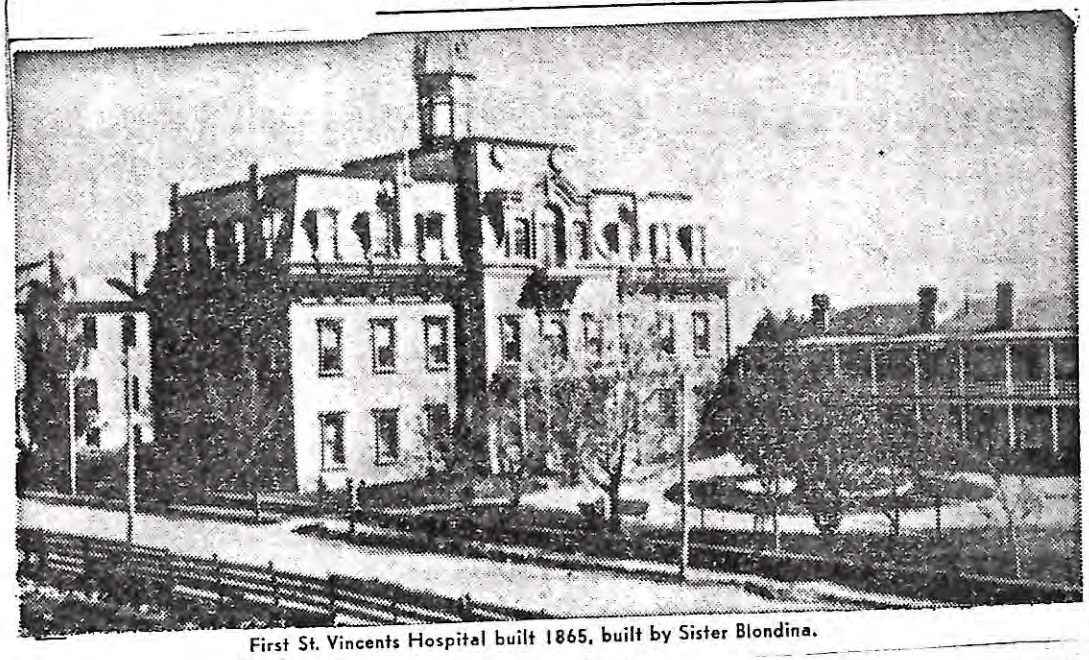


First St. Vincents Hospital built 1865, built by Sister Blondina.

On August 21, 1865, a little band of four Sisters left from Cincinnati, Ohio for the West, for the conquest of souls—the souls of the sick poor. On September 14, 1865 they arrived and were shown the place of their future labors—a building which was adobe, with mud floor and ceiling. The railroads were being built in the West and all the men who needed surgical or medical treatment were sent to the Sisters.

As time went on, the Sisters found that they would have to build an addition to the small Hospital to accommodate the many demands for private rooms by health seekers coming to Santa Fe. The two-story brick building, which was later used for the old folk's home was then erected at a cost of $10,000.

On June 14, 1896 a fire broke out, the loss being estimated between $50,000 and $75,000.

On December 31, 1910 the present hospital, situated on Palace Avenue was opened. This Institution is approved by the American College of Surgeons, the Catholic Hospital Asociation—the American Medical Association, and the American Hospital Association—the International College of Surgeons and the Western Hospital Association, thus giving the Hospital an A-1 rating.

# Preservation of hospital urged

The Historic Santa Fe Foundation board of directors has passed a resolution favoring preservation of the old St. Vincent Hospital site, including Marian Hall.

Hospital officials and others are supporting a plan to sell the property to the State of New Mexico.

The hospital's finance committee has recommended that Marian Hall, an old wooden structure with brick veneer, be considered expendable during negotiations for sale of the property.

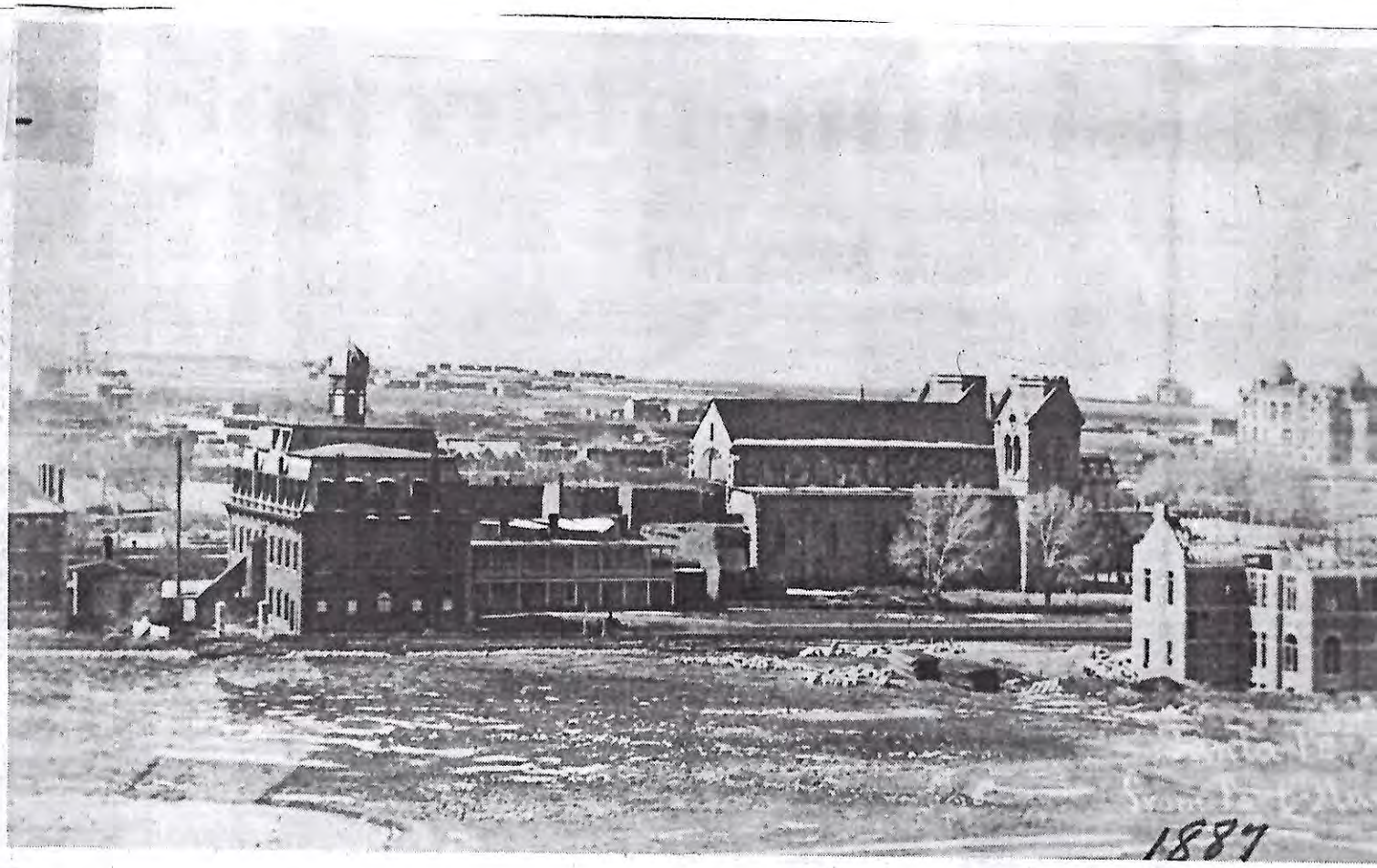
The foundation vote came after a discussion of the historic significance of the site where the Sisters of Charity founded the hospital in the late 19th century.

Five St. Vincent Hospital buildings, dating back to 1865, have existed in the vicinity of Marian Hall.

## New Mexico

The 500-member foundation passed a resolution to join with the 800-member Old Santa Fe Association and the State of New Mexico's Properties Review Committee in expressing interest in Marian Hall's preservation.

In other action, the foundation board voted to offer portions of the historic Tully House at Grant and Griffin streets for lease as business offices.




St. Vincent's Hospital

THE BEGINNINGS—This view from Fort Marcy in 1877, looking south, shows the old St. Vincent Sanatarium (with tower) behind St. Francis Cathedral (center-right). Building in background at right is the old state Cap which later burned, as did the sanatarium. The p shows an empty field north of Palace Avenue.

# St. Vincent... legacy of servic

By Howard Houghton
The New Mexican Staff

It was a rugged, muddy Santa Fe that Sister Blandina Segale arrived in around Christmastime 100 years ago.

Shortly after her arrival, she wrote in her journal, "What can I say of this nested (am I coining a word?) town! 'Antique' to the first degree, is uppermost in my mind. There is a small brick dwelling northeast of the hospital, the rest are all made of adobe laid in mud."

Sister Blandina's published journal has provided one of the few glimpses into the history of the small bands of religious women who, enduring considerable hardships, came to Santa Fe from Ohio in the late 1800's to help found community institutions.

Their most visible achievement: St. Vincent Hospital, founded as the first hospital in the territory by the Sisters of Charity shortly after they began arriving in 1865, 15 years ahead of the railroad.

While their story hasn't been completely ignored, a recent push by the hospital to gather in its history before completing its transformation into a locally-owned, secular institution is bringing together pieces of the story of these missionaries from a wide variety of sources for the first time.

With the transfer of title to a local board of trustees in 1972, the departure this year of Sister Mary Joaquin as chief administrator, and the forthcoming move from its site behind St. Francis Cathedral, the hospital's officials felt the need to preserve some record of its past.

As an outgrowth of a project to gather data for an archive, the hospital plans to publish next summer a new book that will tell the hospital's history in photographs.

Photographs from other archives, various libraries, hospital files and private collections are being gathered and catalogued by the hospital's first archivist, Clark Kimball.

Some date back to the earliest days. Some have never been published.

There are saintly faces, some stern, some warm, staring out from under hooded garments; grainy images of people on territorial-style porches; vistas of a frontier town that had few large buildings to block the horizons.

St. Vincent's Hospital Photo

FIRST OF MANY—Sister Vincent O'Keefe, first mother superior of the Sisters of Charity in Santa Fe (1865-1872), was crippled while rescuing patients from the fire that burned the old St. Vincent Sanatarium near the end of the 19th century. Though courageous, she never overcame the loneliness and homesickness she felt in the Southwest.

Stacks of the photographs set on the tables in the bare, top floor office of the archivist in the old Marian Hall section of the hospital.

By next summer, about 100 of them will have been chosen for the book.

"It's really a fascinating story," says Kimball. "It's a story that criss-crosses with the story of the railroad. The hospital was busy treating the men who worked on building the railroad. It's a story that criss-crosses with the history of the military. Ft. Marcy had an infirmary but no hospital of its own...It's the people-to-people aspect of the story that seems most important...They were good people."

Kimball betrays some excitement when he talks about the hospital's role in the region's history.

"Most people hear about nowadays is the financial problems and the infighting that goes on" he says. "Now is a good time to remember the history of the hospital—the fact that it started with just the idea of people helping people."

Even without the journals of the times, the photographs portray the starkly simple surroundings of the early hospital—surroundings that bore no resemblance to the midwestern homelands of the sisters, just as their garments were at first strange to the natives.

The first sisters who came, crossed the prairies in wagons, braving attacks by Indians or desperadoes and contending with discomfort and disease.

The later sisters tried financing their homes for orphans and old folks by building a sanitarium where Easterners of means could enjoy the therapy of fresh air, nearby mineral springs and sunny days.

The stone Victorian-style building, which stood about where Marian Hall stands today, burned down around the turn of the century.

Marian Hall was built around 1911. More contemporary photos show the state's governor Ed Mechem helping dedicate the present four-story hospital building in the early 1950's.

"We've been really lucky," says Kimball. "We're pretty pleased with the photographs we've gotten. It tells the story very well.

"Right now we are identifying the photographs and writing the caption material. Once this is done, by the end of February, will lay them out as a b of photographs and t find a painter."

The project has alre received a $1,000 grant fr the New Mexico A Commission to help printing costs. Attempts being made to raise m ching funds throu donations of money materials of value to archive.

Beyond publishing book, Kimball also hope microfilm all newspa clippings and other exist documents relating to history of St. Vinc Hospital and gather medical instruments other relics of the hospita

"We don't want to get fanatical about this beca there will probably be v few people who will wan do research on this," s the 29-year-old archiv "Nevertheless, we feel t these things are wo preserving."

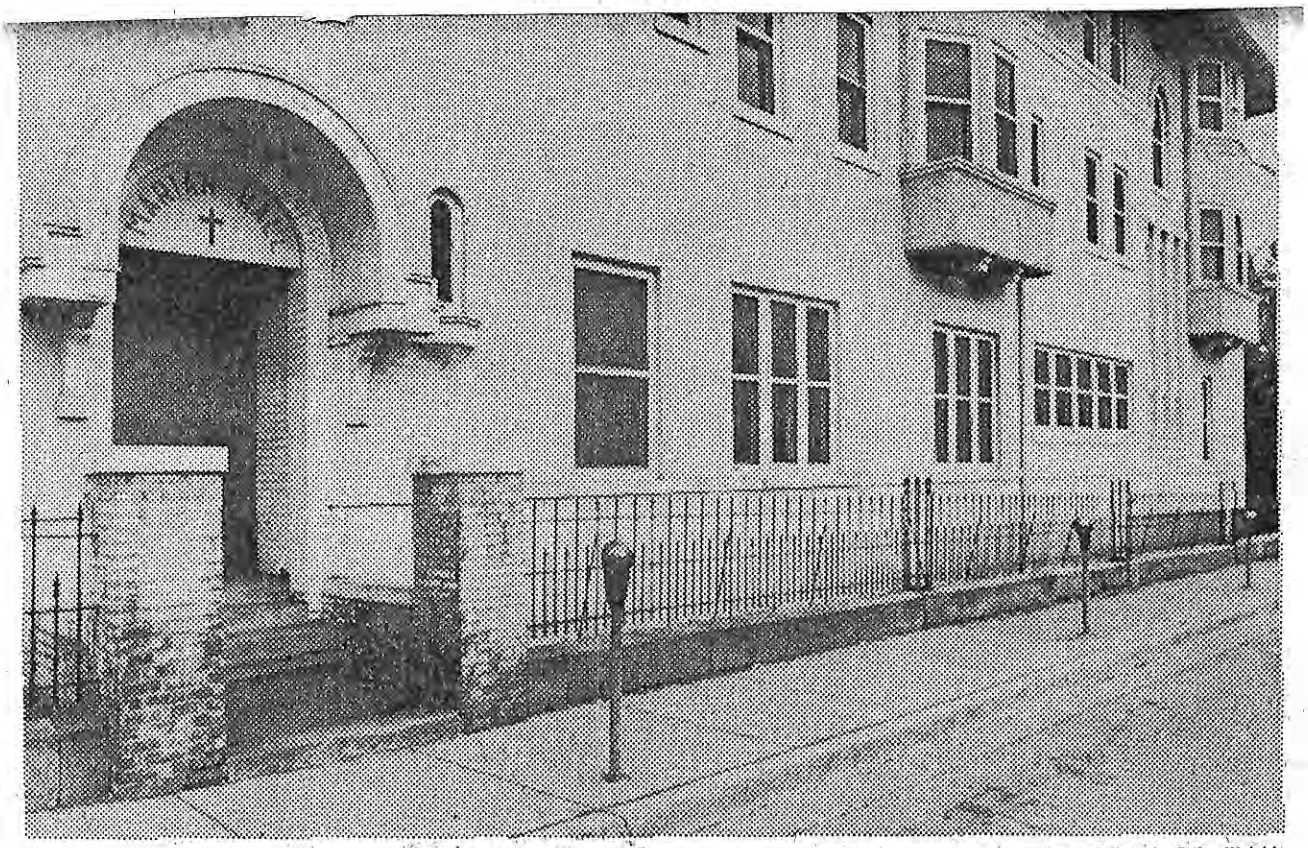
St. Vincent's Hospital Photo

SCENES OF HARDSHIP—This 1876 photograph (unsucessfully retouched after it was taken) shows Bishop Lamy and members of a wagon train preparing to bury Sister Alphonsa Thompson on the Kansas plains. She was said to have died of fright during an Indian attack. Mourning beside her are fellow Sisters of Loretto and two Sisters of Charity on their way to Santa Fe at Lamy's request to found hospitals and schools.

The New Mexican

SEARCHING—St. Vincent Hospital archivist Clark Kimball, 29, looks through photographs of the way the hospital used to look. A book of historic photos is scheduled for publication next year.

JOURNAL NORTH
March 13, 1981



Journal Photo by Brian Walski

### Preserving Woodwork, Floor, Stained Glass at Marian Hall Concerns Officials

# Council Wants Artifacts Saved

By HOWARD HOUGHTON
Journal Staff Writer

SANTA FE — Whatever happens to the old St. Vincent Hospital property, the Santa Fe City Council wants the hand-wrought woodwork, inlaid marble flooring and stained glass in Marian Hall preserved.

Marian Hall, a wood-frame and brick building on Palace Avenue, is the oldest structure on the vacant, state-owned property. It would likely be razed if the state decides to put museum facilities at the site.

A resolution adopted by the council this week recommends to museum officials and Gov. Bruce King "that if the state desires to proceed with the demoliton of Marian Hall, that every consideration and precaution be taken to preserve those irreplaceable building artifacts incorporated in the building."

One section of Marian Hall includes a chapel once used by the Sisters of Charity, which founded the hospital in the late 1800s.

The resolution also asked that the historical preservation unit of state government be consulted before any demolition.

The measure was introduced by Councilor Dolores Lee, who said she was inspired by historical preservation efforts in Washington, D.C., during a recent visit there for a National League of Cities convention.

Structural problems with Marian Hall have left its chances of survival doubtful since the hospital was relocated to St. Michael's Drive three years ago. Even before its evacuation, signs had been posted in the structure warning of the dangers of fire in the largely wooden building.

The Museum of New Mexico's plans to raze the building and construct a new Indian arts museum there have been left in uncertainty by the current session of the Legislature.

A bill to provide an additional $1.5 million for the project was rejected by the influential House Appropriations and Finance Committee. The museum still has $2.7 million appropriated in 1977 for use in building the facility.

The committee chairman, Rep. John Mershon, D-Lincoln-Otero, maintained that the museum should be built near the International Folk Art Museum on Camino Lejo.

A bill still pending in the House would force the state to sell the entire hospital property for commercial development.

A number of native northern New Mexicans were born in Marian Hall when it housed the old hospital's delivery room.

# PSC Offices Proposed for Marian Hall

SANTA FE — The Anaya administration hopes to restore Marian Hall for use by the state Public Service Commission next year, a city panel was told Monday.

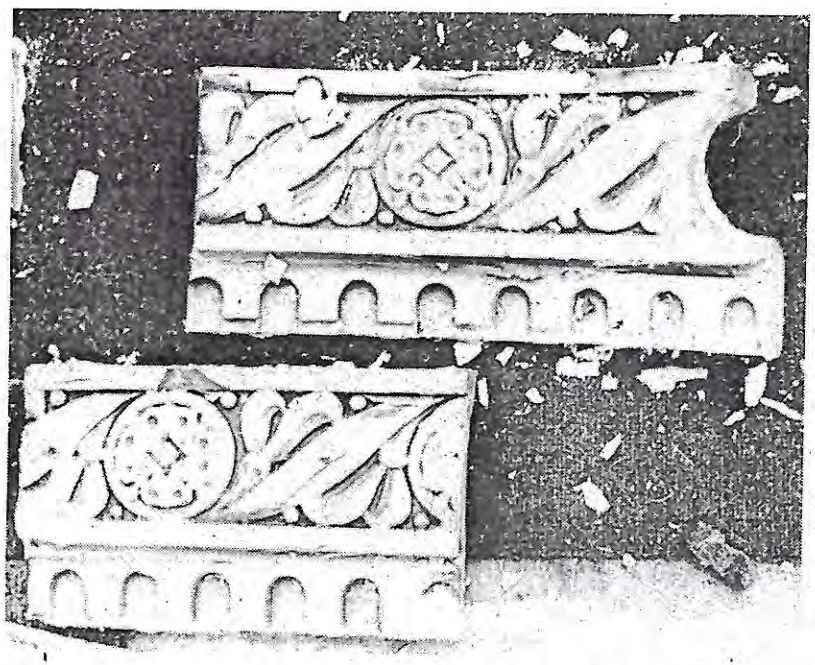
Funds will be sought from the Legislature to fix up the 73-year-old brick structure on Palace Avenue, which originally was a hospital and is the birthplace of a number of Santa Fe area residents.

State Property Control Director Michael Trujillo told the city's Historic Design Review Board that the remodeling project would be sensitive to community sentiments toward the old building.

The exterior would be largely restored to its original appearance and the interior would be renovated to accomodate offices and meeting rooms.

The building has been vacant since the state bought the old St. Vincent Hospital property eight years ago. An inspection of the property on Monday showed it has been extensively vandalized.

The former second-floor chapel



**Terra Cotta Molding Lies in Pieces on Chapel Floor**

once used by the Sisters of Charity is littered with broken glass, pieces of ceramic molding that once ornamented the room and feces. Plans call for converting the room into a hearing chamber for the PSC.

The former dining room, which also would be converted into a meeting room, was filled with old beds, furniture and discarded hospital equipment. Paint is peeling from the ceilings of the unheated building, which has had numerous windows broken out. Plumbing fixtures have been removed and cans, bottles and other indications of use by transients litters several rooms.

Although the city's review board has no jurisdiction over the proposed $1.6 million state project, the remodeling plans were presented as a courtesy. The existing exterior windows are to be restored and backed with a second window for energy efficiency.

PSC offices currently are located in the crowded Bataan Building.

According to Trujillo, the project is to be presented for final review by the Board of Finance next week and presented to the Legislature for an appropriation early next year. If approved, the remodeling could be completed by late 1984 or early 1985.

After a major hospital addition was completed in the early 1950s, Marian Hall was used as a residence for hospital personnel, a school for nurses and a meeting place for the hospital board of trustees.

Journal Norm 12/13/83

Journal Photos by Barbaraellen Koch

**Johnny Vigil, Building Services Construction Manager, Looks Out Window of 2nd-Floor Chapel of Marian Hall**

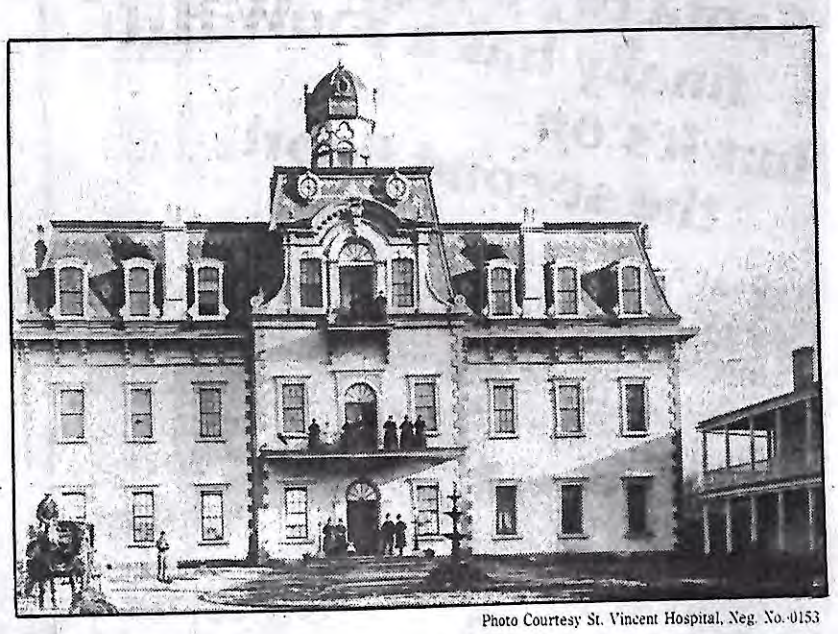


Photo Courtesy St. Vincent Hospital, Neg. No. 0153

**Original St. Vincent Sanatorium in 1885**

# Old Sanatorium Being Nursed To Recovery

By JOHN SHERMAN
Journal Correspondent

MARIAN Hall, a landmark Santa Fe building on East Palace Avenue, is slowly being nursed back to good health.

Built in 1910 by the Sisters of Charity as St. Vincent Sanatorium, it's being renovated to open next January as the new office of the state Public Service Commission.

The tile floors with their colorful designs, the dark woodwork on the walls and ceilings and the brick fireplace in the visitors room will be retained, according to contractor Robert L. Doose of Albuquerque.

Only about 25 percent of the decorative plaster-of-paris trim remainded in the second-floor Sacred Heart Chapel when reconstruction began, Doose said. The workers were instructed to pick up, wrap and box all that could be found in order to restore it to the walls of the room where daily mass was said for many years.

Marian Hall has been vacant since St. Vincent Hospital moved in 1977 from its next-door location to the present site on St. Michael's Drive.

In December 1910, the sanitorium was dedicated and the public had a chance to see the latest in medical apparatus, enjoy a "Spanish supper" and a military band for 50 cents, and purchase "fancy work," candy or ice cream from a booth, according to *New Mexican* reports of that week.

Amalia Sanchez, 91, is one of the few people around who attended the opening festivities. Not only does she recall the first days of the sanitorium, she also remembers when its precedessor, the first St. Vincent's Sanatorium, called "the old San" by some oldtimers, burned down in 1896.

"I was 4 years old," she said. "We climbed up on the roof of Sena Plaza (her family home) and watched the blaze" until adults in the family made her and the other children get down. She believes the fire started because the slate roof of the building got too hot.

That first sanitorium served the community from 1883 until the fire. Between its demise and the opening of the second, other buildings at the site were used for the patients.

Like its precedessor, the second sanitorium was used not only for medical purposes but as a hotel of sorts, as well. It was common practice for visitors to Santa Fe to board at the sanitorium, and poker-playing legislators frequented the rooms, including the billiard room off the lobby, when the Legislature was in session.

Marguerite Claffey, a longtime employee and volunteer at St. Vincent, remembers running up and down the tile floors with other children when her mother and grandmother took out rooms in the sanitorium during the legislative sessions.

Her grandfather, Thomas D. Burns, represented Rio Arriba county in the Legislature. He and the other men in the family stayed at the DeVargas Hotel, another gathering spot for legislators. The children made so much noise they were banished to the old seminary building, attached to St. Francis Cathedral, where, Mrs. Claffey recalled, most of the people were deaf.

She also remembered sending unexpected out-of-town guests to the sanitorium during Fiesta week in the late 1930s when too many other guests already filled her house.

According to Clark Kimball and Dr. Marcus J. Smith, authors of "The Hospital at the End of the Santa Fe Trail," a pictorial history of St. Vincent, the 1910 sanitorium contained an elevator, hot and cold running water, electric lights and modern surgical facilities on the third floor.

Monthly rates, payable in advance, were $100 to $160 for private rooms and suites. This included "food, nursing, and medical care, pneumothorax, and fluoroscopy."

There was a "certain air of elegance" about the place, said Mrs. Claffey. Patients were served with silverplated water pitchers and coffee pots. A look at the old photographs of the patient's rooms shows attractive fixtures, wicker rocking chairs and colorful rugs.

The elevator did not work for many years, according to Kimball and Smith, and a surgeon, Dr. LeGrand Ward, and a nurse had to carry anesthetized patients down the stairway after their operations.

One of the other doctors to work out of the sanitorium was a Sister of Charity, Sister Mary de Sales, who was granted her M.D. in 1901 by the state of New Mexico. She was believed to be the first woman doctor in the West. She had come to Santa Fe in 1880 in the last years of the Santa Fe Trail.

Some of the chapel's stained-glass windows have been preserved and are now in the chapel at the current St. Vincent. Prominent residents, such as the Luna family, donated the windows for the 1910 opening.

Looking around the room that was once the chapel, now filled with construction equipment and debris, Mrs. Sanchez said, shaking her head, "Oh, this was so beautiful." The former chapel, like the former dining room directly below it, will become a hearing room for the commission.

The white altar that was used for so many years for patients and visitors alike is still in use in a Catholic institution in Santa Fe, St. Catherine Indian School.

For 43 years, the second sanitorium served as Santa Fe's sole public hospital. After World War II, a growing community made a larger hospital necessary and, in 1953, St. Vincent's Hospital opened next to the sanitorium. That building is now called La Villa Rivera, and is known to many residents as "the old hospital."

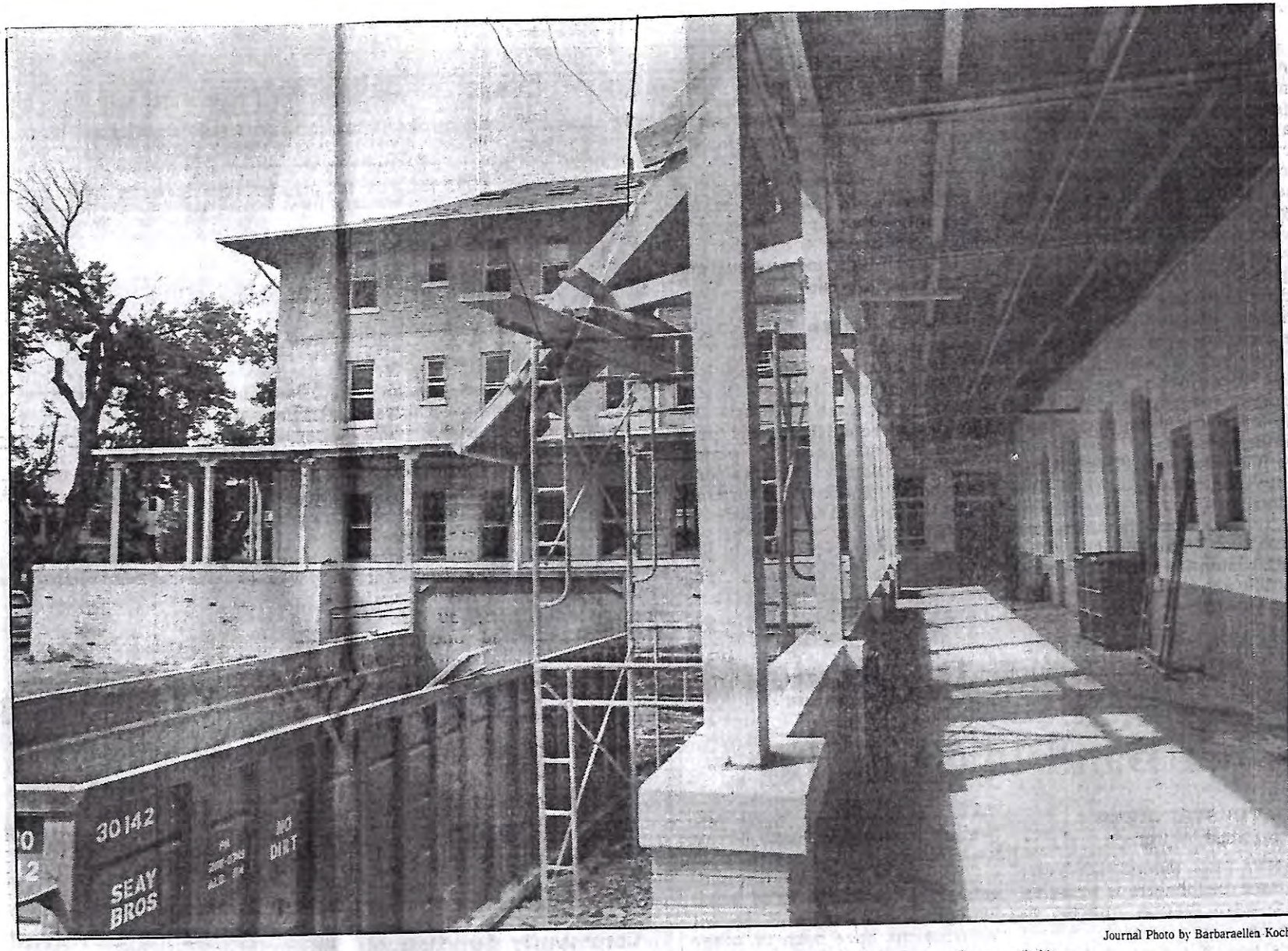
The sanitorium was remodeled and renamed Marian Hall. According to Sr. Mary Joaquin Bitler, administrator of St. Vincent's from 1960 to 1976, who was in Santa Fe a few days ago for a brief visit, the sisters moved to the second floor (their old dormitory was razed). The Regina School of Nursing, a joint effort by St. Vincent and St. Joseph Hospital in Albuquerque, occupied the other two floors.

St. Vincent became a community-owned hospital in 1973, although Sister Mary Joaquin remained as administrator for three more years at the request of the board. Once the sisters moved out of Marian Hall and the other school of nursing was transferred to the College of Santa Fe, according to Mrs. Claffey, various departments of the hospital moved into the building.

Four years later, the building was vacated when the hospital moved to St. Michael's Drive. The state purchased the former hospital and Marian Hall.

Photo by Jesse Nusbaum Courtesy St. Vincent Hospital, Neg. No. 0015

**East Palace Avenue View of St. Vincent Sanatorium as It Appeared Earlier This Century**




Journal Photo by Barbaraellen Koch

**Marian Hall Undergoes Reconstruction for Its Reopening in January as State Offices**

Journal Photo by Barbaraellen Koch

**Dust Covers Dining Hall Floor Tiles**

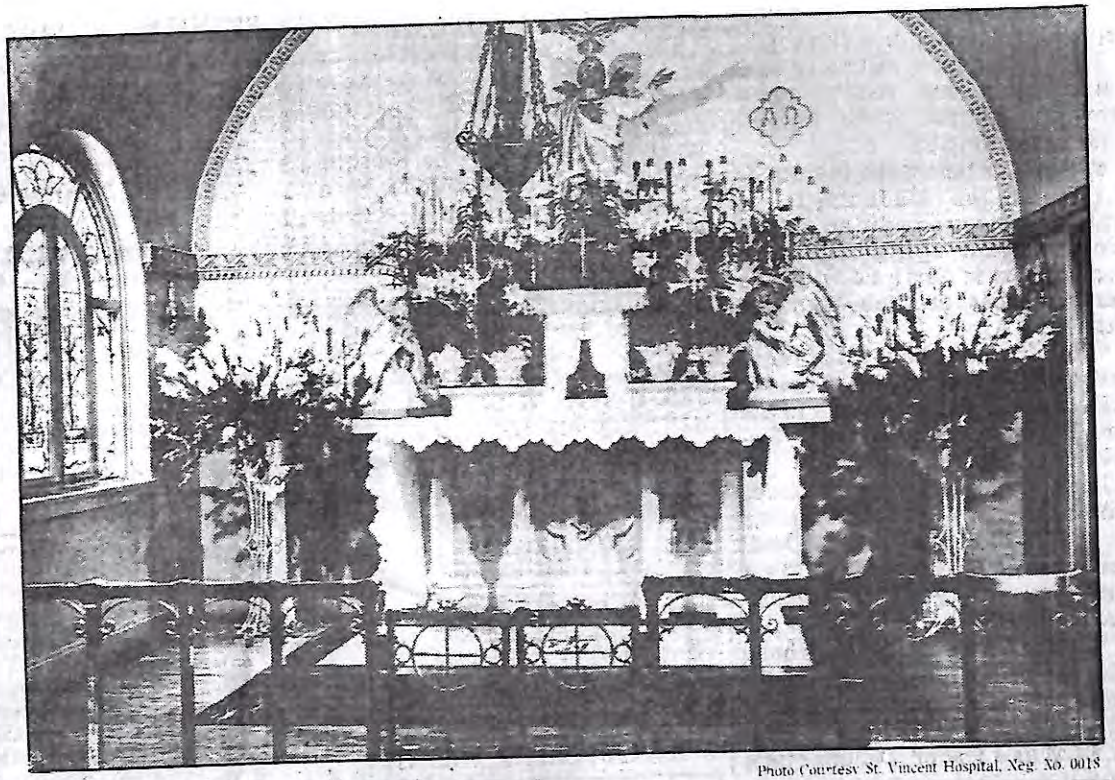
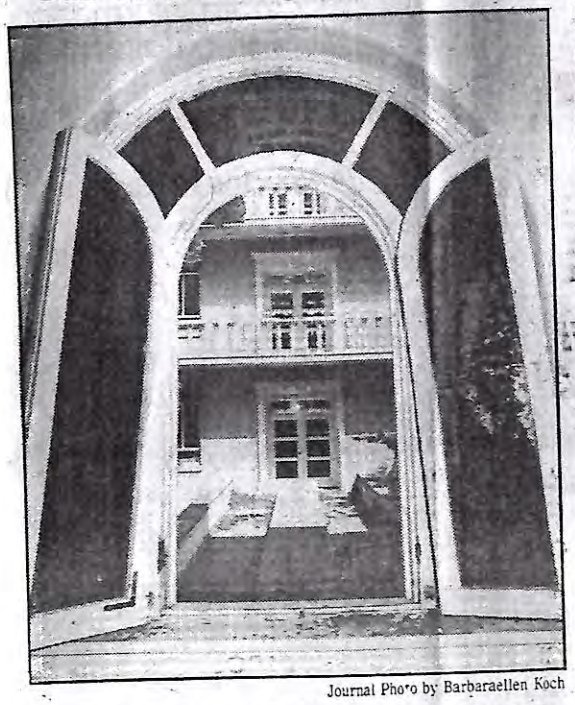


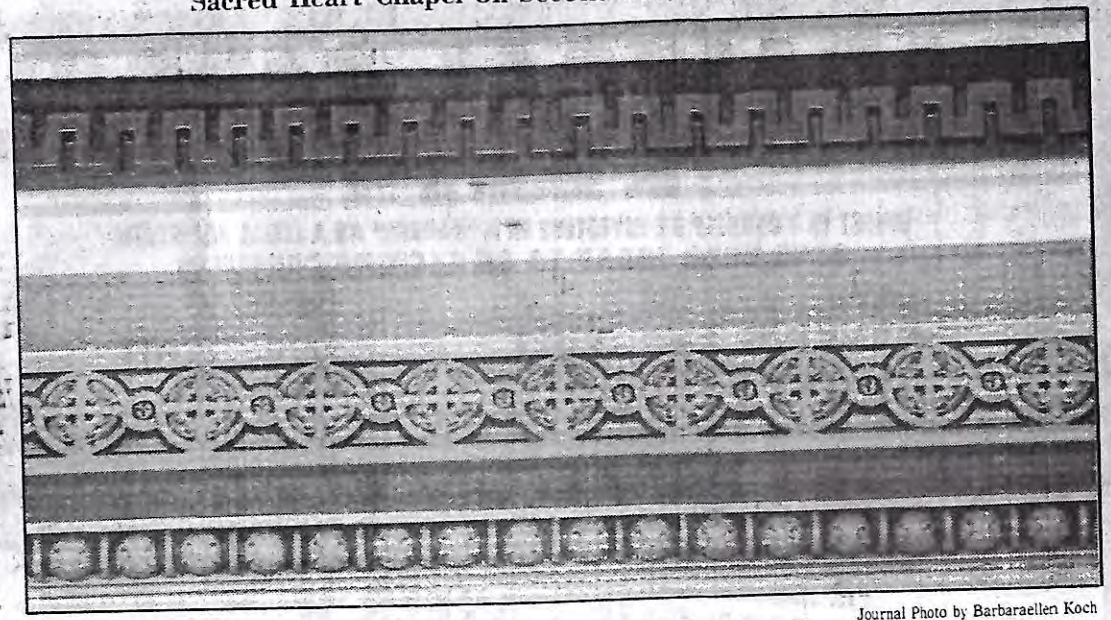
Photo Courtesy St. Vincent Hospital, Neg. No. 0018

**Sacred Heart Chapel on Second Floor of Sanatorium**



Journal Photo by Barbaraellen Koch

**Chapel Windows Were Once Stained Glass**



Journal Photo by Barbaraellen Koch

**Plaster-of-Paris Decorations in Chapel**