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HOLY CROSS AT ST. MARY'S COLLEGE, GALVESTON

A SHORT STORY OF THE 1870s

by

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Holy Cross at St. Mary's College, Galveston

A Short Story of the 1870s

The story of how the men of Holy Cross in the 1870s began their work in Texas has been told more than once.[1] What pertains to Austin has told at length. The present paper recounts in more detail than has been done before the short-lived venture of the community in Galveston. It also makes reference to early projects in Brownsville and Galveston. The Brownsville project was short and farcical. That in San Antonio never got off the ground. In Galveston the community lasted for several years. But why did an undertaking begun with good prospects and bright hopes play out in such a short time? This paper hopes to throw some light on how and why. It suggests for one thing that Father Edward Sorin, provincial and then superior general at Notre Dame, was stretching available manpower too thin with his many undertakings. In Texas he finally had to decide upon priorities.

Information about the many starts he made in the years from 1865 to 1881, which bracket the period under consideration here, is found in "A Chronological Outline: The Congregation of Holy Cross in the United States 1841-1978", compiled by the Indiana Province Archives Center at Notre Dame. This source counts something like twenty-five parish and mission

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[1] See William Dunn, CSC., The Finest Country in the World: The Brothers and Priests of Holy Cross in Texas 1870-1984 (Notre Dame, 1985), 1-3, idem, Saint Edward's University: A Centennial History (Austin, 1986), 4-6, 14. A jubilee publication, The Silver Anniversary of Saint Mary's College in Galveston under Jesuit Administration," (Galveston, 1909), 11-12 (hereafter cited as "Silver Anniversary"), makes some use of recollections contributed by Brother Boniface, who then was at Notre Dame. Apparently Father Daniel Spillard, CSC., in 1922 dictated some notes which included material on Holy Cross in Galveston. This source, entitled "The Congregation of Holy Cross in Texas," which I have been unable to find, is cited by Father Raymond Clancy, CSC., in a paper which he wrote years ago, probably for the Golden Jubilee in 1924, of Holy Cross at Saint Mary's Church in Austin.

schools, seven parish churches, one orphanage, the Ave Maria Press at Notre Dame, and four farms, as new starts by the Congregation between 1865 and 1881. There were some seven new college or academy launchings: St. Mary's in Galveston, St. Joseph's in Cincinnati, St. Joseph's in Brownsville, Sacred Heart in Watertown, New Iberia in Louisiana, St. Joseph's in Brownsville and finally, St. Edward's in Austin. To keep all these plus the older works like Notre Dame going, Father Sorin had by a census of 1872, 164 brothers and thirty-six priests, both in the Indiana Province and in the Louisiana vice-province or whatever it then was.

How Bishop Claude-Marie Dubuis and Father Sorin negotiated the agreement that brought Holy Cross to St. Mary's College in Galveston in 1870 is related elsewhere. We may start with the arrival on September 9 of Brother Boniface Muher to assume the direction of the school, which had been opened before the Civil War. Seeing that he needed more help, Brother Boniface wired New Orleans for Father Richard Shortis, a Holy Cross man stationed there, asking him to come at once. That suited Father Shortis just fine. He had been wanting to go to Galveston. In fact, he had already written the Provincial--it was Father Granger at the time--asking about it, but had not received a letter of obedience for it. Nevertheless when Brother Boniface's telegram came that weekend, Shortis packed right up and left, probably on Sunday. He went to Galveston without an obedience, he later explained to Father Sorin, because of the urgency of Brother Boniface's summons. With him went Father John Toohey, then apparently a kind of vice-provincial for the South (elsewhere we see references to a Louisiana Province), who no doubt wanted to get a look at the new situation for himself. Just as they were leaving, two Brothers, Philip and Gregory, arrived in New Orleans also bound for Galveston.

Although they were expected at St. Mary's by the following Tuesday, they failed to beat a quarantine imposed upon New Orleans because of the yellow fever. [2]

In the meantime, Brother Boniface had begun teaching on Monday as planned. There were twenty-four boys in this first class taught by a Holy Cross religious in Texas. The number was higher on Tuesday when Fathers Shortis and Toohey arrived (Brother Boniface has them arriving on Wednesday) and "found this great Brother hard at work with thirty-three boys". For his part, the Brother was delighted to see Father Shortis, who took up the duties of chaplain and director of studies, pro tem, pending more definite arrangements. With the only church, St. Mary's Cathedral, a mile away, it was a great convenience to have a priest at the college. Nothing is said of classes for Shortis. [3]

By early October, when it was time to be thinking of a letter to Father Sorin for his feast day on October 13, Brother Boniface had had a pretty good opportunity to size up the new college. He obviously liked it. His feast-day letter to Sorin described its physical layout, prospects and progress in some detail. The campus was a spacious one, 300 feet by 275 feet, enclosed by a fence. The main college building, a three-story brick structure, was about eighty feet long and forty-five wide. When it was being planned in 1853, Bishop Odin thought that it would be too large. The Oblate Fathers wanted it large, however, and he went along with them on that.

In addition to the main structure there was an outbuilding or annex for the kitchen and other uses, possibly including the servants' rooms

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[2] Boniface to Sorin, Oct. 11, 1870; Shortis to Sorin, Oct. 11, 1870.
[3] Boniface to Sorin, Oct. 11, 1870; Toohey to Sorin, Oct. 10, 1870.

which are mentioned. The third floor of the main structure was reserved as a dormitory for boarding students. On the two lower floors were six classrooms, a chapel, eight rooms for professors, and a parlor. At the front of the college building was a small flower garden. One third of the remaining area of the campus was for a "kitchen garden" and two thirds of it for playground.

With the existing facilities and with the tradition that school had, Brother Boniface saw no difficulty in enrolling fifty boarders eventually. Just with day students, the number had more than doubled, up to fifty-one, within a month after his arrival. He could not take any more students for now, but was trying to make a good start otherwise. Needing help, he had telegraphed New Orleans for Father Shortis. He hoped that Father Sorin would sanction the arrangement by giving Father Shortis an obedience for St. Mary's College. Whether Sorin did not or whether for another reason, Shortis went back to New Orleans a few weeks later. The quarantine could be lifted soon, noted Boniface, and then the two brothers held up in New Orleans would be coming. When they arrived, he expected enrollment would go up.[4]

Those two brothers and then two more, one of them probably a Brother Charles, perhaps from Notre Dame, made it to Galveston soon thereafter. In its issue of November 5, 1870, the Notre Dame Scholastic mentioned that it had gleaned from the New Orleans papers that Brother Boniface was being "assisted by four efficient Brothers." Other Chaplains than Shortis the first two years were in turn Fathers Charles Padey and John Ruthmann. A layman, Professor Goldthorn, also had came onto the

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[4] Ibid.

faculty.[5]

Indications are that the early weeks at St. Mary's went generally well. The religious took a good first impression of the college and the city. Father Toohey, C. S. C., after his visit there in September, declared: "The place in Galveston is really delightful." and Brother Boniface himself wrote: "The climate is really delightful here and surpasses my expectations." There was no sickness at the time, he said, in "our beautiful island city", and his own health was good. He saw no real difficulty in the new venture. Galveston boys were a little wild, to be sure, but not wicked. Success was on the horizon, and a broad field was opening up for the Congregation in Texas.[6]

As the autumn advanced, Brother Boniface had the opportunity to talk to Bishop Dubuis, now back from the Vatican Council in Rome, about other works that the Congregation might undertake in the diocese, which then included almost all of Texas. He urged that Father Sorin bring as many religious from France as he could. They would find a home in Texas, he promised. Boniface duly relayed the bishop's invitations to Father Sorin. He mentioned Houston and Laredo, on which nothing more is found, as well as Brownsville and San Antonio. What became the main show, Austin, was not mentioned at this time.[7]

Brother Boniface himself was exultant about Texas. "This seems really our country," he wrote, "where we can do much good." Before Christmas already there were eighty-four boys, ten of them boarders, at St. Mary's. A seminarian was teaching Latin and French. German, enrolling

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5 "Silver Anniversary"
6 Toohey to Sorin, Oct. 10, 1870.
7 Boniface to Sorin, Nov. 27, 1870, Dec. 5, 1870.

eighteen students, was probably taught by Boniface himself. He expected the school's enrollment to double by January 1 and wanted another brother for the minims or little boys.[8]

In its second year of operation, 1871-1872, St. Mary's of Galveston did well also. Its reputation in the city rose to new heights. Protestant and Jewish as well as Catholic boys were in attendance. A German-American postulant became "the first Brother that took the habit in Texas". His name was Brother Joseph. Brother Boniface even expressed the opinion that it would be better to have a novitiate in Galveston than in New Orleans. For one thing, Galveston was more salubrious. There had been no epidemics of cholera or yellow fever there for a year. And, although he himself was doing well as the director of the college, Brother Boniface asked in December, 1871 for a priest to replace him in that role. His request was granted, and on January 30, 1872 Father A. E. Bernier (whom I do not find in the 1962 General Directory) assumed charge at the behest of the Provincial Visitor, but without a letter of obedience. At first it was fine. "I am happy to have at last some relief," sighed the hard-working brother.[9]

But a transfer of power is not always easy, and Father Bernier quickly perceived that he was not fully accepted. After more than a week in office, he complained to Sorin that he had not yet been introduced to the students as the new superior. Brother Boniface continued to receive visitors, to admit new students, and to give permissions for leaving campus, as though he were still in charge himself. Bernier was not even kept informed. Moreover, when he mentioned a few little changes that he

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[8] Boniface to Sorin, Nov. 27, 1870.
[9] Boniface to Sorin, Feb. 7, 1872.

thought should be made, in the order of the house or the school, he met resistance and was even threatened with appeals to the Superior General. It would help him to get things under control, Bernier suggested, if he had a formal letter of obedience for his assignment from the Superior General, and if duties were clearly assigned. Thus Sorin should name an econome, a prefect of studies and a prefect of discipline. And was not the superior the one who should keep the money box? Father Sorin himself had ordered that, Bernier recalled. There were economies that could be made. Some of the improvements being considered were not really necessary. The lay professor was a good man, but he was being paid twice as much as he would have to be.

Resistance manifested itself in different ways. There had been a little fuss with Bishop Dubuis over catechising the boys. The bishop expressed his wish to have them all come to the Cathedral a mile away. He would then give them religious instructions himself, without even having the brothers present to supervise them. When Bernier put this plan before the brothers, they refused to go along with it. Father Sorin himself, they pointed out, had directed that the students get their catechism at the college. So the bishop had to back off. For certain community exercises Father Bernier proposed using a room other than the chapel. This too met with prompt opposition. The reason alleged was that making the exercises in chapel was in accordance with an order from higher authority.

So the new superior's intentions were misunderstood. He was perceived as an innovator and disturber of the peace. Actually he was just trying to be helpful and to improve the order of the place. He very much wanted to win the acceptance of the religious and the pupils. As it was,

he could only hope that Father Sorin's eagerly awaited visit to the South would be oil on troubled waters and would stimulate a spirit of cooperation. [10]

Before the end of the same month, Brother Boniface received an obedience to move to another assignment, at St. Joseph's College Cincinnati. In agreement with Father Bernier and the bishop, however, he proposed to stay in Galveston until Father Sorin could come down and see things there at first hand. The brother was sure that Father Sorin would not want to hurt St. Mary's College, and that it what would happen if he left under the circumstances. "The college as it is now," he wrote Sorin, "is the result of my efforts, and all the confidence of our people is placed in me." Father Bernier was a good man, but he seemed to think he had to change everything. For example, he had broken up the catechism class on Sunday. Clearly, Brother Boniface, at least in his own opinion, was still needed in Galveston, and he was allowed to stay there through the next school year.[11]

There is not a great deal to be found about affairs at St. Mary's College during the spring session of 1872. There were small successes. The boys in the First Communion class passed their examinations with Father Chambodut. The bishop was getting over his "prejudice" against the catechism class. On the negative side, there were some cases of measles in the student body. All in all, it seems to have been tolerably good season at the school.[12] What really made that spring fateful for Holy Cross history, however, was that negotiations were begun then for the

10Bernier to Sorin, Feb. 9, 1872.

11Boniface to Sorin, Feb. 25, 1872.

12 Boniface to Sorin, May 17, 1872.

congregation to go to Austin. So Father Sorin came to Galveston for that as well as to visit the community there. We do not learn how he handled matters at Galveston. The Austin affair is well recorded, but that is another matter.[13]

As Holy Cross began its third year in Galveston, Brother Boniface was back in the position of superior and director. Father Bernier was no longer there. The year seems to have brought a decline, of which the main cause may have been weaknesses on the faculty and in the religious house. Poor preparations the summer before may also have contributed. In any case, there were only seventy students in school by the beginning of November. Brother Boniface, who had been away himself during the summer, suspected that the lack of recruitment had hurt. He noted too a retention problem. Several of the "most promising boys" from the year before had enrolled elsewhere. He did not think the teaching at the college was to blame. He thought, in fact, that it had probably improved.[14]

In October two new brothers arrived, Brothers Felix and Agatho. Brother Felix had hurt himself in some way by working too hard at New Orleans--probably at St. Isidore's Farm.[15] He came to Galveston with Brother Boniface, who had made a trip to New Orleans at that time. Felix seems to have fitted in quietly. Agatho came through New Orleans, probably from the academy at New Iberia, Louisiana. He seems to have been a close observer, if not a man for all seasons. His first impression of Galveston was favorable, though he found the college "considerably in need of repairs and care". He thought that a housekeeper (he may have

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13 See Dunn, Saint Edward's University, 1, 6-10.

14 Boniface to Sorin, Nov. 1, Nov. 18, 1872.

15 Father John Ruthmann, CSC., to Sorin, Oct. 16, 1872.

meant a maintenance man) could spruce the place up. Reporting his early observations, he said that all the brothers there were well, but that he feared the chaplain would "succumb to his well-known weakness".

Before the end of November, Agatho was complaining of a "throat malady", which was aggravated by the damp Galveston climate. He needed rest, he said, and that meant getting out of teaching. He would be willing to go to New Orleans and do some light work around the house there. As for Galveston, he had tried his best, but as Brother Boniface would confirm, it was too hard for him. Still he did not want to quit and leave Brother Boniface without a teacher. By Christmas time, he had made up his mind to tough it out a while longer at least. [16]

The chaplain, Father Vincent Hayes, was also a question mark, as Brother Agatho indicated.[17] Brother Boniface had failed to accept Father Bernier the year before in spite of the latter's best efforts. Father Mariné was supposed to have come from New Orleans, but sickness had prevented that. Now the director had to put up with a problem drinker as chaplain. And he was willing to do so, he said, "until God provides for us otherwise". At least Father Hayes was saying Mass for the community regularly and saving them the long walk to the cathedral.[18] Hayes was not a C. S. C. Brother Boniface identified him as "an old priest from the north", probably from Ireland.[19]

In spite of these troubles, they must have done something right at St. Mary's that year. Unfortunately the records are silent about most of the spring session. It is said, however, that the closing exercises in June

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[16] Agatho to Sorin, Nov. 27, Dec. 26, 1872.
[17] Agatho to Sorin, Oct. 16, 1872.
[18] Boniface to Sorin, Oct. 29, Nov. 29, 1872.
[19] "Silver Anniversary," 11-12.

of 1873 were well done and made an excellent impression upon the public.[20] So after three years, the position of Holy Cross at Galveston seemed viable.

The summer brought an important change for St. Mary's. Brother Boniface was now transferred away from it to the presidency of St. Joseph's College in Cincinnati. His loss hurt Galveston. He had become well known and well liked there, and when he did not return St. Mary's lost students. This and other complaints were expressed to Sorin in a letter by a continuing member of the faculty, Brother Charles. And Charles was not a young whipper-snapper, for he remarked that he had been in the community for over twenty-five years, good and bad. The new director, Brother John Chrysostom, who had arrived in late August, was feeling discouraged and sick before two weeks had passed. The school was difficult to run, said Brother Charles, for the people were not like those in the north. It was not easy to please them nor to "manage" their children. There was no priest in the faculty house--Father Hayes was gone--and Mass there was rare. The Brothers had to walk the mile to the Cathedral for confession and communion--"among the public", Brother Charles added parenthetically. The wish of all the brothers was that a priest like Father Toohey might be placed in charge of the college. He was a southern man himself and understood southerners, who did not like "to be governed by northern superiors". He could also teach French, and thus fill a need of the school. Also, the house wanted Brother Ildephonse for housework. Servants here were unreliable. One had walked out yesterday without a word of explanation and the community had had to rustle up supper for

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[20] Charles to Sorin, Sept. 11, 1873.

themselves. [21]

Brother John himself had written Sorin in the latter part of September reviewing the limitations of Galveston and suggesting that Austin might be a better place.[22] Father Feltin had been in town a few weeks before, in fact, asking when Holy Cross was going to begin its work at Austin. The religious at the college had replied that they knew nothing about it.[23]

And Charles wrote Sorin again on November 1. He said his superior had told him to write candidly about things as he saw them. His chief complaint was about the removal of Brother Boniface. It explained why the enrollment was so small--only 115 students. There had been only seventy students at St. Mary's the year before. Even worse, the number of boarders had been very low, ranging from three to eight. And boarders were counted on most to pay the bills. Day students paid little; many were poor boys sent by priests and paying nothing. But even so, the "exhibition" or closing exercises of the school year in the spring had been very successful. The favorable impression it had made on the public had raised hopes for as many as thirty boarders in the fall. What had ruined the prospect was that Brother Boniface, who "was well known and had the confidence of the public" was taken away from the school.

But there were other adversities too. The clergy was not very supportive; even Father Chambodut, once a great friend, seemed to have turned cold recently. There had been epidemics and quarantines in various parts of the state. Galveston had been nearly free of yellow fever, but had

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21 Ibid.; Charles to Sorin, Dec. 23, 1873.
22 John to Sorin, Sept. 21, 1873.
23 Charles to Sorin, Sept. 11, 1873, Sept. 24, 1873.

had some of the Dengue fever. This had afflicted two students and three teachers at St. Mary's College. All were well now. The quarantine had been removed, and there was the prospect of a few months free of sickness. But the financial panic of '73 made money scarce, and the school was having trouble paying its debts. Travelling, most of it unnecessary in Brother Charles' opinion, had been a drain on the resources of the house. Brother John was depressed and in poor health. When he had come to Galveston, he understood that a priest was to be superior. He had not expected the office himself, and he felt it to be a burden. The school was difficult to administer and the public hard to please. Yet Brother John's pleas to Notre Dame seemed to go unheeded, and this made him feel even worse. The inconvenience of having to go to the Cathedral for the sacraments was a standing grievance of the house.[24]

Two other members of the house informed Notre Dame that they personally were unhappy. One of them, Maurice, had been asking Sorin from the year before to be allowed to return to Notre Dame.[25] The other was Joseph, the German novice what had entered from Texas. He missed Brother Boniface, who as we know was German too.[26]

In spite of all this, Vicar General Chambodut told Sorin in October "Your dear brothers have a beautiful school." The number of boys in it was growing every day. The leaders of the diocese thought the world of Brother John. Even the yellow fever had "respected us this year".[27] As the fall advanced, Brother John himself admitted that things were looking

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[24] Charles to Sorin, Nov. 1, 1873.
[25] Maurice to Sorin, Oct. 6, 1873, Nov. 6, 1873, Dec. 22, 1873.
[26] Joseph to Sorin, Dec. 22, 1873.
[27] Chambodut to Sorin, Oct. 21, 1873.

brighter.[28] Early in the new year of 1874 Bishop Dubuis noted that the school was doing good work and giving satisfaction generally.[29] Father Chambodut confirmed that judgment and added that the future of the institution was now assured. But Brother John, noting that the opening of parochial schools in the city was hurting prospects, was not so sure of the future of his congregation there.[31] Moreover, Father Sorin by 1874 had shifted his hopes for the growth of Holy Cross in Texas and his affection from Galveston to Austin where Holy Cross people arrived that spring. Alluding to the story of Jacob and his sons in the Old Testament, where he said: "Of all our foundations, Austin is my Benjamin." And as the school year ended he instructed Father Daniel Spillard, who had been at St. Mary's Church in Austin since April, either to negotiate the community out of Galveston or to make sure that it would have sufficient students. He should go about this with tact, of course.[32]

August found Brother John still in Galveston and wondering what he was going to do for faculty. Brothers Pancratius, Charles and Maurice were gone. So Brother John had with him only Brother Joseph, and he was supposed to be making his novitiate. Teachers were needed for "German, Book-keeping, Latin, Geometry, Algebra, Physicks [sic] and Music Vocal & instrumental".[33]

Father Sorin was no greenhorn. He surely knew that this was no way to run a school--to leave its director wondering at the eleventh hour about a faculty. The fact is, he was losing interest in Galveston and

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[28] John to Sorin, Nov. 13, 1873.
[29] Dubuis to Sorin, Jan. 3, 1874.
[31] John to Sorin, April 30, 1874.
[32] Sorin to Spillard, June 14, 1874.
[33] John to Sorin, Aug. 21, 1874.

wanted to concentrate on Austin. From this point I find precious little about the congregation's involvement with it. There is evidence that at least one religious, a Brother Anthelme or Anselm from New Orleans and Father Joseph Carrier, reported to Galveston in the fall of 1874,[34] and that Brother John was in Galveston as late as August 1875, presumably still at the college.[35] For some reason Father Carrier seems along the way to have incurred the bishop's displeasure. Perhaps he was just the man in the middle as Holy Cross wound down its commitment to St. Mary's College. In a letter of August 1876, Sorin asked the bishop why he was displeased with Carrier. Surely he had explained to the bishop why Holy Cross for the time being had to cut down at St. Mary's. "Let us hope for better times," Sorin added, perhaps significantly.[36]

Brother Boniface years later wrote that the brothers of Holy Cross remained at St. Mary's until July of 1877.[37] In 1878, the former Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross, the Most Reverend Pierre Dufal, came to Galveston as coadjutor bishop to Bishop Dubuis. Understandably, he wanted to get the community back to work at the college there. So in August he fired off a telegram to Father Sorin. The college would open on September 2. "Accept it," he barked, forgetting that he was no longer Superior General. "Send Brother Boniface and two Brothers. Answer by telegram..."[38] Sorin, unmoved, replied that he could not accept the college this year. To confirm the point that now there was no Holy Cross house in Galveston, there is a Report of December 1878 on the Province of Indiana.

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34 Fr. Michael Robinson to Sorin, Feb. 26, 1875.

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38 Dufal to Sorin, [Aug.] 19, 1878.

It says that Holy Cross at the time had only two establishments in Texas--St. Mary's Church in Austin and a farm "over the river" near the same city.[39]

Yet in March 1879 the chancellor of the diocese, then Father J. M. Guyot, asked Father Sorin whether he intended to take charge of St. Mary's College that September. The diocese wanted to know, because other religious communities were interested in it.[40] Guyot also put the question to Spillard, now the Holy Cross leader in Texas. Spillard referred it to Sorin, offering the opinion that would it be better to give up Galveston since, as was known by then, Bishop Dufal was not going to stay there. [41] The last word for a while on the college is found in a letter of Sorin to Father Daniel Spillard, C. S. C., at Austin in the early spring of 1879. Sorin said that he had the deed to the college almost ready to send back to the bishop in Galveston. He made a cryptic statement that the "unsettled" condition of the Galveston matter had kept him from making an anticipated visit to Texas that season. Now other matters were pressing and it was too late to go.[42] Soon the deed was sent, Bishop Dufal thanking Sorin for sending it.[43]

Five years later the Holy Cross people learned that the Jesuits were taking St. Mary's College in Galveston and would operate it as a day school.[44] The new community entered upon a long era of stable service which the retiring community might envy. In 1909 they published a

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40 Guyot to Spillard, March 1, 1879.

41 Spillard to Sorin, March 28, 1879.

42 Sorin to Spillard, April 1, 1879.

43 Dufal to Sorin, June 25, 1884.

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booklet celebrating their silver anniversary there. The had contacted Brother Boniface, still living at Notre Dame, and they included some of his recollections in their historical sketch.[45] What I remember best about that sketch, however, was the comparison it made between fly-by-night communities and the Jesuits who could be counted on to stay on the job and open their school every fall year after year.[46]

It is necessary now to go back to the early 1870s and to notice briefly two other stories--about Brownsville and Mission San Jose in San Antonio. Bishop Dubuis was initially pleased, as we have seen, with the start Holy Cross made at Galveston. One day in late November 1870 he had had a long talk with Brother Boniface about other works which he hoped the Congregation would take. Among others he mentioned St. Joseph's College in Brownsville, on the lower Rio Grande across from Matamoros. [47] In a confused decision-making process involving community authorities in New Orleans--it is not clear that Father Sorin ever approved--two seminarians were sent to St. Joseph's in the fall of 1873. It was a disaster. The seminarian in charge tried hard, but the other one was immature and a bit of a goof-off. The Oblate pastor of the local church, presumably the superior of the college, had the good sense to stay away from it. Holy Cross recalled its seminarians at the end of the year, but they were held up for a time because of debts incurred for school improvements. All of this seems to have strained relations--it is not entirely clear how--between involved members of the two religious communities. And Holy Cross was finished at Brownsville. [48]

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[45] "Silver Anniversary", 11-12.
[46] Ibid., 15-16.
[47] Boniface to Sorin, Nov. 27, 1870.
[48] Representative documents for the Brownsville episode are: A. Gaudet to Sorin, April 5,

Even shorter is the San Antonio story. The bishop had promised the old Franciscan mission of San Jose to Holy Cross suggesting that it could be used as a home for convalescents or as a mission house from which Holy Cross priests could go out to preach missions around Texas. But Holy Cross, seems never to have gotten possession of San Jose. Instead the mission was opened up (Bishop Dubuis said it was "ceded") in 1873 to twenty-four Jesuits expelled from Mexico in the course of the Liberal Reform there. The diocesan authorities explained to Father Sorin that it was a question of saving the mission for the Church. It had already been seized by "the court of Austin", and would go to the city (it was then outside the city--Maybe Bexar if it was not occupied promptly--and apparently Holy Cross was not able to do that.[49] So when Holy Cross men are grumbling about opportunities that the congregation has slip through its fingers, they may count "the Queen of the Missions". But everything worked out for the best in the long run. The Jesuits from Mexico found a harbor in the storm. And today the Franciscans are back in their old mission. That is surely more appropriate than to have there a society which did not even exist when it was established.

The early retirement of Holy Cross from Galveston, its fumbling efforts in Brownsville, and its failure to follow up promptly the offer of the mission in San Antonio were all related to a shortage of manpower and the need to set priorities. Certainly the new opportunities turning up in Austin called for a diversion of resources that hurt Galveston. Austin would give the congregation not only a school, but also the city's only

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1871; Francis Malloy to Michael Robinson, Oct. 12, 1873; Robinson to Sorin, Jan. 9, 1874, Feb. 9, 1874, March 12, 1874.

[49] Dubuis to Sorin, Sept. 19, 1872; Chambodut to Sorin, Dec. 30, 1873.

parish and two handsome tracts of land. It was the state capital, picturesquely located, and bound to grow. It was healthier than Galveston, less subject to visitations of the yellow fever. It was not exposed to hurricane--driven tidal waves such as the one that was to flood Galveston in 1900. So not having enough men for both missions, Sorin went with the one that seemed to have more advantages. I should say that his faith in Austin has been vindicated.

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