

ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-2012-0002

HLC DATE:

January 23, 2012

PC DATE:

APPLICANT: Historic Landmark Commission

HISTORIC NAME: Victor R. and Ella Schmidt House

WATERSHED: Boggy Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 1600 E. 11th Street

ZONING FROM: SF-3-NP to SF-3-H-NP

SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from single family residence, neighborhood plan (SF-3-NP) district to single family residence – Historic Landmark, neighborhood plan (SF-3-H-NP) combining district zoning.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION:

The ca. 1917 Victor and Ella Schmidt House is a good example of a vernacular pyramidal-roofed transitional cottage, represents the architecture and environment of the middle class in the early and mid-20th century in Austin, and has historical significance as the convent for the Sisters of the Immaculate Holy Cross, who ran the Holy Cross Hospital, Austin's first racially-integrated medical facility.

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: April 26, 2010: Initiated the historic zoning case. Vote: 6-0 (Myers absent).

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION:

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The house is beyond the bounds of the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984).

CITY COUNCIL DATE:

ACTION:

ORDINANCE READINGS: 1ST 2ND 3RD

ORDINANCE NUMBER:

CASE MANAGER: Steve Sadowsky

PHONE: 974-6454

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: Organization of Central East Austin Neighborhoods (OCEAN)

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

Architecture:

One-story rectangular-plan pyramidal-roof frame transitional cottage with hipped and gabled dormers and a partial-width inset porch.

Historical Associations:

The house was built around 1917 for Victor R. and Ella Schmidt. Victor Schmidt was a teacher at the time he purchased the house, but by 1918, he had gone to work as a draftsman for the State Highway Department. He worked as a bridge designer and bridge engineer, a job which took him out of Austin for long periods of time. He and Ella are listed as the occupants of the house through the 1922 city directory; the house was then rented

out until around 1935, when the Schmidts returned to Austin. They moved back into this house and lived here until around 1939. Their son, Victor R. Schmidt, Jr., and his wife, Opal, are listed as the owners and occupants in the early 1940s. By 1943, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Holy Cross were using the house as a convent. The Sisters ran Holy Cross Hospital in East Austin for patients of all races. The convent then became the rectory for Holy Cross Catholic Church, which is at the east end of this block. Holy Cross Catholic Church still owns the property.

PARCEL NO.: 02060909070000

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: 50 x 192.5 feet of Outlot 61, Division B, L.K. Miller Subdivision, plus ½ of the vacated street.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: \$1,147 (owner-occupied); city portion: \$268; \$584 (income-producing).

APPRAISED VALUE: \$127,500

PRESENT USE: Vacant

CONDITION: Good

PRESENT OWNERS: Roman Catholic Diocese of Austin, Texas
P.O. Box 13327
Austin, Texas 78711




DATE BUILT: ca. 1917

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: None apparent.

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): Victor and Ella Schmidt (1917)

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None.



 SUBJECT TRACT
 ZONING BOUNDARY
 PENDING CASE

HISTORIC ZONING

ZONING CASE#: C14H-2010-0017
ADDRESS: 1600 E 11TH ST
SUBJECT AREA: 0.000 ACRES
GRID: K22
MANAGER: STEVE SADOWSKY



This map has been produced by the Communications Technology Management Dept. on behalf of the Planning Development Review Dept. for the sole purpose of geographic reference. No warranty is made by the City of Austin regarding specific accuracy or completeness.

1600 E. 11th Street
ca. 1917



OCCUPANCY HISTORY

1600 East 11th Street

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
April 2010

1992	Rev. George Artis, renter Pastor, Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1610 E. 11 th Street
1985-86	Rev. Mark Figaro, renter Pastor, Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1610 E. 11 th Street
1980	Rev. Mike Fritzen, renter Pastor, Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1610 E. 11 th Street
1976	Rev. Mike Fritzen, renter Pastor, Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1610 E. 11 th Street NOTE: The directory indicates that Rev. Mike Fritzen was a new resident at this address.
1971	Rev. Clement Mathis, renter Pastor, Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1610 E. 11 th Street
1967	Rev. Clement Mathis, renter Pastor, Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1610 E. 11 th Street
1963	Rev. Stanley Gootee, renter Pastor, Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1610 E. 11 th Street
1959	Rev. Aloysius Dayberry, renter Pastor, Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1610 E. 11 th Street
1955	Rev. Aloysius Dayberry, renter Pastor, Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1610 E. 11 th Street
1952	Rev. Edwin C. Bauer, renter Pastor, Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1610 E. 11 th Street
1949	Missionary Sisters of Immaculate Holy Cross Convent
1947	Missionary Sisters of Immaculate Holy Cross Convent
1944-45	Missionary Sisters of Immaculate Holy Cross Convent
1942	Victor R. and Opal Schmidt, owners No occupation listed
1940	Victor R. and Opal Schmidt, owners Draftsman, City Water Department
1939	Victor R. and Opal Schmidt, owners Clerk
1937	Victor R. and Ella Schmidt, owners Engineer Also listed is Victor R. Schmidt, Jr., a student at the University of Texas.
1935	Victor R. and Ella Schmidt, owners Bridge engineer Also listed is Victor R. Schmidt, Jr., a student at the University of Texas.

1932-33	Henry T. Kirkpatrick, renter No occupation listed NOTE: Victor R. and Ella Schmidt are not listed in the directory; Victor R. Schmidt, Jr. is listed as a student at the University of Texas, living at 304 W. 15 th Street.
1930-31	Henry T. Kirkpatrick, renter County headlight supervisor
1929	Vacant
1927	James E. and La Rue McClain, renters City detective NOTE: The 1920 U.S. Census shows James E. McClain as the single 24-year old son of James and Stella McClain, who lived at 4310 Avenue D in Austin. James E. McClain had been born in Texas and was working as a conductor on the electric bus.
1924	Lanus E. and Edna Bauerfeind, renters Printer, Texas Posten Publishing Company, 105 E. 10 th Street. NOTE: By 1930, Lanus and Edna Bauerfeind were living with her parents in Ochiltree County, Texas; he was a printer at a newspaper there. Lanus Bauerfeind was then 35 years old and had been born in Texas. Edna Bauerfeind was then 33 years old and had been born in Nebraska. They had one daughter, also named Edna. Bauerfeind was the son of a newspaper printer named Julius Bauerfeind. According to the 1910 U.S. Census, the family was living in Bisbee, Arizona.
1922	Victor R. and Ella Schmidt, owners Draftsman, State Highway Department
1920	Victor R. and Ella Schmidt, owners Draftsman, State Highway Department
1918	Victor R. and Ella Schmidt, owners Teacher, Junior High School
1916	The address is not listed in the directory. NOTE: Victor R. Schmidt is listed as a teacher at Austin High School, living at 1400 San Jacinto.

Holy Cross Colored Missions	1600 East 11th St.
34 C	B
L. Miller Subdivision	
Detached garage	
70691	10/20/58 200.00
Lern Gilmore	none

Building permit to the Holy Cross Colored Missions for the construction of a detached garage (1958)

OWNER	Holy Cross Catholic Church			ADDRESS	1600 East 11th
PLAT	34	LOT	C	BLK.	B
SUBDIVISION	L. K. Miller				
OCCUPANCY	carport addn				
BLDG. PERMIT #	193947	DATE	4-4-80	OWNERS ESTIMATE	2,500.
CONTRACTOR	Owner			NO. OF FIXTURES	
WATER TAP REC#				SEWER TAP REC#	

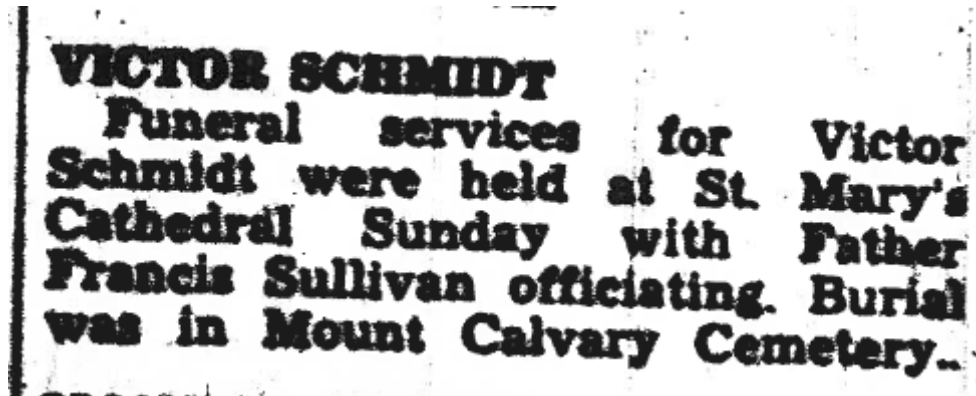
Building permit to Holy Cross Catholic Church for the construction of a carport (1980)

The 1930 U.S. Census shows Victor R. and Ella Schmidt renting a house in Crockett, Texas; city directories before and after this census report show the Schmidts as the owners and occupants of this house. According to the 1930 census report, both Victor and Ella Schmidt were then 42 years old; both had been born in Texas to German-born parents. They had 5 children, the oldest of whom, Victor R., Jr., was then 14. Schmidt listed his occupation as a civil engineer, engaged in bridge building. No other family members listed an occupation.

The 1920 U.S. Census shows Victor and Ella Schmidt in this house on E. 11th Street. He is listed as a civil engineer for the State Highway Department.

VICTOR R. SCHMIDT
CAMERON, Sept. 16.—(Spl)—Victor Raymond Schmidt died Friday here, following a heart attack. Schmidt was born in Austin July 18, 1887, and had been with the Highway Department for over 30 years.
He is survived by his widow, Mrs. V. R. Schmidt of Cameron; two sons, Victor R. Schmidt Jr. of Austin and E. Schmidt of Dallas; three daughters, Mrs. Edward Tomsu of Austin, Mrs. A. F. McCormick of Raymondville, and Miss Eleanor Schmidt of Cameron; two brothers, Otto A. Schmidt and A. G. Sievers, both of Austin; two sisters, Miss Anna V. Schmidt and Miss Erica Schmidt, both of Austin. Rosary services will be held at the Cook Funeral Home Saturday at 8 p. m. Funeral services will be held at St. Mary's Cathedral Sunday at 8 p. m. Burial will be in Mount Calvary Cemetery.

Obituary of Victor Schmidt
Austin American, September 17, 1949



Funeral notice for Victor Schmidt
 Austin Statesman, September 19, 1949

Steve_ here is the information I have put together so far on 1600 E 11th. I am waiting for some more info from the Schmidt family and an architect. You should go over again and look at the house. Now that they have torn off the ugly shingles and torn up the screens you can see in the windows. It's quite lovely. Also, the info I have from the appraisal district is that the whole value of that lot is in the land-\$187,500. the structure is listed at zero.

1600 E. 11th Street Austin, Texas 78702

Owners of the property where the house at 1600 E. 11th Street sits include a list of some of Austin=s most prominent citizens. One of the first owners was Samuel Whiting, pioneer printer who published the first newspaper in Travis County called the Austin City Gazette. Other property owners included Col. Thomas T. Fauntleroy, commander of the US troops in the area during the 1850's. Swen Magnus Swenson, the first Swedish immigrant to settle Texas and an opponent of slavery; and L.K. Miller, whose brother ran the Texas Democrat. The property was part of a larger lot that includes the German-American Ladies College, which was under the direction of Alice Nohl and Natalie Von Schenck. It was considered one of the outstanding Austin schools. The current structure at 1600 has been home to leading Austin citizens and to ground-breaking members of orders of religious societies.

LAND OWNERS

Samuel Whiting

Samuel Whiting was a pioneer printer who came to Texas in 1825 from the United States, as stated in his certificate of character. He represented the District of Liberty at the Convention of 1833 and the consultation of 1835. He served as Secretary at the latter. He fought as a private in Captain Fannin=s Company from September 29 to December 29, 1835. His house on the Brazos was rented to various companies for barracks between 1835-6, but records indicate that the troops killed many of his cattle and damaged much of his property. He sold considerable supplies to the Republic for the Mexican prisoners and guards stationed at Liberty. Soon after the capitol was located in Houston, Whiting moved to Houston and engaged in printing and newspaper work. In 1838-39, he owned the National Intelligencer, in the offices of which he printed the laws and journals of the Third congress.

Mary Starr Barkley places Samuel Whiting in Austin in 1838, and references him as an active citizen. For example, he published the first newspaper in Travis County called the Austin City Gazette on October 30, 1839. A weekly Wednesday edition of this paper sold for \$5 yearly and lasted until March 30, 1842. She also notes that on January 13, 1840, Whiting is included as one of the first elected alderman and on October 21, 1841, as a member of a fire protection group authorized by the city.

In 1842, he was also documented as a member of the Citizens Committee, along with William L. Cazneau, A.D. Coombs, Joseph Lee, Eugene C. Kelly, James Webb and others, who defied his friend Sam Houston to keep the archives in Austin.

Later in 1842, Whiting also engaged in another war and served under General Edward Burleson in his campaign against the Indians. Whiting was one of the few left at the Capitol after the President and his cabinet had fled following the Mexican General Woll's invasion in September 1842. Most likely one of the reasons he remained was that his assets were tied up in property, stocks and printing for his printing costs during the last sessions, according to a letter dated December 10, 1842, to the Honorable Anson Jones. On this letter he sought financial assistance for the transportation of his printing equipment out of Austin.

About 1843, it is reported that Whiting left Austin for some destination east of the Mississippi and en route to the West Coast in 1850, he stopped in Austin. On September 2, he transferred a warrant for the 1842 printing to H.E. Catlett. The judgment for D.H. McDonald against Sam Whiting on September 3, 1843, for which J.H. Matthews, as sheriff, sold the property, cited with a dwelling house, and the date of the judgment was July 7, 1850. Whiting may or may not have been present at this sale.

Colonel Thomas T. Fauntleroy

The Annals of Frank Brown for the year 1850 place Col. F in Austin. During the last week of May that year he was in command of the US troops. When news of a large body of Comanches was reported in the vicinity of Georgetown and were showing signs of hostility, he dispatched Lt. A.D. Tree with the entire force at the Capitol to the area of trouble. The Indian raid, as this event was called, was met with Lt. Tree's forces and those of Capt. Blake from Hamilton Valley Station. Although the Indians said they were returning from a visit to General Brooke in San Antonio, some property of the settlers in Williamson County was damaged and alarmed the residents of Austin.

Col. Fauntleroy was married and active among the prominent society people in Austin during the 1850's. F. Brown, for example, mentions that he was genial and the old timers would remember him with pleasure. He may have sold the property to SM Swenson in 1850 because of his connections with the prominent society.

Swen (Svante) Magnus Swenson

Mr. Swenson was well known as a prominent businessman, rancher and leader in bringing Swedish immigrants to Texas. Born February 14, 1816 in Lattarp, Smaland, Sweden, he came to America in 1836 and in 1838 was to become the first Swedish immigrant to have settled in Texas. He entered into a partnership with his uncle, Svante Palm, and together they were highly successful in the mercantile business. This business was first located in La Grange, later in Austin. The business grew to include banking, hotel operation and dealings in land and cotton.

In 1850, Swenson married Cora Susan McCready, daughter of Ephraim McCready of Columbia Tennessee and cousin to his first wife, Mrs. Jeanette Long, widow of Dr. Edward Long of Sugarland. It may be that the growth of the Swenson-Palm business brought Swenson to Austin with his new wife in 1850. He bought the property with dwelling house from Col. Fauntleroy on October 3, 1850 and did not sell it until July 10, 1871. It is known that Swenson could not have lived there the whole time of his possession since he fled for his life in the autumn of 1863 due to his views on slavery during the Civil War. He returned in June 1865, at which time he transferred his family and chief business interests to New Orleans. His residence in Austin was referenced as on a hill overlooking Govalle. This location meets that description nears Robertson's Hill and was Austin's most prestigious area.

LK Miller

According to the Frank Brown Annals, LK Miller was born in Alabama in 1832 and came to Austin in the middle of the 19th Century. He had two brothers: David J. Miller who came to Austin in 1845, and Washington D. Miller, who was Secretary of State to Governor Wood in 1848 and part time editor of the Texas Democrat. Brown also states that

LK Miller resided at the capitol or in its vicinity until his death on November 13, 1899. The 1860 census for Travis County lists LK Miller as a 26-year-old farmer from Alabama. The post office location for the precinct in which he resided indicated that he had such neighbors as Crosswaithe, Doyle, McArther, Shaw and Rowe. This is the area where the Horton-Duval Home and the Sneed Home are located. The post office, no longer in use, was Bluff Spring. The location of 1600 E. 11th is identified as the LK Miller Subdivision.

Julius and Alma Moreau

We have little personal information on Mr. Moreau except his wife's name was Alma and Moreau was 22 when he arrived in New Braunfels from Weisbaden aboard the vessel Weser in 1858. On April 29, 1876, Moreau and his wife entered into a contract with Fredrick Braun for construction of 1604 E 11th Street. The cost was \$900-furnished labor and materials. It was mortgaged with the Austin Home Building Association.

Natalie von Schenck and Alice Nohl German-American Ladies College

Moreau conveyed the property to Natalie von Schenck and Alice Nohl on December 7, 1877 for \$800 upon which our residence is now situated and presently occupied by them and used as a boarding school academy, the German-American Ladies College.

THE PRINCIPALS OF THE
German-American Ladies College
In Austin
Will remove their institution to the house of
Mr. Moreau, beautifully situated west of the
Swenson building, northeast from town. Only
a small number of day scholars will be received.

School year opens September 3, 1877
For further information apply to the principals.

NATALIE von SCHENCK
ALICE NOHL

ad in the Austin paper

The German American Ladies College (GALC) was originally located at 208 W. 14th, where Alice and Natalie signed a lease from 1874-9. In the Austin Directory for 1877-8, the school is listed as being the north side Walnut Street between Lavaca and Colorado with 6 teachers. It offers to young ladies the advantages of a full course in literature, modern and ancient history, languages, drawing, elocution, etc., and is unquestionably one of the finest schools in the State. Miss Nohl previously ran a Young Ladies Boarding School listed in the Austin City Directory in 1872-3. In the 1879-80 directory, they are listed as living at the GALC, but the school address is not listed. By the next year only one of Natalie's sisters, Antoinette, who taught at the school, is listed in the Austin directory.

The School Waltz copyrighted 1878 shows a drawing of the GALC with another house-like structure next to it.

Alfred Raimond Ritz and Anna von Schenck Ritz

Alfred Ritz, and his wife, Anna von Schenck Ritz, were en route from Germany to come teach at the school when it closed just before they arrived in 1881. According to "Two Texas Female Seminaries" by Mabelle Purcell, Mr. Ritz had lost his fortune in a South American business venture and came to the United States to retrieve his fortune "where his family would not lose caste because of their impoverished condition". Moreau and wife conveyed the property to Alfred R. Ritz on Dec. 6, 1884. The Ritz family used GALC as a residence. Their daughters, Helene Ritz, Marie Ritz, and Annie von Schenck Ritz all lived there and taught instrumental music at Stuart Presbyterian Seminary, which was located on the property by Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Rudolf Ritz, meanwhile, was a member of the Texas Volunteer Guard. The Ritz ladies' photos are included in the book by Mabelle Purcell, which also notes that the cultured German family who spoke French and German in their home were of the Catholic faith. The descendants of the Ritz family owned and lived in the house at 1604 E. 11th Street until 1985.

Alfred R. Ritz died July 17, 1886 died from injuries suffered in a buggy accident two years earlier. Anna died April 23, 1919. The surviving children were: Helen (also Elaine) Ritz, Rudolph r. Ritz, Clara (also called Claire) Hesse (Paul Hesse), and Mary (also Marie) (Victor) Schmidt.



Anna Auguste von Schenck Ritz
She was a famous concert pianist.

Alfred Ritz's Famous Hunting Dogs

Published 5/12/1883 in "Texas Siftings" Sporting Magazine:

Mr. Alfred R. Ritz of Austin, Texas, has imported from Germany and England some of the finest dogs that have ever been brought to the United States. Among them the following: 1. Treff, cross-bred German-English [pointer](#). 2. Shot, cross-bred German-Irish [setter](#). 3. Daisy, pure bred Irish setter. 4. Coeur(sp?), cross-bred German-English pointer. 5. Beila, cross-bred German-English pointer. Mr. Ritz is a thorough sportsman himself. He has hunted the [wild boars](#) in Germany, the [chamois](#) on the Alps, and the [jugar](#) [sic] on the Pampas of South America, and he is an authority on almost everything that wears feathers. At present he is making a specialty of breeding pointers and setters. He has shipped several pair of puppies to the Eastern States lately. His price for a single puppy is \$30. He has now on hand a number of thoroughbred puppies, both pointers and setters that he is prepared to dispose of at that price. It is seldom that we endorse anything offered for sale, but we make an exception in favor of Mr. Ritz's dogs, for we have bought some of them, and believe his stock to be almost unequaled in this country.

Helene Ritz took over her sister's classes at Stuart Presbyterian Seminary in 1886 and began teaching piano lessons. The "Two Female Texas Seminaries" book comments "the mother-daughter team brought great renown to Stuart Seminary, and amply justified the broad religious policy of the owners, a policy that was severely criticized at the time".



Mrs. Helen Ritz-Hesse
Concert Pianist and Teacher, Late of Berlin, Germany.
For Concerts and Recitals

From the "Austin Statesman," May 29, 1901.

Rare indeed was the treat enjoyed by the music lovers of Austin at the Board of Trade Hall last night upon the occasion of the piano recital by Mrs. Helen Ritz-Hesse, assisted by Mr. McAll Lanham and Prof. Collins.

Mrs. Ritz-Hesse greets her many Austin friends and admirers after an extended absence in Europe, whither she went several years ago to perfect herself in music. That her trip was freighted with all the success obtainable by natural ability, where guided by the hands of the masters, was evidenced in the program rendered last night. Her playing is of exceptionable merit. She clearly demonstrated her ability, and the various selections rendered were attended with such rare musical ability and cleverness as to elicit the unstinted approval of all. Mrs. Ritz-Hesse's return to the city is an occasion of rejoicing to her friends, but more especially is she to be welcomed as a most important and pleasing addition to the musical circles of the Capital City.

From the "Austin Tribune," May 31, 1901.

To those appreciative of the beautiful and artistic in music, a rare pleasure was afforded by the piano recital given at the Board of Trade Hall by Mrs. Helene Ritz-Hesse Tuesday night. Mrs. Ritz-Hesse's playing is the perfection of grace and charm. On all sides, nothing but words of praise were spoken of her wonderful ability. The music fell, at time, from her fingertips as softly as snowflakes, and at others the whole air vibrated with the sonorous notes. It was truly a "concourse of sweet sounds." Austin is proud to number Mrs. Ritz-Hesse among her talented daughters.

Maria Ritz and Victor Schmidt

Maria Ritz and Victor Schmidt married in 1884. April 9, 1890, Anna Ritz conveyed the property to Maria and Victor. The couple had six children, Otto, Victor, Albert, Annie, Erica, and Marie. Victor was about 30 years older than Maria and died May 30, 1897.

Gustave A. Sievers

Mrs. Marie Schmidt continued working after the death of her husband. She leased space to Goggan Brothers Music Store at 1604 E. 11th according to a newspaper ad of the time. However, there were various structures on the large lot, so it is not clear which structure housed the music store. As a result of her music connections, she met Gustave A. Sievers, a renowned violinist who was mentioned as possibly being the best in Texas. They married and had one son, Adolf.

The scrapbooks of Sievers many achievements from 1888-1912 are held at the Briscoe center for American history. Sievers performed at the Hancock Building, Saegerrunde Hall, The School for the Blind, to name a few. He performed for graduations, at a speech by Williams Jennings Bryan in 1908, and at benefits for the Galveston flood sufferers in 1900 and for the Hogg Memorial Park-Lake at the foot of Congress Avenue.

Maria often accompanied him in concerts. He wrote a book on violins in 1906 and owned one that was worth \$3000-5000 in 1903. He is mentioned in the book, Austin Music 1900-1950. **Victor Raimond Schmidt 1916**

In 1916, Marie and G.A. Sievers and Otto, Marie, Annie, Albert, and Erica Schmidt subdivided the lot and deeded the land at the corner of Comal and 11th Street to their brother, Victor Schmidt and his wife, Ella. Victor attended the Bickel School and the Stuart Seminary where his mother and grandmother taught. Later, he attended Austin High where he performed in plays and concerts. He graduated in 1905 with approximately 35 other students. Later, he returned to Austin High as a teacher of manual training. He became head of the department of manual training. He left the school and was employed by the state as a bridge engineer. He built the house that currently stands on the lot.

Architecture-waiting for description from architect.

Victor Raimond Schmidt, Jr.

Victor Schmidt traveled the state and moved often as a bridge engineer. Sometime around 1936-7, his son, Victor Raimond Schmidt, Jr. and wife, Opal, moved into the house. Schmidt, Jr. was the director of water and wastewater for the City of Austin and named citizen of the Year by the Austin Board of Realtors. He also served as Navy officer in World war II and the Austin Commander of Seabees reserve Unit. Waiting for more info from daughter and sister.

In January 1936, Marie Schmidt Sievers died. Her daughter, Marie, died two months later. Gustav Sievers died on November 13, 1937. The remaining heirs to the property-Anna, Otto, and Erica continue living next door at 1604 E. 11th. None of them ever marry. Adolph Sievers and Albert Schmidt live elsewhere.

Neighborhood

The lot is across the street from the State Cemetery. E. 11th street was one of the first integrated neighborhoods in Austin. In the 1800's German and Italian immigrants settled along the dirt road that lead to the Capitol Building. Newly emancipated slaves also settled into the farmland area and slowly a small community took hold. Gradually the Anglo population moved out and by the late 30s and early 40s, 11th street had become almost exclusively a black neighborhood. AAS-Aug.20, 1981.

Holy Cross Catholic Church 1936

In Austin, Holy Cross Catholic Church was founded in 1936. The group had grown to a dozen worshipers and they purchased property at 1610 E. 11th, the parish's current location. The property had a small house that was used as a sanctuary and rectory. Father George Baxter and Father Weber, who had some construction experience and would earn the nickname of the "carpenter priest," recruited parishioners and students from Tillotson and Sam Houston colleges to build the first church in the rear of the property.

The church was completed in 1937 and dedicated on June 5, 1938 by Bishop C. E. Byrne. With the church now a reality, Father Weber set out to meet the other needs of the mostly African-American east Austin community. In 1939 he opened a school in the basement and soon had 38 pre-school aged children enrolled. Mrs. K. L. Williams, a non-Catholic educator, served as the school's first teacher. In 1941, the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception from Patterson, N. J. took over the school. They soon added classes through fifth grade. The school closed in 1959. Some of the graduates of this parochial school are among the most distinguished professionals in the United States today.

Holy Cross Catholic Church and the Schmidt family had a close relationship because Father Weber was also German and Catholic. Erica went to mass every morning at Holy Cross although the family members belonged to St. Mary's church downtown. Priests often had dinner on Sunday nights with the family.

Holy Cross Hospital 1940

Holy Cross Hospital, Austin, was established in 1940 by Father F. R. Weber, pastor of Holy Cross Church, and the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Its mission was to offer care to African Americans who had difficulty getting quality service at other hospitals. The hospital presented an important opportunity that extended beyond the Catholic community of Austin: it provided black women an opportunity to study nursing and gave black doctors a place to practice.

The hospital was built almost entirely by the pastor of the mission, Father Francis Weber. Victor Schmidt, Jr. who was living at 1600 E. 11th Street drew the plans for Holy Cross Hospital on the back of a cardboard that came in shirts returned from the dry cleaners. He also helped Father Weber build the facility. The sisters and volunteers made mattress covers, curtains, and hospital linens. The hospital was opened to serve poor Catholic Negroes, but was open to patients of any race or religion. It operated on a non-segregated basis long before that became the law. The sisters originally had twelve beds, six bassinets, and one second-hand operating table, located in an old two-story school building. Supplies and equipment were so limited that the staff had to use pressure cookers and kitchen pots to sterilize instruments. Under the direction of Sister Celine Heitzman, M.D., who became the resident physician in 1942, the hospital improved. During the 1940s, Sister Celine instituted a racially mixed staff. Through intensive fund-raising a new facility was built on Marin Luther King Blvd. in 1951 with a fifty-bed capacity. The hospital was closed in 1989.

Missionary Sisters of Immaculate Conception 1943

Victor Schmidt, Jr. was called to World War II and Opal and the children moved in with Opal's mother. At that time, Victor Schmidt and Ella sold the front part of the property to the Missionary Sisters of Immaculate Conception with the right to remove a garage situated on both tracts. The deed includes a provision that the Sisters would be responsible for the taxes due after December 31, 1942. In the original group of sisters to work at the hospital was

sister Celine Heitzman who served from 1940-1964. She was a doctor of medicine, one of the first religious sisters in the country to achieve this degree. She delivered nearly 4,000 babies and was recognized by the Travis County Medical Association for her outstanding work. The other sisters who worked at the first integrated hospital in the south lived in the house.

Holy Cross Parsonage 1955

In 1955, the Sisters ceased use of the property for corporate purposes and sold the property to the Bishop of Austin, Louis J. Reicher. From that point, the priests at Holy Cross lived in the house until approximately 1992 when the priest moved into new housing in the Heritage Heights development across the street. The following pastors lived there: 1952-1960 – Fr. Aloysius Dayberry; 1960-1961 – Fr. Joseph A. Francis, SVD; 1961-1973 – Fr. Stanley Goatee, SVD ; Fr. Mixim Willaims, SVD; Fr. Clement Mathis, SVD; 1973-1981 – Fr. Michael Fritzen, SVD; 1981-1982 – Fr. William Feldner, SVD; 1982-1986 – Fr. Mark Figaro, SVD; 1986-1996 – Fr. George Artis, SVD.

Contact information:

D=Ann Johnson
(512) 476-2917

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING HISTORIC DESIGNATION
OF 1600 E. 11TH STREET**

WHEREAS, the house at 1600 E. 11th Street was built around 1917 for Victor R. and Ella Schmidt, descendants of the owners of the German American Ladies College next door,

AND WHEREAS, it was later occupied by their son, Victor R. Schmidt, Jr., and his wife, Opal,

AND WHEREAS, in 1943 it was then sold to the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Holy Cross were using the house as a convent and who worked at the nearby Holy Cross Hospital, the first integrated hospital in the South and where African American babies had the opportunity to be born in a hospital in Austin,

AND WHEREAS, after the hospital moved the property was used as a rectory for the priests of Holy Cross Catholic Church,

AND WHEREAS, Holy Cross Catholic Church instituted many programs that benefited the neighborhood including the hospital, a school and Meals on Wheels,

AND WHEREAS, the original Holy Cross Hospital has been demolished and the original Holy Cross Church burned,

AND WHEREAS, many structures with important ties to this East Austin community have been lost through neglect, urban renewal, and demolition,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Blackshear Neighborhood Association opposes demolition and supports historic designation of the structure at 1600 E. 11th Street.

Dated

6/24/10



President of Blackshear Neighborhood Association



THE SCHMIDT FAMILY
1604 E. 11th St.
C. 1894

Otto

Victor Schmidt

Maria Ritz Schmidt

Anna

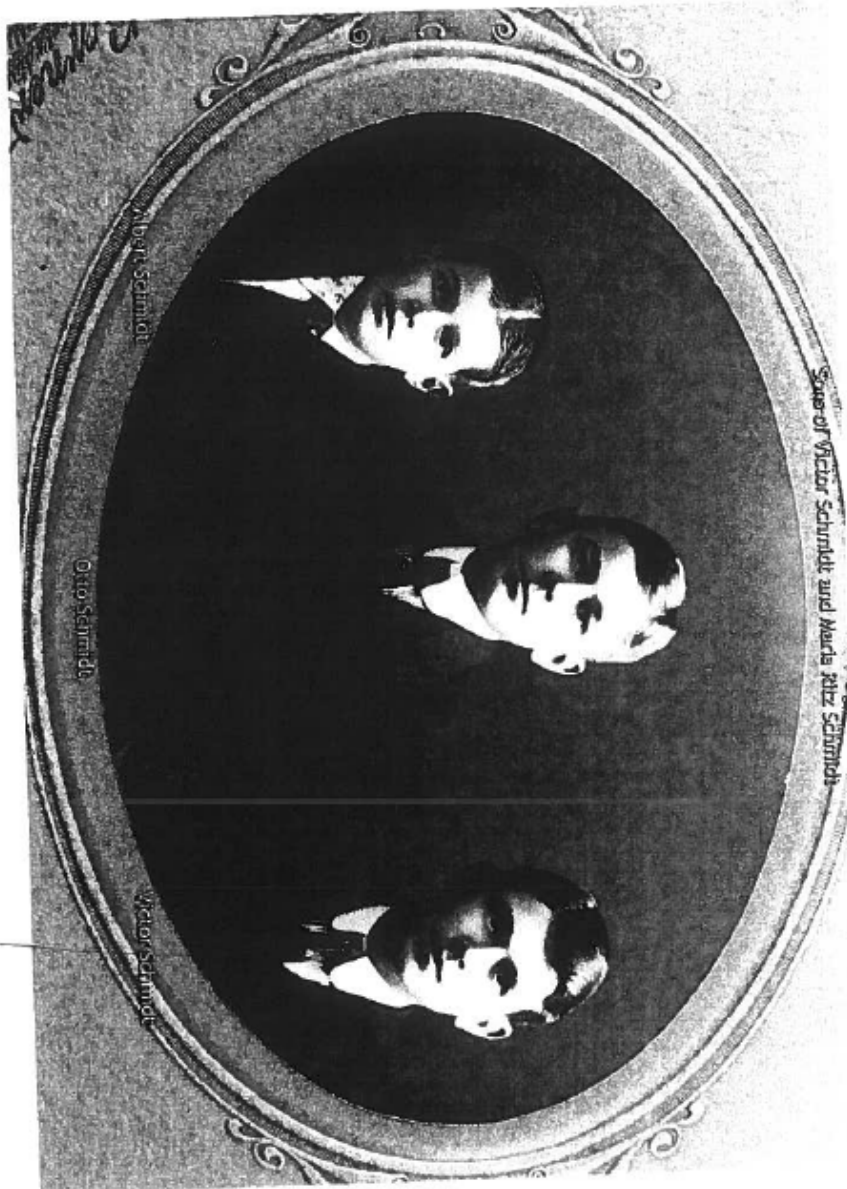
Marie

Erika

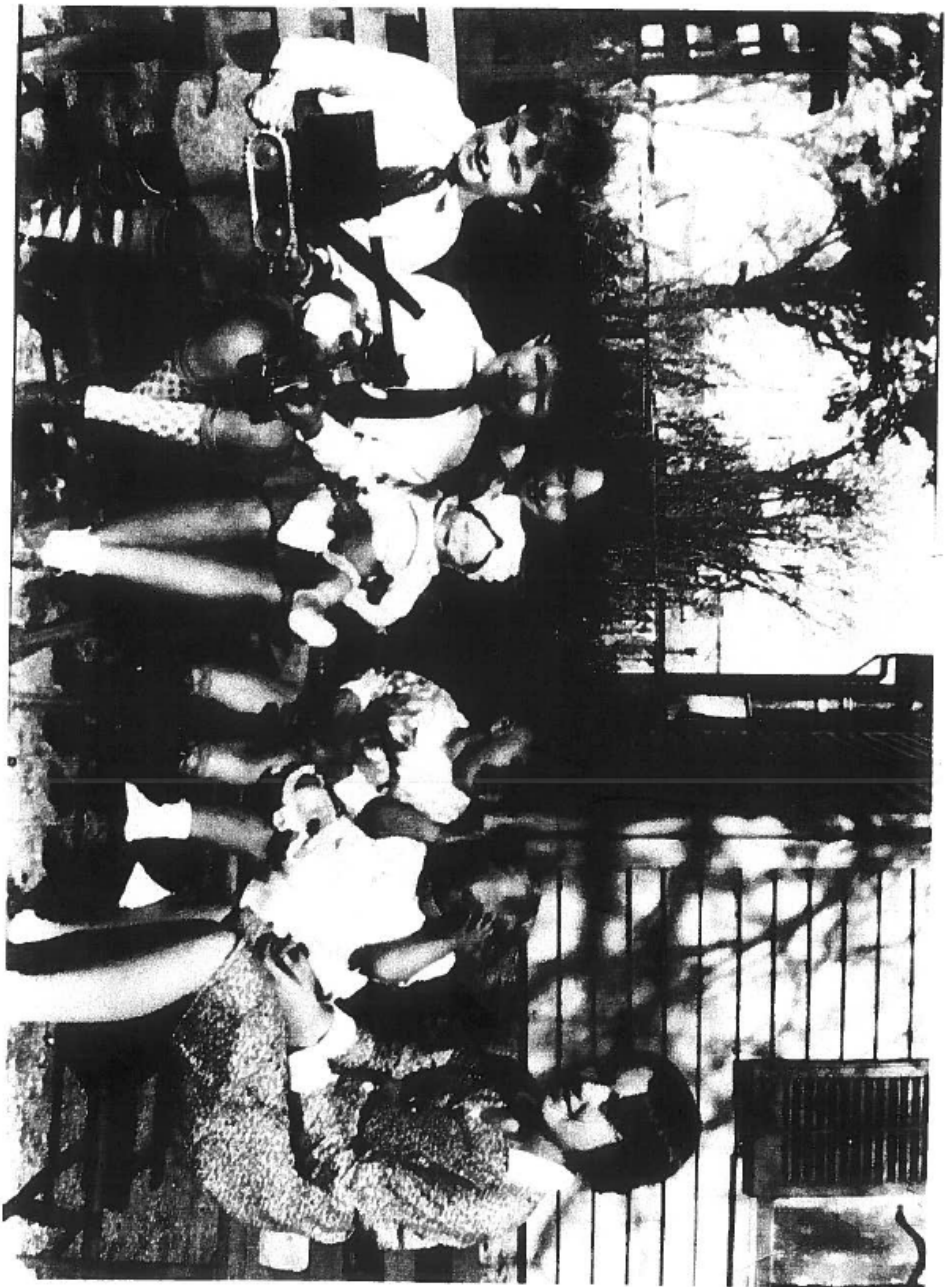
Albert

Victor

Built
1,000



Print
1900
E 1/1



1605 E. 1st St.
Houston, TX

1951

Al Schmidt

Al Schmidt, Jr.

Frances Schmidt
Hickman

Robert Schmidt

Eleanor Schmidt
Hollis

Dorothy Schmidt
Tennis

Karen

Barbara

Frances

William

Blanche

Al

1100 York
St. 405

Don't
know
any
of
them
any
more



Eleanor Schmidt Hollas
April, 1937
1600 E. 11th St
Austin, TX 78723

81 yrs old in
2016 -

First
Communion

From: Samuel West <sawestii@earthlink.net>
 Subject: VR Schmidt Jr Picture
 Date: March 17, 2008 10:37:53 AM CDT
 To: Frankie and Bill Gribble <wmmarygribble@earthlink.net>, O'Banan Lisa
 <amanda91197@yahoo.com>, Eric Matula <matuer@yahoo.com>, Samuel West
 <sawestjr@earthlink.net>, Victor Schmidt <skiptor13@yahoo.com>, Anna Phillips
 <anna_phillips7@yahoo.com>, George Hollas <retiredman71@hotmail.com>, Sam & Cathy
 Cook <cscocok@earthlink.net>, Matula Linda <matula@yahoo.com>
 1 Attachment, 45.9 KB Save Slideshow

We found this at Grandmother's House yesterday. It is of Grandfather at work, apparently in a City of Austin water lab. I'm glad I don't have to wear a suit to work (yet!).

Sam III



VICTOR RAYMOND SCHMIDT, JR
 DIRECTOR, WATER + WASTEWATER
 CITY OF AUSTIN

CITY OF AUSTIN EMPLOYEE 1937-1971*
 EXCEPT U.S. NAVY 1943-1945
 WATER BOARD AUG-1945
 SAN ANTONIO AUG. 1945

SOLD house in 1942 to Sisters

Hospital For Negroes Opens

Austin is invited Sunday to inspect a unique contribution to the betterment of its negro population—the new Holy Cross hospital which will open its doors to patients Tuesday.

Friends, including the many who have donated to its establishment, are invited to call between 3 and 8 p. m. to view the building and its equipment, which alone is valued at \$10,000. The hospital, only one of its kind in the South, is at 1106 Concho street, near the 1600 block on East 11th.

Under a non-profit plan, service will be offered at a very low rate, probably \$1.50 a day, Father Francis Weber, young Holy Cross priest, said. Sole purpose of the institution, he pointed out, is to give hospitalization to the needy. "There can be no free hospitalization as there must be funds to run the hospital. Those who have observed the beginnings of this hospital know well the many hardships already undergone. The many donations thus far have been small and have had to be stretched as far as possible to get the hospital and necessary equipment," he said.

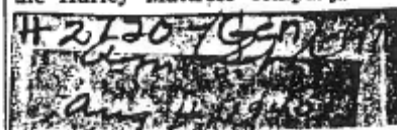
The hospital will have 24 beds for men, women and children, with a special ward with nine small beds for infants. Seven more beds in other rooms will be reserved for the staff. The hospital will have a day and a night nurse.

Probably its most valuable piece of equipment is a violet ray machine valued at \$700, donated by a San Antonio doctor.

There will be no private rooms for patients in the present set-up, but blinds are available for privacy. For several weeks the Sister Superior, Sister Consolatrix, and her assistants, Sisters Gemma and Emery, have worked with volunteers in making mattress covers, curtain and hospital linens. Some pillows and sheets are still necessary. Venetian blinds have been donated for all the wards.

The resident physician, Sister Celline, who at the present time is specializing in children's diseases in Washington, D. C., will arrive in October.

Father Weber, who personally undertook the building of the new institution and did much of the actual carpenter work himself, expressed his gratitude to contributors, among them Seton hospital, Sears Roebuck and company and the Hurley Mattress company.



Austin American-Statesman

Page A1—Austin, Texas Sunday, June 26, 1966

new hospital boasts several austin firsts

By SARA SPENCER
Staff Writer

Until 1964, Holy Cross Hospital was a two-story, rectangular masonry building that looked like any other 50-bed hospital with modest facilities.

Then, ground was broken for the new circular nursing wing, rising five stories above E. 18th Street with an adjacent outpatient, hexagonal chapel.

The original wing was remodelled to include the only on-hospital therapy center and psychiatric ward in Austin hospitals.

At its formal dedication Sunday, Holy Cross Hospital stands as a striking architectural feat and boasts several "firsts" among Austin hospitals in accommodations and medical facilities.

Owned by the Catholic Diocese of Austin, Holy Cross first opened its doors in July of 1940 in a frame building housing 20 beds. The staff consisted of Father Francis B. Weber as administrator, three nuns of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and a resident physician, Sister Carmel Matteman, who celebrated her

dedication of new holy cross wing to be held today

Dedication ceremonies for Holy Cross Hospital will be held Sunday at 1:30 p.m.

The hospital, at 2800 E. 19th, is being formally dedicated to celebrating the completion of its circular nursing wing.

Most Rev. Louis J. Reicher, Bishop of Austin, will bless the hospital and unveil the dedication plaque which will be placed in the main foyer.

Guest speakers will be Dr. David Wade, past president of the Texas

Medical Association, Rev. Francis Weber, founder of Holy Cross Hospital in 1939, and Mayor Lester Palmer.

Sister Mary Agnes, vice provincial of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, and Sister Gertrude, administrator of the hospital, also will be on the program.

After the ceremony, there will be a tour of the hospital open to the public.

25th anniversary at Holy Cross about a month. The ward was remodeled last year.

The hospital now boasts 190 beds in private and semi-private rooms including the only on-hospital psychiatric unit in Austin.

Set apart in the original wing of the hospital, the psychiatric unit now accommodates about 15 patients and will be able to handle 34 when the second floor remodeling is completed in

designed to treat special medical problems along with the administration of mental therapy.

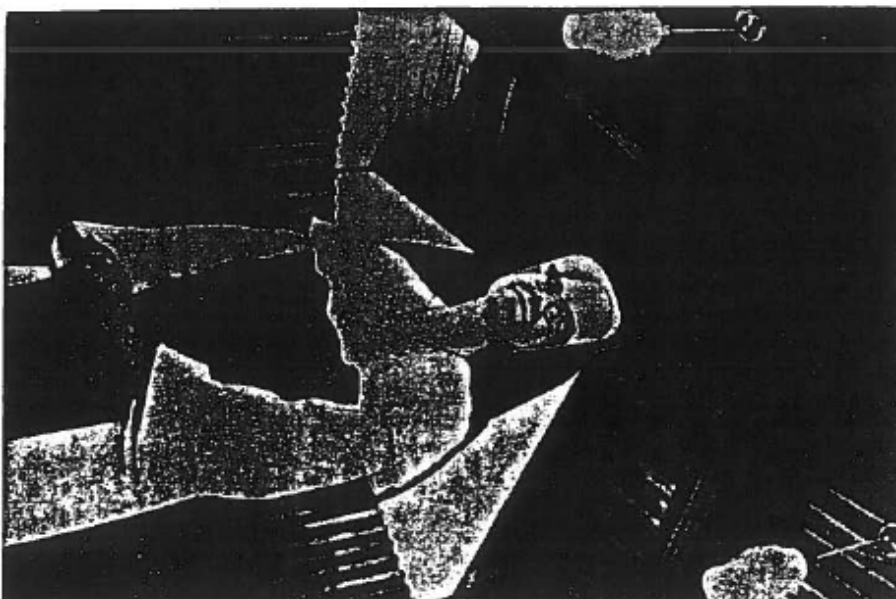
The only cobalt radiation treatment center in Austin is also housed at Holy Cross Hospital. It is a short walk from the circular nursing station. Twenty rooms radiate from this central spot from which nurses have a clear view into each room. A time and energy saver,

this arrangement puts the nurses within 12 steps of each room. The rooms themselves are almost arch-shaped, reflecting the architectural design of the building. A few of the rooms turn patios which overlook the hills around Austin.

The first floor of the new wing has a curved walkway which surrounds the business office. Adjacent to the wing is the chapel which is still under construction. Father Edward Jordan is the resident chaplain. A medical auditorium for in-service training is located below the chapel. Built to seat 70 persons, the auditorium will have facilities for showing films and demonstrations.

So far, about 15 paintings have been donated to the hospital. Artist Kelly Feeney of Austin has painted one especially for the hospital which he entitled "An Owl with the Holy Cross."

Although the hospital is owned by the Catholic Diocese of Austin, its board is a volunteer group of Austin businessmen of all faiths who advise the Sisters.



SISTER GERHERDA VIEWS THE NEW CHAPEL OF HOLY CROSS
As hospital administrator, she happily awaits its completion



Missionary Sister Gemma Semon

A life that spans a century of happy memories

Missionary Sister celebrates 100th birthday, 75 years in religious life

By **CECILE SAN AGUSTIN**
Reporter

RINGWOOD - Call her a rare "gem" - after all, it's in her name - when wishing a "happy 100th birthday" to Missionary Sister Gemma Semon. The centenarian happily celebrated reaching triple-digits on July 23 at St. Francis Residence in Ringwood.

Still sharp and full of wit, Sister Semon said with a laugh, "I feel like a celebrity with all this attention I'm getting today."

A "celebrity" she is indeed for her fellow Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, who serve throughout the diocese especially in the Paterson area. Missionary Sister Kate Conti, provincial, said, "She's a very prayerful and holy woman. Her generosity, kindness and gentle understanding is a model for us."

The oldest of 10 children (five siblings are still living), Sister Semon's parents lived well into their 80s, a feat that she has easily surpassed. Her secret to longevity - "Just doing the ordinary in extraordinary ways."

In addition to her 100th birthday, she is celebrating 75 years in religious life this year. Another interesting tidbit about Sister Semon is that she was a 1 year old when Mother Immaculata founded the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

Sister Semon received her call to religious life after attending a retreat led by the Missionary Sisters at the former Immaculate Conception convent in West Paterson. "I worked with a young woman at the telephone company and she was going on a retreat. I asked her about it and attended with her. When I went to the convent, I just felt I belonged there," she said.

Since that first moment, she has felt a sense of great fulfillment in her life as a religious sister. Today, even in retirement, she feels her life as a religious gives her the constant opportunity to pray for her family and for others. In addition, she always has a deep sense of the presence to the divine around her. She recently wrote, "God gave us all creation for our good and careful use of it."

As a resident at St. Francis, she along with four other Missionary Sisters in retirement lives with the Sisters of St. Francis together in community. In 1997, when Immaculate Conception convent closed, the Missionary Sisters were relocated at St. Francis.

Sister Semon said. "It was very hard to leave but everyone here is so good to us. They take good care of us."

When she began her life as a religious, she served in childcare and supervision at the former St. Walburga's Orphanage in Roselle. She eventually went into nursing and was graduated from Providence Hospital School of Nursing in Washington, D.C.

She was one of three sisters who opened Holy Cross Hospital in Austin, Texas, in 1940. The hospital was intended to help African Americans and Mexican immigrants who had little recourse to medical care. She eventually served in the nursing department of the hospital, becoming nursing supervisor and administrator serving there from 1940 to 1958.

Sister Semon returned to the Paterson Diocese and served as superior of the Immaculate Conception Convent from 1958 to 1964. She then once again returned to Texas serving as administrator of St. Elizabeth Hospital in Houston for several years. St. Elizabeth's was the congregation's hospital in the fifth ward of the city, opened to provide a place for black patients to be served and black medical professionals to have a place to practice their medical skills. Many parts of Houston were closed to both groups during the 1960s. Upon returning to the northeast, Sister Semon served as administrator of the former Holy Family Residence, an independent living residence for women run by the Missionary Sisters on their property in West Paterson. She also worked at St. Joseph Hospital, Paterson; Bellaire Nursing Home, Haskell; and Alps Manor, Wayne in the nursing department.

Today as she continues to live her life fully, Sister Semon enjoys spending time with her fellow sisters and receiving visits from her family. To mark her 100th birthday, 33 of her relatives came out for her birthday celebration, which was held July 25.

Some of her hobbies and interests include painting, crocheting and knitting. Her fellow sisters also note she enjoys playing Hand and Foot, a card game she always wins, they said.

For a life lived fully, Sister Semon said, "We need to change to be more holistic in how we trust each other, to be more understanding and to forgive, listen, show love and try to become more like God Who created us."

Sisters of Immaculate conception

Sister Andrea Westkamp, vocation director of the order said, "People just come up to the table and share their lives with us. There seems to be a trust that people have in sisters. Many people ask if we can pray for them."

During the fair, the sisters prayed every evening for religious and priestly vocations. "It was very good to be able to pick up people passing by willing and very excited to pray with us," said Sister Westkamp.

This is the second year the order has been at the fair. It was an idea that Sister Jean Amore had. She recalled being at the fair as a patron two years ago and saying to herself, "We need to be here among the people."

The idea worked, allowing people in Passaic County to know more about religious life and allowing the sisters to meet people in a very social atmosphere.

Sister Westkamp said, "Many people don't know about religious life and some even think that religious life is something that took place in the Middle Ages. Being at the fair, lets people see us in a place they would never expect us to be."

"Since we do not have institutions such as schools or hospitals, many people are not exposed to Missionary Sisters as they would be to other orders," said Sister Jean Amore.

SMIC was founded in Brazil by two Germans and four Brazilians in 1910. A Franciscan order, their emphasis is on living the Gospel and giving witness to God's love. The charism of order is to be a contemplative and compassionate presence to all especially the most needy. Many sisters in the order have healthcare professions. The sisters in the Diocese of Paterson serve at places such as Father English Center, Paterson, and Passaic Valley Hospice, Totowa.

The younger sisters in the order attend the International House of Studies at St. Bonaventure Church, Paterson, to learn formation and attend school at local colleges.

Worldwide there are 350 sisters living and ministering in the U.S., Brazil, Germany, Taiwan, Namibia and the Philippines. Since the sisters serve all over the world, an idea they projected at their table was "seeing SMIC in the world and making SMIC visible to the people of Passaic County," said Sister Amore.

Literally, the world could be seen among the nine sisters who were present at the fair. Four countries from four different continents are represented: China, Germany, Namibia and the United States.

Sister Johanna Ndjaula from Namibia became a Missionary Sister in 2001. She now resides in Paterson serving the people there.

For her being a SMIC sister means "serving with an open heart." Sister Ndjaula said, "We understand what God wants and you enrich your faith when you are called to serve."

This is the message many of the sisters shared when they let people know about religious life. The sisters also handed out information to laypersons on the Franciscan Mission Services, an overseas lay mission program.

"We've had a couple of women who wanted to become associates of the Missionary Sisters," said Sister Westkamp.

The SMIC do plan again next year on having a table at the fair to continue their mission.

"We like to have people think, 'There's a real-life sister and I could go up to her and talk with her,'" said Sister Westkamp. "This is something we represent for people in the public. Sisters understand you and you can talk to them."

For more information about the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, contact Sister Andrea Westkamp (973) 279-3790.

Did you know?

East Austin hospital served community

Austin's first African American physician was believed to be Dr. Quinton Belvidere Neale who arrived here in 1883 and was later joined by Dr. E.W. Abner and Dr. John F. McKinley. Although J.M. Donaldson practiced homeopathic folk medicine in the 1860s, he was not recognized as a licensed doctor.

In the late 1930s, at least two clinics opened in East Austin that began providing primary care for the African American community: one operated by the Rev. Francis Weber, and the other by Dr. E.L. Roberts on San Bernard Street. In 1940, Holy Cross Hospital opened at 1106 Concho St. near the present location of Huston-Tillotson University. It became known as the only local hospital where African American doctors were allowed to practice. Staffed by the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Holy Cross was run by the first Catholic nun in the U.S. to become a physician, Sister M. Celine Heintzman.

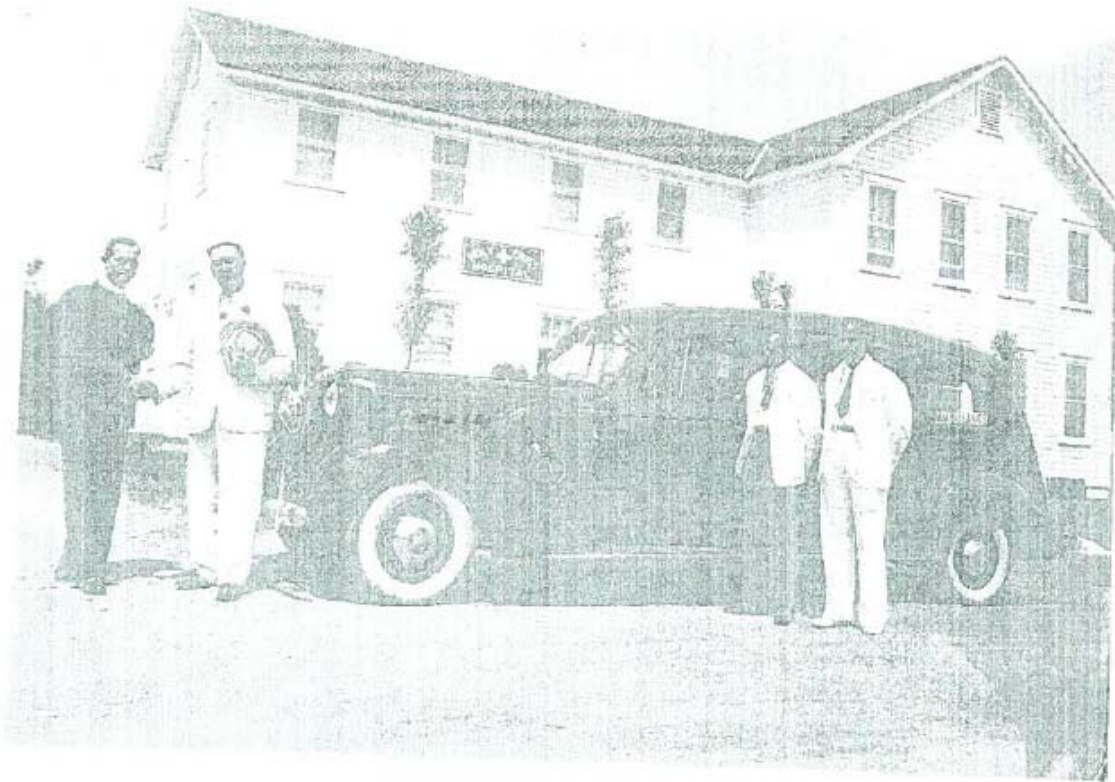
*lived at
1600*

Dr. Beadie Connor, a prominent African American physician, raised money for the hospital and helped organize the Austin Negro Chamber of Commerce. He lived at 3111 E. 13th St., where he and his wife entertained African American musicians, writers and other visiting celebrities. Their home, which no longer exists, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places, recognized in part because of Connor's leadership in gaining equal treatment for black physicians and their patients.

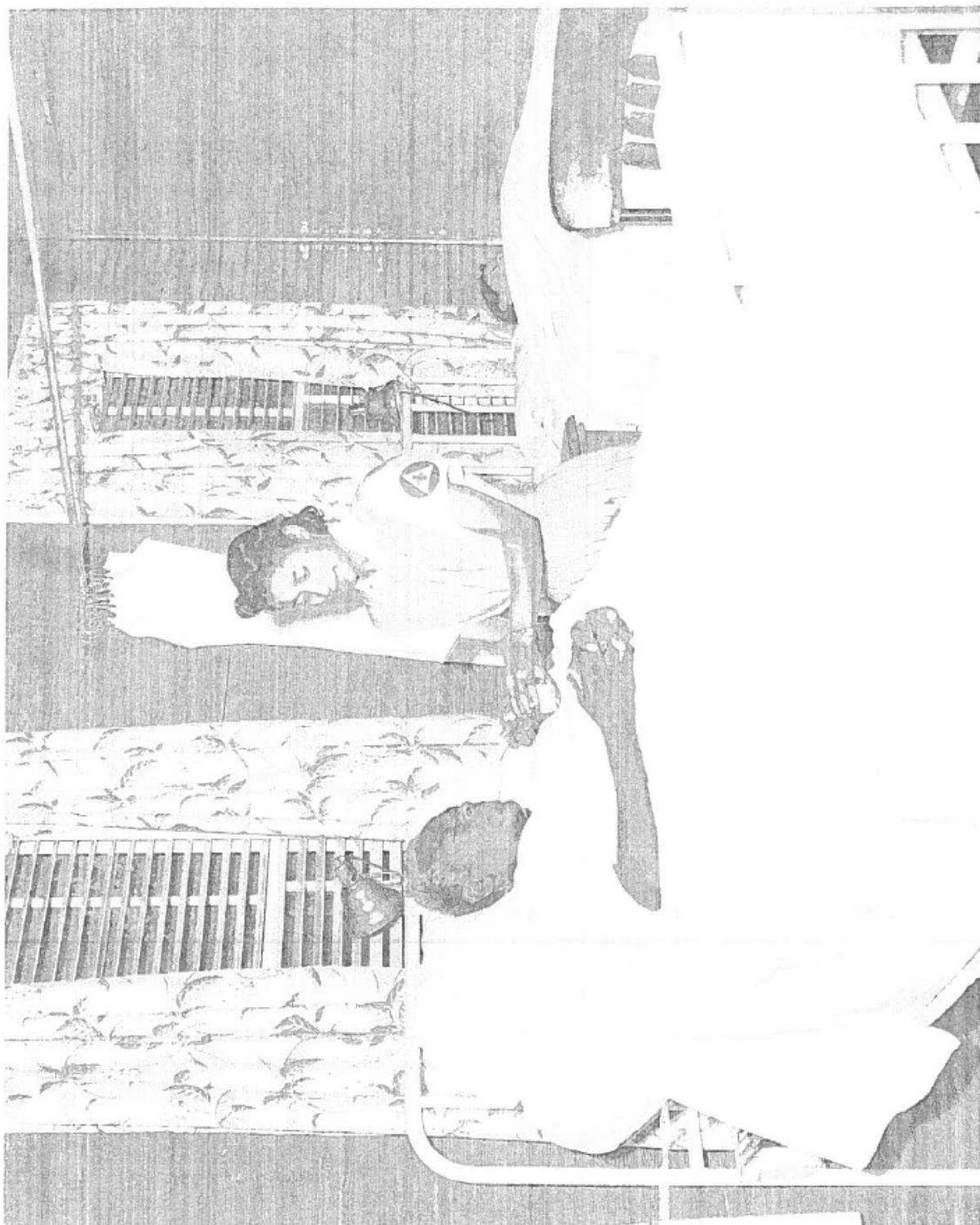
— From Austin History Center archives and 'A Capital Place for Healing,' a forthcoming history of medicine in Travis County by Betsy Tyson and Marilyn Baker.



From Archives of Missionary Sisters
Convent 1943-1954



Holy Cross Hospital



Sister Celine Is Honored

Editor's Note — Sister Celine, who has delivered almost 4,000 babies at Holy Cross Hospital, was honored Thursday night with a surprise banquet and testimonial dinner. The following article about Sister Celine is reprinted as it appeared in Missouri Horizons, in the autumn, 1952, edition. It is by Sister M. Frances, S. M. I. C.

If you had passed Margaret Heitzman on the street back in 1918, you wouldn't have given her a second thought. She was just an ordinary 14-year-old with nothing much to distinguish her from any other girl of her age. But if for some reason you had stopped and spoken with her for a moment, you would have been struck by the sweetness of her ready smile. You would have been impressed, too, by the kindness reflected in the glance of her clear, gray-blue eyes, and you would have sought to yourself: "Somewhere this girl is different. There is something special about her—something deeply attractive—and you would have kept the memory of her for a long time. That was the way with Margaret Heitzman. She seemed ordinary as dandelions in spring, but once you came to know her, even slightly, she revealed qualities of a very high order.

Margaret was born in Paterson, N.J., the eldest child of Emil and Katherine Heitzman. The family was comfortable but not wealthy, for there were only three children to feed, and one was worried about the size of the family, though, and when Katherine Heitzman announced that there would soon be another child, the news was received with jubilation. There was much happy speculation as to whether the new baby would be a boy or a girl, and what the name would be, in one so much as dreamed of reality.

On Friday, June 22, 1918, Katherine Heitzman gave birth to her 10th child. She expected,

no particular difficulty, but on the following Monday she was stricken with a sudden and severe headache. By Thursday she was delirious, and the following Saturday she was dead. The shock of their mother's death was terrible for the Heitzman children. The 14-year-old Margaret tried her best to take her mother's place, but the going was hard. Still, so long as their father was with them, they could feel happy and secure in his love despite the loneliness of life without mother. Then, six years later, Emil Heitzman died.

Margaret had now to be both father and mother to the family. The first thing to do was get a job, and a steady, well-paying one. That was a large order for a young woman with no professional training, but Margaret managed to obtain a good position with the Delaware-Lackawanna Western Railroad. At the same time, her brother Edward, then 14, left school to go to work and help her provide for the family, but Margaret agreed to his working only on condition that he continue to study at night school.

For a long time Margaret had felt sure of her vocation to the religious life, but she could see no chance of leaving home until all the Heitzman children were able to provide for themselves. Patiently she waited for them to grow up, which they did, slowly, one by one. Meanwhile she kept looking for a religious congregation that would satisfy her desires. She wanted to be a missionary, especially to some far away pagan land with an exotic name, and she wanted to belong to a sisterhood distinguished for poverty and simplicity in their way of life. Eventually she found what she wanted, but it was not until little Loretta married and sister Kathryn went to work that she felt free to think seriously of the convent. She lost no time. On Feb. 7, 1925, she said an affectionate goodbye to her friends at Delaware-Lackawanna-Western. Two days later she was admitted to the postulate of the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception in Paterson.

In due time, Margaret Heitzman became Sister Celine. She was still a very ordinary young woman, distinguished only by her ready smile and willingness to give herself wholeheartedly to whatever task was assigned. No doubt it was this quality of total self giving that prompted Mother Immaculate, who was then Superior General, to assign her to the study of medicine. After pronouncing perpetual vows in 1929, Sister Celine went to the Franciscan Fathers' College of Saint Bonaventure, where the Sisters had charge of the housekeeping and dietary, to being pre-medical studies. Her companion was Sister Hilma, a brilliant and

buoyant young nun newly arrived from Germany. There was much difference between the two students. Sister Celine, older, quiet and unassuming, passed almost unnoticed among the noisy, leech, self-assertive young males who made up the overwhelming majority of Saint Bonaventure's student body, while Sister Hilma charmed everyone with her vivacious personality and quick mind. Sister Celine had been out of school for a number of years, and to return to the grueling routine of formal study was not easy for her. But she worked on steadily, and those who took time to observe her were impressed by her quiet determination to succeed. To the young men who were her classmates (Saint Bonaventure was then and still is, a man's school) she was an inspiring example of the dedicated religious woman who was also striving for professional excellence, a woman deeply spiritual and otherworldly, yet thoroughly practical and respectably alive to the needs of society.

Four years of medical study at George Washington School of Medicine, Washington, D. C., completed in 1933, terminated Sister Celine's medical studies. From there she went to Bon Secours Hospital, Baltimore, for a year's internship, then another year at Children's Hospital, Washington, and three months at Margaret Hague Maternity Hospital, Jersey City. By September, 1940, Sister Celine, MD, was ready to being practice. Where would obedience demand her? Sister Hilma had already been assigned to China, but Sister Celine could not hope for the same assignment. World War II was growing bigger and bloodier, and while Sister Hilma, as a German citizen, could obtain a visa for Japanese occupied China and passage on a Japanese ship, Sister Celine, being American, had no chance for China at all. But there was still some hope for Brazil. Finally word came from her superior in the effect that she should serve in the home missions. Holy Cross Hospital, a new foundation in Austin was to be her field of labor. She responded to the call of obedience with genuine enthusiasm; but actually, a more ungrudging assignment could hardly have been given to her.

In October of 1946 Sister Celine put up her shingle over the door of Holy Cross Hospital. It was a humble little wooden structure, built almost entirely by the hands — and the blood, sweat, and tears — of the young poster of the mission. Father Francis Weber, CSC, and equipped with none but the barest of facilities. It was opened primarily to serve the poorer class of Catholic Negroes in and around Austin, but patients of any race, nationality, or religion were admitted.

Naturally, since the hospital was poor, it attracted poor patients. As a result, even when its 18 beds were filled, the income was negligible. With almost no facilities, almost no personnel — Sister Celine, together with Sister Vicenta and Sister Emory, both nuns, were the only qualified professionals — and with a pathetically inadequate income, the little hospital barely managed to keep afloat.



SISTER CELINE: HONORED PHYSICIAN
She has delivered almost 4,000 babies

The early days were difficult in many respects.

Holy Cross Mission began with a church, school and hospital. Lack of funds forced the closing of the school in 1939.

As the economic situation of Austin's negro and Mexican population improved, the hospital was burdened with fewer charity patients and blessed with an ever-growing number of generous benefactors. When Sister Consolatrix died in 1945 Sister Celine took over as superior and administrator. Within 19 years, Holy Cross Hospital became too small to accommodate all its patients. A new 56-bed hospital was built, in 1961 with the aid of a Hill-Burton grant. The new hospital was spacious and attractive, well equipped with the best and newest in hospital furnishings. Sister Celine's practice increased in increased facilities, so that her maternity cases alone averaged about 250 a year.

Although the hospital was integrated from the start, no one seemed to take notice at the time. Even now, when integration is such an explosive issue, Holy Cross continues to operate on a non-segregated basis without attracting attention.

The hospital's medical staff comprises Negro, Anglo, and Latin doctors, and the Sisters' community is also "integrated," with both white and Negro Sister nurses indiscriminately serving patients of any race or nationality. This is typical of Sister Celine's approach to the problem of getting difficult things done. She moves so quietly, so unobtrusively, that no one is aware of what she is actually accomplishing.

Quart 61, Nov 13

