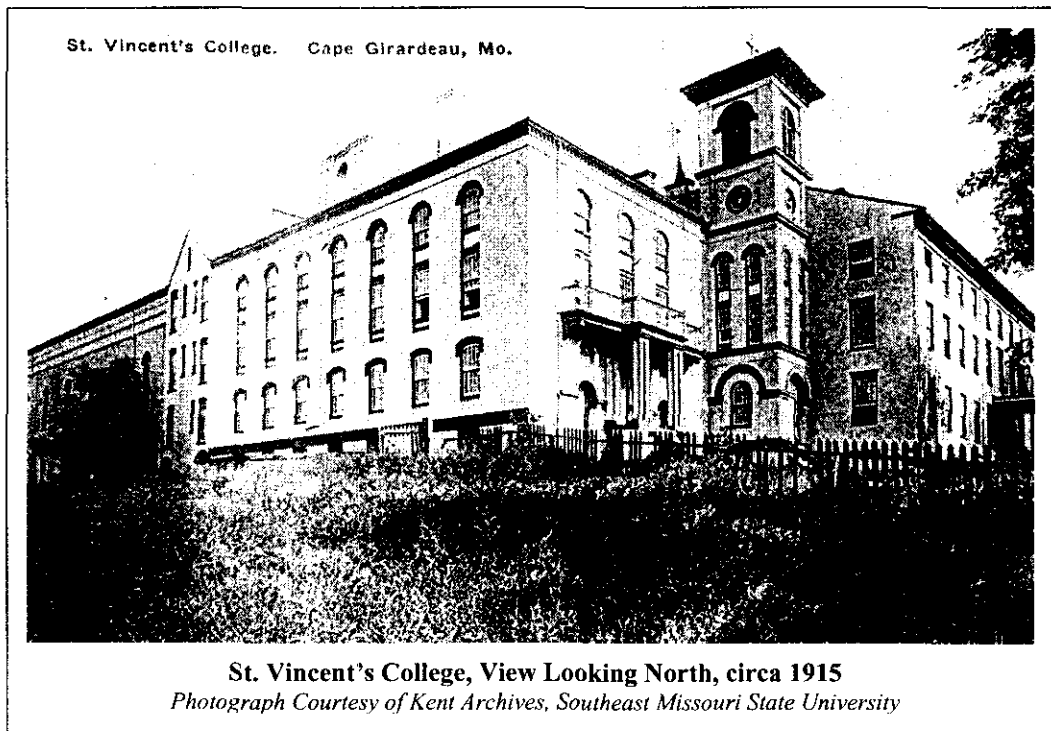
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it. Whatever the influencing factors, the restrained, vernacular design of the College's first building was not an uncommon treatment in the rapidly developing communities of Missouri at this time.

Lansmon also supervised the repairs from tornado damage in 1850 and erected the 1853 addition (Block 2). The three-story brick addition provided more residential space and a lecture hall and had the same dimensions as the 1843 building (Block 1).



This addition and a subsequent 1871 addition (Block 3) reflect the common patterns in the design of college buildings that was part of a continuum of reinterpretation of the property type using contemporaneous popular residential architectural forms and design treatments. The 1853 addition (Block 2) reflects the popularity of the Italianate (Italian Villa) residential style in the Midwest between 1850 and 1880. As adapted to the college building, the stylistic treatment reflects a prototype that emerged in the 1840s and 1850s featuring relatively simple detailing. The most distinguishing stylistic feature of the 1853 addition (Block 2) is the bell tower, with its low-pitched roof; wide bracketed eaves; tall, narrow, arched windows; floor divisions articulated by horizontal coursing; single and paired windows with straight lintils; and segmental and full arch openings. The 1853 building's (Block 2)

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shallow hip roof and its south and north elevations provide subtler references to the style. Creating a dignified, regular rhythm of solid and void is the symmetrical placement of single windows and the horizontal divisions created by different window sizes and treatments at each story, which includes hooded brick segmental arches at the first story, flat lentils at the second story, and full arch openings at the third story.

In 1871, St. Vincent's College added another addition to the west end of the 1853 building (Block 2).⁷⁶ This addition also had the same dimensions as the original 1843 building (Block 1) and housed a gymnasium at the basement level, a theater/lecture hall on the first floor, and a two-story chapel. The design treatment of the 1871 addition (Block 3) is more eclectic. The front-gabled section with its cupola, which links to the 1853 building (Block 2), references Colonial American architectural antecedents. However, the shallow hipped roof and long, narrow arched windows reflect Italianate influences. The narrow nave plan echoes European precedents in ecclesiastical architecture as does the use of shallow buttresses and arched windows with leaded glass to create vertical bays in the north and south elevations.

The juxtaposition of the smooth, hard, dark-red brick with the light cool tone of the limestone foundation and windowsills was typical of mid- to late nineteenth century design treatments and construction technology. The use of cast iron columns in the 1853 and 1871 additions reflects a continuum of nineteenth century construction techniques. In the 1850s, the use of iron support columns was rare in Missouri. Shortly after the end of the Civil War, their use in commercial and institutional construction became more commonplace in Missouri. The ore deposits at Iron Mountain and in Franklin and Phelps Counties fed a growing number of foundries that fabricated cast iron balconies, handrails, lintels, and gratings prior to the war. After the war, an expansion of these iron manufacturers took place and iron joists replaced their wooden counterparts and began to be common in commercial buildings in the region.⁷⁷

Secondary sources, including church histories prepared by the Vincentians, date the handball courts to 1843 and claim that they are the first such structures west of the Mississippi River. The double-sided structure with side walls provides two triple-wall handball courts, each of which can accommodate two to four players. In addition to the front wall, the court's long rectangular playing area had a short line marked off parallel to the front wall, from behind which the ball was served. Hand-played ball games originated in ancient Egypt in 2000 BC. Alexander the Great introduced the game to the Greek colonies

⁷⁶ It is unclear whether Lansmon was responsible for the design or the construction. An unverified source indicates that he bid for but did not receive a contract for the 1871 addition (Block 3).

⁷⁷ van Ravensway, 192.

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in Italy in 450 BC, from which it spread to Spain and France. Variations of the game appear throughout Europe by the sixteenth century and often appeared near church buildings to encourage play away from church walls with their glass windows. In France, the home of the Vincentian order, a version of the game invented by monks evolved into tennis. Modern American handball evolved from the game brought by Irish immigrants in the mid- to late nineteenth century.⁷⁸ Because of its date of construction and associations with the Vincentians, it is possible that the structure's design has associations with the French antecedents.

In addition to its significance in its design and construction, the building and handball courts represent the work of brick mason Joseph M. Lansmon. Lansmon established his reputation as a master builder in Cape Girardeau in the late 1830s and continued his construction company for almost seventy years. Among his commissions were the first St. Vincent's Catholic Church (circa 1838); the Vincentian Priests Residence (circa 1838); the St. Charles Hotel (circa 1838); St. Vincent's Male Academy (circa 1838); St. Vincent's Young Ladies Academy (circa 1840); the St. Vincent's College Building (Blocks 1 and 2) and handball courts (1843, 1853); St. Mary's of the Barrens Administration Building (Perryville, Missouri, circa 1850); St. Vincent's Church (rebuilt after the 1850 tornado); the Common Pleas Courthouse (1854); the Riverview Hotel (1857); the Union Mill (1857); the Covered Bridge (Bufordville, Missouri, 1858); St. Mary's German Catholic Church (1868); the Cape Girardeau County Courthouse (Jackson, Missouri, circa 1871); the Third District Normal School (Academic Hall of Southeast Missouri State University, 1873); St. Vincent's Parochial School (1877); and numerous private homes.⁷⁹ The buildings are an example of his early mid-century work and reflect his skills as a stone mason and brick mason, as well as his use of vernacular design traditions.

According to local historical sources, Lansmon and several of his brothers immigrated from Alsace-Lorraine to New Orleans at an unknown time. Family tradition holds that the brothers changed their name from Hoch to Lansmon to avoid military service in their homeland. After working in New Orleans at a number of jobs, Lansmon, then around twenty-three years of age, came to Cape Girardeau around 1837 and established a construction business. He purchased 300 acres of land where he quarried limestone, erected a kiln, and manufactured brick. Lansmon employed a number of work teams and often constructed several buildings at one time.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ "Handball," Encyclopedia Britannica from Encyclopedia Britannica Premium Service available at <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=9039126>; Internet; accessed 20 January 2005

⁷⁹ Bryant; Steele.

⁸⁰ K. J. H. Cochran, "Joseph Lansmon's Imprint on History," *Cape Girardeau Bulletin*, 14 June 1983, Vertical Clipping File, Cape Girardeau Public Library, Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

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CONCLUSION

The St. Vincent's College Building has significant associations with an era in Missouri history during which the Vincentian Order renewed and revitalized Catholicism as a culture in Southeast Missouri and the Mississippi Valley through its role of educating the Roman Catholic clergy of the West. The institution also is significant as one of Missouri's oldest colleges and as a representative example of the evolution of both religious and lay institutions of higher learning in the nineteenth century. It is significant in architecture for its ability to communicate the transition from accepted eighteenth century design treatments to popular nineteenth century styles; its demonstration of the construction techniques, craftsmanship, and technological changes that occurred in the mid- to late nineteenth century; and for its representation of the institutional work of master builder Joseph M. Lansmon.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The National Register of Historic Places boundaries of the St. Vincent College Building property are shown as the shaded area on the accompanying scaled map entitled "National Register Boundary Map"

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property includes a portion of the parcel of land purchased by the Vincentian Order in 1833 that is currently owned by Southeast Missouri State University. It contains all of the remaining buildings, structures, and landscape features associated with St. Vincent's College during its period of significance from 1843-1910. As such, it encompasses but does not exceed all associated historic features of the property. In particular, the use of the 380 foot contour line to define the east and south boundaries allows the inclusion of important extant open spaces and topographical and landscape features such as the original entrance drive road bed. The legal property ownership boundary line delineates the north boundary and allows inclusion of historic open space and structures associated with the College's significance. The western boundary is defined by the legal parcel boundary line running south from its intersection with the northern property boundary lines and continuing to the topographical line. The boundary excludes spaces, buildings, and structures of the historic college grounds that have lost their historical integrity or are not associated with the period of significance.

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St. Vincent's College Building
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Photographers: Bonnie Stepenhoff and Christine Williams
Date of Photographs: January 22, 2005
Location of Negatives: Southeast Missouri State University
Cape Girardeau, Cape Girardeau County, Missouri

| <u>Photograph No.</u> | <u>Description and Camera View</u> |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1) | Entrance, 1843 Building (Block 1), primary façade. View looking northwest. |
| 2) | Bell Tower, 1853 Addition (Block 2), primary façade. View looking northwest. |
| 3) | Entrance, 1853 Addition (Block 2), primary façade. View looking west. |
| 4) | North and west elevations, 1843 Building (Block 1). View looking southeast. |
| 5) | West elevation, 1843 Building (Block 1), rear entrance and Bell Tower (Block 2). View looking east. |
| 6) | West elevation connection between 1843 Building (Block 1) and 1853 Addition (Block 2). Note bridge pylons to the right of the bell tower. View looking southeast. |
| 7) | North elevation, 1853 Addition (Block 2) and 1871 Addition (Block 3) from rear (west) driveway court. View looking southeast. |
| 8) | North elevation, 1871 Addition (Block 3). Note front-gabled stair hall and chapel sections. View looking southeast. |
| 9) | North and west elevations, chapel section of 1871 Addition (Block 3). View looking southeast. |
| 10) | South Elevation, connection of 1853 Addition (Block 2) on right and 1871 Addition (Block 3) on left. Note front-gabled stair hall section of 1871 Addition (Block 3). Swimming pool fence in foreground. View looking north. |
| 11) | Interior stairway, 1843 Building (Block 1), rear (east) entrance foyer. View looking west. |
| 12) | Chapel altar, second and third floors, 1871 Addition (Block 3). View looking west. |

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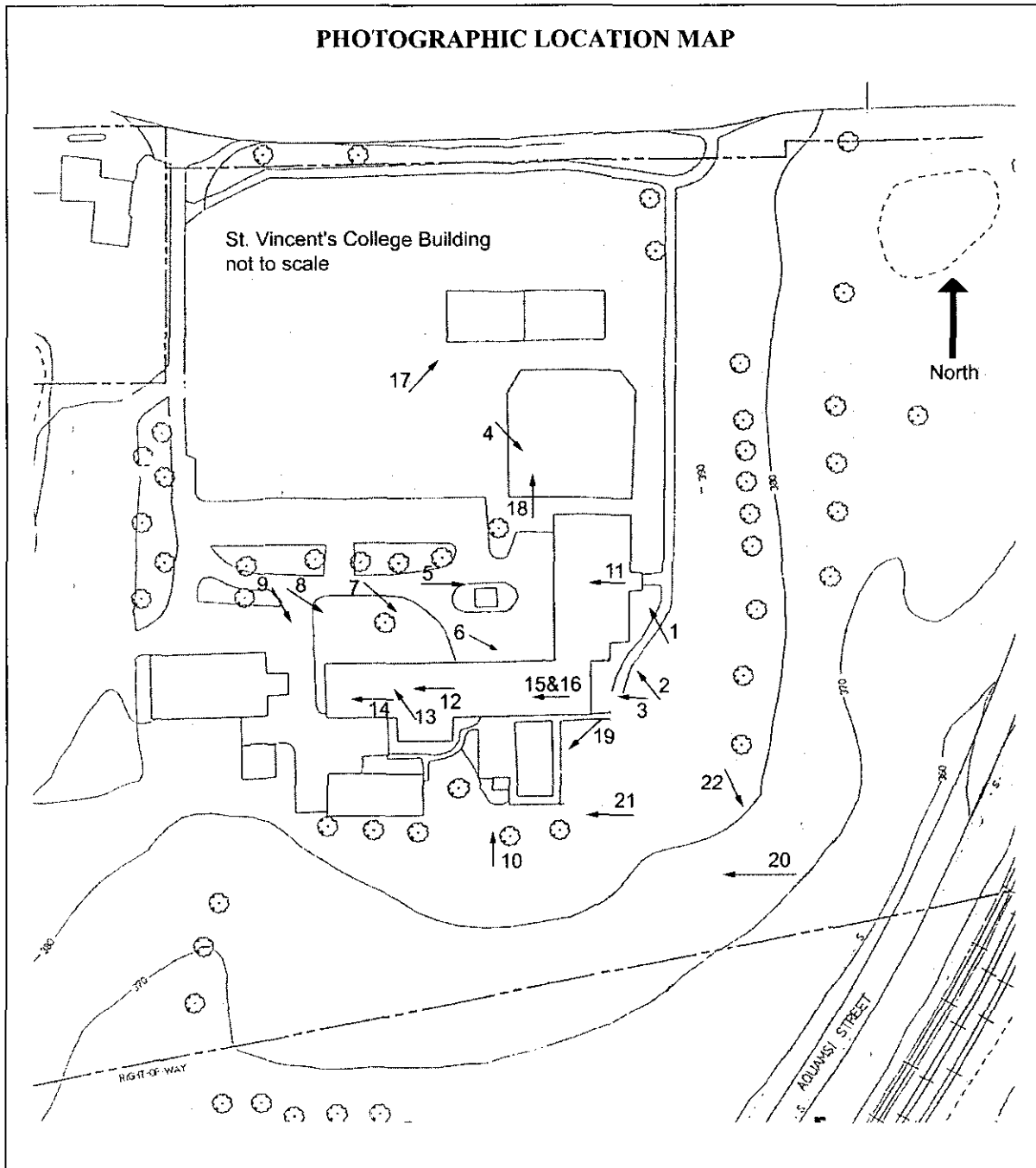
| <u>Photograph No.</u> | <u>Description and Camera View</u> |
|-----------------------|---|
| 13) | Chapel window, second and third floors, 1871 Addition (Block 3). View looking northwest. |
| 14) | First-floor stage, 1871 Addition (Block 3). View looking west. |
| 15) | First floor, 1853 Addition (Block 2). View looking west. |
| 16) | Cast iron capital, 1853 Addition (Block 2). View looking south. |
| 17) | Handball courts. View looking northeast. |
| 18) | Tennis courts in foreground; handball court in background. View looking north toward Morgan Oak Street. |
| 19) | Swimming pool and decking. View looking southwest. |
| 20) | Bluff landscape. View looking west from east bluffs. |
| 21) | Swimming pool and open space on the south side of the building. View looking west. |
| 22) | US Highway 74 bridge pylon. View looking southeast, near the 380-foot contour line. |

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Boundary Map Page 53

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NATIONAL REGISTER BOUNDARY MAP

