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**Histories of
The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
in Wyoming since 1892**

**Sister Emily Ann Herbes, O.S.F.
(Philadelphia, 2005)
Cum permissu superiorum**

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Curriculum Vitae
of
Sister Emily Ann Herbes, O.S.F.
(Philadelphia, 2005)

Born: July 2, 1936 in Portland, Oregon

Grew up in Pendleton, Oregon with parents: Leonard E. and Antoinette (Young) Herbes; brothers Edwin Herbes and Richard Herbes, and sister, Colleen (Herbes) Christiansen

Schooling:

St. Joseph Academy, Pendleton, Oregon. I attended first through twelfth grades in the Academy, having Franciscan Sisters as my teachers for all grades, 1942-1954

BS in Ed, 1960 Marylhurst College, Marylhurst, Oregon

MAT (English), 1973 Seattle University, Seattle, Washington

Spanish courses, 1990 Adams State College, Alamosa, Colorado

Religious background:

Baptized: July 16, 1936 at St. Agatha Church, Portland, Oregon

First Communion: May 9, 1943 at St. Mary Church, Pendleton, Oregon

Confirmation: 1949 at St. Mary Church, Pendleton, Oregon

Entered the western novitiate of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, September 7, 1954 at Our Lady of Angels Convent, Portland, Oregon

Invested in the Franciscan habit: August 12, 1955, Portland, Oregon

Profession of simple vows: August 11, 1957, Portland, Oregon

Silver jubilee: 1982 [What is possibly a unique privilege is the fact that when I made my silver jubilee, all twelve of my teachers from grade and high school were still living and still in the congregation. I had the joy of having my picture taken with each one of them. And at this writing, January 4, 2006, my second, fourth and ninth grade teachers are still alive.]

Golden jubilee: (anticipated in 2007) [It is my hope to travel to Germany

and see firsthand the birthplace of our foundress as well as my family's personal roots.]

Ministries:

1960-1978 Classroom teacher, grade and high schools, English emphasis

1978-1982 Secretary for provincial of Sacred Heart Province, Portland, Oregon

1982-1989 Program co-ordinator for senior center activities, Portland, Oregon

1989-1990 Sabbatical

- Theological update, San Diego, California

- Learning Spanish, USA and Mexico

- aide to refugees, teaching English, Oakland, California

- tutor of illiterate Hispanics, Oakland, California

1990-1997 ESL [English as a Second Language] instructor in elementary school, Gervais, Oregon

1997-1998 Caregiver of aged mother

1999-2000 DRE [Director of Religious Education] and junior high religion teacher, Gervais, Oregon

2000-2001 ESL instructor/aide for adults, Spokane, Washington

2001-2005 ESL instructor for adults, Puyallup, Washington (part time)

Congregational historian, Aston, Pennsylvania (part time)

2005-present Congregational historian, Tacoma, Washington (full time)

Publications:

Celebrating the Journey... Volume I: Mother Mary Francis Bachmann, 1824-1863, Sister Mary Catherine Gurley, OSF. (Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia 2005).

Celebrating the Journey... Volume II: History of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, 1855-1970. Sister Adele Francis Gorman, OSF; Sister Emily Ann Herbes, OSF. (Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia 2005).

“Celebrating the Journey...The Western Story” (2005), an in-house published book of memories compiled by a committee of seven Franciscan Sisters in the West in preparation for their 150th anniversary.

“Histories of The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia in Wyoming since 1892,” Sister Emily Ann Herbes, O.S.F. (2005)

Sister Emily Ann commented on these Histories of her Order, two jubilee volumes published in 2005 for their 150th anniversary: “Volume I was written by Sister Mary Catherine Gurley about our foundress, Mother Francis Bachmann; Volume II was written by Sister Adele Francis Gorman. Her death in 1995 brought the project to a halt, but it is her material that I edited. To distinguish the two volumes, I refer to Sr. Adele’s as “the telephone book” because of its size. Besides the history up to 1970 [in reality, up to the death of our Mother Agnes MacIntyre in 1987], it contains all the letters of Mother Francis known to be extant and many helpful facts, e.g., the listing of the missions opened by the Sisters of St. Francis from 1855 to 1970, plus some interesting appendices, especially Appendix 5 signed by the three Drexel sisters as well as Mother Agnes Bucher, our second superior general.”

Histories of The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia in Wyoming since 1892

Sister Emily Ann Herbes, O.S.F. (Philadelphia, 2005)

INTRODUCTION

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia have served in Wyoming since their arrival on the Wind River Reservation in 1892. Originally, the Sisters came from the congregation's motherhouse in Pennsylvania. After the Western Province was formed in 1900, the Sisters assigned to the Wyoming missions were members of that province.

The spirit of those ministering in Wyoming is captured through the accounts written in their house histories. These primary source histories were customarily kept by one Sister in each local house. Like the artists of long ago who accomplished their work "for the love of God" and claimed no credit, most often the historians did not identify themselves.

The length of time the Sisters spent at a mission is usually reflected in the length of the history chapters. For example, while the Rawlins history is less than one typed page, the St. Stephens history is long because the congregation's stay has been a long one. It is this Indian Mission's story that contains an especially rich heritage of themes: Epidemics and competition from other Christian denominations; retreats and basketball successes; the conversion to Christianity and inculcating of the Native American culture in liturgy and in art. Nine Sisters were serving there in 1892 and now three Franciscan Sisters from the Philadelphia foundation are in Wyoming.

When I came to Wyoming in November, 2005, the trip was the fulfillment of a long-awaited dream. During my novitiate in Portland, Oregon, we heard much of St. Stephens Indian Mission in Wyoming and all novices were prepared for such an assignment in their early years of service. However, I never achieved that dream until an opportunity for

research brought me to the Mission for a brief visit in 2005. What a joy to experience what I had been told, to visit the places spoken of by our Sisters, to walk the labyrinth now located where St. Stephens convent had been and truly be in communion with their souls.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

ST. STEPHENS, WYOMING 1892-Present

By Sister Emily Ann Herbes, O.S.F. (Philadelphia, 2005)

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ST STEPHENS INDIAN MISSION

1892-1908: A time to begin

“With the consent of the proper Ordinary [Archbishop James Wood of Philadelphia] and at the request of Mother Katharine Drexel, this Mission was accepted.” These words in the Book of Foundations explain

the beginning of the long ministry of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia at St. Stephens Indian Mission on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. Six Sisters left Philadelphia on August 11, 1892, to staff the school at the Mission. Because the train arrived in Rawlins on August 14 at 9:30 p.m., the Sisters stayed overnight. The next morning, four Sisters continued on to Lander by stage [capacity, four passengers]; the other two Sisters arrived the following day. Accompanied from Lander to St. Stephens by Reverend Philip Turnell, S.J., the passengers were grateful after the 175 mile journey for “a glass of water from a spring. It was a welcome drink.” The six Franciscan pioneers included Sisters Eugenia Gaeb, Coletta Miller, Modesta Schmidt, Thaddea Loughran, Amalberga Carlan, and Evarista Healy. A Mission workman prepared their first meal of eggs and biscuits and the following day the Sisters were greeted by a welcoming committee of Arapaho men that included “Plenty Bear, Lone Bear, William Shakespeare, Little Ant, Goggles, Biter, etc.”

Because their trunks were late in arriving, the Sisters wore ropes instead of their Franciscan cords and used pieces of rags for aprons. The coal bucket and wash tub became their temporary pails for cleaning the refectory and front hall. On “tour” of the Mission the first Sunday, the group was shown a coffin in the attic of the priests’ house which was below the Mission. They learned that the coffin had been purchased for a very sick member of the tribe who had recovered; it was being stored for future use! On September 6, there was rejoicing when the last three members assigned to St. Stephens arrived: Sisters Paphnutia Clark, Liberata Smith, and Secunda Dougherty.

Shortly thereafter, Sisters Coletta and Thaddea went with Chief Lone Bear to “collect the children” for the Mission school. They brought home in the wagon two girls: Beauty Medicine Eagle and Angela Shoot Gun. Stephen and Francis Setting Eagle were the first boys to arrive and within a few days a wagon load of boys followed. At the time, the Sisters, boys, and girls were all quartered in one building.

Reverend Joseph M. Cataldo, S.J. (1837-1928) “Last of the Black Robes,” superior of the Rocky Mountain Mission and founder of Gonzaga University in Spokane, visited St. Stephens Mission in September 1893 and encouraged the Sisters to take the children to the Indian dances. [See Endnote: Account of the Death of Father Cataldo]. Besides enjoying the richness of the Native American culture as demonstrated through the dances, the Sisters were learning more about those they were serving. Death also invited the newcomers to experience a way of responding that was foreign to the Sisters, most who had Germanic or Irish backgrounds. Old Chief Black Coal [“Cole” in the House History] died and was buried within a few hours. The children were in school when word of his death arrived and “they set up a howl which lasted a little while and then profound silence for another while and all was over.” On the following day, June 29, 1893, Maggie Coal [“Cole”] was the first Arapaho to receive her first Holy Communion. That afternoon nineteen children were baptized, seven boys and twelve girls. Sharing their faith with these Native Americans was the motivation for most of the Sisters who came to St. Stephens Mission and this reception into the Church must have been a cause of great thanksgiving for the early pioneers. Sixteen children received their first Holy Communion in 1894 and the beginning of growth in the faith was gratefully acknowledged by the house historian.

On January 6, 1895, Sisters Eugenia and Modesta were transferred and Sister Paphnutia became the temporary superior. Shortly thereafter while the Sisters were awaiting visitors, high water in the river made crossing it a fearful experience. Reverend Balthazar Feusi, S.J., while demonstrating for Sisters Stanislaus Bittenbender and Columba Hering the safety of a boat secured by rope, fell into the river. Despite the accident they had just viewed, both Sisters navigated the river safely and Father was brought to shore. Sister Columba was named local superior, but when Sister Stanislaus left, Sisters Evarista, Coletta, and Paphnutia accompanied her as far as Rawlins. Sister Paphnutia then continued with Sister Stanislaus to Pendleton, Oregon, while the other two returned to

Philadelphia. In March, Mother Agnes Bucher and Sister Paul Kolb visited the Mission. As Mother Agnes was not feeling well, they remained two weeks. Sister Paul was able to observe the classes where the girls were being taught regular school work up to the eighth grade plus cooking, baking, laundry, sewing, and general housework. "They are very apt at fancy work and turn out some fine pieces." The house historian also noted that the girls delighted in Bible history and even the older ones enjoyed playing with dolls.

Life at St. Stephens was busy and incidents were not always recorded. After noting that Mother Agnes, accompanied by Sister Aquinata Mohrmann, had again visited in 1900, the Franciscan record of St. Stephens jumps to 1908. The first entry reminisces, "When we first came here sixteen years ago, the children would hardly stay with us, but now we have no trouble. When there is question of coming to school, the Mission always has the preference." Two observations also display the humor that the Sisters found among their charges: One little girl observed that the Sacred Heart was like the Indians because "He wears a blanket" and the Christ Child in Our Lady of Perpetual Help icon "wears moccasins." Because the children so looked forward to their annual school picnic, inclement weather caused one child to say, "Stop the rain, God, and I'll pray to You." The house historian further noted, "The children are so far now that they can sing High Mass, Benediction and a number of other hymns." In 1908 is also recorded the date that the first of the students died. One of the thirteen-year-old girls had gone home for Christmas vacation with her sisters when she became very ill. Although she returned to school, she never recovered and died at the Mission.

On March 28, 1908, "a band of our Arapaho Indians being baptized, it was a pleasing sight for those who had labored many years in their midst...Adam and Eve Sleeping Bear, Abraham and Sarah Brokenhorn, Isaac and Rebecca Goesinlodge, etc." However, the tenets of the faith were still somewhat a mystery to many of the natives. An incident

recorded at Easter demonstrated their desire amid confusion. Many of the faithful were receiving Eucharist and some of the Indians not yet prepared came to the altar rail. "Father [John] Sifton, S.J., had to tell them, 'No.' They still remained a little while, standing before the altar rail and finally returned to their places. If God is willing, the Feast of the Patronage of St. Joseph will be their happy day when they will be allowed to make their First Holy Communion." This hopeful prayer was heard. On St. Joseph's feast, those baptized March 28 as well as sixteen children and a 33-year-old, William Robinson, who had been crippled for seventeen years and was confined to a chair, made their first Holy Communion. William had traveled twenty-five miles by wagon to reach St. Stephens and seeing Father go down the aisle to bring him his first Holy Communion "was a touching sight to behold."

The Monday after his baptism, Little Wolfe died and was brought to St. Stephens for a Christian burial. This, the first burial from St. Stephens, was noteworthy because the custom among the Native Americans had been immediate burial on a nearby hill in their own graveyard. The house history describes the event, "To my knowledge, it is the first full-blooded Arapaho to have a coffin. They placed the remains of poor Little Wolfe on two benches in the main aisle and put six wax candles around it, and there it lay until one o'clock; meanwhile, the Indians who accompanied the remains came over to the Sisters' house and got their dinner. At one o'clock the funeral services were held. All the Sisters, Indians, and children attended the funeral and accompanied the remains to their last resting place. The bell tolled as the remains were carried from the church to the wagon, and finally the funeral started for the graveyard, accompanied by five teams: Reverend Sifton and two altar boys, Aloysius White Antelope, Basil Wolfe Bear and two catechists, Alonzo Young Chief and Andrew Jackson [went] to bless the grave. Thus terminated the first funeral at St. Stephens. May his soul rest in peace."

On Ascension Thursday, Bishop James Keane confirmed seventy-three children and adults. “After Mass, they partook of their breakfast at the Sisters’ home.” As the house historian noted, “It was the custom among the old Indians [This term was used to distinguish those living on the Reservation as distinct from the children at the Mission.] on hearing of a priest or a Sister visiting the Mission, that they come and pay their respects, which consists in a handshake and in telling you that you are good. In return they expect a meal, which convinces them that you are not merely good in words but express it in acts.” This was a practice continued through many years.

1909-1915: A time to grow

Sister Clementina Mullaney arrived on April 1, 1909, to teach the kindergarten class at the Mission. Her fifty-four year presence at St. Stephens was to be “a match made in heaven,” an appreciative and reciprocal love affair between those she served and Sister herself. Except for three years spent at St. Andrew’s Mission, Pendleton, Oregon, from 1932 to 1935, Sister Clementina ministered at St. Stephens until 1963. When she was sent to St. Joseph Hospital, LaGrande, Oregon, as a patient where she died October 12, 1963, the tribe begged that she be allowed to be buried among them. However, because no Franciscans were buried at St. Stephens and the congregation did have a plot where she died, Sister Clementina was laid to rest in Calvary Cemetery, LaGrande, Oregon.

When school opened in September 1910, a few pupils had not returned because they had smallpox. Three weeks later “Anthony Iron broke out, then Leslie, then a few weeks afterwards, eleven more took sick, then all the old Indians were quarantined until the second week of January.” As is evident from the long time the disease ravaged the tribe, it was a difficult year for those enduring the disease and for those caring for them.

In 1911 from February 25 to March 6, Mother Aloysia Hofer, third superior general, and Sister Clela Frenie visited at St. Stephens. While they were at the Mission, the old Indians asked Reverend John Sifton if they might speak with the superior general. When the Sisters returned to the convent after Mass one day, the halls and rooms were “filled to overflowing, all waiting to ask favors from Reverend Mother. Chief Lone Bear spoke; Columbus Goggles interpreted. The last--and most important request--a good dinner which Father Sifton said they might have!”

At the time, the Mission school went only to eighth grade and the house historian noted in September 1911, “Six of the large girls did not return as they were of age to remain home.” The following Christmas, “Four more were graduated, not in knowledge, but in age.” For the second time in three years, the midnight Mass was canceled because of bitterly cold weather. In 1909 the thermometer had read -47 degrees; in 1911, it was -23 degrees. Despite the cold, “About one hundred fifty old Indians besides all the children took dinner and at two o’clock we went to the Christmas tree to distribute the presents.” Presents from nation-wide benefactors brought joy to all. While the children were thrilled with new toys and games, the gloves, mittens, scarves, shawls and dresses for the old Indians found them “well pleased.” After the festivities of Christmas, the children were allowed to go home for a vacation, a treat they all looked forward to throughout December.

The arrival of machinery for the new laundry was a highlight of late spring in 1912 and after the children returned home for their summer vacation, the new steam washers were used for the first time. “We washed everything: blankets, comfort[er]s, pillows and everything we could find that needed washing.”

During July, events within the Society of Jesus and the Franciscan congregation occurred that affected many at the Mission. On July 6, 1912, the Jesuits transferred St. Stephens Mission from the California

province to the Missouri province. Although the Jesuits continued to staff the Mission, the priests and brothers arrived from the South rather than from the West. For the Franciscans, Mother Kilian Schoeller and Sister Bernadette Ennis were present July 25 to witness the renewal of vows pronounced by Sisters Clementina Mullaney and Carola McDevitt. In September 1912, Reverend Sifton was transferred to Alaska and the Sisters felt the loss of a “zealous priest, a true friend.” When Sister Tranquilla was changed to another mission the following year, the house historian stated, “They accomplished more for the uplifting of the Indians and for the Mission in particular than ever had been done.”

Significant changes continued to occur. First, a new cemetery at the Mission was blessed on the Feast of All Souls by the new pastor, Reverend Placidus Silam, S.J., giving the Catholics now a burial ground of their own. Regina Blackburn’s child was the first person laid to rest there. Secondly, the Presbyterians opened a new day school that provided competition to the Mission school. Thirdly, recognizing the power of their tribal council, the Indians met with the Jesuit provincial in an attempt to return Reverend Sifton to them. They did not understand the changes that had occurred through the shift from Reverend Sifton’s California province to the Missouri province which was now ministering to them at the Mission.

On February 20, 1914, Mother Aloysia arrived during a heavy snowstorm. She remained until March 2. Returning again in September with Sister Blanche Koch, she met the old Indians who “came in crowds to show their respect to the Big Chief.” Evidence that the children were doing well was obvious. To the teachers’ delight and pride, the children’s needlework and crocheting received ten first and seven second place prizes at the State Fair for which an \$18 check was awarded the school. The money was used for a treat for the children and a half-day holiday from school.

Competition between the religious groups continued. On Thanksgiving

Day between fifty and sixty Native Americans appeared at the Mission at noon. They informed the priests, "Protestant Minister gives dinner to the people going to his church; we come to the Mission." No record tells how the Mission responded for Thanksgiving, but the Sisters were prepared for Christmas. "Close to 175 people attended the 6:00 a.m. Mass and had breakfast at the convent, then between 250 and 300 were present for the later Mass followed by dinner which the Sisters and older girls served. By 3:00 p.m. all were ready for the entertainment prepared by the Mission children and the arrival of Santa with a generous outpouring of gifts." [Although the house history never once remarks on the tremendous challenge of feeding so many, the Sisters continued this practice for many years.]

At least annually, government-sponsored medical care was provided for the children. In February 1915, Dr. Dewey, an eye specialist, with Dr. McCormick and Miss Soper, a trained nurse, examined all the children for trachoma, a prevalent disease among the people. Sixteen children had operations as well as "many of the old Indians"; the doctor remained five days treating his patients. Frequently, pneumonia also took its toll. The convent chronicle recorded that despite one of the children's weak condition because of dreaded pneumonia, parents took him to their camp. "Removed from the Mission at 11 a.m., he died at 2:30 p.m. A sad experience."

In early July, the daughters of Chief Lone Bear were brought to the Mission for the rest of the summer vacation. "In fact, seven girls remained the entire summer." On July 24 the Mission experienced a "most dreadful" electrical storm. Although the Mission farm was spared, the big Arapaho farm in Arapahoe was completely destroyed. The summer of 1915 was also a time for much renovation at the Mission complex: church repairs were completed, the boys' dormitory was plastered and painted, new buildings for the chickens, horses and cattle were erected. Four Sisters, "going from morning 'til night, provided

meals for all, including the extra painters, carpenters, ‘cement men,’ etc.”

School’s autumn opening registered only thirty-seven girls and a comment that “the boys were still more slow (sic) in returning.” Sister Thaddea had returned to the Mission as superior of the Sisters, taking Sister Iphigenia Carroll’s place. Because her health was “poorly,” Sister Iphigenia was transferred to St. Joseph Orphanage, Spokane, Washington, where it was hoped that smaller numbers would relieve her somewhat of the heavy burdens she had been carrying. The historian reflected, “She will be greatly missed at the Mission.”

A fierce, unrelenting winter brought much sickness and death. Shortly after Christmas, Luther Shakespeare, one of the old Indians, was found frozen to death. Departing from the tribe’s usual custom, the family delayed the burial for five days until his brother could arrive from Oklahoma. A poignant entry of the history lists no date, but reveals the hardship faced by those on the Reservation. “The Indian papooses have been dying right along at the rate of two or three a week. Since January 1st, there have been forty-three babies buried at the Mission. A number of little ones have died at the Agency and elsewhere but their remains were not brought to the Mission.” In February, Doctor Newton, the government dentist, remained at the Mission for six weeks, caring for the children’s teeth. Between March 6 and 11, Doctor Strassberger and his nurse performed operations on twenty girls’ eyes. In April, measles and whooping cough among the children at the Agency spread to the government school and all were under quarantine until school closed.

1916-1929: A time to be silent; a time to weep

In July 1916, nineteen priests made their annual retreat at St. Stephens convent. “It proved to be a grand success” was the history keeper’s assessment; however, “It took the Sisters about three weeks to prepare

the house and afterwards to put it in order again.” Because many of the Sisters left the Mission during the summer to further their education or to help in other areas, usually the burden of “vacation” activities fell to three or four Sisters who worked very hard.

When school reopened, Alonzo Moss, a former student at the Mission, became prefect of the boys. This year of 1916 the pupils again were slow in coming back to the Mission. The historian noted that it was “almost the first of November before the students had all returned to school.” Before Christmas, the government physician, Doctor Shoemaker, presented a lecture on tuberculosis, using pictures that showed “modes of living carried on by different tribes of Indians” that made them susceptible to the disease. After Christmas vacation during which the temperature had fallen to -40 degrees, many of the children returned to school with coughs and colds. In January 1917 only forty-three boys and forty-two girls were in attendance.

A time of good news and bad news marked 1917. A basketball team formed at the school was mentioned for the first time although the outcome of their first game was not recorded. The Sisters welcomed a new altar that was placed in the convent chapel. Although it was “very simple,” it was a “vast improvement to the old one made by Sister Columba out of tea chests.” These positive actions were counterbalanced by national and local disasters. On April 6, Good Friday, the United States entered World War I with the Allied nations. Later that month at Arapahoe, the church burned to the ground. An intoxicated sheepherder set straw on fire in a nearby cabin. He escaped through a window but a breeze spread the flames, igniting the church. Fortunately, the Indians saved the vestments, Stations of the Cross, benches and even the doors and windows.

Encouraging news was entered in the house history on June 3, 1917. “Yesterday the Indians came to sign the contract. Fifty-five signed in Father’s office and a good many more have promised to sign so Father

feels rather encouraged.” [The contract was a pledge between members of the tribe and the Mission that they would send their children to the Mission school.] In exchange, the administrator, Reverend Aloysius Keel, S.J., gave the tribe gifts: one hundred loaves of bread, three sacks of potatoes, bacon, and a beef. Having had the low enrollment of eighty-five at the beginning of this year, Reverend Keel must have been relieved over this promised increase. In July the school building acquired a new fire escape that took three days to install. And improvements continued to upgrade the lives of those at the Mission in 1918. The rectory, convent, church, and laundry buildings all received electricity for the first time. A further cause for gratitude and rejoicing came with the end of World War I on November 11. Even the Christmas entertainment in the boys’ new play hall brought a special joy to the year’s closing events. “The boys and girls did their parts well. The only thing was that we had too many good things in the program.” [Was that an admission that the program was too long?]

December of the horrendous Spanish flu epidemic recorded the death of one woman to whom the Sisters had given care. Reverend William Keavy, a diocesan priest, also had the flu but recovered. Despite the loss of fourteen Sisters throughout the congregation over this national scourge, the Sisters at St. Stephens considered themselves blessed with having escaped the epidemic that left so many families without loved ones. However, death by pneumonia or tuberculosis did continue to ravage the tribe. The detailed entry in the house history of Marie Wolfe’s demise indicates the impact this young woman had made on the school. “Marie had spent nearly all her life at the Mission. She was a very good girl and much devoted to the Sisters.” The first girl to reach eighth grade, a leading member in the choir, and first to sing a solo, Marie died a rather harsh death in the camp. She was already unconscious when Reverend Keel, accompanied by Sisters Thaddea and Cornelia, anointed her. By the following morning, Marie had breathed her last.

Washington's birthday, February 22, 1919, was the occasion for a basketball game between the Shoshone and Arapaho boys. Happily, the scribe wrote, "Our boys won the game, 48 to 13." In March the evidence of technology's arrival was twice recorded. One of the priests, in returning from ministering to a dying man, lost the "hind wheel" from "his machine" [automobile]. Good Samaritans along the way returned him, and eventually his car, to the Mission. Brother Perry, S.J., who was mechanically talented, went to the government school "to fix their moving picture machine." Entries in the house history reveal that films became a frequent means of entertainment for the children throughout the Reservation. At Easter besides the special meal prepared for the students and old Indians, an egg hunt for the children and an evening picture show provided a memorable day for all.

Because the bishop and the diocesan priests planned to use St. Stephens as the site of their annual retreat in 1919, much preparation was involved. "We painted the classrooms, the parlor and the lower hall and varnished the woodwork all over the house...Father's house, too, had to be all painted and cleaned, so for two weeks we were very busy." During the week of retreat "Father [Theo.] Schultz played for Benediction in the evenings and the priests did the singing. It was grand to hear them," the house historian commented. However, the area was suffering for lack of water; it was hot; there was no rain and little snow in the mountains; the river was almost dry and crops were burning up.

With gratitude the Mission welcomed the cooler weather of autumn.

Sickness that scourged the Mission greatly was about to arrive with the New Year. On February 5, 1920, a flu epidemic that had "eighty or ninety in bed at the same time" had all staff working overtime.

Reverends Keel and O'Connor with Sisters Expedita Fraites and Cornelia Jordan cared for the boys; Sisters Thaddea Loughran, Carola McDevitt and Clementina Mullaney nursed the girls. A few old Indians and several babies in the camps did succumb to the flu. All patients at the Mission recovered only to endure a "siege of mumps, especially

among the boys.” Then, another form of devastation hit the camps on March 13 when a flood of ice and water came down from Beaver Creek. The Indians had to move camp in the middle of the night. A mother and her day-old infant sought refuge on a hill while a dying man was transported to safety in a wagon.

May 1, 1921, marked the departure of Indian Agent Hutchinson and his wife who were moving to Utah after serving the tribes at Wind River Reservation for four years. “He was a good friend to the Mission and always spoke highly of our school...we regretted very much to see them leave.” Mr. Haws, the successor, arrived June 4.

During the last week of February in 1923, the children began to be ill. What seemed to be a mild flu soon had forty-nine in bed at once. Then the adults and babies became sick. Nine of the infants had pneumonia and were brought to the convent for care. The baby daughter of Lawrence Little Ant died in the convent. “The crowded room erupted in an anguished ‘Indian cry’ that continued for over two hours...Old Chief Little Ant came out of the room and went over to the Sisters’ dormitory door and leaned against it and cried. It was a sight long to be remembered.” Measles claimed five children in two weeks’ time at the end of that tragic year. Ironically, the cold weather brought the children back from vacation, welcoming warmth and good food, only to have them quarantined because of a measles outbreak in the school. Deaths on the Reservation continued to mount: childbirth, pneumonia, tuberculosis.

However, mingling with the sorrows was a strange cause for joy: marriages of the ‘older girls.’ Dated February 26, 1925, the history noted, “This was the third bride in two months from the eighth grade.” Viewed from the distance of years and cultural change, the early marriages of these young women are seen as dangerously premature and doomed to failure. Despite the judgment of the twenty-first century, the young brides of the 1920s usually accepted their responsibilities and made good homes for their families.

A tragic accident that claimed the life of Sister Lucinda Mayhue occurred on the morning of September 16, 1925. Sister, who had charge of the bakery, was attempting to relight the gas flame when it exploded and she was engulfed in flames. Sister rushed into the laundry, calling for help and Sister Carola tried to beat out the fire. Reverend Joseph Lannon, S.J., threw two blankets around her and laid her on the laundry floor but the flames continued to burn. It was recorded that “in the midst of all her agonies, Sister [Lucinda] never ceased praying. As soon as Father Keel arrived, he gave her absolution. However, she received the sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction with every possible fervor. When Father told her there was little chance of recovery, she accepted death with submission to God’s will.” After the doctor came, he administered an opiate to quiet her so the burns could be cared for. It was too late, though, and Sister died at 4:40 p.m. Because a suitable coffin could not be found in either Riverton or Lander, “a gray casket was chosen.” Following Mass, the priests gave the last blessings before Sister Tranquilla Gallagher accompanied Sister Lucinda’s remains by train to Spokane, Washington. Having been met at the depot in Spokane, the coffin was taken to St. Joseph Orphanage where a solemn funeral Mass was offered for Sister Lucinda before her burial at Calvary Cemetery. Mourning that they could not be with their dear deceased Sister, the Sisters at St. Stephens found comfort that Mother Bernadette Ennis was present with several others whom she had invited to join the funeral cortege.

If Sister Lucinda’s death was traumatic, the Mission experienced more wide-spread anguish when spinal meningitis was contracted in December 1927 and all Christmas festivities were canceled. The children, in quarantine, remained at the Mission and those in the camps were not allowed to visit. By January, thirteen more children were in the infirmary. Seven girls and nine Indians from the camps contracted the disease and four did not recover. Then, on January 20, 1928, another tragedy occurred. A devastating fire burned to the ground the church, the boys’ dormitory, and their play hall. Because the fire occurred during the

day while the children were at school, orderly evacuation prevented any loss of life although all beds and bedding were lost as well as the boys' personal belongings. The government school sent twenty beds and a nearby army camp donated thirty cots and blankets. The recovery from the fire continued as the buildings were restored, but Sister Death summoned Sister Liberata Smith on May 22, 1928, after a sickness of only a week. A Mass was offered for the repose of her soul and her body also was set to follow Sister Lucinda's to Spokane. Reverend Keel and three of the Sisters started for Bonneville where the train would convey Sister Clementina with the deceased to Spokane. However, the undertaker got "stuck on the road" about a mile from the station and did not arrive on time. Having stayed overnight in Bonneville, Sister Clementina repeated the route that had so recently been followed by Sister Tranquilla with Sister Lucinda's body. After all the tragedy, good news arrived by Christmas with the first Mass held in the unfinished church. A dance given in the new gymnasium was presented as a benefit for the church.

Two major events occurred in 1929. The first Solemn High Mass was offered after the new church was dedicated with Bishop Patrick McGovern presiding. Reverend Aloysius Keel, S.J., was celebrant, assisted by Reverend John Mullin of Casper and Reverend M.A. Kennedy of Lander. Reverend Joseph Lannon, S.J., was master of ceremonies. "Everybody was overjoyed with the dedication services, as it was rather a treat for them; many of them had never attended such services before...The people are delighted with the church; the altar is very attractive." A second event of unusual import occurred when members of the National Editors Association visited St. Stephens. "They were very much interested in the Mission. About ninety cars brought [some 300 visitors] from Riverton. Most of the states were represented. They visited the different buildings and enjoyed everything, as it was quite a novelty to them. Some of them had never seen an Indian Mission before."

If the preceding events had been positive, an unusual number of accidents that caused broken bones in 1929 were listed in the house history. A cripple who slipped on a melon skin remained at the convent while healing; ironically, this second break improved her mobility although she still needed crutches. A fall from a horse, from a tree, and from a hay stack caused more broken limbs. The man who fell from the hay stack was the father of nine children and his badly broken ankle left him dependent on crutches. "As he is a very good provider and very steady and faithful to his family, we all feel very sorry for him as there is very little hope for his getting entirely well." Sister Carola, too, slipped and broke her wrist but it was immediately set and healed successfully. Incidents of blood poisoning, eye operations, and tonsillectomies also filled the pages of St. Stephens history for 1929.

1930-1935: A time to give; a time to receive

Although many technological improvements had been made by 1930, communication from across the Atlantic Ocean to St. Stephens Mission remained wanting. Sister Expedita's sister died in Portugal but the news reached Sister nearly a month after the burial. However, news on the Reservation traveled fast when "Pay Day" arrived for the natives. On April 15 each Indian received \$25. Therefore, those with large families obtained larger sums. School was closed for two days while the families collected their children, obtained the pay due them, and took them into Riverton to shop. Often the girls delighted in buying jewelry; boys would spend seven or eight dollars for a hat. The older members of the tribe purchased food or clothing--even a car! For the 1930 Christmas dinner the record notes, "We had the largest number of Indians that we've ever had."

Hardships reached from January to December in 1931. In one entry of the house history, "broken heart" was listed as cause of death; infant twins were burned to death...tragedies seemed to multiply among the

natives. By Christmas, the historian wrote, "These last few Sundays, being too cold to go home, the children stayed here." Over 400 Indians from the Reservation were fed Christmas dinner. Among the gifts distributed, the women received homemade loaves of Mission bread according to the size of their families.

After nineteen years at St. Stephens, Reverend Aloysius Keel was sent to Holy Rosary Indian Mission in South Dakota in July of 1932. Reverend Keel found the change very hard. On his final Sunday at St. Stephens, the church was full and many of the natives wept. They wanted to petition the bishop or write to Washington, DC, but Reverend Keel discouraged these actions. Then, less than one month later, news came that Sister Clementina who had served at the Mission for more than twenty-three years also was being changed.

The new pastor, Reverend Albert Zuercher, S.J., offered a Field Mass which was followed by a feast. Father Zuercher had provided a beef which all enjoyed, "especially now when many of them are hungry and have very little to eat." The tentacles of the Depression were reaching into the Reservation and the Indians, "anxious to have their children in school as they are really hungry," brought their little ones to the Mission even before the designated return date in September.

The entry in the house history for December 8, 1932, reflects the eagerness with which the children and adults awaited Christmas. Acknowledging the loss of money when the Riverton bank crashed, the scribe worried that it "will be hard to make ends meet and the children may not receive as many presents as usual." However, because benefactors continued their generous donations to the Mission and fewer participants arrived on Christmas Day because a new church nearby held its first Mass, the gifts were sufficient.

Again the early months of 1933 held much sickness: flu, sore eyes, babies with whooping cough. Three sets of twins each lost one twin to

sickness and the house history lists many deaths. On May 14 the Indians had another open air Mass followed by a beef dinner. Signatures for school enrollment were taken at the event; however, a flaw was discovered in the contract and they had to reregister--even more names were added to the list the second time. In June, Reverend Matthew Connell, S.J., was made an officer of the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] reforestation camps. There were seven camps located in the mountains, "quite a distance apart" that accommodated 600 boys for the summer. In August a CCC camp for the Arapahos was located thirty-five miles from the Mission. Two camps for the Sioux were also added. When the Native Americans held their annual Sun Dance, Reverend A.C. Riester, S.J., celebrated Mass near where the dance was being held and, to his pleasure, "a large number of Indians who were attending the Sun Dance also attended Mass." But the Depression continued to cause want on the Reservation. On Thanksgiving the Indians came to the Mission for breakfast. At their homes very little food was available so they were glad to come to the Mission on special feasts and holidays.

Two faithful friends of the Mission were lost in 1934. Doctor Albert Tonkin who had been physician to the Mission for twenty-three years, died in February. "It seemed as if he just belonged here," the scribe noted. Within a month, Brother Stein, S.J., who had served with great generosity at the Mission, died after much suffering. His example of patience and self-sacrifice was remembered when he was "called to his eternal reward on Good Friday sometime around three o'clock." During the summer Reverend Keel had come to the Mission for health reasons, but he became very ill and almost immediately returned to Nebraska.

Tragedy was followed by triumph. A radio, the marvelous gift from thirty-two donors, greatly pleased the Sisters in 1935. Lumber companies, a bakery, an oil company, as well as many individuals, paid for it. This time of Depression made the Sisters even more grateful for the sacrifices that had been made to so gift them. Of consequence to the Mission, in February the Arapahos chose a new chief, Mr. Whiteman,

known as Whitman. The faithful historian confided that the new leader was a white man who had been stolen by the Indians years ago. "His features are Caucasian, but his long braids and clothing would identify him as Indian."

Mumps swept through the Mission school in April 1935, over ninety students falling victim to the disease. By the following month, though, all were recovered and enjoyed their annual school picnic held at the "Big Trees" on the Mission grounds. The little children were then dismissed for the summer while the older students continued for another week. A custom that arose in the Mission cemetery was the adornment of the graves for "Decoration Day" [Memorial Day]. Paper flowers were lovingly made into attractive shapes of wreaths, hearts, or crosses which were then blessed by the priest before they were placed on the graves. Many years, it seemed, the day was awash with heavy rain storms, turning the "labor of love" that the Indians had prepared for the graves into short memories.

When Bishop Patrick McGovern came to the Mission with his priests for retreat in 1935, it was obvious that he was in poor health. Before going to the hospital, the bishop spent some days of rest at the Mission. Priests also visited for short vacations, often on their way to see Yellowstone Park. Word came that Reverend Keel had passed away in South Dakota. The historian prayed, "May the dear Lord reward him abundantly for all his labors in His vineyard." In the meanwhile, Sr. Clementina's return to the Mission as Franciscan superior was cause for joy for the Sisters and the Native Americans as well.

1936-1940: A time to change

Changes were inevitable as the years moved forward. With the opening of the 1936 school year, the Mission boasted of a new concrete barn that had electricity and an electric milking machine and separator; however,

before the barn could be used for its original purpose, Doctor Erickson used it as an x-ray lab for the children. Adults on the Reservation went to the priests' house for their x-rays. This was the year that, for the first time, the students went home for Thanksgiving. Usually between seven and ten days at Christmas and the three summer months were the only vacation opportunities for the boarders. When the children returned in January 1937, many were sick with colds and flu. What began as forty-eight ill soon became seventy-two in bed simultaneously. Nevertheless, the St. Stephens' basketball team had an outstanding year in 1937. The Lions Club helped sponsor a Chicago trip for the team where they played in a tournament. On their way, they won a game against Sioux competitors and lost one at Creighton University. [No mention is made of the outcome of the tournament.] Meanwhile at St. Stephens, Mother Casmir Smith and Sister Presentina Baechle visited, having "motored" via Thermopolis and the beautiful sixteen-mile canyon. After time spent with the Sisters, they continued their journey by way of Rawlins.

In the fall, "Penny Parties" provided funds to paint the church and to defray expenses for another basketball trip to Chicago. Chances on "a loaf of bread or a sack of flour, vegetables or a quilt" were a delightful source of entertainment for the people as they helped raise funds. Reverend Albert Zuercher and some of the boys did the painting of the church. These events brought joy to the Mission. However, the historian recorded a saying in December that proved too true. "A green Christmas, a fat graveyard." The first death recorded in 1938 was that of Dominic Harris, "a very good Indian, very prayerful." Two elders and one little child died within a week and then the avalanche began. During the first two weeks of Lent, twenty Indians died, many of them babies who contracted whooping cough or pneumonia.

Rumor of St. Stephens becoming a day school passed through the Reservation in April of 1939. On May 9, the Sisters received a visit from Reverend Mother Veronica Steffens and Sister Illuminata McBride, "to our great and pleasant surprise." [Because of the great distance of St.

Stephens Mission from so many of the other western convents, most visits were well planned and prepared for. This spontaneous arrival of the superior general and her companion must have provided much joy—and some cause for wonder!] With the effects of the Depression far from over, the Indians expressed concern about how they would be able to feed and clothe their children; nevertheless, by July the reality of a day school was confirmed. The history notes that the children were happy over the idea of returning home each evening. September 15, with the opening of the school year, enrollment was at ninety. The Sisters mused that they had to adjust to the absence of beds made up in the dormitories and to seeing the children jump from buses each morning; the children were quiet at first as they, too, absorbed the changes.

During the latter part of June in 1940, some New Jersey visitors to the Mission were amazed to meet members of the same Franciscan congregation that they knew in Trenton. After their return home, they sent a generous donation to the Sisters. Summers that provided vacation time for the children remained a busy time for the Sisters. July marked another priests' retreat to which most came in autos. However, the bishop expressed his concern that he couldn't come anymore on account of his small funds available. The Jesuit superior, Reverend George Prendergast, S.J., assured the bishop that he was always welcome.

Decoration Day in 1941 is recorded as the first time Mass was offered in the cemetery. Mother Mildred Florenz and Sister Francis Steffens, who were present for the occasion, were much impressed by the beauty of the paper floral decorations that adorned the graves. Unlike the previous two years when rain had rapidly destroyed the Indians' handiwork, the clear sky and warm weather made the day very special. Extending their hospitality further, the Indians welcomed the Sisters and their guests to a picnic and games at the Big Trees.

In the fall, a group of fifth and sixth grade boys experienced events long to be remembered. Invited by Reverend Cullen of the Marquette League,

the boys attended the Eucharistic Congress held in St. Paul, Minnesota, and visited Omaha and New York as well. Wearing their native costumes, they performed dances and sang songs of their people.

1941-1953: A time to take up arms; a time to lay them down

In 1941, just months shy of fifty years since the arrival of the Sisters, the house historian reflected on the progress achieved by the people they were serving at St. Stephens. Among spiritual accomplishments were listed the baptisms of many on the Reservation, and now their infant children; the use of holy and St. Ignatius water, especially when they were ill; the blessed graveyard and all the events of Decoration Day. For the camps, Mass at Arapahoe was now very convenient. Native talents that had been developed were enumerated: beadwork sewn by the Indian Women's Guild on vestments; mattresses made to improve the natives' homes; raffia baskets woven with Indian designs; crocheting and rug weaving--these demonstrated their crafts. The historian also listed commodities provided by the government to improve nutrition: dried fruit and juices as well as powdered milk and flour.

By 1942, St. Anne's Sodality also became an active presence on the Reservation. The women helped the poor by sewing for them and bringing them food. They gave good Christian example by receiving Communion frequently and by praying the rosary at the home of deceased members of the Mission.

In September, eleven Sisters were stationed at St. Stephens--the largest number to date. However, because Reverend George Prendergast closed two chapels on the Reservation to persuade the Indians to give up the "pagan practices" of the Sun Dance and peyote, many of the natives retaliated by not sending their children to the Mission school. Reverend Prendergast reopened one of the chapels and distributed gold crosses to those who had remained faithful to their religion. Originally, forty

received the cross. At a tribal council meeting, the suggestion had been made to “have the Mission closed,” but no one would be the first to sign a petition of closure. Despite the change to a day school in 1940, the number of Indians moving away for employment had made a boarding school a necessity. About forty boarders plus the day students brought the September 1942 enrollment to 173 students.

The first of “our boys” to enlist in the military service was named in the history on September 12. Although the entrance of the United States into World War II was not mentioned by the chronicles, the Sisters at St. Stephens were aware of those serving in the Pacific and European fronts as well as those still on American soil as they anguished with the families of the young men.

The business councils of the Arapaho and Shoshone tribes adopted an important resolution on September 30, 1943, that bound all members of both tribes. Children between seven and sixteen years of age “who have not completed the 8th grade are obliged to attend school. Parents failing to send children to school are guilty of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and are subject, after the first offense, to ten days in jail and a fine of five to twenty-five dollars.” With youth eager to contribute to the war effort, this ruling at least kept them home until they completed a basic education.

A few of the girls had gone for training at the Franciscans’ Northwest hospitals. A glowing report from Mother Mildred Florenz assured the Sisters at St. Stephens that “splendid work” was being done by Joyce Birdtail, Loretta Warren, Inez Jenkins and Philomena Walker at St. Joseph Hospital, Tacoma, Washington, and in St. Elizabeth Hospital, Baker City, Oregon. In 1944, after thirty-three continuous years’ ministry at St. Stephens, Sister Carola McDevitt was transferred to Baker City.

As the war continued, all sought ways to help. A bingo and raffle party to benefit the Red Cross was proclaimed a “great success” and \$102 was

turned over to the chairman of the War Fund Drive. In May, Sherman Redman was the first from the Wind River Reservation to die in the service of his country. By December, eleven from the Reservation had merited Purple Hearts. When requiem or memorial services were held for those who died in the war, members of the American Legion attended the funeral. Even after the war as prices continued to rise, “Penny Parties” became “Nickel Parties” in an effort to pay for needed improvements throughout the Mission.

The house historian declared the arrival of Brothers Henry Kinney, S.J., and Paul Hofer, S.J., at the Mission in 1947 “the greatest acquisition to the Mission for many a year.” The former was in charge of the farm; the latter, the cars, buses and machinery. In June the following year, the first Catholic Laymen’s Retreat in Wyoming was held at St. Stephens. Having benefited from the time away from work to consider spiritual concerns, they asked that such a retreat become an annual affair. Until other arrangements could be made, the bishop asked that St. Stephens host them.

“Father Cullen of New York paid us a visit. The children enjoyed his visit very much. He is buying new basketball suits for our girls. He is also sending us 60 hymn books for choir use.” Entries such as this one of August 22, 1948, reveal the ongoing generosity of those who saw the Mission first-hand and were made aware of its needs. As the new school year began, enrollment on the first day numbered only forty-eight pupils. Nevertheless, by the twenty-fourth of the month, 147 had arrived and hope for many more by the end of the following week was expressed.

During her visitation to the Mission in October, 1949, Mother Leandro Keough, the eighth superior general, did a rather unusual thing. Besides writing a brief prayerful note for blessings on the work of the Sisters, she filled a page of the house history herself, relating the matters she had discussed with the Mission’s Jesuit superior, Reverend Zuercher.

The final school program for 1950 featured a recital by the eight music students, a few choral numbers, recitation of poetry, two folk dances, and “a short skit by the High School.” [This is the first reference in the house history to indicate that the grades had gone beyond eighth.] The May procession, described in detail, was held despite a rainstorm. Then the closing picnic lunch on May 25 took place in the dining room “because it was snowing.”

In reality, how isolated were those on the Mission? Two pages of the house history seem to answer the question. “June 5: Forty priests arrived for their retreat. Four B.V.M. Sisters from Casper came to Mass. They will be teaching vacation school in Riverton and Lander. June 7: Bishop Newell visited. June 9: The priests’ retreat ended this morning. In the evening the Knights of Columbus arrived for their retreat. There were about seventy of them. June 12: The Sisters began their annual retreat.” [Hospitality certainly was one of the Sisters’ greatest gifts!]

In October 1950, students provided a moving sight as they assembled at the convent and processed to church as a living rosary. The devotion brought meaning to the prayers and honored Mary in a special way. While the older girls wore white formals, the younger ones wore white blouses and blue or red skirts and the boys were dressed as altar boys.

When school opened September 5, 1951, the largest first day enrollment ever recorded at St. Stephens numbered 138, a count that continued to build in the weeks that followed. At the end of the month, a novena in honor of Our Lady of Fatima was well attended and those participating increased every evening, especially the night of the closing on October 7. Benediction concluded the novena; then Reverend Jerome Zummach, S.J., presented “The Joyful Hours,” a movie on the joyful mysteries of the rosary. Spiritual activities, so much a part of the Mission life and concern of the diocese, received a jolt when Bishop McGovern died unexpectedly November 8. Although he had been ill for two years, his

death came as a shock to those he shepherded. Bishop Hubert Newell, a loving pastoral leader, succeeded him.

At the Mission, practical concerns faced the administration. On February 8, 1952, a fire that had been started by two boys who were smoking in the willows near the Sisters' convent spread rapidly toward the picnic grounds. The priests, brothers, men and high school boys were able to contain it, stopping it at the river with no loss of life or buildings. If that incident caused concern, others brought joy. In May, Confirmation for ninety-three took place. Two Knights of Columbus served as honor guard and the ceremony was impressive. Kindly Bishop Newell even helped the students in answering the questions he asked! The first prom for the high school students was held at St. Stephens in the children's dining room later in the month. The enjoyable evening was rich in its simplicity, e.g., the participants danced the Virginia Reel, the Jessie Polka, the Oxford Minuet, and Circle Two Step as well as waltzes. "For refreshments they had cake, cookies, punch and candy, "and later-- apples." The scribe [and chaperone?] observed, "They were well behaved all evening and then the dance closed with a waltz at 12:00." And on May 27, 1952, the first high school graduation took place at St. Stephens. "Four high school graduates dressed in smart street clothes attracted everyone's attention. They were June Chiefly [valedictorian], Nora Jenkins, Edwin Norse and Theodore Bell [salutatorian]." The superintendent of Morton schools, Mr. Koeneke, addressed the gathering, using the inscription "For God and Country" as his theme.

In August, after summer activities away from the Mission, Sisters Clementina Mullaney and Incarnata Lauer traveled with Reverend Zuercher to South Dakota where they visited three Missions: St. Francis, Holy Rosary and Porcupine. "It was interesting and educational to see how others do things," claimed the scribe. In the fall, many visitors to St. Stephens had a political goal: to meet the Indians and to be known by them. Supporters of a current Wyoming senator "came to the children's dining room for a few minutes. They expressed their amazement at the

large number of children and were pleased with the set-up.” During that time, a movie was made of the Mission activities, including Indian costumes and dancing. Also, a photographer came to take pictures of the children, “girls making baskets, weaving, typing; of all the classes at work; of the Mission, etc.” His intent was to produce educational film strips that would be available throughout the United States.

Forty Hours Devotion was held for the very first time at St. Stephens on October 26-28, 1952. The three day event, having been opened on the feast of Christ the King, was well attended. During the day, an honor guard of two boys and two girls kept vigil before the Blessed Sacrament. “Such a beautiful and heaven-sent devotion should be continued yearly,” the house historian commented. “May we look forward to another Forty Hours devotion in 1953.”

On February 13, 1953, the chronicle read, “The Sisters gave a party to the boys and girls. The children enjoyed playing games and dancing after which they were served refreshments.” In school, basketball remained a favorite sport—and one in which the St. Stephens teams excelled. The Fremont County Tournament held in Lander February 25-28 found the junior high team returning to the Mission as champs “although we didn’t expect it.” In March the Termite team from the Mission also won first place in a three-day tournament that was held at St. Stephens while the Midget team placed second. The high school Eagles traveled to Rapid City, South Dakota, where they competed in the All Catholic Indian Tournament. Having won their first game, they eventually placed third. By April the junior high and high school students were ready for some “time apart.” They embraced the quiet of a retreat given by Reverend Stroh from St. Francis Mission in South Dakota. “Some remarked that it was the best they’d ever had.” During the prom in 1953, “Music was provided by the recently acquired record player.” First Communions, May processions...the beauty and devotion of these special occasions continued to be recorded in the convent house

history. [Whether or not the annual school picnic continued is not clear from the history. The scribe seems to mention other activities instead.]

In June, 1953, Sister Expedita Fraites celebrated her golden jubilee at the motherhouse in Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania. She and Sister Clementina had gone east for the occasion and were away for the summer. As was the custom in the congregation, Sisters who taught during the school year were often asked to relieve those in year-round ministries. Four Sisters came to St. Stephens in 1953: Sisters Anselma Leonnig, Antoinette Marie Fermo, Nicola Sarvello and Philomena Rosaire Glynn. According to the history record, "They worked hard all summer but they liked their work and enjoyed being at the Mission."

On Sister Clementina's November 23 feast day, Reverend Earl Kurth, S.J., presented her with a document from Bishop Newell which stated that the Sisters were to have Benediction according to their rule and customs. Although they received Benediction "sometimes during their retreats," it was not given regularly "as in other houses. Now, they have the privilege of having it on all first and second class feasts, etc., just as the Rule states." In keeping with this directive, Reverend Kurth, S.J., gave "us Our Lord's blessing" this day.

1954-1957: A time to play; a time to cease playing

Penny Parties seemed to multiply in 1954. The first party, held February 1 to benefit the gym fund drive, was followed in March by another. Each class collected money for the new gym and the seventh and eighth grade students held a bake sale to help swell the fund. Other events met with special interest, too. The girls' basketball team placed second during the tournament held at Pavilion. In this Marian Year, a drive to collect money for a statue for the children's dining room also took place. The goal, \$25 per class by Easter, was reached in less than two weeks and a lovely statue of the Assumption soon presided over the dining room. On

Mothers' Day, the annual May procession that was held at the Mission differed because it was the Marian Year and because of the outside Fatima shrine. Following the living rosary, a Eucharistic procession to the shrine was concluded with Benediction and then the crowning of the statue of Mary. In the afternoon, under Sister Monica Francis Lentz's supervision, the sixth graders sponsored an ice cream social, the first ever on the Mission grounds. "All the Indians who were present for the procession remained to have pop, ice cream and cake with their neighbors and friends."

On June 9, Sister Expedita was hospitalized after having been anointed by Reverend Kurth. Although she seemed better, the following day she died at 11:45 a.m. "We were all, of course, very shocked when Bishop Newell announced her death in the dining room just before dinner." Sister's body was returned to the Mission and in the evening "many Indians and a number of white people from Riverton, along with the [K] nights [of Columbus] who were making the retreat, recited the rosary and passed around the bier to view for the last time their dear friend, Sister Expedita." On June 12 a requiem High Mass was offered and Monsignor John McDevitt spoke of the light that Sister Expedita had been to all with whom she lived and worked and served. "After the funeral, her body was sent to Spokane, [Washington] where another requiem Mass was offered and burial rites were carried out."

A second visit from Mother Leandro Keough produced another encouraging comment written into the pages of the house history: "We are pleased with the work our Sisters, under the inspiration and direction of their Superior, Sr. Clementina, are doing here at St. Stephens. It is missionary work truly and will merit the reward promised to those who 'instruct others unto justice.' May Our Lady, Queen of the Missions, continue to prosper this work spiritually and materially, and preserve among our Sister missionaries their spirit of fervor, of sacrifice, and of regular observances." Mother then signed the message, "mml." [Reading those kind words written June 21, 1954, must have given the Sisters

courage to continue what was sometimes a difficult, challenging assignment.]

After Confirmation at the Mission in October, Bishop Newell visited with the Sisters, encouraging them to be in contact with the girls in Riverton in order to foster vocations. He also announced that the convent chapel was to be renovated at his expense. This precious gift pleased the Sisters greatly. When the provincial and school supervisor visited, the house history noted, “The men, boys and girls of the Mission gave a native dance in honor of Mother Agnes [MacIntyre] and Sister Joan [Schillow]. This took place down in the meadow, back of the Sisters’ convent. The performers were dressed in tribal costumes, with beaded head bands and moccasins. This proved to be a most pleasant afternoon and was enjoyed by our own Sisters as [well as] the visitors.”

A paragraph in the history shows the individual loving care that Sister Clementina gave to the little ones on the Mission. “Some weeks previous to Christmas, Sister Clementina spent day after day repairing dolls, [For the most part, these were used toys donated to the Mission.] making new clothes for them, washing them and curling their hair, just to make some little Indian girls a bit happier. The patience, mildness and charity of Sr. Clementina is (sic) an inspiration to all of us here at St. Stephens.” By Christmas the Sisters were able to return to the newly renovated chapel. Except for the tile on the floor, the entire chapel was new, from the paint on the walls to the liturgical furnishings. Everyone was very pleased.

On Valentine’s Day, 1955, Bishop Newell visited the school for the first time and blessed the new gymnasium, an event attended by the priests, Sisters, Brothers “and most of the Indians.” A day later in the week had been designated as “free” after Mass to celebrate the new gym. However, so many children arrived for Mass despite a “terrific snow storm” that they were kept for a movie and given dinner before being returned home. Pride in their new facility reached peak intensity when St. Stephens hosted basketball’s Catholic State Tournament and won it!

The historian admitted, “We were exhausted from cheering and from excitement.” As the year progressed, Native American pride was again obvious when the May procession featured a court of queen and attendants wearing Indian dress for the first time.

In November 1955 the substitution of Clothing Sales for the Penny Parties helped the Indians get what they needed at very reasonable prices--”twenty-five cents, more or less.” The first sale profited \$126.20 with \$46.90 charged; the second sale, held two weeks later, netted \$58.00 cash and \$83.00 on charge; the third sale brought in \$126.00. Speaking of the latter sale, the historian noted, “There was no credit given because of the recent pay checks the Indians had received.” Managing these sales was one of the little extra ways the Sisters served the people on the Reservation.

A “beautiful, heavenly blue car” that the Sisters named “Regina” in honor of their heavenly Queen, arrived on Christmas Eve. All the Sisters were delighted with it and marveled at the smooth ride when they initiated it Christmas afternoon. Over the holidays the car took them for a few pleasure rides as well as provided transportation for their first “corporal work of mercy” when the Sisters traveled to Fort Washakie to visit a little sick child. In January 1956, the Sisters drove Reverend John O’Shea, S.J., to Morton where they taught Sunday school while Reverend O’Shea instructed three adults in preparation for Baptism. Although this assignment lasted only until Easter, they experienced yet another outreach of ministry. Bishop Newell also delighted in the new vehicle, predicting “much good that could be done by its use” while insisting that the Sisters take some pleasure trips, too.

When the Penny Parties of March 5 and 6 were held, many accounts on credit were settled. “For the March payment the Arapahos received five hundred and thirty-two dollars. Many of them paid their school bills and pledges on the new church pews.” In this busy spring, the Mission also provided a tour for the wives of miners who were in Riverton attending a

convention of the Wyoming State Mining Association. They were shown the school, the church, the arts and crafts room, and the convent. "They were impressed by the cleanliness and orderliness of the Mission...In the arts and crafts room we had displayed the crocheting, weaving, little blouses, skirts and dresses, quilts, etc., which the girls from the fifth grade up through high school had made. The women marveled at the splendid work done. To our dear Sr. Clementina the credit of this fine work accomplished really belongs. God bless her."

Although the new Jesuit provincial stayed only one day as he sought to touch all the missions for which he was responsible, the result of his visit to St. Stephens on April 20, 1956, brought permission to build a new high school. This permission was made with the understanding that if the enrollment in the high school did not increase within five years, the high school as such would be closed and the facility used for the grade school.

Simplicity marked the celebration of Sister Edna [Mary] Boyd's golden jubilee on May 10, 1956. After a special sung Mass in the Sisters' chapel and the observance of the feast of Ascension Thursday in church, the Sisters "simply enjoyed chatting in the community room." A lovingly-prepared dinner and a treasure hunt for Sister's hidden gifts preceded the closure of the day with Benediction in the Sisters' chapel. Sister Edna, from the Shoshone tribe, had attended grade school at St. Stephens. While studying in Virginia, she had been encouraged by Mother [now "Saint"] Katharine Drexel to enter the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Having spent her years of teaching mostly in missions in Oklahoma, Sister Edna returned to St. Stephens in 1950 where she labored until her death.

A production of mammoth undertaking was an operetta begun in October and presented in December. Sisters Bernard Weisser, the superior, and Eva Mary Cox were the directors of the production. Hours upon hours of practice resulted in a very successful presentation and the

hall “which normally holds 350 people, that day had at least 500 people. Its success was a great ‘ad’ for St. Stephens. Many...children expressed their desire to attend St. Stephens next year.” It also pleased those who had worked so hard that when expenses had been deducted, the operetta had netted \$226.50 which they gave Reverend Kurth for the Mission.

With Bishop Newell’s approval, preparations for the new high school went forward. On March 21, 1957, the house historian wrote, “Ground was broken today for the new high school. Seven men have set to work on the new building foundation.”

Thirty second-graders made their first Holy Communion on April 7, 1957, despite “a terrific blizzard” the previous day. One child had to stay overnight because of the weather conditions, but all arrived on time for their memorable day. According to the house history, the girls had--for the first time--provided their own veils and nine had purchased their own white dresses. Because the Mission had always loaned the children the outfits for first Holy Communion and Confirmation in the past, this move toward independence thrilled the Sisters.

Sister Bernard celebrated her silver jubilee on May 11 with a high Mass sung by Reverend Kurth in the convent chapel. “After a most delightful day which was carefully planned by the Sisters, Benediction was given by Reverend Kurth in the evening.” [The brevity of description leads the writer to assume that Sister Bernard herself was author of this part of the house history. This entry concluded Book 5 of the house history for St. Stephens.]

On May 26, four students graduated from high school and twenty completed the eighth grade. With the children gone for the summer and Sisters leaving for study, the diocesan priests’, Knights of Columbus’, and Sisters’ retreats became the normal topics listed in the house history. However, on July 23, after having made every exercise of her retreat, Sister Edna passed away very quickly and quietly. As it was customary

for Sisters who died at St. Stephens to be interred in Spokane, she was buried there with her other “Mission” Sisters.

The newly-completed high school opened September 3. The enrollment of 241 pupils in the grade and high school was lauded. With the addition of Franciscan Sisters St. Hubert [Kathleen Veronica] Carroll and Lauren Huston as well as Jesuit scholastics Mr. Lewis O’Neil, S.J., and Mr. Frank Higgins, S.J., the school looked forward to a special year. Having replaced Reverend Jerome Zummach, S.J., as director of athletics, Reverend Stephen Dillon, S.J., expressed pleasure with the cooperation he was receiving from the students. By September 10, the enrollment had climbed to fifty-five in the high school and two hundred thirty-five in grade school classes. No longer facing crowded conditions, the faculty and pupils in high school were very happy in the new building. “Our daily prayer is that God will bestow countless blessings upon those who made this new school a reality,” the historian recorded. Officially dedicated on October 20 by the bishop, the new high school was displayed with pride as approximately three hundred guests attended the ceremony and afterwards enjoyed cookies and coffee in the tastefully-decorated gym.

The fall and winter semesters witnessed many efforts made by and for the Mission students. For the high school boys, September 27 had been an historic day. Accompanied by Reverend Dillon and Coach Strannigan, the twelve team members traveled to Burlington to play their first official football game. The history noted--most probably with accuracy because there is no later negation--that “We do not expect the boys to win but hope that they will do their best.” When the Catholic Women’s Club gave a silver tea in November for the benefit of St. Stephens, nearly sixty ladies from Riverton, Lander, and Hudson attended. Then, instead of each class presenting part of a Christmas program, “The Gift of the Magi” became the entire school’s production for parents and friends in the school auditorium on December 8, 1957.

According to the historian, “The children performed very well and the play was enjoyed by all.”

1958-1961: A time to celebrate

Although little mention is made of illness among the Indians in these years, the horrible effects of infantile paralysis was recognized when a Polio Benefit game was played between Riverton and St. Stephens Midget and Termite teams in early February 1958.

At the end of the month, both the Midget and Termite teams of St. Stephens won first prize in the tournaments held at the Mission. The high school team, the Eagles, also won the treasured cup as trophy for the year in their tournament. While success in sports brought much satisfaction, students were also excelling in arts and crafts. In Pavilion’s Art Exhibit, the class projects of St. Stephens first, third, and sixth graders received first prizes. A first prize also was awarded for the rug made by the seventh graders and Susan Hartman won second prize for a crocheted hand bag.

School opened in September 1958 with an enrollment of 345 students. For the first time, the elementary teachers had single grades in their classrooms while the seventh and eighth graders were officially included as junior high in the new high school. Great was the rejoicing when the Eagles won their first football game! Having worked hard and competed for three seasons, the team found this victory was especially sweet. But not all attention was directed to the boys. On October 6 the junior and senior high school girls wore their new school uniforms of navy blue gabardine with white blouses. “The mothers are very grateful for the change from wearing street dresses,” claimed the house historian.

Mother Rosella Delaney, western provincial, and Sister Joan Schillow, school supervisor, arrived October 9, the date of Pope Pius XII’s death. It had been twenty-one years since Mother Rosella had seen the Mission

and the Sisters were eager to share all the changes and improvements that had occurred over the years. After the guests departed, the first PTA meeting ever held at St. Stephens introduced the faculty to the parents of the new pupils. The historian admitted, "We were very pleased that our Indians responded so well and gave us their support." The annual Christmas program, a play entitled "Hi Ho Holly," was presented to a full house and was a great success. The pastor, Reverend Kurth, was delighted with the cooperation of both students and parents. Vacation which began for the students on December 19 extended until January 5. "We hope to have a lovely Christmas, the ground being covered now with five inches of snow." And when the students returned "in great spirits after the two week holiday," the very cold weather "put the snow in condition to stay for a while."

March 21, 1959, marked the triumph of the Mission Eagles as they defeated Cowley 56-50 to become basketball state champions for the first time. They returned to the Mission at 2:30 the following day. "Our Eagles were given a big welcome and countless congratulations...The Indian police cars and many cars with hosts of friends came from Riverton and Arapahoe to see our state champs. Then, St. Stephens bus, driven by Mr. Gemble, followed by the cars, forty in number, drove to Riverton to proclaim that little St. Stephens Eagles were the State Champs!"

Both Sister Clementina's golden and Sister Balbina's silver jubilees were celebrated May 9 "with great pomp and joy." Twenty-five candles and pink and blue daisies adorned the altar for the High Mass sung by the Sisters. A full day of rejoicing, many beautiful gifts, and a program that added fun and pleasure made the day memorable. On the following day, to show their appreciation and gratitude to the Sister jubilarians, the Indians prepared a feast for the entire parish. Then an Indian dance was held in the auditorium and Sister Clementina was gifted by St. Anne's Sodality with fifty dollars "for her long and zealous years spent in the welfare of their people." Reverend Kurth also presented Sister with fifty

silver dollars that had been wrapped in gold “to show the gratitude of the Jesuit priests for her wonderful cooperation in the strenuous work here at the Mission.” These joyous days in early May were followed on the nineteenth with a sobering record: “Today Sr. Bernard took Sr. Clementina to La Grande [Oregon] for care in our hospital.” The report that Sister Bernard gave upon her return was not very encouraging: Sister Clementina had become very ill by the time they reached La Grande.

Attendance at the opening of the 1959-60 school year rose to ninety high school students with three hundred eleven in the grade school. Three Jesuit scholastics were also part of the high school faculty this year. “Good records and tasty menus” was the report given by the Wyoming lunch program inspector, Mrs. Buntree, who arrived unexpectedly on September 23 to observe the meal and the serving of the children at noon. Having checked the dishwashing as well, she was “pleased with our new equipment.” Outside visitors also were noticing the improvements made at the Mission.

In the meantime, with joy the Sisters had welcomed Sister Clementina’s return. Since her coming, Sister was able to do limited work in the sewing room. When she came on visitation September 28, Mother Rosella expressed great delight that Sister Clementina was up and able to greet her.

The month of triumphs and trials was November 1959. The Eagles’ football team finished their season with five wins and one loss, ranking second in their conference. The team was both happy and proud, having proved that St. Stephens was not simply a “basketball school.” An event usually celebrated in April or May, first Holy Communion took place this year on November 22. This early date offered thirty-four children the opportunity to receive more frequently during the school year. As was the practice, after Mass the Sisters served breakfast to the children and their parents. Then, on the heels of these joyous occasions came a

word no one wanted to hear, “Mumps!” That was the diagnosis of Doctor Ashbaugh when he examined Sister John Julia [Sheila] Casey on November 24. Several of the children had been ill with mumps and many were absent with the flu. Because the students were in the middle of their term, it is not surprising that there was a fervent wish that Sister would soon be able “to resume her classwork.”

The grade school pageant, “The Toys That Had to Wait,” once again under the direction of Sister Bernard, and the Nativity Scene produced by the high school students brought a capacity audience for the annual performance in 1959. The Sisters’ hard work was rewarded at Christmas with two gifts that added greatly to their pleasure. Reverend Mother Agnes MacIntyre presented them with an electric organ for their chapel and Reverend Kurth gave them a stereophonic record player for their community room. Both gifts brought much pleasure.

When school--and sports--resumed in the New Year, the winning list for the basketball teams seemed unbreakable. For the second year, the Eagles became district champs, having achieved forty-two straight wins over the two seasons. Sister Bernard, who had never seen the Eagles play in three years, delighted in this afternoon game that allowed the Sisters to attend. The hard work of Sister Jeanne Therese Mahoney with the pep squad had paid off as “in their red and white [outfits they] did a fine job yelling for the flying Eagles.” Much to their delight, the team again returned from Laramie with the state championship. Another first place win was achieved by the school’s track team although they had participated in track events for a limited time only. On the academic side, spelling contests also took sixth grade students as far as Pueblo, Colorado, where Cheryl Blumenshine placed third; eighth grade spellers in competition traveled to Casper and to Denver. Fourth and sixth grade Mission winners were also acknowledged in the Family Art Contest held in Lander. [In the recitation of all these feats, the historian expressed great pride in the accomplishments made by the students of St. Stephens.]

May 8, 1960, marked the Confirmation of one hundred thirty children and adults. The congregation was so great that many could not get into the church. After the Mass, the bishop blessed a new statue of St. Francis, a gift given by Mr. Studer “in appreciation of the devoted service rendered by our community of Sisters.” Commented the scribe, “It was very fitting that Reverend Mother Agnes [MacIntyre] should be present at this ceremony.”

While students were on vacation in 1960, an annex was added to the gymnasium that provided classrooms for grades seven and eight as well as a music room, an enlarged lobby, and more shower room. The history also noted, “Two homes for employees are also under construction.” Sisters Christine Voelker and Dolores Mary Herbeck, a Riverton graduate, spent two summers cataloguing books in the school library, a much appreciated gift of time and effort. As the new school year 1960-61 drew near, the Sisters returned from their studies and travels. “All the teaching Sisters went to Dubois to attend the County Teachers’ Institute, the first of its kind held in Fremont County.” Mrs. Mary Newton made history in 1960 when she became the first lay teacher in the grade school since St. Stephens opened in 1892.

On December 4, an operetta, “The Little Blue Angel,” was presented by the school to another capacity crowd. “The children did beautifully, which was due to the untiring effort and work of Sister Bernard.” In what was to be her final direction of the Christmas programs at St. Stephens, Sister Bernard again achieved outstanding performances. “Reverend Kurth was very pleased with the splendid cooperation of the parents and the large attendance of so many patrons.”

The house historian noted that 1961 was not a winning year for many of the Mission teams. “However, we had a successful year, for a fine spirit prevails in our school.” [What more could be desired?]

In June, after the priests' and three laymen's retreats, the first women's retreat was held at the Mission. On July 31, Sister Bernard left St. Stephens for a visit with family in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, before going to her newly-assigned mission in Tacoma, Washington. Sister Clarina Burns, named the new superior to the Mission, arrived on August 18.

On October 5, Sisters Clarina and Incarnata Lauer traveled to Denver, Colorado, where they met Mother Rosella Delaney and Sister Joan Schillow. At 8:00 p.m. three days later, the Sisters returned, reporting an enjoyable and profitable weekend; however, when they reached Rawlins, they were surprised to learn that heavy snows had kept thirty high school students who had traveled to Rock Springs for a CYO convention from returning home. In spite of the weather conditions, the Sisters decided to continue toward the Mission. They advanced without difficulty until they reached Beaver Hill where "Cars had been stalled for several hours." Fortunately, by the time the Sisters reached that point, snowplows had cleared the highway and they were able to drive home safely. When Mother Rosella and Sr. Joan completed visitation, they left for Rawlins by bus because they were concerned that the roads would make driving unsafe. Ironically, their bus broke down enroute. However, the thoughtful driver hailed a passer-by who took the Sisters into Rawlins where they made connections with their trains.

Sister Ernesta Berlo and Sister Vivina Erni arrived for a visit to the Mission on their way to Pendleton, Oregon, where a new addition to St. Anthony Hospital was being dedicated. It was Sister Ernesta's first visit to St. Stephens and Sister Vivina's first ride on a train! "They are very interesting and we will enjoy their short stay immensely..." Three days later the historian mused, "All good things must come to an end," as she penned the hope that someday they would meet these visitors again. Weather continued to foil plans: Sister Clarina's plane from Portland was detained at Rock Springs over the Thanksgiving holidays and she had to return by bus; in January, bad roads after a big snow and -42 degrees caused Reverend John Flannigan, S.J., to cancel school for two days,

fearing for the children who waited along the highways for the school bus. “Both the Sisters and pupils rejoiced for this two day vacation.”

1962-1968: A time to open; a time to close

In 1962 “various schools” in the area decided to cease having their Midget Teams [fifth and sixth graders] play basketball, feeling they were too young to compete with other teams. Reverend Zummach kept the St. Stephens teams motivated by choosing boys whose attendance and academic standing was good and allowing them to form four teams that competed against each other. “This kept our little fellows happy” and provided them with a motive for regular attendance--a factor that made the teachers happy! At the close of the school year, Reverend Flannigan presented twenty-eight diplomas to the graduating senior class. Sister Clarina had been acting principal since the April hospitalization of the principal, Reverend Dillon.

The first tornado in Wyoming “tore through Lander and did some damage to homes” on June 8. The scheduled men’s retreat had fewer participants because those planning to attend from Casper turned back to their homes when they heard the storm warnings.

With a clergy’s retreat sandwiched between the men’s retreats, mid-June also found many of the Sisters leaving for summer school courses. Having Sister Bernard return for a short visit to help with the sixty-two participants in the women’s retreat was a delight. For the first time, lay women are listed as having helped during the retreat. Given the number of retreatants and the skeleton crew left to care for them, the extra hands were a real necessity. Even the library helpers for the summer, Sisters Lavinia Koch and Marietta (Agnes Madeline) Wallaert, pitched in to aid the overwhelmed workers.

Education continued to receive high priority in the Mission efforts. The 1962-63 school year opened with 420 students; of this number, 185 were

in the junior/senior high school. Office Practice, a course initiated this year under the direction of Sister Clarina, had “two stenographs, one dictaphone, an adding machine and one electric typewriter.” Despite the limited materials available to students, they learned well. Sister Jeanne Therese Mahoney received a certificate of merit as one of three finalists for Wyoming’s biology teacher of the year. The instructor from Green River High School who observed Sister’s classes as part of the final judging was amazed at “the school spirit, good conduct and keen interest given by our pupils.”

With summer came the usual retreats, the departure of Sisters to courses of study, and much rain. Although the water didn’t get into the children’s dining room, by the morning of June 17, it was three feet deep in the convent basement. The road to Lander was closed and many families had to leave their homes. The historian observed that during the women’s retreat, volunteers from Riverton lent a hand with the serving, in the kitchen, and with dishwashing. Given the wet conditions, all the help offered was greatly appreciated.

Although Sister Clementina had been allowed to return for one week to St. Stephens from De Paul Hospital in Cheyenne, and was warmly welcomed by the Sisters and her beloved Arapahos, her continuing illness made it clear that she would need to be missioned in one of the congregation’s hospitals where she could have constant care. Her farewell after fifty-two years at the Mission was heart-wrenching. On August 22, 1963, she was flown to St. Joseph Hospital, La Grande, Oregon. Sister Incarnata remained with Sister Clementina a few days, attended a workshop in Seattle and, having stopped on her way back to Wyoming, was able to report that Sister Clementina was happy and grateful for the good care she was receiving from our Sisters. When her death on October 12 brought an end to her suffering, the loss felt by those with whom and for whom she had served so lovingly at the Mission was deep. The women of St. Anne’s Sodality asked Reverend Zummach to represent them at the funeral; he and Reverend Flannigan

flew to La Grande to acknowledge the richness Sister had brought to the Mission. Bishop Newell, in Rome for the second session of the Vatican Council, sent words of sympathy to all the community. Then in November, the Sisters who were still reeling from the death of Sister Clementina, joined the nation in mourning the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The generosity of Mr. Staples allowed them to view the nationally broadcast funeral and burial.

On August 13, 1964, Sister Macaria Flynn arrived to assume several roles. Besides being principal of the grade school and teaching eighth grade, as the new superior, Sister Macaria replaced Sister Clarina Burns who had been assigned to open the convent in Worland. As new teachers assumed their responsibilities, the recording of house history at St. Stephens then met a hiatus until December 18. "We closed school today for Christmas Vacation" was the succinct statement!

Within the week of April 18, 1965, news of both great joy and great concern were posted. "The grade school children and the Junior High School students sang for the Holy Week services. The services were very beautiful and the children's singing was well done." Reflection on these services must have brought great satisfaction to those who labored to bring meaning and beauty to the liturgies of this most holy week of the year. Imagine, then, the shocked reaction when Reverend Flannigan announced two days later that the high school at St. Stephens might close in 1966, adding that "there is one chance in a hundred" that the school would remain open. [The fact was stated, but no reasons or reactions about the closure were chronicled. The termination did occur in June.] Nevertheless, events special to the Mission continued. An eight inch snowfall on May 7 made necessary an indoor move for the annual May procession. But life went on. During their retreat, on June 2, 1965, Bishop Newell and seven priests concelebrated Mass in St. Stephens Church. "His Excellency invited the Sisters to attend. It was magnificent to witness the celebration." [This possibly was the first time that the

scribe had seen a concelebration of Mass since the Vatican II directives made it possible.]

Although still living with the Sisters at St. Stephens, Sisters Marie Monica Borden and Sister Joseph Anne Fitzpatrick began their teaching ministry at St. Margaret School in Riverton in the fall of 1965. The Mission school registered 267 students for grades one through eight. “The first four grades [of St. Stephens] lost a number of students to St. Margaret’s in Riverton, which opened for the first time,” explained the writer. Numbers took on a new significance as the school year continued. On December 8, thirty-five “little ones” received their first Holy Communion with third and fourth graders singing the hymns for the occasion; on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, twenty CCD students received Communion for the first time. “The children were not able to be released from school on the 8th, so their day was postponed to the following Sunday.” On both occasions the children and their parents were served breakfast after the Mass. Again, on May 15, 1966, thirteen children attending religious education classes made their first Holy Communion. While “angels” had accompanied the first two groups, children dressed in traditional Indian attire led the May class this year. In December, yet another fourteen children received Our Lord for the first time followed by breakfast given in the school lunch room.

Entries of the Mission house history indicate that the Sisters from Worland spent many holidays and weekends with their “neighbors” at St. Stephens. In true Sisterly fashion, the visitors were always welcomed and the Sisters receiving hospitality were always delighted when they could spend time with their Franciscan Sisters.

Reverend Leonard Murray, S.J., assumed the role of superintendent and superior of St. Stephens, replacing Reverend Flannigan in 1967. When school opened on September 5, the enrollment of 214 children included the junior high students. The parish Christmas party was simplified when compared with previous years: a movie was shown followed by Santa’s

distribution of gifts. Involvement by the students at Christmas liturgy was also recorded. “The 4th, 5th, and 6th graders participated in the Midnight High Mass. Before Mass the choir processed to the crib singing hymns and Mary Eagle, dressed in her Indian [garb], placed the Infant in the crib.”

When the house historian wrote of the dedication of St. Joseph Church in Ethete on January 21, 1968, she shared details. Mrs. Hartnett, a generous donor to the Mission from New York, attended the dedication with her daughter. “Following the church service, the parishioners served coffee and cake at Ethete Hall. Several Indian boys performed three Arapaho war dances. Mrs. Hartnett was presented with several gifts of beadwork and a quilt.”

On March 7, 1968, citing economic reasons, Reverend Murray announced that the ninth grade would be discontinued as of May 29. The school would continue to operate as a complete elementary school of eight grades, simply no longer being conducted as a junior high. Given that closure deadline, the students must have rejoiced that the 15th Annual Wyoming Parochial Basketball Tournament which was begun at St. Stephens the day after Reverend Murray’s announcement, ended in first place wins for both St. Stephens team and the pep squad. They proved that they could “go out with a bang”! When the end came, no special event commemorated it. Simply, “School closed today. Following lunch the students boarded the buses.”

1969-1974: A time to arrive; a time to leave

Concern for superior instruction and meaningful learning caused the teachers to look at different modes of educating their students. During March of 1969, Mr. Lamar Gordon, testing consultant of the state department, met with staffs of St. Stephens and St. Margaret schools to discuss the screening of students needing more help through a federally-

funded program. Because it applied to all schools on the Wind River Reservation, plans were made for in-service training for all teachers on the Reservation. When school reopened on September 2 with an enrollment of 220, the Follow Through program was introduced in the first grade while grades two through eight began the Title IV program. In a further effort to enrich their background on Native American culture, all teachers in Fremont County were invited to the Indian Institute in Riverton's junior college. Sisters from Holy Rosary Indian Mission in South Dakota were guests at St. Stephens while they attended the institute, too. By January 6, 1970, two evaluators from the state department visited St. Stephens first grade to see how the Follow Through program was working. "They seemed pleased with their visit."

During August of 1970, Sister Macaria Flynn who had served six years as principal and superior was reassigned and Sister Marie Monica Borden stepped into those roles. All seemed to be going well; then double tragedy struck in December. When three Sisters were returning from Rock Springs on December 20, Sister Daniel Noreen [Ann] McSweeney slipped on ice and broke her leg. The Sisters returned to Rock Springs where Sister Ann was hospitalized until December 24. She had been back at St. Stephens only two days when word came that her blood sister, Sister Margaret McSweeney, had been one of five who died in a two-car accident in Oregon. Because of her broken leg, Sister Ann could not get an air flight. Graciously, Reverend Colm Woods insisted on transporting her to the funeral by car. With Sister Marie Monica and Leanne Lake to help with the driving, they headed for Portland. The traumatic scene of three hearses lined up before the provincial house was deeply impressed upon the memories of all who attended the funerals. Following the burials, Sister Ann remained at St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton until January 19, 1971; Sisters Anne Lupita McNamara and Ann Cahill then accompanied her back to the Mission.

Reverend John Killoren, S.J., arrived to serve at St. Stephens in 1970. In what was to be a great and lasting contribution to the Mission, the

following year he began the publication of the Wind River Rendezvous. This colorful magazine provides a “report on the historic background and current activities of the Native Americans on the Wind River Reservation.” The present editor and photographer, Ron Mamot, continues the effort to produce an informative, beautiful quarterly which has helped to make St. Stephens Mission known throughout the United States.

On April 18, 1971, Sisters Balbina, Mary Coakley, Marie Monica, and Ann McSweeney traveled to Worland for a “vocation discussion.” Little did they imagine that exactly one week later word would come that St. Mary Magdalen School in Worland would close at the end of the school year! Before the small community left Wyoming, the Sisters from St. Stephens provided a picnic dinner at the Worland convent so that packing could continue without disruption.

The train had been the most frequently used source of transportation to and from St. Stephens. However, with the lessening of Union Pacific’s services, five Sisters scheduled to spend the summer in Portland decided to “carpool” it. They left June 2 and arrived safely in Portland four days later, having had “a very pleasant trip.” Sister Marcia [her surname not recorded], a Servite Sister from Omaha, arrived as a volunteer to join the summer school staff. This welcome help would augment the small group left to care for the Mission’s needs. At the Mission all were preparing for the Follow Through summer school program. Sisters Geraldine Harrison and Angela Keane were both involved with thirty students from the Mission and thirty from Riverton. On June 20 Sister Michael Mary [Mary Jane] Yassick arrived to attend the summer school practicum. St. Stephens had been chosen as the training site for consultants from Follow Through centers throughout the United States. A successful enrichment program for the children was completed July 9 as the Follow Through summer school staff ended their instructions. This was the same day that Sister Angela Keane passed her citizenship test. [The recorder, having added that personal comment, helps one realize a fact

that some forget in reading this Wyoming journey: Many of the Sisters who served at St. Stephens were Franciscans come from Germany or Ireland. Adjustment to the surroundings, the culture, the food, and the people of Wyoming was a task not easily accomplished, but they worked willingly for the love of God and His people.]

Before school reopened, as guests of Reverend Woods, all ten Sisters thoroughly enjoyed the “Up with People” singing group in Lander. Later, six Sisters relaxed at a cabin loaned to them for a weekend. Then, a further cause for rejoicing occurred on September 1, 1971, when the bishop and twenty-four priests concelebrated in St. Stephens Church with Reverend Francis Clerkin, S.J., who was observing fifty years as a Jesuit. Bishop Newell was also present for the Mass and dinner which followed.

In September 1971, Sister Incarnata began her new assignment as Home Visitor on the Reservation. In a winter that started in October, heavy snowfalls [a Wyoming record of twenty-one inches on October 29] occasioned frequent school closures and hardships on the farmers and owners of stock still in the mountains. Extreme temperature changes were also registered. Despite the awesome weather and road conditions that challenged even the best of drivers, many congregational meetings had the Sisters traveling to various community sites as they attempted to update according to Vatican II counsels.

In April 1972, an effort to continue the positive effects of the Follow Through program caused Sister Michael Mary Yassick and Mrs. Chavez, an aide in the program, to visit Denver during Easter week. The workshop was followed by a convention of the Association for Childhood Education International. The attendance of 1300 persons from many parts of the world greatly enriched the gathering and made the convention beneficial for everyone.

June 1972 marked the transfer of Sister Marie Monica, superior and principal, to Portland, Oregon, with Sister Patricia Kidd appointed superior and Sister Bona Consilia [Ita] O'Neill assuming the duties as principal. Sister Marcia, the Servite Sister from Omaha who had helped in the 1971 Follow Through program, returned to work in the development office and to help in the school library. Certainly a highlight for the 120 kindergarteners and first three grades participating in the Follow Through program was a three day trip spent at Yellowstone National Park. Sisters Patricia, Michael Mary, and Marcia accompanied the mothers and children who were "delighted, eager, thrilled with their new experience."

The eighth graders along with the Follow Through grades sponsored a school carnival which was well attended and profited \$1,131 on Sunday, December 3. Because the students of the eighth grade planned a spring trip while the lower grades wanted to buy equipment for the school playground, both groups were equally pleased with the results. Dreary, cold weather didn't lower the enthusiasm of the carnival attendees and when snow fell through the night, making travel treacherous, all rejoiced that school was closed allowing teachers as well as students "to have a free day after the big event on Sunday." On December 5 the official temperature report for Riverton was -41 degrees, registering a drop of ninety degrees from the previous days when the carnival had been operating!

A variety of items are listed by the scribe for 1973. The house history speaks of a concelebrated Mass where "the harmonious playing of guitars and devotional singing of hymns added beauty to the liturgy." [This was the first mention of guitars being used at Mass.] With pride, the historian also notes "the upset of the season" when the St. Stephens Midget team broke the 8-0 record of Mill Creek during their February tournament. Three members made the All-Tourney Team and their coach, Leonard Moss, was rightfully proud of his team and their second place win in the conference. Of a different nature is the written

account of the visit of Mr. John Stanton, a former committee member of finances for ex-president Lyndon B. Johnson. Having given up politics and his wealth, Mr. Stanton was now working for the Lord as his part of the Catholic Pentecostal movement.

A big snow storm in mid-March brought school closures and a shift of professional days to include the snow holidays. [Because the provincial had arrived for visitation, the time must have been spent with an unusually relaxed group.]

Despite the fact that the Sisters of St. Francis had been in residence at the Mission for over eighty years, some events were still occurring for “the first time.” On March 25, 1973, during the celebration of Mass, thirty-six sick and elderly members of the parish received the Anointing of the Sick in the Mission chapel. Sisters Adriana Rahill, Incarnata Lauer, and Balbina Weitzel were among those receiving the sacrament.

Benefits for the school continued to be a concern for the administration and staff. Federal funding for Indian schools held such importance that Sister Bona Consilia O’Neill, Mrs. Berg who coordinated the Follow Through program, and nine Native Americans left at 4:00 a.m. in May for a meeting in Billings, Montana. Upon their return, they were encouraged to write a proposal for Parts B and C [the Indian Educational Act] of the Title IV program. The following day, Sister Patricia Kidd and Mrs. Chavez joined a national group of Indian parents in Denver. Concerned that the Follow Through program which had so enriched the St. Stephens children was in danger of being discontinued, the group hoped to organize a legal advisory council to prevent the program’s closure.

The usual summer comings and goings--including four home visits to Ireland--provided a pleasant and necessary break from the ordinary events of the school year. Visitation at the Mission occurred early with

Provincial Sister Philomena Joseph Ludwig, the vice-provincial, and school supervisor arriving on the opening day of school, September 4, 1973. Long to be remembered was the severe hail storm that peppered the Mission four days later. “Many windows on the southeastern side of our Mission buildings were broken by the hailstones, some as large as hen eggs. The roofs of our convent and other buildings were damaged. Sr. Philomena Joseph’s car, being parked in front of our convent, was badly dented.”

At the end of October, the Jesuit pastor, Reverend Lewis O’Neil, S.J., departed for a rest and Reverend John Killoren, S.J., served as interim pastor until the arrival of Reverend Anthony Short, S.J. Bishop Newell installed Reverend Short as pastor in an impressive ceremony preceding Mass on February 10, 1974. Two Elders of the Mission “presented Father with the Baptismal Records of our parish.” During the Eucharistic liturgy the bishop confirmed children and adults. Afterwards, “Mission cinnamon rolls and coffee were served to those confirmed, their parents and friends.” [This segment of the house history was being kept by Sister Incarnata Lauer, long known at the Mission and among the Franciscans as an outstanding bread and roll maker. Although she makes no personal mention of the fact, we can be certain that the rolls enjoyed on this momentous occasion were the work of her hands.]

In March 1974, a visit occurred that was to open new vistas in the composition of the Mission staff. Sister Mary Jo [surname not given] of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary from Detroit, Michigan, arrived. The education coordinator of their community, Sister Mary Jo was present to study “the possibility of sending Sisters to help to teach here at the Mission.” From 1888 to 1890 the Mission had known the services of the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth; then for a brief time the Sisters of St. Joseph ministered at St. Stephens. However, when the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia arrived in August of 1892, they established a community in the Mission that had remained the sole religious support of their Jesuit brothers until 1974.

During the summer, the help of two Dominican Sisters was greatly appreciated as they volunteered their services at the depleted convent. Other helpers included a LaCrosse, Wisconsin Franciscan and a lay woman who served in the development office. However, not all were comings; there were also some goings. Sister Mary Coakley was transferred to Portland, Oregon, and after “twenty-eight years of dedicated and faithful service in the Mission,” Brother Paul Hofer, S.J., was assigned to St. Louis, Missouri. Recognizing Brother Paul’s gifts of cheerful disposition and readiness to help when needed, the historian acknowledged the fact that he would be missed for the spirit he brought to the Mission.

On September 1, 1974, the chronicle listed the Sisters living at the Mission: Sister Patricia Kidd, superior; three Sisters whose ministry was at St. Margaret School in Riverton but who lived at St. Stephens: Sisters Barbara Jackson, Dolores Herbeck and Kathleen O’Donnell; ministering at the Mission were Sisters Adriana Rahill, Anthony de Padua Dunphy, Balbina Weitzel, Brendan Mary Kiely, Incarnata Lauer, Michael Mary Yassick and Teresa Frawley. Three I.H.M. Sisters of St. Louis included St. Stephens new principal Sister Joyce Duroski, fifth grade teacher Sister Laetitia Lariviere, and librarian Sister Julia Seim. Home/School coordinator for the upper grades was Sister Monica Suhayda, C.S.J. The Immaculate Heart Sisters and Sister Monica shared a home on the Mission grounds which had been the home of the parish coordinators. Thus began the inter-congregational ministry at St. Stephens Indian School and Mission.

A board of directors which represents the Arapaho and Shoshone peoples was established in September 1974; members who were installed included Mr. Vincent Redman, Mr. Pius Moss, Mr. Francis Hanway, Mr. Mark Dewey, and Mr. Bud LeClair, Sr. This board of directors then appointed nine men and two women to the newly created school board. In November, ten members of St. Stephens school staff as well as many aides attended the sixth National Indian Education

Association conference in Phoenix, Arizona. The event, considered of such importance, closed school for a week.

1975-1976: A time to laugh; a time to refrain from laughter

All work and no play? “Our skating rink has been a source of lots of fun for us. Brother Frank Schmidt, S.J., built this rink near our convent by the gymnasium and the ice is splendid.” However, this joyous recording on December 28, 1974, was followed with somber news in February. Facing the financial situation of the school, the school superintendent, Reverend Anthony Short and the director of the Mission, Reverend John Killoren, alerted the staff to the possibility of St. Stephens uniting with School District #38 which operated the Arapahoe school. Such a move would be funded and directed by that elected school board. The news of such a possible change came as a shock to most. Therefore, on February 21, Bishop Newell met with the Jesuit staff, the school staff, and any parents who wished to attend. The Mission board and the school board also met with the bishop. Then, with a detailed description, the historian tells of the Franciscans’ meeting with the bishop. “At 3:30 the three clergy from Cheyenne met with us Franciscans in our recreation room. Every Sister was given the opportunity to speak her sentiments about our Mission and [to] discuss the proposals at hand...This afternoon we had a concelebrated liturgy with singing. Many people attended and we received [the Eucharist] under both species...Our dear bishop dined with us; Monsignor O’Neil ate with our Jesuits and Reverend Hardy was the guest of our I.H.M. Sisters. The bishop had great interest in our work here and is truly a great friend.... At 7:30 p.m. the bishop met once more with everyone who was interested. At this final meeting, Mr. William C’Hair, Jr. and Mr. Thomas Shakespeare [proposed] asking the BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] in Washington, DC for the necessary funds to keep St. Stephens Indian School as an independent school. This suggestion [was approved by] the Indian people and the attending clergy and religious.”

While the adults struggled with financial concerns, the little ones prepared for their first Holy Communion on Mother's Day. What had always been a single group ceremony was divided in 1975. The children whom Sister Teresa Frawley had prepared at St. Joseph Church in Ethete received Eucharist as a group in their church; the twenty-four Mission children made their First Communion during St. Stephens 10 a.m. Mass. The house history noted that one youngster even had received his first Eucharist during a home Mass celebrated by Reverend Short. Then, as another school year drew to a close, the twenty-three eighth grade graduates received their diplomas toward the end of the "simple but beautiful liturgy."

With the absence of all but three of the Franciscans during the summer of 1975, the remodeling of the convent was made easier. Brother Frank Schmidt, S.J., with the help of several hard workers, made improvements in the gas heating system. They also enlarged several rooms by removing partitions and by changing the girls' dormitory into three bedrooms. The Sisters of the other congregations who had remained at the Mission during the summer painted the six new rooms. Through generous donations by Bishop Newell and the parishioners of St. Margaret Parish, Riverton, the cost of the remodeling was covered. Other notable events of this busy summer included religion classes being held for the first time for public school students of the Reservation. Also, artistic additions to the Mission church included a new ambo that was crafted by a Lander artist and donated in memory of Mr. Clayton Wallowingbull and a baptismal font carved from the trunk of a tree by parishioner Mr. Ambrose Wanstall. In mid-August, forty-two CYO leaders used the Mission for their state convention. Their presence brought "a wonderful spirit of Christian enthusiasm and vigor" to the compound.

Reverend Carl Starkloff, S.J., who previously had taught in the high school, returned to the Mission as director. His interest in Native American culture and love for the people made it a joy to welcome him

back to St. Stephens. This 1975 school year opened with an enrollment of 193 students. On September 11, record is made of the arrival of [now Sister] Maureen Cosgrove, a young woman from Spokane, Washington, who was discerning her future and would live at the convent as she assisted in first grade for the year.

Although distances between cities are great in Wyoming, the Sisters at the Mission continued to take advantage of rich spiritual and professional offerings. In Casper, a weekend of sharing on prayer by Reverend Armand Nigro, S.J., brought the Sisters much peace. A concelebrated Mass at the Mission during the presence of the Thermopolis Deanery Council of Catholic Women gave all an opportunity to share the richness of the Native American culture. "The Indian heritage was accented throughout the Mass and the Lord's Prayer uniquely recited in English, Arapaho, and sign languages. Due to the death of Lloyd Jenkins, one of our Indians, the drums were quiet for twenty-four hours and, therefore, we couldn't have Indian music as was planned." Librarians met in Lander; Sisters traveled to Portland for congregational meetings; enrichment called the Sisters throughout the state and beyond.

For a change in pace, a masquerade party was held at the Mission on October 31, 1975. It proved "a great success. Parents and adults were asked to disguise themselves or pay a fine of five dollars. The parish hoped to raise money, but the per capita checks hadn't arrived and, therefore, no fines were paid. However, many came dressed for the occasion and it was a gala night for everyone. The [little] children were deathly afraid of the witch who was none other than their teacher, Sr. Patricia Kidd."

On the Reservation, the practice of communal sharing of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick was spreading. On November 23, 1975, at St. Joseph, Ethete, for the first time, twenty-four persons were anointed; at St. Stephens, during Mass on the same day, seventy-three people were

anointed. “The sacrament was given and received with great reverence and devotion.”

Efforts to raise funds continued. At the Mission, a school benefit bingo and turkey shoot on December 7 “was a great deal of work” but the organizers’ efforts were rewarded “because it brought in a much needed sum of money for the school.” However, the costs of running the school could not be met with such small successes. On December 16, the St. Stephens Indian School Educational Association [SSISEA] met with the Administrative Board in search of a solution for operating the school during the coming year. The Administrative Board asked that a decision be made regarding the future of the school and the direction of the apostolate of St. Stephens Mission. The following items were clarified for the SSISEA board:

“ 1. St. Stephens Mission recognizes that it can no longer continue operation of a private Mission-controlled school.

“ 2. St. Stephens Mission is willing to transfer authority and control of St. Stephens Indian School to SSISEA.

“ 3. St. Stephens Mission wants to assist SSISEA in any way that they might request.”

On January 22, 1976, members of the Mission board and SSISEA met with the three officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs from Billings, Montana. Sister Patricia Kidd offered the use of the spacious Franciscan community room in the convent for this important meeting. The purpose of this gathering was to answer questions for the BIA officials and to affirm some of the conditions for the contract and budget for the future school. The work of transfer occurred rapidly and on March 19, 1976, the recorder noted,

“ St. Stephens School was officially signed over to the Arapaho Indians. Since 1884 this Mission and school was supported by the many benefactors, priests and Sisters and [B]rothers, but now we trust that our school board can take over. The members of the board are Mr. John Warren, Mr. Richard Brown, Mr. Henry Kennah, Mr. Manderson and

Mrs. Howard Brown. The BIA will finance our school.”

On June 1 the BIA signed a contract assuring the Mission of \$125,000 to keep the school open. However, they stipulated that the money was to be used for necessary improvements and was to be spent by October 1.

During the 1976 summer, interior painting of the Mission church took place and the ceiling, which is decorated in geometric Arapaho designs, was cleaned. This work was done by two cousins of Reverend Short and Ray Weis, one of the Mission volunteers.

Renovations in the school included a new paint job of colored hues and the enlargement of some rooms. What had served as the old gymnasium was changed to accommodate physical education classes as well as parish functions. “The youngsters were delighted.”

Among the summer’s visitors was Episcopalian minister, Mrs. Leona Caldwell, a long-time friend and benefactor of the Mission. Her month’s stay allowed her to enjoy “the quiet, simple life with us.” Meanwhile, Sister Incarnata Lauer had attended the Eucharistic Congress held in Philadelphia. One of the congregation’s “lottery” winners, she expressed both privilege and gratitude that she was given this opportunity to see “so many people from all parts of the globe who witnessed to Christ and the world by a genuine spirit of reverence and prayer to the Eucharist.” In communion with this national observance, on August 15, a Wyoming solemn Eucharistic celebration took place in Casper. The three Franciscan Sisters participating were part of the largest gathering of Catholics in the history of the state. Combining Eucharistic themes with those of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother as well as the nation’s bicentennial provided a rich heritage to celebrate.

“Our school is now officially called St. Stephens Indian School.” This statement, recorded August 26, 1976, marked another change in the long history of the Mission. Because the school was no longer a “Catholic” institution, it was necessary to separate the teaching of religion from the building. The old Jesuit administration building was renovated and

enlarged and it became the Religious Education Center from which Sister Judy Moraw, I.H.M., and Mrs. Rosemary Doyle instructed the students.

The newly-installed auxiliary bishop of Cheyenne, Bishop Joseph Hart, visited the Wind River Reservation on the weekend of September 25, 1976. At the beginning of Mass, Mr. Ralph Antelope asked a special blessing on the new bishop. Then Bishop Hart blessed the new Religious Education Center and dedicated the Tekakwitha Center. Sisters Monica Suhayda, C.S.J., and Laetitia Lariviere, I.H.M., directed this rehabilitation center as they supported those struggling with addictions. A special Indian feast and dance to honor the bishop climaxed his introduction to the Mission and Reservation.

1976-1978: A time to speak; a time to be silent

On September 27, Reverend Carl Starkloff, S.J., hosted a dinner honoring four Elders of the Arapaho tribe: Mr. Ben Friday, Mr. Adam Shakespeare, Mr. Ben Goggles, and Mr. West Shakespeare. Because these Elders knew the Indian ways of prayer, it was hoped the gatherings would provide opportunities for their Caucasian brothers and sisters to learn how to correlate the Native American way of religion with Christianity.

A naming ceremony took place on October 26 with the Elders of the tribe. The entire religion school faculty was invited to the impressive event. For her many years of service at the Mission, Sister Adriana Rahill received from Ralph Antelope the name, "Singing Star"; Sister Balbina Weitzel received "Walks on the Water" from Joseph Duran; Ben Friday gave Sister Incarnata Lauer a name meaning "Singing Above." Sister Mary Kiely, having been ill for many months, was given a name for healing which means "Woman Sings over the Mountain." Before the person revealed the chosen name, he gave a short talk and offered a

prayer for the Sister. In response, the person honored with the name presented a gift of two dollars. The ceremony had a powerful impact on all who witnessed it. A month later, the interchange between Indian and Christian practices continued when over eighty aged and ill persons received the Anointing of the Sick from Reverends Starkloff, Short, and Killoren. During a dinner following the ninety-minute anointing, students of the religious education classes presented vases of wild flowers to those for whom they had prayed, a personal touch that meant much to the recipients.

On December 13, the first dinner with the Old Men of the tribe was held in St. Joseph Hall, Ethete. Seven staff members and several Indian families from St. Stephens attended the gathering. "The big question of the night was why the Church seemed more interested in the religious culture of our Indians [now] than in the far past." At some length, the house chronicle tells of Reverend Starkloff's explanation. He shared that in the early Church those who carried the teachings of Christ to pagan worlds were told to build on what already existed and not to abolish earlier ways of worship; however, the colonization in America often did not observe these dictums. Indian ways of worship often were not respected and were even suppressed. However, the teachings of Vatican II reminded the Church to have great regard for the culture of other groups, while inculcating the teachings of Christ.

A description of St. Stephens feast day observances in 1976 illustrated the changes that had been occurring at the Mission. The festivities "began with the liturgy at 7:30 p.m. The church was filled to overflowing. Following the liturgy was a Give Away in the new gym, replacing the traditional Christmas party. Before the Give Away there was a Paint ceremony." In a circle, the Indians waited for the traditional Indian paint, "a symbol of healing and restoration." There were gifts of toys for each family following the traditional Indian custom of Give-Away and the Indian drummers provided music for the dancing. "Paul Warren danced alone and it was a thrilling sight to see this fine, young

eighth grade student [present] the traditional ‘fancy dance’ [usually] performed by the men during the pow-wows.”

When Francis Setting Eagle died of natural causes at the end of January 1977, he held the distinction of being the oldest member of the Arapaho tribe and of having been one of the first students at the Mission school in 1892. Highly respected by his people and “all of St. Stephens,” this staunch Catholic was honored with Indian drums as well as guitars and a day free from school was declared in his memory.

The “busyness” and variety that characterized the Mission continued in 1977. Sister Balbina again instructed students learning beading work during a mini-course at St. Margaret School, Riverton. Sisters Teresa Frawley, Michael Mary Yassick, and Anthony de Padua Dunphy who taught CCD in Ethete helped pastor, Reverend John Padberg, S.J., celebrate his birthday by having him as guest at the convent. The historian wrote, “We all enjoy Father who is truly a Jesuit-Franciscan.” For a well-planned and happy St. Patrick’s Day observance, the Franciscans from St. Stephens hosted over forty guests for dinner. Slides taken informally of the Mission, Reverend Padberg and his guitar, Irish dancing--all added to the delight of the evening. Not all was entertainment, though. A meeting for the Franciscans that lasted four hours in preparation for the provincial chapter still could be acclaimed “rather interesting”! During a special service, the dedication of new Stations of the Cross that had been painted by Raphael Norse, “one of our own Indians,” took place. The testimony of John C’Hair regarding the cure of his little daughter after her parents attended the Stations of the Cross was “very impressive.” Heavy snow storms continued to make travel at the Mission a challenge. Ironically, within the week of noting the snow storms, the historian speaks with gratitude for the “big all-night rain” because “we’ve had very little snow on the mountains all winter; therefore, there is great concern for sufficient water for irrigation.”

The team from the Bureau of Indian Affairs arrived May 9, 1977, to evaluate all classes of the school. [Was it planned or merely coincidence that on that morning at 9 a.m. a busload of third graders, thirteen parents, and their teacher Sister Patricia Kidd with Sister Teresa Frawley left for Denver for the class field trip of the year? Traditionally, this had become an educational field trip for the current third grade, a much anticipated journey of new sights and events.] As the school year drew toward closure, the all-school Mass and picnic were celebrated May 19 on the football field. The students found an opportunity to relax and enjoy each other before leaving for the summer. On the following evening, the staff “immensely” enjoyed themselves with a progressive dinner.

June 19, 1977, marked the canonization of St. John Neumann, founder of the Franciscan congregation. Although distance separated the Sisters on St. Stephens Mission from the activities and celebrations in Rome and at the motherhouse, they were very aware of the great privileges bestowed this day upon the New World and upon their congregation in particular. After a beautiful liturgy, several of the Sisters enjoyed an afternoon at the Sinks. However, call the celebration “the calm before the storm” because a devastating hail storm raged through the area on June 21, “breaking between sixty and seventy windows. Considerable damage was done to gardens and bean and beet crops [in] the nearby farms.”

As usual, the Sisters scattered to many areas for study, retreats, home visits, and Summer Enrichment. The latter program, begun by the congregation in 1974 for senior members, provided them opportunities for reuniting with their peers and sharing their talents with one another. Relaxation was part of the enrichment agenda and those participating in the program declared it “a lot of fun.” For 1977, St. Stephens convent was completely vacated during the summer. At the provincial chapter to which all Sisters were invited for the first time, Sister Carmel Gregg was elected provincial. Sister Corda Marie Bergbauer, minister general, was with the 170 Sisters for the elections. She told them of her trip to

Zambia, Africa, and met with those who were interested in being missioned there.

From St. Stephens, Sister Patricia Kidd, as part of the newly-established Ongoing Formation Task Force for the congregation, found herself traveling to San Antonio and to Portland. [Pages upon pages fill the house history of the comings and goings of Sisters who shared on Franciscanism, ministerial meetings, congregational visits, etc.] At the Mission, a prayer weekend for teenagers was organized by Sister Barbara Jackson and held at the convent November 18-20. Seven girls and one boy attended. According to the historian, the efforts of all the Sisters made the event a success.

On December 3, 1977, Reverend Glenn Mueller, S.J., the newly appointed pastor for the Mission, made his final profession as a Jesuit. As the profession of their Sisters meant much to the Franciscans, they rejoiced, too, when their Jesuit co-workers shared their commitments. Five inches of snow brightened the scene for the feast of the Immaculate Conception, but for the most part, Christmas parties throughout the month lacked snow. Still, there was no absence of joy. The Masses on Christmas were well attended. However, no mention is made of the breakfast and dinner that had been such a custom among the Mission staff in years gone by. Rather, the historian notes that “we had our community dinner at three o’clock.” Another tradition ended on the feast of St. Stephen when candy but no toys were given to the children and door prizes became the adults’ gifts.

Regina Haskins, a candidate from Our Lady of Angels, Portland, arrived in early January to help Sister Anthony de Padua in fourth grade and to drive on the Reservation for Sister Incarnata as she made home visits. On January 16, 1978, Sister Anthony was struck with a severe flu and was unable to be in her classroom until later in the month. Nevertheless, her recuperation later allowed Sister Anthony to speak at the Elders’ Dinner about religious life and her call to follow the Lord in the lifestyle

of a woman religious. The topic of sharing had been suggested by Arapaho James Oldman, a fervent Church member.

The golden jubilees of Sister Adriana and Reverend Padberg, S.J., and the silver jubilee of Sister Michael Mary Yassick were combined with St. Patrick Day celebration in 1978 to fete the three. Sister Dolores Herbeck had prepared the liturgy for the occasion during which Reverend Padberg, pastor of the missions of Ethete and Fort Washakie, pronounced his vows in Latin and the Sisters renewed their vows as on the day of their profession. Following a dinner hosted by the Franciscans for all people living on the Mission compound, Reverend Padberg entertained with his guitar and everyone enjoyed a sing-along. Irish dancing “by everyone who could dance” concluded the joyous event.

Mixed emotions touched the Franciscan occupants of the Mission in the spring of 1978. The serious illness of Sister Anthony de Padua caused her to be transported to St. Joseph Hospital, Tacoma, Washington, and the Sisters were greatly concerned about her. At the same time, Sister Aubertina Lydon’s arrival for a western visit brought joy, especially to those whom she had guided during their early life as Franciscans. On April 25, word arrived of the official appointment of Bishop Hart to succeed Bishop Hubert Newell who for thirty-one years had led the Cheyenne diocese. The Sisters rejoiced because they knew that Bishop Hart had the Mission and its welfare at heart, but they were saddened to lose the caring, fatherly leader they had in Bishop Newell.

On May 5, 1978, “A blinding snow storm raged on here” making the burial of Nellie Shakespeare a distinct challenge. “The weather was so extreme, the roads became impassable because of deep snow,” causing First Communion at Ethete to be postponed because no one was able to travel. However, by the feast of Pentecost, May 14, the snow had receded to the mountains and Sister Carmel Gregg, the provincial, made a surprise visit to help Sisters Adriana and Michael Mary observe their community jubilee celebrations.

With knowledge that several Sisters would not be returning to the Mission after the summer activities, all faced the new changes. Sister Patricia Kidd was called to help in the formation of the novices in Portland; Sister Anthony de Padua would care for the elderly Sisters in Pendleton, and Sister Michael Mary would continue in the training of those who had volunteered to go to Zambia, Africa. Before the transitions, however, the general chapter of the congregation met June 19-July 3, electing a new minister general, Sister Rose Cecilia Case. Sister Patricia Kidd also telephoned news which revealed that the religious habit as worn by our Sisters was still a source of interest. Wearing a veil had become optional but the religious garb “must be all black, all white, or solid black and white.”

July 11 provided “a pleasant surprise, indeed, when Sister Incarnata found four Franciscans who had been delegates at the general chapter at the door at 5:30 a.m.” Having found no hotel space at Greybull or Casper, the Sisters had called the Mission [At 2:30 a.m. no one had heard it!] but the travelers decided to continue to St. Stephens anyway. After enjoying some breakfast and rest for a few hours, they departed for Yellowstone Park where Reservations awaited them.

Sister Karen [surname not given], a Presentation nun who was at the Mission doing research work on Indian tribes, took Sister Incarnata to the Sun Dance at Ethete on July 16. “Some ninety dancers and fourteen women who [had] fasted from foods, participated. After the dance [performed by the natives] to welcome the sun and praise the Creator, Reverend Starkloff offered Holy Mass for about forty people. This was the first time that the Sacrifice was offered on the Sun Dance grounds.” Another unusual religious experience awaited Sisters Anthony de Padua and Incarnata the following week. The first ecumenical liturgy was celebrated on the Reservation. Reverend Glen Mueller, S.J., was the Catholic celebrant and Father [the name was not recorded] was the Episcopalian minister. “The antiphons and prayers of the Liturgy of the Word were said and read by members of both churches. Then for the

Liturgy of the Eucharist, Reverend Mueller came to our altar and Father [unnamed] stayed at his altar. After the reception of the Eucharist, once more we gave the Sign of Peace to each other. It was very beautiful to see Indians of both groups take an active part by reading or praying. Some singing was done with the beat of drums.”

With summer activities at an end, the St. Stephens enrollment in September 1978 numbered 200. The Sisters serving St. Margaret School in Riverton continued to live at St. Stephens; for the most part, their schedule and activities centered around the parish where they ministered. Sister Barbara Jackson, who had been St. Margaret’s principal, began her new role in pastoral ministry at St. Stephens. When Sister Carmel Gregg made her first official visitation as provincial in October, St. Stephens new local minister, Sister Mary Griffin, was present to greet the visitor. [The title “superior” was changed to “minister” to reflect the Franciscan charism of service.]

Snows on November 12 delayed Sister Teresa Frawley’s departure for an Ongoing Formation Resource Service group meeting in Portland. The humor of the situation was not missed by the house record keeper: “Sister arrived late in Portland and was made secretary of the group before she arrived.”[Editor’s italics] December 8 recorded a far more serious plight. “At 2:30 a.m. the telephone rang. Father Mueller was asking for our car because due to the terrible cold [42 below zero], not one of the Mission cars would start. Ours is in a garage.” Sister Mary Griffin went to the hospital with Reverend Mueller only to discover that the mother of eight had passed away. They then spent several hours at the home with the bereaved husband. The bitter weather continued to take its toll: “At ten o’clock we will have the funeral Mass and burial... Tomorrow we will bury...There was no school today because it was impossible for the children to walk to the buses, and our buses are not heated.”

A detailed description of the 1978 Christmas Midnight Mass revealed the impression it made upon the scribe. "It was a cold and crisp night with much snow on the ground. However, the Mission church was filled to capacity. Father Mueller, S.J., was the main celebrant with Father Short, our guest from Regis High School in Denver, as concelebrant. Our Sisters and some laity sang hymns beginning at 11:30. The eight altar boys with lighted tapers came to meet the children of grades four and five, dressed in their costumes, at the entrance of church. The procession then accompanied Chalice Duran who carried the Infant in its Indian cradle to the crib of Indian figures made of papier-mache. The little group of youngsters made a colorful picture, pretty and reverent. The sanctuary was different because the main altar was decked with Indian blankets given by the Altar and Rosary Society, as also was the small tepee about eighteen inches in height. This tepee was placed on a stand at the feet of the life-sized crucifix behind the altar. Eventually this tepee will house the tabernacle...In the thanksgiving of the Mass, eight girls of the seventh and eighth grades signed the Silent Night in sign language. It was beautifully done and people in hushed silence loved it."

On St. Stephens feast day, the Jesuits held a brunch for all living on the Mission compound. Main chef, Reverend Starkloff, prepared the crepes. The historian noted, "Thus we did justice in honoring our patron St. Stephen, and the beginning of the Christmas socials." The history then reveals that almost every day during the holidays one group on the grounds hosted the Mission staff. As the old year bowed out, it took with it a record that had been established in 1949. "For thirteen days we have had below zero weather."

The Elders' dinners continued to be a source of cultural education for all who attended. During the February 4 gathering, Mr. Ross, a teacher of Indian Culture at Colorado University, spoke on the Lakota [Sioux] culture and the origins of the Red Man. Despite the lengthy sharing, "His three hour talk was much enjoyed by our Indian people." In an effort to know more about those he served, Reverend Starkloff met

weekly with the Elders. For many months the Elders and he had labored to translate the Sunday liturgy into the Indian language, but the task of translation was very difficult because the Arapahos have no written language.

Meetings, liturgies, visitors coming and going, travels, first Holy Communion, graduation. With slight variations, the days and nights of the Mission continued. At the Senior Citizens Hall in Riverton, Sisters Balbina and Incarnata were guest speakers on March 21. They told of the early days of the Mission. Some of the people at the luncheon also were acquainted with the Mission and added their memories to the Sisters' talks. At Holy Thursday liturgy, a personal cultural touch was added during the offertory procession. The children brought their banks and the women carried their fried bread. After the celebration, fried bread was given to the people as they departed. Later in the spring while the third graders headed to Denver for their annual field trip, a busload of senior citizens from Riverton came to see the Mission, many of them to reminisce. Sister Balbina conducted the tour and Sister Incarnata served cinnamon rolls and coffee to the delighted--and delightful--guests. The children of Arapahoe School and of St. Stephens Indian School received their first Holy Communion together; because religion is taught on release time at both locations, their preparation was now similar. Eighteen eighth graders completed their St. Stephens studies on May 27 before the summer exodus.

1979-1983: A time to move on

On September 7, 1979, Sister Teresa Frawley accompanied Mrs. Florence Petsch to Our Lady of Angels Convent in Portland. Mrs. Petsch, a widowed teachers' aide and home visitor for the school for seven years, joined the Sisters of St. Francis. Sister Florence, having completed the novitiate in 1982 and having worked as visitor in St. Joseph Hospital, Tacoma, Washington, and St. Elizabeth Hospital, Baker

City, Oregon, is currently one of three Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia serving at St. Stephens, Lander, and Ethete. She continues the work of home visiting through parish outreach ministry.

In November a sad event reflected the difficulties sometimes faced on the Reservation. At the 5:00 p.m. liturgy, Reverend Mueller offered the Mass “for forgiveness, reconciliation and peace on the Reservation. This was at the request of Mrs. Joanne Monroe, mother of a young man who was killed by a car. There has been continued fighting and shooting in revenge. Everyone has been praying for this intention.”

A thirty-hour communications workshop presented by Sisters Esther Anderson and Margaret Whelan in December was part of the corporate renewal program sponsored by the congregation for the Sisters. During their stay in Wyoming, Sister Esther made visitation and also had the opportunity to visit Worland where she had been stationed previously. Both she and Sister Mary Griffin had served at St. Mary Magdalen School and now enjoyed a visit with Reverend Cyril Hmelovsky, pastor in Worland.

The final entry in St. Stephens convent history for 1979 reflected once again the exchange of fellowship among the compound staff during the Christmas season. [To date, no record for 1980 to September 1981 has been located. It was a period of great change and turmoil for the Sisters living at the convent. A letter received by the congregational archivist, Sister Marita Egan, on December 4, 1981, from Sister Dolores Herbeck helped explain the difficulties which the Sisters encountered and the resulting changes that took place. In part, Sister Dolores wrote to address the reason for Sister Kathleen O’Donnell’s and her transfer to Riverton. However, it was to the exodus from St. Stephens convent that Sister Dolores gave further clarification.]

The convent at St. Stephens was a very large building and was built in 1897. Many repairs had been made on it but still a large amount of

energy was needed to heat it as the ceilings were high and there were no storm windows. Not only was it a cold building in the winter, but during the past two years snakes began to wind their way into the building come springtime. The last year it was in use, a minimum of twenty-six snakes were found in different parts of the house. Almost every Sister had the experience of finding one in her bedroom....

A change of residence was finally imperative when six Sisters were changed from the Mission with no replacements and the cost of heating the building became too expensive. Many possibilities of where to move were discussed and evaluated. Finally it was decided and approved for trial that the two Riverton Sisters would move into town and the two remaining Sisters would move into a trailer near the old convent.

In September 1981, the next Franciscan chronicle entry noted the radical difference. Where there had been eight Sisters, "This year we are reduced to two." Sisters Mary Griffin and Barbara Jackson changed the mobile home vacated by Lois Ewers into a comfortable little "convent" with one small room converted into a chapel. Yet nostalgia is revealed, "Even though happy to be in a compact, practical mobile [home] for two, the empty convent that has housed our Sisters for years is close by to remind [us] of another time and era in our community's history." On the feast of St. Francis, the mobile home was blessed in a special ceremony by Reverend Anthony Short, S.J., and an Indian Elder, Mr. Ernest SunRhodes. In the Indian tradition, Mr. SunRhodes used cedar and prayed to the Spirit of the four directions for protection on the home. After the ceremony, the Sisters held open house for all their friends and neighbors. Then, to conclude this Franciscan feast, the Sisters from Riverton and St. Stephens dined out.

The annual Thanksgiving dinner provided by the women of Hudson again reflected the past. However, "This was the first year the dinner was not held in the Franciscan convent." Rather, the Immaculate Heart Sisters on the compound hosted the event. Accustomed as they were to

large local communities, the Franciscans rejoiced in gathering with others for meals and simple socials. When the two Sisters from Riverton joined the Mission Franciscans for prayer and gift opening on Christmas Eve, “It was a small but beautiful experience of community.” Regarding the celebration at the Mission, the scribe noted, “[It] was very Indian as it should be. The ladies had decorated the church to perfection. Everything was truly festive.”

Religion continued to have top priority in all the St. Stephens ministries. In February 1982, Reverend John Hascall, O.F.M., a Native American priest, conducted a five day healing and praying time for the Indians on the Reservation. A medicine man in his own tribe, he combined the Indian and Catholic ways; the people’s response was so great that the services had to be held in the Keel gymnasium. In April, the efforts of the Jesuits and Indian Elders to make spiritual experiences meaningful for those they serve were especially evident during Holy Week and Easter services. Then, by spending May 4 with the confirmandi, Bishop Hart helped them to know him better before the evening bestowal of the sacrament. Following a trend that had grown throughout the Reservation, many of the children who received their First Communion as a group on May 9 had previously made their Communion at home Masses during the year. According to the writer, “Today was the community’s acknowledgement of the event.”

Sister Barbara Jackson would not be returning to the Mission in the fall, and many events marked her preparation for departure: dinners, surprise parties, a get-away to the mountains for a weekend, a Sweat [the special prayer ceremony of the Native American peoples] and a special naming. From Ernest SunRhodes, Sister Barbara received the name “Blue Sky Woman” and Sister Mary Griffin was named “Star Walking.” Together, they prepared for another move. Sisters Mary and Antoinette Kennedy would live with the Immaculate Heart Sisters, Sisters Joyce and Janet, in the fall. As Sister Barbara reflected, “It has been a very good year and

both of us will be sad moving on to a different community next year; however, we trust the Lord will be with us as He has been in the past.”

With the newly established inter-community living, Sisters Mary and Antoinette spent time with Sisters Joyce and Janet “getting to know you” by experiencing prayer, play, meals, and social events together. Thursday nights had been set as community nights. On September 2 the first gathering of Sisters in the area included a prayer service, a carry-in dinner and time for sharing with each other. Besides the “four,” the group included the two Franciscans from Riverton, two Victoryknoll, two Immaculate Heart Sisters and Martha Strachota, a widowed catechist at the Mission for three years. After the meal and visiting, Sister Mary gave any who wished a tour of “the old convent.”

Just as people were preparing evening meals on September 13, 1982, all lights, water, electricity and heat went off in the St. Stephens and Riverton areas. A heavy snowfall had damaged 13,000 lines, causing all within the area to “rough-it” for four days. A propane burner and melted snow were the means of “survival” for the foursome. One week later, with things back to normal, the emphasis was on Indian Awareness Week. “It is a time set aside to develop knowledge and pride among the Indian children [for] their heritage.” Movies and lectures as well as activities throughout the week were concluded with an outdoor liturgy, a pow-wow, and a feast. Meetings through the months continued to enable the Native Americans to set goals while the staff involvement helped them better understand and help the people they served. At times even a movie provided a powerful Native American theme.

Sharing of time, community interests, prayer, and food were common supports among those at the Mission. “Joe [Reverend Damhorst, S.J.] brought over our share of 400 pounds of beef. The meat was a gift to the Mission people from the Barquin family.” The generosity of benefactors continued to permit St. Stephens to survive and to share. In December, the calendar seemed to move up because neither Sisters Joyce Duroski,

I.H.M., nor Antoinette Kennedy, O.S.F., would be present at Christmas. Gift exchange among the intercommunity four took place on December 14 and the annual staff Christmas party was held on the fifteenth. By the next day Sister Joyce had left for retreat and family visiting. The school Christmas parties followed on the seventeenth and then vacation began. Sister Antoinette, a delegate to the general chapter at the Aston motherhouse, was taken to Casper on December 23 in an effort to beat a predicted blizzard. "After seeing Antoinette off to the airport, Mary and Janet went out for dinner. While [they were] at the restaurant, the blizzard came."

The description of Christmas in 1982 depicts how differently things were being celebrated. At the 5 p.m. children's Mass on Christmas Eve, Reverend Joseph Damhorst encouraged the children to gather around a small altar. The Christmas story was told with puppets and the little ones sang carols "that they knew." Before Midnight Mass, Sister Janet "and the liturgy group that was left" caroled. They also played for the Mass.

Brief entries in 1983 follow the pattern of ministry, liturgies, travel for meetings, welcoming of guests--both helpers for the Mission and congregational persons--and enjoyment of each other's company through special gatherings and programs. In April the Bilingual Conference for 400 participants was held at St. Stephens. "Speakers provided input and practical ideas for teaching, for involving parents, for understanding of the bilingual culture." The importance of such a conference was indicated by the fact that "all four of us participated."

On April 27-29, 1983, fourth graders from nine Wyoming schools attended a "South Pass Rendezvous" at the Mission. Sister Janet, I.H.M., helped plan the event. "A frontier town was built. Across the ditch tepees were put up and our children danced on each of the days. It was a marvelous happening." A trip to Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian Reservations in May provided Reverends Damhorst and Short an

opportunity to compare Mission notes with their Jesuit confreres of the Wisconsin province while Sister Antoinette and Martha Strachota dialogued with people in the education and alcohol rehabilitation programs on their Reservations. The annual trip planned for eighth graders had to be canceled this year. They had to turn back because of snow and high winds. "All roads to Denver were closed." Given the date, May 17, the storm was a bit unusual. In place of their planned excursion, the eighth graders flew to Casper and stayed at the Hilton Hotel for their class trip.

Sister Rose Cecilia Case, minister general of the Franciscans, arrived May 24 for official visitation. She stayed four days, visiting the Mission and St. Margaret, Riverton, able to witness the activities that were so much a part of the Wyoming scene. Thirty-two eighth graders graduated; Sisters Antoinette and Monica Suhayda, C.S.J., left for Portland, Oregon, on May 26; Sister Teresa Frawley arrived for vocation work and vacation in the Riverton and Lander areas.

By June 4, 1983, the children had begun vacation, the teachers had completed their tasks, and a school staff party and special Mass to honor Sister Joyce and Martha celebrated the talents that they had shared. Sister Teresa Frawley joined Sister Janet, Han Pedre, and John Warren, Jr. on guitar. Ernest SunRhodes cedared Sister Joyce and Martha, thanking them for their service to St. Stephens. Potluck and presents for the honorees concluded the celebration. However, "Later that evening, the Doyles came over to the house and we had an impromptu St. Patrick's Day party" [in June, mind you!].

With Sister Joyce gone, the Franciscans and Sister Janet, I.H.M., became a community of three. However, the record shows that many visitors--some for overnight, others for longer stays--continued to bring energy and "news from the outside" to those busy about the Lord's work at St. Stephens. In October 1983, Sisters Esther Anderson and Teresa Frawley came to present a Peace with Justice workshop for the Franciscans of the

area. The sessions were held in Riverton but shortly thereafter, significant deaths occurred: the fathers of both Sisters Dolores Herbeck and Florence Petsch were buried in October. Sister Mary Griffin had been busily packing school items because October 20-21 had been slated for moving into the new school when word arrived that Sister Balbina Weitzel, who had given forty-two years of her life at St. Stephens, had died. [Interestingly enough, the scribe made no comment on the new school building.] Sister Mary Griffin and Reverends Damhorst and John Warren traveled as Mission representatives for Sister Balbina's funeral in Tacoma, Washington.

November 1983 had only two short entries in the convent chronicle plus a "NOTE: Because we have many things going on here and we do live a relatively exciting life, the three of us realize more happened, but we can't remember." [A double space and then a single line]: "Lots and lots and lots of snow."

The Christmas play was held in the new school gymnasium. Sister Antoinette sang with the faculty choir, Sister Janet directed the fourth to sixth graders and Sister Mary led the primary grades in the signing of "Silent Night." On December 16, the dedication of the new school took place from 9:00 to 4:00. Sister Mary's task was to hand out programs while Sister Janet led the bilingual choir. By December 21 the weather registered -50 degrees and all were happy that vacation had begun lest the cold would cause harm: frozen cars, pipes, fingers and toes. Then during Midnight Mass, Sisters Janet, Antoinette, and Monica led the caroling and hymns.

1984: A time to end

On January 10, 1984, Sister Mary Griffin received word that her request for a year with her family in Ireland had been granted. Sister would leave July 1, 1984, and would return the following July. When this news

was followed by a visit from Sisters Anne Miller and Marie Lucey who shared the Global Ministries workshop, thoughts turned to ministry outside the mainland USA. Sister Janet joined the Franciscans as they viewed a video of the Franciscan Sisters who have had a Third World Experience. Even St. Patrick's Day 1984 was task-oriented: Sister Antoinette joined Reverend Damhorst and Judy Warren in Worland as adult moderators for thirteen teenagers who attended the annual Youth Ministry Leadership workshop. Sisters Mary and Janet attended a workshop for parents and teachers in the morning, celebrated at the Mission with a special Mass at noon, enjoyed lunch with Sisters Mary Coakley and Dolores Herbeck in Riverton, and were dinner guests of friends of the Sisters.

A visit from Sister Patricia Kidd "to share with us the Formation Program and to receive our input" indicates an increased attempt to dialogue about the life chosen by the members of the congregation. At Riverton the four Franciscans gathered with Sister Patricia for an intense three hour meeting dealing with the Constitutions and Formation. In April, Sister Carmel Gregg, the provincial, arrived. The Sisters met with her in Riverton and "we came home after talk, tea and toast." The tasks of the leaders of the congregation remained the same in some ways--differed in others. They were still responsible for meeting with administrators of the ministries in which the Sisters were involved. However, rather than a required visit, they now made themselves available to see any Sister who wished to confer with them. The notations in the house history are very succinct, simply indicating that Sister came, performed her duties, and left.

No indication is given as to whether or not the Good Friday services inspired them, but the historian wrote that they "were a type of wake service for the Lord Jesus." Neither is a description given of any of the Easter services although activities of the comings and goings of the Sisters is listed in detail. As a surprise gift for a silver jubilee, Sister Esther Anderson and Sister Marie O'Connor came for Sister Mary

Coakley's celebration in Riverton. Sister Esther Anderson stayed with the Mission Sisters; Sister Marie O'Connor, with the Sisters in Riverton.

May 13 "was Confirmation Sunday for nine members of the parish. The bishop visited in the homes with the confirmandi and then spoke with them before the ceremony which took place at the 5:00 Sunday Mass." The number receiving the sacrament was much smaller than in previous years, allowing the personal visit with those to be confirmed. As the school year drew to a close, "the faculty surprised [Sister] Mary Griffin with a going-away party at the Sundowner [Restaurant]." This dinner was the beginning of a host of farewell gatherings to honor Sister Mary.

The Heritage Center at the Mission was dedicated May 20. The festivities began with liturgy at 10:00 followed by a blessing of the Heritage Room in the administration building. Coffee and cake served in Eagle Hall concluded the event."

Interestingly, May 24, 1984, was listed as the date for "the last eighth grade to graduate because we will be adding the 11th and 12th grades on in the fall of '84." The following day, the school sponsored a Mass, a pow-wow, and picnic for the children and staff of the Mission and school as they honored the centennial of St. Stephens. The celebration of the centennial liturgy took place "outside--on a really beautiful day." At the Mass, Sister Mary was cedared by Ernest SunRhodes and Reverend Damhorst offered a missioning prayer for her.

Sister Maureen Cosgrove, visitor to the Mission, went horseback riding "as a practice session" with the Mission Sisters who anticipated a three-day weekend in the Sinks Canyon. "Good thing that we did! [Sisters] Mary and Antoinette were terrified, Maureen's horse reared, her saddle strap broke, she fell and so did the horse." Luckily, the would-be equestrians were able to calm the horses and move forward. And they were able to share their adventures later that evening with Sister Janet

and her community's guests, Sisters Joan Mumaw and Ellen Rinke. Having spent several days touring the Mission and visiting Sister Janet, Sisters Joan and Ellen returned to the airport where Sister Joan became an instant celebrity. As the 10,000th passenger to board Continental Commuter, she received a letter from the president of the airline advising her of a free roundtrip ticket to Albuquerque, New Mexico.

The Sisters celebrated on May 31, the final day of school, by going out for hamburgers. "We finished our hamburgers in twenty minutes and talked together for about two hours."

After completing her "end of the year work," Sister Mary was looking forward to their trip to Sinks Canyon. Another ride around the Reservation under the watchful eye of their guide, Ron Mamot, gave the Sisters confidence for the three day outing where they planned to camp at the top of the mountain for two nights. On June 8, Sisters Janet, Mary, and Antoinette traveled with Ron and Renee Mamot and Diana Masquereniez to the camping area where they saddled their horses and the pack horses. Unfortunately, "There was trouble from the beginning." [The detailed description of the accident reveals the impression it made upon the writer.] Sister Mary was dragged by her horse and cut her scalp in an obviously serious wound. In Lander before surgery, Reverend Damhorst administered the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Anointing of the Sick. Fortunately, Sister Mary recuperated rapidly and by June 10 was able to return to the Mission. As her service at the Mission was drawing to a close, Sister Mary continued to visit and to say her good-byes. Then, on June 20, she and Sister Janet left for Michigan where both made retreat. Sister Antoinette departed for Baker City, Oregon, on the final day of June. On that same date, Sister Janet drove Sister Mary to Chicago where she caught her plane to Ireland.

As summer events began to wane, Sisters Antoinette and Marjorie Ille arrived at St. Stephens on August 6. Sister Marjorie came for five weeks of rest and research on Franciscanism and the Economic Pastoral of the

Bishops. On August 16, Sister Janet had returned to “a royal reunion.” Sisters Adriana and Incarnata also arrived to begin their celebration of the centennial of the Mission. By August 20, 1984, the Franciscans present to observe the centennial also included Sisters Philomena Rosaire Glynn, Maria Assunta Oman, Lois Leonnig, Norine Graves, Nicola Sarvello, Emerita Leonnig, Esther Anderson, Kathleen O’Donnell, and Teresa Frawley. Sisters Joyce Durosko and Margaret Shea of the Immaculate Heart Sisters also joined in the week-long festivities. “The days were filled with art exhibits, trips to the mountains, an outing at the Sinks Canyon. And many visitors for Sister Adriana and Sister Incarnata. On the 26th, we had a grand liturgy saying thank you to the Indian people and the missionaries who were and are a part of their lives. Reverend Dave [surname not given], the Jesuit provincial, was the main celebrant.”

School opened August 27 and reality returned as Sister Janet met her fourth graders for another year. In the beginning of September, Sisters Janet, Marjorie, and Antoinette traveled to Ring Lake for their annual Sisters’ meeting and retreat. The sessions, based on Scripture and Carl Jung, were presented by Sisters Margo [surname not given] and Pat Sabblatura. Sister Marjorie left the Mission on September 11 for a Franciscan Federation meeting and for a week of family visiting in Oklahoma.

On September 17, Sister Antoinette requested exclaustation from the congregation. When she signed her papers on October 17, 1984, as the only Franciscan “in this house, the house history will end with this last entry.” And sadly, it did...until...

1989 - Present: A time to begin again

At the request of Mr. Darwin Griebel, principal of St. Stephens School, Sister Teresa Frawley returned in 1989 to teach high school and grade

school art at the Mission.

As there were no longer any other Sisters at the Mission, she rented a small house near the school. Although her neighbors who had lived at St. Stephens for many years warmly welcomed her back and Sister Teresa loved teaching, she found it difficult to adjust to changed conditions.

In 1990, Sister Florence Petsch, a native of the Wind River Reservation and a Sister of St. Francis, returned to minister at the Mission through home visiting. She joined Sister Teresa on July 1, 1990, as the community of two continued to meet the everyday challenges of Mission life. Gatherings on major feasts brought joy when they met other Franciscans of the area or when they all joined the clergy and religious of the region to celebrate. They were pleased to be present for the celebration of Mass at Daniel, Wyoming, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the first time and place that Mass had been offered on Wyoming land. Indians from St. Stephens, wearing their tribal regalia to observe the event, were among the attendees. Then Reverend Frank Schmitt, S.J., left the Mission on July 30 for an assignment in Belize, Central America. The leave-taking was hard because he had hoped to spend his last years at St. Stephens.

Sister Florence remembered the hardships of the Mission when the parish bulletin for August 19 announced the cedaring [a blessing with cedar boughs] and painting [facial paint] of the youth of the Reservation. "Families who have recently experienced problems with their youth [had] approached the Elders of the Northern Arapaho tribe for help in protecting their young." The bulletin assured participants that no pictures or recording of the ceremonial would be allowed. Recognizing that "we have had great numbers of youth suicides," the parish made efforts to stem the deliberate loss of life.

In September, the annual Sacred Heart novena was held. Opened at the Church of the Ascension in Hudson, the Mass and novena prayer were rotated through the churches of the area for the nine days, concluding at

St. Stephens. Sister Florence also began her pre-school classes in religious education while Sister Teresa returned to her art classes in the grade and high schools. Also, attendance at the Religious Education Conference in Rapid City, South Dakota, helped enrich the professional background of the teachers of religion.

At the Mission, efforts continued to be made to fulfill the spiritual and physical needs of the people: baptisms, adult faith discussions while the children had religious instruction, the anointing of the sick and elderly in an annual sacramental ceremony. During Advent, the CYO members experienced an overnight retreat at the House of Healing. [Through the years, this building has also been known as the Prayer House and the Gray House.] Weekly AA and Alanon meetings were held. However, alcoholism continues to challenge the people of the Reservation. Sister Florence noted that “Taking the Pledge is a step toward recovery, not a cure.” Along with weekend Pilgrimage retreats, the programs are supported and encouraged by the staff. Originally developed among Native Americans in Montana, the Pilgrimage consists of a prayerful weekend that brings together the power of discussion, group prayer, and the sacraments to heal the hurts of alcoholism and family dysfunction.

The tradition of priests and religious of Fremont County gathering for Thanksgiving continues even to this day. Although the staff also gets together for Christmas, the manner of celebration on the Mission in recent years centers around the Masses and a distribution of food boxes for parish families in need rather than the dinners, programs, and gift distribution to the natives that marked earlier years. In 1991, an invitation in the Mission bulletin to help with Christmas decorating of the church broadened the volunteer base and lightened the work load of the parish staff.

Efforts to involve the youth of the parish in positive, supportive events are ongoing challenges. Local meetings and activities such as bake sales, gatherings with CYO groups of other areas, attendance at state

conventions, pilgrimages—all are means to involve the young in wholesome activities that are hoped will prepare them for their future roles as leaders in the Church and civic life.

A biannual meeting that involved many from the area was the Council of Catholic Women, Thermopolis Deanery. In the spring of 1991, the group was hosted by St. Stephens. Reports of local parish activities for fundraising, convention speakers who follow themes set for the year—these efforts on the part of the laity are recognized by Bishop David Ricken. His 2002 letter addressed the women as he commented, “Your part as women, mothers and grandmothers is vital and crucial to the Church...”

Preparation for the sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation are dutifully recorded although recent house history accounts no longer indicate the numbers receiving the sacraments. Summer activities included the annual religious vacation school (sometimes called Summer Bible School) for students in kindergarten through sixth grade. In August 1991, Reverend Robert Hilbert and Sister Florence attended the National Tekakwitha Conference in Norman, Oklahoma, increasing knowledge of the Mohawk maiden that they hoped to share with their own Native American people. Before school began in earnest, Sister Incarnata Lauer, a visitor who brought much delight to the Mission, spent two weeks visiting her many friends on the Reservation.

On October 15, 1991, Bishop Joseph Hart had an extremely full day at the Mission. Besides meeting with parish staff, parish council, CCD teachers, and the Wyoming Council of Catholic Women’s group, he visited the Black Coal Senior Center in Arapahoe, celebrated Mass at St. Stephens, and enjoyed a carry-in dinner with parishioners from the two missions and St. Stephens.

World Marriage Day at St. Stephens was observed February 9, 1992, during Mass. A special blessing was given all married couples and honor bestowed especially on those married twenty years or more. The occasion concluded with the ever-popular carry-in meal.

Changes were a part of 1992. When Bishop Hart asked pastors to confirm in their parishes this year, Reverend Hilbert became the minister of the sacrament at St. Stephens. By the end of the 1992 school year, Sister Teresa realized that, despite the Native Americans' appreciation of nature and their natural talent for artistic expression, she was ready to take on a new challenge. She accepted Reverend Hilbert's invitation to fill the role Sister Michael Mary from Ethete was leaving. Sister Teresa would direct the religious education program there. She transferred to St. Joseph Parish in the summer. Although ailing Reverend Jerome Zummach, S.J., [named "Big Eagle" by the tribe] had been stationed in Denver, news of his pending change to a St. Louis nursing home prompted some St. Stephens parishioners to visit him prior to his move.

The summer of 1993 was note-worthy for several reasons: Reverend Daniel Gannon, S.J., joined the Mission staff; the tenth anniversary of the annual Sacred Heart novena was observed with the closing service again at St. Stephens. However, July 15, 1993, marked a unique occasion. Because Pope John Paul II came to Denver and many Wyoming priests wished to attend the ceremonies, Bishop Hart dispensed all Catholics in the diocese from the obligation of Sunday Mass. At the Mission, however, the parishioners were assured, "There will be Masses at St. Stephens that day, but you are not obliged to come." On August 23, 1992, the Mission celebrated the centennial anniversary of the arrival of the Franciscan Sisters at St. Stephens. A special Mass was offered for the occasion, followed by a carry-in dinner at Eagle Hall.

The work of the Jesuits at the Mission continued. When Reverend Robert Hilbert, S.J., left the Mission on August 29, 1994, his

replacement was Reverend Lawrence Jonas, S.J., from Armour, South Dakota. In the meantime, Reverend Gannon started the Recovery Incorporated study group and Reverend John Apel observed his silver jubilee with an evening Mass that was followed by the ever-popular carry-in dinner. To help parishioners with Christmas expenses, St. Stephens held a “Toy Express” event on December 13. Parents could select toys in Eagle Hall for their children’s Christmas.

In 1995, a farewell dinner for Reverend Apel was held and the parish learned that Reverend Hilbert was returning to replace him. However, Reverend Hilbert ministered from Blessed Sacrament Church at Fort Washakie, one of St. Stephens mission churches. It was there that the priests and Sisters gathered to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day. Reverend Hilbert also offered the Mass for Sister Florence Petsch’s mother when she died, March 28, 1995.

“Renovation of St. Stephens Church is beginning to take shape,” the July 23, 1995 parish bulletin read, and all liturgies were transferred to Eagle Hall. Because Reverend Jonas was reassigned to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Reverend Eugene Zimmerman, S.J., arrived to become the Mission’s new director as of October 1. One month later St. Stephens happily welcomed Brother Bill Foster, S.J., who assisted with maintenance of the Mission. By December the parish was able to return to worship in the church. However, the official rededication was celebrated “in grand style” by Bishop Hart in May 1996.

On April 13 the Mission’s Center for Native Arts and Humanities held a workshop in the Culture Center. Three local Arapaho artists: Robert Spoonhunter, Martin Blackburn, and Curtis Oldman whose works enrich the Mission church and environs, provided contacts. Mrs. Frances Makeshine was instructor of the workshop. Weekly classes in beading, conducted by Georgie Crawford, were reminiscent of the many years that Sister Balbina Weitzel had shared her beading knowledge with students at St. Stephens.

Despite the fact that the elementary and high schools were no longer directed by the Mission, interest in the education of the Native Americans remained an ongoing concern. In June 1996, St. Stephens offered a scholarship for “non-traditional students,” i.e. students who were out of high school. The scholarship was established “to help students complete their college degree, renew or maintain certification, or begin college.” Applicable for one year, the scholarship could be renewed.

In 1997, deaths touched many at the Mission. The sudden demise of the Arapaho director of the Native American Heritage Center, Robert Spoonhunter, left the Mission mourning the loss of an outstanding artist who had contributed much to his people’s heritage. In September, news arrived that Reverend John Padberg, S.J., whose musical talent and love for life had enlivened many parties and social gatherings, had died in St. Louis. Sister Florence Petsch lost her sister, Martha, and Sister Mary Schafer, C.S.J., her mother.

Reverend John Apel was elected to the Jesuit provincial staff in August and he transferred to St. Louis. In his place, Reverend David Matzko, S.J., arrived to join the staff. Although he was to care for St. Joseph, Ethete and Blessed Sacrament, Fort Washakie, Reverend Matzko preferred community living and moved to St. Stephens. The mission churches continued to receive sacramental care from the Jesuit community at St. Stephens. However, Sister Teresa Frawley, as pastoral assistant for Ethete and Fort Washakie, directed the religious education programs and alerted the priests if extraordinary pastoral needs arose.

In 1998, the natural cycle of life and death, joys and sorrows continued to embrace the Mission. Sister Anthony de Padua’s death in Aston, Pennsylvania was noted. Although she was now in her congregation’s western retirement facility, Sister Adriana Rahill’s celebration of her diamond jubilee at the age of ninety-seven brought cause for joy. Reverend Jerald Zummach, S.J., was buried at the Arapaho Catholic

Cemetery on the Mission grounds with feelings of great loss among the staff and Native Americans alike.

In August, when Reverend Zimmerman departed for the Jesuit Retreat House in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Reverend David Matzko assumed the duties of pastor and director at St. Stephens and Reverend Hilbert rejoined the staff.

In January 1999, most of the pastoral staff attended the Diocesan Institute held in Casper. This year found the usual liturgical activities filling the lives and energies of both staff and parishioners of the Mission. On May 6, a national day of prayer was observed. Special intercessions were offered for national, state, and local leaders as well as for a spiritual revival "in our land." Memorial Day again was marked with Mass being offered in the Mission cemetery. The parish picnic, sponsored by the parish council, and religious vacation school were summer activities concluded with the Labor Day Pow-wow before classes resumed.

The new millennium arrived without comment in the parish bulletin. Nor was it recorded by the house historian. A video entitled "Mission Memories" which featured events of the 1950's and 1960's, did provide a look back in time. Copies were made available in the gift shop. It was January when the Wind River Reservation Council of Catholic Women began to meet weekly as they prepared for the spring deanery meeting to be held at St. Stephens.

In May, new water bird candlesticks, hand-crafted by Parnell Taylor of Riverton, further enriched the Native American theme in St. Stephens. Among the natives, the water bird holds the same reverence as the dove in Christian symbolism.

Because Sister Mary Schafer, C.S.J., was elected to her congregation's council, she left St. Stephens for Chicago on May 25. Jean Watt replaced

her as director of religious education. In November, Reverend August Koene, a diocesan priest from Worland, conducted a healing service at St. Stephens; then he continued to share these popular services around the area.

Recognizing that the strength or weakness of the Church depends upon the strength or weakness of its families, in 2001 the Mission offered several program opportunities for their parishioners: Engaged Encounter, home Masses “for those who desire,” parents gathering to pray for children, renewal of marriage vows, etc. An attempt also was made to restart the Mission prayer chain; the Sacred Heart novena began June 14 in Ethete and ended at St. Stephenson the 22. Concern for holistic health caused a group in the parish to begin weekly meetings “to achieve spiritual and physical awareness through prayer, Scripture, nutrition awareness and mild exercise. With a goal to support one another in achieving a more healthy lifestyle,” the group invited others to join them.

Upon Bishop Hart’s retirement and the elevation of Bishop David Ricken, St. Stephens parishioners looked forward to his first visit to the Mission, August 26, 2001.

Because Sister Florence Petsch is a widow with children and grandchildren, her birthday celebration planned by her daughter, Martha McCoy, was a rather unique occasion for a woman religious. Gathering first for Mass at the Mission, Sister Florence and her guests then enjoyed a dinner in Eagle Hall. At the Thermopolis Deanery meeting in the fall, Reverend David Matzko, guest speaker, addressed the attendees on the theme, “Celebrate Life Through Grandparents.” This topic was one that Sister Florence knew well by experience!

December was a month of preparation and celebration. On the 2nd, the Christmas bazaar introduced the season followed on the 5th with a healing service. Eucharistic Adoration on First Friday and an Advent

Retreat in the middle of the month helped parishioners to prepare for the Nativity of Our Lord. The evening children's Mass on the vigil, the Midnight Mass and Mass at 10:00 a.m. provided three opportunities for the parish to gather in joy and thanksgiving. Recognizing the pain suffered by those who had lost children, the priests offered a special Mass on the feast of the Holy Innocents for them.

In a letter of February 17, 2002, to the parishioners of St. Stephens, Reverend Matzko, as pastor and director of the Mission, informed the people of the condition of the nearly 115 year old convent building. Empty and deteriorating, the building was unsafe and beyond repair. It was the decision of the Board of Directors of St. Stephens to proceed with demolition plans. "Sometime in the later part of the coming summer" was the predicted time for the razing; in reality, it began on Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2003, and continued for five days before the people actually witnessed the demise of the proud, historic convent.

Anguish of the times was reflected in April 2003 when families with members serving in the military in Iraq or Afghanistan were asked to sign their loved ones' names in a book "so that we can formally pray for them and their safety." Also mindful of the loss of the convent building, the pastor requested some thought be given to a memorial "to honor all the decades of lives associated with the convent." [Since that request, a labyrinth has been erected on the site and plans for Stations of the Cross are proceeding.]

On May 18, Reverend Matzko announced his reassignment to St. Isaac Jogues Parish in Rapid City, South Dakota. Although he would still be working with Native Americans, Reverend Matzko spoke of his great enjoyment through the six years spent at St. Stephens. "Coming here was a great opportunity for me to discover God among all of you. You have helped me in my spiritual journey; I pray I have helped you in your journey to be closer to God." Reverend Matzko departed July 21, 2003. Reverend Ron Seminara, S.J., named as his replacement, would not be

arriving until February, 2004. Reverends Hilbert and Gannon continued service at the Mission until then.

Throughout the year, efforts continued to combine the Christian and Native American cultures in the parish's praises of God. On All Saints and All Souls Days, the singing during the Masses had accompaniment of the drum group and Leonard P. Moss, Sr., offered the cedar prayer. To prepare for Christmas, a special Holy Hour opened with Scripture and the Advent theme; exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was followed by quiet time and individual cedarizing and ended with Benediction. Another cultural enrichment occurred at St. Margaret Parish in Riverton when Reverend Simon Stefanowicz of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Poland introduced devotion to the Divine Mercy during a three-day mission.

Needs of the Reservation continued to be felt. In both December 2003 and January 2004, the call went out for donations of "coats, jackets, gloves and hats for adults or children."

With the arrival of Reverend Ron Seminara, the parish held a Friendship Service to celebrate Valentine's Day and to welcome their new pastor and director. Following the Mass, the parishioners' usual means of gathering invited all to a carry-in dinner at Eagle Hall. Sister Florence was present to greet Father, then surgery caused her to be away from the Mission from the middle of February until April.

Reverend Seminara's efforts to involve the parishioners in decision-making led him to call "an interested local parishioner to be on the Board of Trustees for the Mission." Many of the elders who had been involved in St. Stephens' welfare and activities were aging and enduring illness, often unable to contribute their time as previously they had done. One long-time elder of the Arapaho tribe, Joseph Goggles, died August 2. He had faithfully walked a long distance to church each Sunday to take up the collection at the early Mass. Joseph was a prayerful person,

practicing both his Native American religion and his Catholic faith. On August 6, the funeral of Clark Trumbull, II was held. He had been the Arapaho drum keeper for many years.

In September, the St. Stephens parishioners were informed of a planned four year program, the Lay Ecclesial Ministry Formation Program. Its goal was to provide “local lay leaders for ministry in the parishes on the Wind River Reservation.” An effort was being made to accommodate the needs of St. Stephens Church and the two mission churches in Ethete and Fort Washakie by providing spiritual, theological, and pastoral formation for leaders of the ministries which best support the work of the faith communities.

In the middle of October 2004, the church boiler malfunctioned, causing the interior of St. Stephens Church to be blackened with soot. The need to repaint, at least partially, the interior of the church was noted. To clean the designs and murals was sufficient; however, the tepee covering the tabernacle was soiled beyond repair. In June, church members moved out so that both the exterior and interior of the church could be repainted. The work of restoration having been completed, they were able to return on August 14, just in time for the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother. In November 2005, the tepee covering the tabernacle was replaced through the talented craftsmanship of Robert Warren.

From June 17-25, 2005, Sister Florence joined nearly 500 of her Franciscan Sisters at the motherhouse in Philadelphia to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the congregation. A week of activities ranged from serious planning at the Assembly to joyous reflection on the heritage of 150 years. A family reunion in July completed the vacation time for Sister Florence who then returned to the Mission .

The health of Reverend Robert Hilbert began to fail and he faced surgery and then recovery and therapy time at the Jesuit community in

Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. Reverend Seminara and Reverend Gannon await Reverend Hilbert's return to the Mission; the priests, Sister Monica Suhayda, C.S.J., and Sister Florence Petsch, O.S.F., remain committed to the revised Mission Statement of St. Stephens:

The purpose of St. Stephens Indian Mission, the presence of the Roman Catholic Church among the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho is to grow into a strong community of believers, sharing our lives in the Holy

Spirit, forming one welcoming People of God, who are committed to Jesus

Christ, his gospel and mission.

FRANCISCAN SUPERIORS AT ST STEPHENS WIND RIVER RESERVATION, WYOMING

Sister Eugenia Gaeb 1892-1895

Sister Paphnutia Clark (temporary) 1895-1896

Sister Columba Hering 1896-1906

Sister Thaddea Loughran 1906-1908

Sister Tranquilla Gallagher 1908-1913

Sister Iphigenia Carroll 1913-1915

Sister Thaddea Loughran 1915-1920

Sister Cornelia Jordan 1920-1923

Sister Tranquilla Gallagher 1923-1926

Sister Clementina Mullaney 1926-1932

Sister Mary Eleonora Redman 1932-1935

Sister Clementina Mullaney 1935-1941

Sister Felicia Baiers 1941-1942

Sister Clementina Mullaney 1942-1955

Sister Bernard Weisser 1955-1961

Sister Clarina Burns 1961-1964

Sister Macaria Flynn 1964-1970

Sister Marie Monica Borden 1970-1972

Sister Patricia Kidd 1972-1978
Sister Mary Griffin 1978-1981

In 1981, the two Sisters remaining at St. Stephens moved to a mobile home and operated on a collegial basis, sharing responsibilities, tasks and duties.

SISTERS WHO HAVE SERVED AT ST. STEPHEN INDIAN
MISSION
WIND RIVER RESERVATION, WYOMING

August 1892

s//Eugenia Gaeb Coletta Miller Modesta Schmidt
s//Thaddea Loughran Amalberga Carlan Evarista Healy

September 1892

s//Paphnutia Clark * Liberata Smith Secunda Dougherty

s//Columba Hering Carola McDevitt Firmina O'Malley
s//Clementina Mullaney [1909] * Expedita Fraites Ernestine Simoneau
Helen Molloy Balbina Weitzel s//Tranquilla Gallagher
Sybilla McGolrick s//Felicia Baiers s//Mary Eleonora Redman
Gertrude Sheridan s//Iphigenia Carroll s//Cornelia Jordan
Bridget Fitzpatrick Blanche Koch Edwina Adams
* Lucinda Mayhue Bertha Roberts Thea Winter
Rose Marietta Fischer Alipia Smith Incarnata Lauer
De Lellis Wolff Olalia Hinkamp * Edna Boyd
Veronica Anne McAuley Anne Marita Feerick Marie Inez Gonzales

Adriana Rahill Monica Francis Lentz St. Kyran (Nora) O'Mahoney
s//Bernard Weisser Marie Stephen Duby Anthony Theresa Dennehy
Josephine Marie Nieto Eva Mary Cox Helena Mary Harvey
Jean Mary Cahill John Julia (Sheila) Casey Kathleen Marie Maleney
Justin Kirchner Marie Patrick Lowe s//Clarina Burns
Elinor Mohan Therese Fergus Francis Patricia Dooley

s//Macaria Flynn Leo Marie (Marie) O'Connor Florisenda Walsh
Marie Dorothy Young (Maria) Marie Columbkil Kelly s//Marie Monica
Borden

Joseph Ann Fitzpatrick s//St. Jude (Patricia) Kidd Bernadetta Creegan
Daniel Noreen McSweeney Joan Kiely Catherine Clare Harrison

Daniel Maureen (Mary) Stewart Mary Coakley Martin Marie (Angela)
Keane

Denise Marie Schroeder Michael Mary Yassick Barbara Jackson
Teresa Frawley Dolores Herbeck Bona Consilia (Ita) O'Neill
Kathleen O'Donnell Anthony de Padua Dunphy Brendan Mary (Mary)
Kiely

Patricia Thurston s//Mary Annette Griffin Antoinette Kennedy
Jeanne Therese Mahoney Florence Petsch

s// = served as superior

* = died at the Mission; buried in Spokane, WA

Endnote: Account of the Death of Father Cataldo, "Last of the Black
Robes."

Sister Ethelwina Molloy, O.S.F. was a novice when she was sent to St.
Andrew Indian Mission near Pendleton, Oregon. Her memory of Father
Cataldo quoted below is from her article, "St. Andrew's Indian Mission,
Umatilla Reservation, Eastern Oregon" in the in-house publication
"Celebrating the Journey...The Western Story," p. 24.

"Sometimes the pastor would invite a priest for special occasions. On
one occasion, Father Corbett, the pastor, invited Fr. Cataldo, a long-time
Indian missionary. It was said that he knew nine different Indian
dialects. It was an experience to attend his Mass and to hear him speak
to the adult Indians.

“It was my privilege to be present at his Mass, and to answer the Mass prayers on one occasion. The next day Father Cataldo became ill. He was taken to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton. As soon as he was settled in his room, he asked for a small table for his room so that he could say Mass. He indicated that he had prayed for years to be able to say Mass every day while he lived. That request was granted. The next day he died, not long after he said Mass. That experience increased my appreciation of daily Mass. It still does. It has grown over the years.”

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

RAWLINS, WYOMING 1899-1906

Sister Emily Ann Herbes, O.S.F. (Philadelphia, 2005)

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

In 1899, at the request of Bishop Lenihan of Cheyenne and with the approval of Philadelphia's Archbishop Patrick J. Ryan, Mother Agnes Bucher, second superior general of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia, sent four members to Rawlins, Wyoming. Sister Mary Cosma Smith, appointed superior, arrived with Sisters Rosaline Doyle, Angeline Schmitt and Tobia Connor on August 22, 1899, to staff St. Joseph School. Built by Father Mathias Turner, the school was a stone, two-story structure.

When Sister Cosma was assigned to Chickasha, OK the following year, Sister Aquinata Mohrmann assumed the position of superior of the local group. Records from the archives of the Sisters of St. Francis indicate that by 1903 all of the original Rawlins community had moved to other missions.

Sisters Elizabeth Boedefeld, Demetria Kirsch and Cupertino Holtmann served as leaders of the group in rapid succession. The financial report of Sister Cupertino for 1904-1905 revealed the struggle the Sisters were experiencing:

Income: \$960.00

Expenses: \$ 958.50

On July 16, 1906, a letter from Bishop J.J. Keane to the western provincial, Mother Stanislaus Bittenbender, acknowledged the lack of financial support for the school and admitted that "The state has been overdone by religious canvassers." To his chagrin, "religious beggars" of

other areas had been in the diocese without his knowledge or permission. Although the number of students recorded for St. Joseph School in that year was listed as 100, the bishop concluded, "I think we had better, for the present, close the school at Rawlins." Sister Euphrosina Kohl was superior of the Sisters at the time of their departure.

Because the convent house history is not extant, little is known about circumstances that led the bishop to make that decision. On October 18, 1978, the Wyoming Register, in an article on the history of St. Joseph Parish, listed the reasons for the closure of the school and the withdrawal of the Sisters of St. Francis: "In 1906, however, the school closed for lack of students and sufficient finances." With the balance of one dollar fifty cents for the year, financial straits were an obvious hardship. How many students comprised a suitable number for a school is unclear.

Besides the four members of the congregation who initially opened the school and those who served as superiors, other Sisters who ministered at St. Joseph School included Sisters Gertrude Sheridan, Honorata Sweeney, Liberata Smith, Noemi Connors, and Procula O'Connor.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

WORLAND, WYOMING

1964-1971

Sister Emily Ann Herbes, O.S.F. (Philadelphia, 2005)

ST. MARY MAGDALEN SCHOOL

To Mother Agnes MacIntyre, western provincial of the Sisters of St. Francis, Reverend Cyril Hmelovsky, the pastor of St. Mary Magdalen Parish in Worland, Wyoming, wrote in 1957 that his bishop had encouraged him to request Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia for his future school. He presented his plan for “a catechetical center which, in time, will be the basis for a parochial school.” Recognizing the importance of providing Catholic education for this isolated population and hoping to give more shared community opportunities to the Franciscans already ministering at St. Stephens Indian Mission, the congregational leaders acquiesced in 1960 with the understanding that Sisters would be sent to Worland four years later.

1964-1965

When the principal, Sister Clarina Burns, and Sister Crucifixa Marie (Mary Annette) Griffin with Sister John Michelle O’Hanlon arrived on August 18, 1964, they were met by the pastor, Reverend John J. Corrigan, and offered dinner by parishioners. For residents of the city, the Sisters’ appearance was the first time many of them had ever seen vowed religious women and the house history speaks about reactions ranging from “courteous, polite, and happy to have us” to “curious, interested, or indifferent.”

The limits of Worland's stores to provide some needed items made a trip to Riverton a necessity. A quick visit to Denver for Sister Clarina revealed the challenge travel could be. On her return trip, she was "deplaned" [Today it's known as "bounced."] because all the seats were filled. The Sisters completed the "settling in" process at the convent and prepared the school for opening day with help from some of their Franciscan "neighbors" at St. Stephens Indian Mission [over eighty miles away]. They even managed a few scenic trips and picnics before Bishop Newell dedicated the new school on August 30.

The following morning, classes opened with sixty-nine students enrolled in grades one to six. Another important "first" occurred on September 1 when Father offered Mass in the convent chapel and the Eucharistic Presence of Our Lord came to reside there. Although they were familiar with the celebration of liturgies and paraliturgies, the trio found having their first Benediction in the convent chapel "quite an experience for us."

Within weeks of their arrival, Sister Clarina addressed two active parish organizations: the women of the Altar and Rosary Society and the men of the Holy Name Society. These two groups were to play significant roles in the lives of the Sisters during their ministry in Worland. Efforts to make the Sisters a part of the parish community were extended during the annual bazaar dinner and later in the year the CYO sponsored a dinner in the parish hall to recognize the Sisters' presence among them.

Still the "firsts" continued: Celebration of the feast of St. Francis was followed by the visitation of the provincial and school visitor. Because school was out for the state convention of Wyoming teachers, classes were dismissed. The house history acknowledged, "This caused a little inconvenience to our visitors" who had come to observe the teaching of the students. However, all the Sisters enjoyed an opportunity to see the beautiful autumn landscape as they traveled to Father Hmelovsky's cabin near Tensleep. This cabin, made available through the generosity

of Father, granted the Sisters many memorable opportunities for peace and rest through the time the Franciscans were in Worland.

Having delighted in Thanksgiving dinner at a Thermopolis restaurant, the Sisters were humbled and appreciative when they were informed that an anonymous benefactor had paid their bill. With the Sisters at St. Stephens for the feast of the Immaculate Conception, the Worland trio were delighted to be included in a surprise visit by Bishop Newell. Having just returned from the Vatican Council session, the bishop presented each Sister with a memento from Rome.

The community's Christmas gift came early. From December 18 until the 24, changes being made in the convent community room were completed. To the Sisters' delight, the Altar and Rosary Society presented them with "a beautiful Christmas scene" that made the room truly finished! After Midnight Mass and a community gift exchange, the Sisters visited St. Stephens until December 28.

On March 21, Monsignor Heister from Denver offered Mass with six guests and the Sisters in the convent chapel. "There was standing room only in chapel but we had no casualties," mused the house historian. As part of March's intention for vocations, the Sisters showed slides of the Sisters of St. Francis to both school children and their parents. The children were excited to locate their teachers in the slides. The writer tells that when the CYO was shown the same slide presentation, "The girls were interested in them." In May, thirty-five children from the school and CCD classes received their first Holy Communion, "the fruit of Sister Crucifixa Marie's labor." The pastor, Father Corrigan, observed his twenty-first anniversary of ordination by treating the Sisters to a steak dinner. "It's the Irish way of celebrating," Father explained. [The house historian, herself from Ireland, recorded this.] A journey to Thermopolis for a track meet offered yet another "first" for Sisters Crucifixa Marie and John Michelle who saw their first buffalo! As the school year drew to a close, vacation school enrolled twenty-one but had

increased to thirty-six by the end of the week. The Sisters then closed the convent for the summer as they left for institutions of study.

1965-1966

The return of the Sisters in August brought two surprises. Father Cyril Hmelovsky was now pastor and Sister Clarina had been changed to Baker City, Oregon. She only returned to Worland for a whirlwind packing spree. The news of Sister's move traveled rapidly and parishioners arranged a farewell reception and a barbeque dinner held at the Tensleep cabin before she left for her new assignment. Sister Philomena Rosaire Glynn, the newly appointed principal, arrived in Billings, Montana. She was met by Sisters Crucifixa Marie and Sister John Michelle who were passengers of Larry Forsberg.

The Sisters rejoiced that the opening day of school in 1965 showed an increase in the number of students in each grade with a total enrollment of seventy-nine. However, news within the week of the death of Sister Philomena Rosaire's sister disrupted the smooth orientation as Sister returned to LaGrande, Oregon, for the funeral. Using their driving permits and accompanied by Mrs. Terrill Gibbons, Sisters Crucifixa Marie and John Michelle returned to Billings on September 11 to meet Sister Philomena Rosaire. Upon their return to Worland, the Sisters discovered that Father Hmelovsky had installed a freezer in the convent. What a delightful surprise! And a second cause for rejoicing came soon after when Sisters Crucifixa Marie and John Michelle obtained their drivers' licenses.

Civic duties accomplished, the Sisters enjoyed special spiritual benefits in October of 1965: Forty Hours Devotions and a triduum for the closing of Vatican Council II were held in the parish. The regulations coming from the Council were quickly put into practice as the first vernacular High Mass was sung in the convent chapel on October 23.

Watching television was permitted for the Vatican Council sessions and to celebrate their patronal feast day, the Sisters saw Pope Paul VI address the United Nations.

On January 1, 1966, the Sisters made slight changes in their habits to follow Vatican Council's directives to simplify the religious garb. The house historian was meticulous in the description: "Today we officially donned the belt instead of the cord and rosary. We also left off our crucifix and wore our tapered habit sleeves."

Special events and feasts were also recorded. The Sisters delighted in an Irish song and dance presentation by a group from Dublin. Afterwards, twenty-four were Father Hmelovsky's guests for "a pre-Lenten celebration" dinner. In March, having prepared sixty confirmandi for the newly-changed Rite of Confirmation, they shared with those in St. Stephens who were getting their classes ready to receive the sacrament. [In 1966, the privilege of receiving Confirmation during Mass was limited to St. Stephens and to St. Mary's in Cheyenne.] According to the house recorder, the Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace and Unity which was held in Worland under the auspices of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women was "an historic occasion for the Church in the Basin, taking positive steps toward ecumenism." On April 16, 1966, the First Holy Communion day was noted, "and, as usual, it snowed." Weather often was a factor. On Easter Monday the Sisters from St. Stephens and St. Mary Magdalen headed to Thermopolis for a picnic. Heavy rain changed their plans to an "indoor picnic" at Worland. The house history also notes that the Worland three spent All Saints Day, Thanksgiving and several Christmas days with their Franciscan neighbors at St. Stephens Mission "where we spent a nice vacation." The picnic at the end of the school year was enjoyed at Thermopolis in 90 degree weather. Gratefully, the historian wrote, "Managers of the [swimming pool] complimented us on how well behaved the children were. We are proud of them."

1966-1967

Sisters St. Anne Holland and Maria Assunta Oman arrived to teach grades one to four during 1966-67, replacing Sisters Crucifixa Marie and John Michelle. On Easter Monday, the Sisters of the diocese were dinner guests of Bishop Newell in Casper. He commented, "If I have to be a bishop, I'm glad it's in Wyoming." To this statement, the historian added, "Even those of us who had just come to Wyoming for the first time, understood what he meant."

On April 29, having traveled to St. Stephens for their annual drama production, as the Worland trio returned, they ran into "the worst blizzard in the Canyon that any of us had ever witnessed. Sister St. Anne was driving and we fairly crawled for a stretch of 20 miles." Pentecost, Mothers' Day and May crowning are annual events that find mention in the house history. Usually Closing Day exercises are highlighted before the withdrawal of the Sisters for the summer. However, in May 1967, the simple celebration of Mass at 7:30 a.m., followed by awards and dismissal, allowed parish preparation time for the ordination and reception of Mr. Thomas Ogg. His first Mass was also offered at St. Mary Magdalen Parish, to the delight of the residents of Worland.

1967-1968

The Sisters returned to a new location after their summer away, Sister Marie Coleman (Esther) Anderson having replaced Sister St. Anne. The move from Grace Avenue to 701 S. 11th Street was accomplished with little difficulty because Mrs. Williams, who cooked for the Sisters during the school year, had transferred "almost everything" during the summer. Before facing the challenges of the new school year, the Sisters were among 24 guests of Father John Flannigan, S.J., from St. Stephens Mission for a day trip on the Snake River. When school opened August

30, Father Hmelovsky used the feast of St. Rose de Lima to connect sainthood, the Holy Spirit to inspire studies, the intercession of Mary and devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament as the themes of the school year. Father Hmelovsky concelebrated an impressive parish Mass on September 3 with two Jesuit priests and a schola of ten Jesuit scholastics.

On October 15, four Sisters from St. Stephens and the Worland Sisters held their first intercommunity dialogue meeting. These were to be a means of strengthening participation among all members of the congregation. A busy schedule in December included early Christmas shopping in Billings, Montana. The annual school Christmas program, "The Prophets Say He Comes," was a paraliturgical production that the entire school prepared as a unit. To the delight of the recorder, it was well received by parents and friends. Santa, vacation time, Midnight High Mass followed by "a fresh fall of soft white snow," and Mass in the convent chapel from December 30 until the beginning of the New Year were topics noteworthy to the historian.

Intercommunity discussions with Sisters from St. Stephens continued into 1968. "Everyone came away, conscious of the need to be truly dedicated," the house historian commented. The February topic, "The Sign and Significance of the Religious Habit," was a preparation for March 2 when the Franciscans donned the experimental habit. Reaching beyond concerns of the local community, on March 14 the Worland Sisters traveled to Denver with the Victoryknoll Sisters to attend the CCD Congress. Their return home was followed on St. Patrick's Day by the three Irish natives welcoming Mother Agnes MacIntyre, now superior general, and Sister Everilda Flynn, school supervisor of the Sisters of St. Francis, to their convent. Because this was the first visit of the women most responsible for the presence of the Franciscan Sisters in Worland, their visit brought much joy.

Usually, the reception of First Holy Communion is recorded by teachers in the house histories; this year, because the sacrament of Reconciliation was now receiving added emphasis apart from the Eucharist, on March 27 the writer noted that “First graders received the sacrament of penance.” During spring break, Franciscan principals from St. Stephens, St. Margaret in Riverton, as well as St. Mary Magdalen, attended the NCEA annual meeting in San Francisco while Sisters Maria Assunta and Marie Coleman substituted at St. Stephens and St. Margaret School.

1968-1969

Children and parents alike were happy to welcome back the same three Sisters who had ministered at St. Mary Magdalen School the previous year. Convent renovations were in progress when the Sisters returned. An office and reception room had been added in the front of the convent and a new chapel and workroom extended in the back. Locating objects that had been moved during the summer became a game of “Hid and Seek” [sic]. On September 6, the Blessed Sacrament was placed in the convent chapel. The following morning Father Hmelovsky offered the first Mass in the chapel, a privilege to be repeated weekly. Father Ogg celebrated Mass two weeks later, introducing more Vatican Council changes: Communion under both Species and a dialogue homily. It was appropriate that the Stations of the Cross were erected in chapel on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Finally, an open house at the convent allowed the parishioners to see the improvements that had been made over the summer; the historian records simply, “They were delighted.”

The three Worland Sisters went to Portland in October for a congregational meeting and school was dismissed early to accommodate their travel. When they returned home, the children greeted them with the complaint that while the Sisters were away, the students had nothing to do!

Because preparing for the first provincial chapter since Vatican II entailed a different process from the one that had been used previously, the Sisters met in local chapter, casting ballots for ten delegates. [No further comment in the history must indicate that all went smoothly!]

Christmas shopping this year took place in Casper. “Symbols of Christmas” was the program presented before the children were dismissed for the holidays.

1969-1970

After the Sisters returned to Worland in August 1969, Sister Philomena Rosaire Glynn welcomed her priest brother, Reverend Patrick Glynn, for a visit to Wyoming. Sister Vera Marie Sheehan had replaced Sister Marie Coleman as teacher of grades three and four and all enjoyed a relaxing visit with Father Pat. The convent chapel continued to be the center for special celebrations. On September 23 the Sisters were delighted that Bishop Newell offered Mass and shared breakfast in the convent before he left for a Deanery meeting. On September 29, the local community turned to congregational affairs, examining some of the enactments that had come from the Extraordinary Chapter of Affairs held in the motherhouse during the summer. This special chapter, the wish of the Holy Father for each religious congregation, was of such import that it would be continued into the following summer.

During October, three small events proved that joy can be found in simple pleasures. On St. Francis feast, October 4, “three joyous voices” were lifted in praise as Father Hmelovsky offered the Mass in the convent chapel. A delightful visit from Sisters of St. Stephens Mission, with three staying overnight, made the feast very special. On October 10, Worland’s first Octoberfest was held in the Community Hall; only two days later the Sisters enjoyed the first snowfall of the season at Father Hmelovsky’s cabin.

Sister Joan Schillow, the school supervisor for Sacred Heart province, visited the classes in St. Mary Magdalen School on October 21. Many house histories dutifully record the annual arrival of congregational visitors, but few acknowledge the reason for their presence as did the house historian in Worland: “The children, quite unaware that they were not the precise subjects of interest, acted quite naturally and captivated their visitor with their stories of elk and deer. True to her nature, Sister Joan interwove their interests in such a way that an English lesson became vital involvement.”

A Halloween-decorated front room greeted the Sisters when they returned home on October 30. They were still marveling over the surprise when the doorbell rang, revealing the Altar and Rosary Society members who had organized a food shower for them. “The Sisters were like guests in their own home,” the writer mused. This group bestowed honorary membership upon the Sisters in December.

More parish involvement came when the Sisters joined seven women of the parish to begin a Discussion Group in November. By December 4 when the group met at the convent, sharing on “Church Changes,” the number had increased so that the historian recorded, “a wonderful turnout!” Sister Maria Assunta led one discussion on “The Influence of Vatican II on the Church” and Sister Vera facilitated “The New and Old Theology” with fifteen members present. [At what moment the “Discussion Group” adopted the title “Aquinas Group” is not clear, but further references to the group are indicated by the latter title.]

Addressing the Holy Names Society, Sister Philomena Rosaire spoke of Catholic Education, “encompassing areas not usually associated with Catholic education,” opined the history scribe.

The challenge to balance work and play comes especially as holidays bring extra pressures. In 1969 the annual shopping trek was enjoyed in Billings with two companions from St. Stephens. As Christmas drew near, the parish was entertained with a Tyrolean Band concert, a German

reading of the Nativity narrative and the singing of German carols. On Christmas Eve, Father Hmelovsky was the dinner guest at the convent. In awe, the writer recorded the event: “Before dinner, Father performed a uniquely beautiful Polish ritual. The breaking of the bread, the touching on the forehead and the simultaneous eating vividly recalled the Last Supper.”

In February 1970, Sister Philomena Rosaire opened an Adult Class and Discussion group with twenty-five participants. Although a blustery snow storm caused early dismissal from school on March 17, the Irish historian hastened to add that “Irish melodies, a special dinner and Compline recited in common provided a ‘Happy St. Pat’s Day’” for the Sisters. By March 20, the Sisters were heading to Denver with the Sisters from Powell for the annual Religious Education Congress. Outstanding speakers and “several hundred” in attendance made the trip well worth the time and effort.

Listings appear again of the Aquinas Group activities. Sister Vera Marie led the members in “Putting the Pieces Together” as preparation for discussing the works of DeChardin. In the parish, Sister Philomena Rosaire and seven men were enrolled as ministers of the Eucharist on May 3, 1970. Because this privilege since Vatican II was just beginning to be used in parishes, the Sisters rejoiced that Sister Philomena would be a minister, too. But the year was moving so swiftly! After a brief respite at Father Hmelovsky’s cabin with Sisters from St. Stephens, the Sisters completed the business of school and convent closure and again left for the summer.

1970-1971

With the return of the same three Sisters in August, there was opportunity for more relaxation before school activities began again. Sisters Maria Assunta and Vera Marie visited at St. Stephens while Sister

Philomena Rosaire and Father Hmelovsky attended the meeting of pastors and principals in Casper. Then the three were guests on a trip to Yellowstone National Park that was planned and financed by the Thomas Williams family. It was a special time to appreciate God's gifts of beauty in nature that surrounded them. The Worland Sisters planned a day of prayer at Tensleep with the Sisters from St. Stephens participating. "Hope," the theme of the day was prayed about and celebrated in the spirit of community. And on Labor Day the two local communities spent another gathering day at the Sinks.

When school reopened on August 27, sixty-four students were enrolled and all three Sisters faced an added responsibility. Besides their regular classroom and CCD duties, the Sisters agreed to teach high school religion classes. The program was designed to involve students in fuller participation in their role as Christians. Junior high and grade school CCD classes began September 16, with the Sisters and three lay teachers. More involvement in the parish and educational programs caused the house scribe to reflect: "Wyoming may be isolated but it certainly has caught up with the spirit of the '70's so far as scheduling meetings go." The teachers gratefully reflected on a successful implementation of Vatican II directives when a communal penance service with three priests was held for the high school students on October 21. By November Sister Philomena Rosaire had begun Adult Education classes as well, using the magazine, Focus on Hope, as their text.

What had begun as normal Christmas holidays changed radically on December 26, 1970. In Oregon, three Franciscan Sisters from McMinnville and a Holy Names Sister who lived with them were in an accident that killed all four as well as a passenger in the car with which they collided. Because all were teachers, suddenly the provincial of Sacred Heart Province was called upon to make decisions that would affect the lives of many, including the community in Worland. Sister Vera Marie was reassigned to Riverside, California, and Sister Rose

Marietta Fischer arrived to replace her. Ever the caring shepherd of his flock, Father Hmelovsky arranged for Sister Vera Marie's pupils to see her off at the airport on December 29, even though it was in the middle of their vacation. It was a difficult time for all. Sister Rose Marietta was coming from the community that had just lost its superior and principal as well as teachers. The Worland Sisters had to deal with the changes that any new member brings while keeping on with their ministries.

Despite a heavy snowfall, all students arrived back on the first day after the holidays, curious to meet "the new Sister." One fifth grader exclaimed that he could name nine Sisters who had been in Worland! School events and parish activities continued to challenge the Sisters' schedules. When the Sister Philomena Joseph Ludwig, provincial, and the school supervisor for the province, Sister Joseph Helene McKee, made their visitation in March, the province was still reeling from the effects of the losses they had suffered. A telephone call from the provincial on April 23 informed the Worland Sisters that they were being asked to close the school at the end of the 1971 spring term. Great was the shock to the parishioners when Father Hmelovsky announced the closure. The house historian doesn't say how the Sisters reacted to the news.

Despite the flurry of events in preparation for withdrawing from Worland, the Sisters made every effort to help the students celebrate the Mass in honor of Father Hmelovsky's 30th anniversary of ordination on May 18. Ten days later the official closure of the school took place. The Altar and Rosary Society sponsored a farewell tea and the Sisters were dinner guests at the Washakie Hotel. Sister Rose Marietta left on June 2 to visit an ailing aunt. On June 5 Father offered the final Mass in the convent chapel and then removed the Blessed Sacrament. Four Sisters from St. Stephens brought a much appreciated picnic dinner so that the Worland Sisters could complete their packing.

As Sisters Philomena Rosaire and Maria Assunta left for Portland, they made a final entry in their house history on June 7, 1971, "The services of the Sisters of St. Francis in the capacity of a parochial school have been terminated. Father Hmelovsky will now reside at the convent at 701 S. 11th St. His old rectory will be rented out."

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

RIVERTON, WYOMING

1965-1995

Sister Emily Ann Herbes, O.S.F. (Philadelphia, 2005)

ST. MARGARET SCHOOL

The Story Behind the Story

A 1963 letter in the archives of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia from Reverend Adolph Pate reveals the determination and perseverance with which he sought his dream of opening a Catholic school in his parish, St. Margaret, Riverton. Father Pate's letter reminded the superior general, Mother Agnes MacIntyre, that he had petitioned the congregation "since 1958 or 1959" for Sisters. Furthermore, the school was now built and ready for use, but he had no teachers. On December 4, 1963, Mother Everilda Flynn, the congregation's directress of schools, expressed Mother Agnes' regret "that we will be unable to supply Sisters for St. Margaret School." Recognizing the parishioners' concern about the vacant building, Mother Everilda recommended approaching other communities for Sisters.

In correspondence of January 15, 1964, Mother Everilda repeated the refusal, explaining in greater detail the congregation's inability to supply new schools with Sisters. The motherhouse that ordinarily supplied members for western schools and hospitals "is scraped to the bone and unable to meet its commitments... We simply do not have a sufficient number of Sisters for the demands here." Father Pate did not give up. In February he conceded, "Even two would suffice at the start." Father suggested that the Sisters stay with the Sisters at St. Stephens Indian Mission and commute to St. Margaret School. To this request, the General Council was able to give a favorable reply. Perhaps it is

significant that the letter penned by Mother Everilda was dated April 9, the anniversary of the congregation's founding in 1855. She wrote, "Your latest letter and undoubtedly the power of your prayer moved the Council to accept St. Margaret School."

Opening of St. Margaret School

St. Margaret School opened August 30, 1965 with an enrollment of 99 students in grades one to four. Sister Marie Monica Borden was principal and fourth grade instructor; Sister Joseph Anne Fitzpatrick taught first grade with two Extension volunteer teachers for grades two and three. By the end of the year, a letter from Father Pate to the western provincial revealed his joy in the presence of the Sisters. "They are great."

He also requested that, if possible, the same two would return the following year. The petition that they teach the religious vacation school for public school students in his parish was an added plea.

Fifth grade was added in 1966 and sixth grade the following year. Sister Daniel Noreen (Ann) McSweeney arrived to teach first grade in 1967. Sister Helen Francis Zezeus was added to the staff in 1968; the following year Sister Denise Marie Schroeder took her place. The Sisters continued to live with the community at St. Stephens.

When Sister Joan Kiely replaced Sister Marie Monica as principal in 1970, the other two Sisters serving on the staff were Sister Ann McSweeney and Sister Denise Marie. Sister Mary Coakley took Sister Ann's place in 1971. By 1972, St. Margaret School documents revealed a staff of three religious and four lay personnel. The average class size was twenty-two. Rapport with the public schools was exceptional and many federally-funded benefits were available to St. Margaret School. The 1972 Survey Report concluded, "The school is a very well-developed part of the parish...The education apostolate of this mission meets the needs of the people."

Sister Barbara Jackson began serving as principal in 1972. Sister Dolores Herbeck and Sister Kathleen O'Donnell formed the religious women of the faculty a year later. In 1975 Sister Patricia Thurston replaced Sister Kathleen for one year; Sister Dolores became principal in 1978. Because the Sisters were still commuting to school, their involvement in the parish remained somewhat limited.

In 1980 St. Margaret School dropped the sixth grade when a new district middle school was opened in Riverton for grades six through eight. Parents felt it was important that their children adjust to the school by beginning with other students who would be their future peers.

Two significant changes at St. Margaret took place in 1981. A kindergarten opened at St. Margaret School and Reverend Gerald Chleborad welcomed the Franciscans ministering there to the parish. The convent had been the former rectory and then a rental before Sister Dolores Herbeck, principal, and Sister Kathleen O'Donnell, first grade teacher, arrived. In preparation for their coming, members of the parish Cursillo made needed repairs. Furnishings for the convent came from parishioners as well as St. Stephens Convent which was closing. On September 7, parishioners provided muscle power for the move. Soon after the Sisters came, the CYO of the parish hosted a food shower to welcome them.

Settling In

Besides getting accustomed to their new surroundings, the Sisters found the beginning months filled with educational meetings, ministry commitments and a few pleasant breaks in routine that helped them know the people better: a weekend spent with the Sisters from St. Stephens at Tensleep, a pizza party with CYO members and the "ghosts and goblins" who dropped by for Halloween treats.

Sobering reality of life “as it’s experienced ‘out there’” set in when the Sisters discovered that an attempted daylight break-in November 6 became a successful assault later in the month made with pliers on the back door. A small amount of cash and two family rings were taken but otherwise the house was undisturbed. A new back door and deadbolt locks restored peace of mind to the occupants.

A close-knit community of clerics and religious serving in the area became a source of support, encouragement, and spirit that inspired the Sisters in their seemingly out-of-the-way ministry. Although Sister Dolores Herbeck’s parents lived in Riverton and it was her hometown, duties as leader of the school kept her busy traveling for ministry purposes. A parishioner of St. Margaret until she entered the Sisters of St. Francis in 1953, Sister Dolores led the educational development of St. Margaret School children from 1978 until 1995. Over the years, Sisters Mary Coakley, Assunta Prunty and Carmel Mahoney also taught at St. Margaret School while living in the parish. From 1989 until she left in 1992, Sister Mary Stewart served as parish secretary and visitor as well as RCIA director.

School Involvement

Dedicated to her ministry, Sister Dolores faithfully attended the annual National Catholic Education Association conventions. The one exception was in the 1988 Marian Year when Sister Dolores and Mrs. Kathleen Goddel of Dubois joined a diocesan pilgrimage and visited the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico instead. It was a choice that both awed and inspired them.

Although St. Margaret was the newest of the six Catholic grade schools in the diocese, by 1983 the need for new bookshelves in the classrooms and a new blacktop coating on the playground gave proof of hard use. By 1986 the long-awaited gymnasium was dedicated.

A school highlight each February was “Catholic School Week” during which student-created banners hung in the church, announcing the theme for the year. An open house at the school, appreciation days [recognizing teachers, students, etc.], Grandparents’ Day [declared “a Big success”], special auctions, dinner-dances, and carnivals packed a full week of events into a short time. In 1988 Sister Dolores expressed delight that her auction item, “Breakfast in the Convent” added sixty dollars to the coffers.

The preschoolers and kindergarten children were sure to “steal the show” in the annual all school Christmas programs directed by Mrs. Pat Le Masters. To accommodate the large crowds [the public was invited], these popular events were presented at Central Wyoming College gymnasium and later in the college theater. In 1990 the show was videotaped and packaged for the troops serving in Saudi Arabia. Yearly May Crownings provided the fifth graders one last opportunity before graduation to lead the students in devotion to the Blessed Mother.

The faculty always delighted in welcoming Brother Martin Kliez , F.S.C., diocesan school superintendent, who provided much encouragement to the staff through his visits and workshops. When he and his father were killed in a car accident, the administration and faculty at St. Margaret School missed him greatly.

On January 14, 1992, the St. Margaret School Foundation was officially established “to promote, to develop, to assist, and to extend financial support to St. Margaret School and its various educational programs.” This dream of Sister Dolores’ found its fruition after many years when Lowell A. Morfeld, a uranium philanthropist as well as a parishioner and school benefactor of St. Margaret, used much of his wealth to assist students in obtaining good educations.

Also in 1992, a variety of events marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the school. A tree planting took place on August 30, the actual date. The

following week, the Parent-Teacher Organization co-hosted an open house and alumni reception and, in the evening, a Dessert Carry-In allowed time for further reminiscing. On September 9, Bishop Joseph Hart celebrated the Mass with music provided by the adult, student and youth choirs. The local Knights of Columbus stood as honor guard and a slide presentation depicted events of the school's twenty-five years. After Mass, helium balloons, one for each year, were released in celebration.

On January 7, 1994, Teresa Urbigkeit-Strube, the computer education teacher for pre-school through fifth grades, began a \$15,000 drive for St. Margaret computer lab. The drive was so successful that counters for the computers and a wall in the teachers' workroom also were installed. And, in less than a month's time, the new computer lab was opened! As the parish community rejoiced in this new improvement, they were also mindful of the need for just wages for teachers. The Parents-Teachers Organization always looked for ways to achieve their money-raising goals. In 1995 they chose St. Patrick's Day for their "7 Come 11" Casino Night. A "40's to 50's" dance also brought enjoyment as well as profit to the fund.

Meetings

The annual gathering of women religious of the Cheyenne Diocese provides an opportunity for Sisters in the wide-spread environs to be enriched by speakers, to share ministry insights and to support and encourage one another. The location of the meeting varies from year to year. When the Sisters met at St. Margaret Parish in 1993, the house history stated that the visitors "were impressed with the facility." All were enriched when the annual Priests' Institute was opened to include Sisters and Brothers in 1985.

Another ministry opportunity arose when the diocesan lay ministers' training meeting in 1989 provided help for overwhelmed Lander instructors. Even though St. Margaret Parish had no candidates at the time, Sister Dolores Herbeck joined in the training to aid the parish in Lander. Also a source for development, the Council of Catholic Women's Deanery meetings offered pertinent topics such as "Inclusive Language," a talk given by Sister Dolores.

On a diocesan level Sister Dolores served on a variety of committees over the years. She was a member of the diocesan Liturgical Committee for one year; Sister Dolores served as vice-chairperson of the diocesan Board of Education and as chairperson from 1981-1985. Elected to the diocesan Pastoral Council in 1990, Sister continued on this council until June 1994. Involvement in the Church includes ministry, too. In September 1989, St. Margaret School hosted a conference of the Wyoming Catholic Teachers, with fifty educators in attendance. The meeting of Wyoming Catholic Principals is held annually in moveable locations with the Catholic School Teachers' Institute offered the following day. In 1995 the meetings were in Casper where it was learned that only three of the six Catholic principals of the state would be returning the following school year. The importance of peer support was further demonstrated when Sisters from St. Margaret found occasions for addressing the Women's Cursillo movement in Riverton and attending sorority meetings. These opportunities help otherwise isolated religious women connect to share interests and concerns.

But not all gatherings were spiritually or intellectually motivated. The priests, Sisters, and Brothers ministering in the north-central area of Wyoming often came together to enjoy each other's company on special feasts. A generous dinner provided by the people of Hudson usually brought them together for Thanksgiving at the Jesuit house in St. Stephens. Reflecting on the effective community building done there, the house historian at St. Margaret wrote, "We have truly learned to appreciate these great leaders in our Church." Popular "Carry-In"

dinners or desserts [more commonly known as “potlucks”] were frequent means of feasts. Such a gathering was hosted on Christmas Day, 1990 by Reverend Ron Stolcis at St. Margaret for priests, Sisters and three widows of the parish. During another Christmas, a party held after Midnight Mass by Sister Monica Suhayda, C.S.J., at St. Stephens caused Sister Dolores Herbeck to write, “It’s pretty hard to exhibit much enthusiasm at 2:00 a.m.; however, we try!” St. Margaret Convent history also noted that in 1995, Easter brought Sisters and priests from Fremont County to Lander for dinner and an egg hunt around the rectory. Perhaps it was the added hunt, but “a good turnout, fourteen to seventeen usually,” was recorded. A further opportunity for intercommunity action occurs when, taking advantage of a few free days during the holidays--and weather permitting--several Sisters travel great distances “to shop.” [Notes in the house history indicate that such pleasure was not always possible. “Had about a foot of snow!!” (11/22/83) and “-46 degrees, lots of snow, extremely cold” (1/31/84). Still, the unexpected joy would occur: “The Community Concert was cancelled; went shopping instead.”]

Parish Involvement

Shortly after the Sisters moved to St. Margaret Convent, a “Wax the Pews” party was held at church to prepare the newly varnished benches for use. The Sisters’ house history tells that they were “happy to take part in as many parish events as possible.” On Memorial Day the following year, they joined parishioners in praying the rosary at the graves of the former pastors. In December of 1984 when new stained glass windows that depicted saints of the Americas were installed, the Franciscans were especially proud that their founder, St. John Neumann, was included.

The RENEW program, held in the parish in 1986, enhanced 180 participants; the Sisters enjoyed their involvement. Two other events of

that year brought joy to the Sisters: Reverend Raymond Moss, a former St. Margaret student, was ordained to the priesthood on October 13. The same month, a second blessing occurred when Reverend Robert Lynch, S.J., offered the first Mass ever celebrated in the convent chapel.

For a change of pace, if the Sisters were able, they participated in SEARCH retreats as speakers or chaperones for the teenagers, and taught religious vacation school before summer commitments called them away.

While a pro-choice rally was being held in Casper in 1989, the Sisters joined St. Margaret parishioners in concurrently praying a rosary for life! To share a Catholic viewpoint and to extend outreach of the faith, in 1990 Sister Dolores agreed to be part of a "Guest Editorial Board" for KTRZ radio. Five talks on topics of her choice were delivered over the airway during the year.

An accident in Denver while Sister Dolores and St. Margaret's director of religious education attended the 1990 Religious Education Congress left their car inoperable, so they rode back to Riverton with Sister Alice Ann and the Lander pastor, meeting "a raging blizzard enroute." That was certainly a trip not soon forgotten!

Holy Week marked special sacramental events at St. Margaret. According to parish tradition, First Holy Communion was received on Holy Thursday. In 1990 they welcomed fourteen RCIA members plus the daughter of one of the candidates into the Church. For a parish of about 420 families in a town of 10,000, this number of new members was cause for great rejoicing.

July 4, 1990, commemorated the centennial of Wyoming's statehood. But the impact felt by St. Margaret parishioners who attended the celebration of Eucharist at Daniel, Wyoming, surpassed the impression made by the secular celebration. One hundred fifty years ago on this date, the first Mass had been offered in the Wyoming Territory at Daniel.

A lack of funds can be a constant source of concern for pastors and those in charge of parish finances. Therefore, St. Margaret parishioners rightly rejoiced that the parish debt of \$175,000, incurred with the school addition in 1986, was reduced in 1991 by \$75,000. When the parish held its annual Christmas dinner that year, there was reason to celebrate. The parish council members cooked turkeys for the dinner while the school and CCD children provided entertainment. In the meantime, preparations were being made for the statewide diocesan synod that the bishop had called. As a voting delegate, Sister Dolores was especially interested in the topic discussed in December--Education. The convent historian remarked, "What a lot of great suggestions for our parish and school!"

Sharing in work and play, joys and sorrows strengthens the bonds between the parishioners and the priests and Sisters who serve them. In May, 1992, four drove from St. Margaret to Cheyenne to attend the funeral of Mrs. Mary Moudy, a former parishioner who had died after fighting cancer for many years. "All of her children attended St. Margaret School. She was a wonderful example to all of us," commented the house historian.

An honor bestowed upon Sister Dolores in 1994 named her St. Margaret "Woman of the Year." Sister was deeply touched. That year had proved to be a personally difficult one for her. After her mother died, Sister Dolores became responsible for clearing the house in preparation for its sale while still having the daily responsibilities at school. Nevertheless, Sister maintained her sense of humor and was able to record a delightful story that involved her, Bishop Hart, the Confirmation class, Reverend Ronald Stolcis and his dog.

"May 8, 1994

" Bishop Joseph Hart, Bishop of the Diocese of Cheyenne, is here in Riverton today to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. Sister Dolores Herbeck was planning on going but she was over at her

mother's house getting it ready to sell. When she got back to the convent which is right by church, the service had started.

“ Sister was taking care of Father Stolcis' dog, Schatzie...Sister parked the car on the school yard and was hurrying to the house [hoping] she could [change her clothes and] get in for part of the ceremony. Schatzie was ahead of Sister and was heading for the back door of the convent when she noticed the side door of church [was] open. Before Sister could stop her, she dashed right up on the altar to Father Stolcis who was sitting by the Bishop and many other priests [who] were there. Well, the people broke out into laughter! That was one Confirmation the people will never forget!”

Community in Wyoming

How is “community” maintained when a few Sisters are at least one thousand miles from other members of their congregation? The convent's house history gives some insight into efforts made both by leadership as well as those who labor in the missions. With the presence of General Minister Sister Rose Cecilia Case in 1983, the recorder mused, “Distance makes visits of Community leadership special.” The following year Sisters Marie Lucey and Anne Miller came from the motherhouse in Aston, Pennsylvania, “to the four of us Franciscans” to present a global workshop. Later, Sister Patricia Kidd arrived, offering a workshop about formation, specifically the Franciscan Associate Program. When Sister Madonna Marie Cunningham visited Wyoming in 1987 for her first visit as general minister, Sister Dolores, who had been in the novitiate with Sister Madonna Marie, and Sister Carmel Mahoney “took the day off from school.” Together with the Sisters in Lander, they showed Sister Madonna some of the majestic sites of Wyoming.

Provincial visitations from Portland, Oregon were not always easily made either. In 1988 when Sister Donna Fread came, a heavy snow storm delayed her arrival by one day. Nevertheless, efforts of hospitality

were evident on the side of those receiving the visits. Sister Gail Tenney, also on provincial visitation, was met at the airport by six of the seven Franciscans in the area. [Teaching duties kept Sister Teresa Frawley of St. Stephens Mission from being on the welcoming committee.]

Celebration of Sister Florence Petsch's first vows on June 13, 1982, in Portland, Oregon, made all parishioners proud of this Riverton native. Father Anthony Short, S.J., from St. Stephens Mission traveled to Portland to witness the ceremony. Like women religious before them, three members of the congregation celebrated their silver jubilees in Wyoming. Although their jubilee observances were somewhat private, Sisters Mary Coakley, Teresa Frawley, and Mary Stewart enjoyed the feasts with their Franciscan Sisters.

In 1987 Sister Dolores was living alone at St. Margaret Convent; however, she spent several nights each week caring for her elderly widowed mother. For community support she often turned to her Franciscan Sisters in Lander. Observances of birth and feast days provided joyous gatherings while meetings also gave opportunities for congregational companionship. In-house or restaurant settings also brought variety for meal sharing. Regional meetings in 1989 took two Wyoming Sisters to Spokane, Washington, and two to Riverside, California. "We found it especially good not to all go the same place," Sister Dolores recorded. Despite the joy of local camaraderie, the Sisters did benefit from expanding interests and ideas. Travel to Baltimore, Maryland, in October 1992 enabled Sister Dolores to participate in the congregationally-sponsored workshop, "Franciscanism in our Catholic Schools."

The Wyoming Franciscans met in Lander for a visitation get-together in February 1993. A month later they flew to the provincial house in Portland for a congregational Affirmation Day. Via conference call, the Sisters were connected with members throughout the congregation, including those in Ireland, Africa and Puerto Rico. "How nice to see all of our Sisters again!" the historian opined. When news spread that the

Sisters in Lander would withdraw in June, a farewell Carry-In dinner brought the community members together for a final time.

By May 1995, Sister Dolores had announced her plans to take a sabbatical year, beginning in the fall. With word also that the pastor had been assigned to Worland, St. Margaret Parish held a farewell reception to honor these two leaders in the parish. However, before either one departed, the VFW state convention was held in the parish gymnasium. Sister Dolores observed, "Everyone had to help to assure success and it was!"

Sister Dolores spent June getting the school ready for the new principal, Mr. D.J. Robertson. Father Stolcis assumed his new assignment in Worland on June 29, 1995, the same day that the newly-appointed pastor, Reverend William Espenshade, arrived in Riverton. Besides packing and closing the convent, during July Sister Dolores acclimated Mr. Robertson to the ministry she had guided for seventeen years. It is no wonder that her final words to this parish and to these people would be, "Part of me stays behind with you, my parish family, but I also take all of you with me in my heart." Then, succinctly, the chapter of the presence of the Sisters of St. Francis at St. Margaret Parish, Riverton, concluded with the words, "This house closed today, August 4, 1995."

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

LANDER, WYOMING 1986-1993, 1997 to Present

Sister Emily Ann Herbes, O.S.F. (Philadelphia, 2005)

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia agreed to serve the people of Lander, Wyoming, in 1986. Nestled in the foothills of the Wind River Mountain Range, today Lander has a population of about 7,000 persons and the parish church, Holy Rosary, ministers to about 290 families. Lander, twenty-four miles from Riverton where the Franciscan Sisters worked at St. Margaret Parish and School from 1965 to 1995, is also near St. Stephens Indian Mission and Ethete where Franciscan Sisters of this congregation are also presently ministering.

Sister Norine Graves and Sister Agnes (Una) McLoughlin were the first Sisters of St. Francis to serve Holy Rosary Parish. They were scheduled to arrive August 12, 1986, Sister Norine to work as parish bookkeeper and Sister Agnes to direct the religious education department. The excitement of opening another new mission in Wyoming was dimmed, however, when Sister Norine had a serious accident that delayed her arrival for six weeks. In the meantime, Sister Agnes faced the unknown with “a wing and lots of prayer.” Soon she faced the challenges of teaching religion at the state training school for the mentally impaired and ministering at the mission parishes of Ascension in Hudson and St. Brendan Parish which consisted of eight adults and four children in Jeffrey City.

Throughout that first year the Sisters were greatly encouraged by the parishioners; the Knights of Columbus especially were attentive to their needs. However, Sister Agnes remained for only that year before returning to Oregon. Sister Alice Ann O’Keeffe replaced her as pastoral

associate with DRE duties from grades one through adulthood. She also started RCIA classes. To her bookkeeping skills, Sister Norine added visiting the sick and elderly in their homes and at the hospital. Reverend Anthony Jablonowski became pastor in 1988 and remained until 1991.

The first convent was a rental home owned by Mrs. Donna Jean Boyle. Wishing to sell the house in 1989, Mrs. Boyle generously donated many of the furnishings to the Sisters who relocated in a HUD house at 680 Bellevue Avenue. Money gifts and loans from parishioners enabled the parish to raise within one week the needed \$44,000 and to complete the sale, having paid in full. With the help of the Knights of Columbus and many women of the parish, the Sisters moved into their new residence in October 1989. Reverend Joseph Fraher, who had been pastor at Holy Rosary between 1966 and 1972, returned in 1991 until his retirement the following year.

The new pastor, Reverend John Savio, worked one year with the Franciscans who withdrew from Lander on June 30, 1993. Sister Norine retired to St. Ann Convent in Tacoma, Washington while Sister Alice Ann began a sabbatical at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The parish hired Sisters of Our Lady of Victory Missionaries who ministered at Holy Rosary from August 1993 to July 1997. However, when the Sister serving the parish departed in 1997, Reverend Savio invited Sister Dolores Herbeck to return to Wyoming. Sister Dolores had grown up in Riverton and, as a Sister of St. Francis, returned to Riverton to serve in St. Margaret School, first as teacher and then as principal. With the blessing of obedience, Sister Dolores accepted the offer of Reverend Savio and began ministry at Holy Rosary on August 1, 1997. As pastoral associate, Sister Dolores directs the religious education program and acts as administrator of the parish in the pastor's absence.

During the summer of 1997, Reverend Thomas Kadera became the new pastor. Sister Dolores found her work including "all of the above" as

well as driving to Hudson for Sunday Mass and once a month to Jeffrey City. Sister also took Eucharist to Catholic patients in the hospital, nursing home and to homebound parishioners. She also conducted weekly discussion groups and attended the RCIA sessions.

Much joy and pride filled Holy Rosary parish in June 1999 when Karl Millis became the first native son of the parish to be ordained. His parents, Bob and Mary Ann Millis, were among the congregation witnessing the impressive ceremony.

On September 29, 1999, Reverend Kadera was transferred to Gillette and Reverend Raymond Rodriguez was assigned to Lander. As the youngest priest in the diocese, Reverend Rodriguez was beginning his first year as pastor. "Old Pro" Sister Dolores continued her ministry which included conducting Communion services, leading the Stations of the Cross, exposing and reposing the Blessed Sacrament for adoration, teaching RCIA classes if the pastor were away, helping with fundraisers for youth planning to attend World Youth Day, and supporting the Council of Catholic Women.

Holy Rosary celebrated its 120th anniversary as a parish in 2002. The ceremony was well attended and much about the parish was learned through a power point presentation. Then Reverend Rodriguez became the vocation director for the diocese of Cheyenne in July 2003. To replace him, Reverend William Caspers came out of retirement; however, illness soon caused him to return to his home in Mountain Home, Idaho where he died December 12, 2003.

Bishop David Ricken asked Reverend David Gau, S.J., who had been assisting in Riverton, to come to Lander as pastor. Besides his other responsibilities, Reverend Gau offered to teach Latin classes to any who were interested. In the fall of 2004, Holy Rosary celebrated Reverend Robert Siu's fiftieth anniversary as a priest. Although retired, Reverend Siu has lived at Holy Rosary parish for many years where his offering of

Mass and visiting the sick are helpful additions for the parish community. Sister Dolores continues to put extra effort into the religious education program, claiming, “The youth are the future of our Church; therefore, it is important to make this program interesting and special.” As of July 2005, Reverend David Gau, S.J., remains pastor of Holy Rosary parish while Sister Dolores Herbeck continues to maintain the Franciscan presence in Lander as pastoral associate and director of religious education.

The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia

ETHETE, WYOMING

1988-Present

Sister Emily Ann Herbes, O.S.F. (Philadelphia, 2005)

St. Joseph Parish in Ethete, Wyoming, is a mission church of St. Stephens Indian Mission at St. Stephens, Wyoming. As there is no resident priest at St. Joseph, the presence of those who would provide religious education and parish ministry is greatly needed. Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary congregation had served in that capacity. Then Sister Michael Mary Yassick of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia assumed the duties of director of religious education from 1988 until she was transferred to Portland, Oregon in 1992. When Reverend Robert Hilbert, S.J., director and pastor of St. Stephens, learned that Sister Teresa Frawley, O.S.F., was planning to leave the school that year, he asked her to consider replacing Sister Michael Mary in parish ministry at Ethete. With the approval of her congregation, Sister Teresa arrived in July 1992.

Sister Teresa's original ministry description, which centered primarily in directing religious education for children and youth, evolved to include taking care of whatever needs arose. It was not unusual for her to give people rides to the clinic, to take Communion to the homebound during the day, to conduct a youth group in the evening, and then to find herself in the emergency room in the middle of the night in response to a call from someone whose spouse or child had been in an accident. [This description and the following paragraphs are gleaned from "Faith, Hope, and Family: The Ties that Bind Wind River" which featured Sister Teresa and her ministry in Good News, Vol. 3, Winter 2000, a publication of the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Personal reflections of Sister Teresa are also included.]

Although Sister Teresa's life is full, she sees herself not only as a person who does things for others, but also as one who allows others to begin to act for themselves. Sister Teresa promotes ownership and responsibility for the Church by encouraging people to play a vital part in the governance and day-to-day activities of their parish. Native American catechists teach religion; they lector and participate as Eucharistic ministers in the liturgies. St. Joseph's Guild, a group comprised of Arapahoe women, functions like a parish council, taking an advisory role, fundraising, and organizing social functions.

According to Sister Teresa, sharing the spiritual lives of the people of the Wind River Reservation has been a real gift. "Indian people are very spiritual in a way that is non-institutional and they bring that spirituality into our Church. God is in everything they do." The people enrich their spirituality through their culture, using the drum and native songs during liturgies for special occasions and for funerals. Eagle feathers are used in blessings. When they are not in church, traditional native ceremonies are still an important part of their social and spiritual lives. The pastor at St. Stephens in 2000, Reverend Dave Matzko, S.J., observed, "The people experience no difficulty moving between native spirituality and Catholicism. They are simply different prayer forms."

Until the summer of 1997, Reverend John Apel, S.J., who resided at Blessed Sacrament Parish at Fort Washakie, was also pastor for St. Joseph in Ethete. When his Jesuit community called him to serve on the administration team, he left for St. Louis, Missouri. His replacement, Father Matzko, S.J., chose to live at St. Stephens Mission. That decision meant that Sister Teresa would now add Blessed Sacrament to her parish ministry responsibilities. The priests from St. Stephens continued to offer the liturgies and to officiate in both mission parishes for funerals and other sacramental needs. To this arrangement, the parishes adjusted well.

Sister Teresa admits: “The work can be quite demanding at times. Alcohol and drugs are very serious problems on the reservation. There are too many untimely deaths, not enough jobs, poverty and poor management, bad accidents and family feuds. But there is also a wonderful spirituality, beautiful and inspiring native ceremonies and unforgettable individuals who somehow ‘keep on keeping on’--against all odds. Each day is different and provides new lessons. The secret is to stay open and flexible; let go of expectations when the unexpected presents itself.” Despite the substance abuse and a very high unemployment rate that affect almost every reservation family in some way, Sister Teresa recognizes that strong family ties, the powerful sense of belonging, and deeply implanted traditions keep many determined and steadfast through all their difficulties. Because of the variety of works and people she serves, Sister Teresa reflects that the thirteen years she has spent at St. Joseph’s, Ethete “seems more like three years.” Sister Teresa concludes, “‘Ethete,’ the Arapahoe word which translates as ‘a good place,’ is, indeed, a good place to live and to serve.”

APPENDIX
ST STEPHEN'S MISSION
FRANCISCAN DOCUMENTS
1892-1930

[Excerpts from House History and a Letter from Sister Clementina]

FRANCISCAN SISTERS
HOUSE HISTORY
ST STEPHEN'S MISSION
1892-1930
[Transcribed excerpts]

[This transcript was supplied to us by Barbara Flasch-Hendrickson along with her University of Wyoming Master's Thesis entitled "‘For God and Country’: the Changing Role of St. Stephen's Mission" (1973). See Index, St Stephens 1884-1973.]

Religious communities often keep very detailed diaries, accounts, and "house histories" of their various apostolates. One such famous account is the JESUIT RELATIONS OF NORTH AMERICA, a valuable source for Native American and Canadian history. The HOUSE HISTORIES of the Franciscan sisters of St Stephens are themselves important sources for Mission history. These accounts are especially valuable in understanding the day to day history not only of the sisters, but especially of the life of the Indian people of St. Stephens. The following excerpts are representative samples from nearly forty years of Franciscan memories: 1892-1930.

[From the Franciscan House History Book I]

[Book I Page 1]

Franciscans arrival at St. Stephens

[1892] At the request of Rev. Father Van Gorp S.J. and Rev. Father Stephan of the Indian Bureau at Washington D.C., and the consent of Rev. Mother Marv Agnes. Superior General at the time. six sisters left