

Cincinnati Beginnings

The Sisters' first residence in Cincinnati was across the street from the original St. Peter Cathedral on Sycamore Street.



Four of the founding members of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati. From the top: Sisters Margaret George, Josephine Harvey, Anthony O'Connell, and Regina Mattingly.

Margaret George's handwritten copy of the Sister of Charity constitution gave direction to the new Cincinnati Congregation.

Article 3rd
The object of the Institution of the Sisters of Charity in America, according to the plan laid down by Vincent of Paul, being to honour the sacred infancy of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the source and model of all charity by rendering to him every temporal and spiritual service in their power, in the persons of the poor, either sick, children, prisoners, or others.
To honour the sacred infancy of Jesus Christ, in the young persons committed to their charge, whom they are called upon to form to virtue, whilst they sow in their minds the seeds of useful knowledge; Accordingly the care of the poor of all descriptions & age, sick, prisoners, invalids, foundlings, Orphans, & even inmates in hospitals & private houses shall be the objects of the solicitude of the Sisters and they will pursue their goal gradually, as circumstances, openings & means of doing either shall be afforded them.
3rd The most object of their goal, no less important at this time in this country, will be the education of young girls of all descriptions in virtue, piety, & all the branches of useful learning, which they will endeavor to extend gratis to poor Orphans, as far as their circumstances will admit.

At the request of Bishop Edward Fenwick, O.P., Sisters Fanny Jordan, Victoria Fitzgerald, Beatrice Tyler, and Albina Levy arrived in Cincinnati October 27, 1829, where they opened St. Peter girls' school and orphanage. Initially located on Sycamore Street opposite St. Peter Cathedral, in 1836 they moved to a larger facility at Third and Plum Streets. With the growing number of orphans and students, this building was enlarged three times by 1850. In 1837 Sister Anthony O'Connell arrived in the city, followed in 1845 by Sisters Josephine Harvey, Regina Mattingly, and the new superior, Margaret George. By mid-century thirteen Sisters taught and cared for over 300 girls and had briefly operated St. Aloysius Orphanage in the 1840s.

When the Sisters in Cincinnati learned of the plans being made by their superiors in Emmitsburg to affiliate their Congregation with the French Daughters of Charity, Sister Margaret George and six other Sisters, convinced that they were

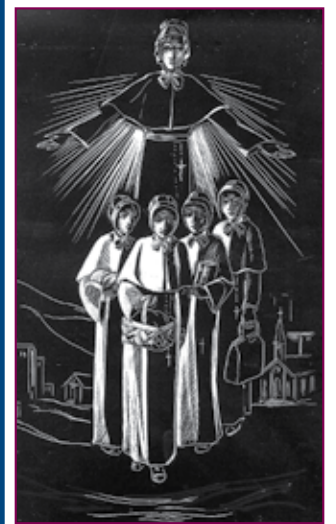
remaining true to the original spirit of Elizabeth Seton's foundation, formed the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati March 25, 1852.



Bishop Edward Fenwick, O.P., (1768-1832), the first bishop of the diocese of Cincinnati, was instrumental in having the Sisters begin their ministry in Ohio.



In 1836, the Sisters moved St. Peter girls' school and orphanage to a larger facility at Third and Plum Streets.



This etching above by Augusta Zimmer, S.C., shows Elizabeth Seton's spirit guiding the first Sisters' arrival in 1829 at Cincinnati's riverfront. Sister Augusta's sketch below represents the Cincinnati riverfront in 1829 when the Sisters arrived.

