

MOUNT ST. CHARLES COLLEGE:
A Catholic College on the American Frontier
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Pursuant of a resolution adopted on March 30 of this year [1932] by the Board of Corporators and Trustees, the name of Mount St. Charles College, Montana Catholic college for men, will be changed to Carroll College in honor of its illustrious founder, the late Right Reverend John P. Carroll, second Bishop of Helena. The day on which the change will take place was set by the Board for Sunday May 29, within the twenty second annual commencement exercises.¹

Although Carroll College, founded in 1909, continued to grow, May 29, 1932 effectively ended the frontier period of Mount St. Charles College. It completed the work of two bishops, begun in 1884, to bring a Catholic college to the youth of Montana. This was not a unique process found only in Montana. It occurred throughout the United States in an effort to bring higher Catholic education to the Catholic population.

The Protestant domination of America's political, cultural, and educational institutions during the early history of the country sparked the desire of the nation's Catholic communities for schools and colleges that would represent their needs.

The first settlers were Europeans, dominated by English traditions. . . . the Protestant religions and the English language remain dominant today. This dominance, like that of middleclass values in schools, creates a major educational problem in equal treatment of students . . . who represent religious background other than Protestant Christian.²

The reality of "freedom of religion" did not always hold true, especially in education:

Dr. [Very Reverend John] Carroll [1735-1815, the first American Bishop, and later Archbishop of Baltimore* saw the inadvisability of sending Catholic boys to the non-Catholic colleges and urged the necessity of "a pious and Catholic education of the young to insure their growing up in the faith."³

*There are two different Bishop John Carroll's in this paper. In order to keep them separate Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore, 1790-1815, will be Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore and Bishop John Patrick Carroll of Helena, 1905-1925, will be Bishop J. P. Carroll.

During the third Plenary Council of American Bishops in 1884, the Catholic church insisted that the children of Catholic parents attend schools that taught from the Catholic faith. While the Council was concerned with the elementary level and not the advanced level of education, it does show a concern for a Catholic education.⁴ Some bishops even threatened to excommunicate those parents who allowed their children to attend a public school. "Catholic doctrine has always insisted that the state should have only a secondary role in education while the parents and the church have primary the necessity of a system of education at least to educate the priests of the nation."⁷ The Catholic youth wanted to obtain a higher education to become physicians, attorneys, or priests, yet

remain Catholic. To accomplish this, Catholic colleges and universities had to be created.⁸ The question was, how does one create a college?

The first priests to come to America, an official missionary country until 1908, were missionaries, sent by Rome to serve the faithful. This initial group of missionaries realized the need for Catholic education, particularly higher education, causing many of these missions to grow into colleges. While it might have been a relatively simple process to open parochial schools, these schools were opened by the local parish and the teachers were the local priests, to create a college required concerted and sustained efforts on the part of the church and its leaders. It was a struggle carried out by bishops and religious orders across the country, on each new frontier.

The origins of this struggle can be found in Newton, Maryland where the Jesuits made the first attempt to establish a Catholic college in the English Colonies in 1677. Although the members of the Society of Jesus "were the most successful teachers of youth in Europe" during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the college in Newton failed to take root and grow. Renewed repression of Catholics as witnessed by the enactment of the Penal Laws which sought "to prevent the growth of popery," handicapped the Catholics and Catholic education.⁹ While this first attempt at establishing a Catholic college failed, it was at least a beginning.

More than 100 years passed before the first permanent Catholic college was established in America, and only then with the help of the first Catholic bishop in the United States, Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore. Before his consecration as bishop in 1790, Father Carroll wrote to Cardinal Antonelli in Rome on January 12, 1789 that "land for the college had been given on the banks of the Potomac, and some English friend gave money for it."¹⁰ Even with the donation, Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore struggled to raise the money required to build the college. He opened Georgetown College in Washington D.C. with only one student, but that one, William Gaston, went on to become a United States Senator,¹¹ In 1806 Bishop Carroll found it necessary to ask the Jesuits to take control of Georgetown College but the college did survive.¹²

Bishop John Carroll's role in establishing America's first successful Catholic institution of higher education was followed across the country. The College of the Holy Cross in Worcester Massachusetts founded by Michael J. Ryan, S.J., expanded in 1843 from an academy, St. James Academy, to include collegiate courses.¹³ Sacred Heart Mission, along with St. Mary's Mission, evolved under Joseph M. Cataldo, S.J. into Gonzaga College in 1887.¹⁴ Las Vegas College opened in 1877 in the New Mexico Territory and the College of the Sacred Heart founded in 1884 in Morrison, Colorado, joined in 1888 and moved to Denver. Today this college is known as Regis College.¹⁵ These colleges demonstrate the growth of Catholic colleges across the United States. They show that the desire of Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore was not isolated. It was the same desire that confronts a latter day Bishop Carroll in establishing a Catholic college in Montana.

Like Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore, the priests in Montana were determined to give a Catholic education to the people of the state. Father Pierre Jean DeSmet, S.J., at the request of the Flathead Indians, established St. Mary's Mission in 1840. By 1855, St. Mary's Mission had proven such a success that the St. Ignatius Mission was established, near Flathead Lake. While these first missions served the needs of the native Americans, they also marked the beginning of Catholic education in Montana. The discovery of minerals in the territory caused an increase in the non-

native American population. Father J. D'Aste, S.J. established a mission in Helena for the region's Catholic population. This in turn led to the opening of a mission school in 1864, a school which, however, provided only the basics of a Catholic education.¹⁶

In 1870, the Jesuits opened a boys school, St. Aloysius Institute, in Helena on Catholic Hill. The Jesuits ran St. Aloysius in the Rocky Mountain Gazette building, found south of the old court house on Ewing Street, which they had purchased during the winter of 1867-68. In 1875, classes for the boys of St. Aloysius moved to the old Sacred Heart Church, and the girls of St. Vincent's Academy, founded in 1869, moved into the Gazette building.¹⁷ St. Aloysius Institute either closed for a time or announced the end of Christmas break, for in January of 1882, The Helena Independent ran an advertisement announcing the "Reopening of St. Aloysius Select Day School for Boys," under the supervision of Reverend Lawrence B. Pallodino, S.J.¹⁸

In 1883, when Rome established the ecclesiastical boundaries of Montana, John Baptist Brondel, Bishop of Vancouver Island, was appointed the Vicar Apostolic of Montana. Bishop Brondel traveled to Montana in May of 1883. He spent a few months exploring the territory of Montana. After touring through several Montana communities, Bishop Brondel requested that the Vicariate Apostolic of Montana be raised to a diocese. Brondel recommended that Helena, the capital of the territory, be named as the Episcopal see. Helena had established church buildings, and these were offered to the new bishop by the Jesuits. On April 18, 1884, Bishop Brondel received his appointment as Bishop of the Diocese of Helena. To minister to his diocese, Brondel found only thirteen Jesuits and four diocesan priests in the whole state.¹⁹

Just as John Carroll, Bishop of Baltimore, had felt the need to provide religious education to the Catholic youth, so, too did John Brondel, Bishop of Helena. In 1881 Brondel, along with two other bishops, signed a petition that stated, "The absence of religious instruction in school does generally bring forth immoral youths, and consequently, is a source of evil."²⁰ Bishop Brondel could take some comfort when he arrived in Helena, for with St. Vincent's Academy and St. Aloysius Institute, the youth of the city were provided with primary and secondary religious education. In addition both Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore and Bishop Brondel recognized the need for a Catholic college to educate American priests. On October 14, 1884, with too few priests to take full control of his diocese, Brondel wrote to the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, "An extraordinary appropriation is asked, as I desire to build a college for boys."²¹ Unfortunately, Brondel's request went unanswered. In June of 1887, Bishop Brondel turned to the Jesuits for help. At the second Diocesan Synod, Bishop Brondel, Fr. E. W. J. Sindesmith, Fr. R. De Ryckere, Fr. J. J. Dols, Fr. P. Desiere, Fr. S. J. Gremblay, Fr. Cyr. Pauwelyn, and Fr. H. J. J. van de Ven dispatched a petition to Rev. Fr. Cataldo, S.J. requesting "that the Society of Jesus found a school of higher education at Helena."²² Three days later on June 27, 1887, leading townspeople signed their own petition to Rev. Cataldo,

The world-wide reputation of the members of the order to which you belong. . . prompts the undersigned to seek recognition at your hands for the City of Helena as a fit place for the establishment of a college for young men and boys under the auspices of your Society.²³

With permission to build the college granted by Rome, the Jesuits set out to purchase land and raise the funds. They purchased two parcels of land, "*" and raised several thousand dollars for

construction costs. Yet, as Bishop Carroll of Baltimore had discovered in establishing Georgetown, it takes a lot more than several thousand dollars to build a college, and the funds raised by the Jesuits were not enough to ensure success of the project. Due to this lack of funds, the Jesuits dropped their plans for a Catholic college. They donated the land to the Sisters of Charity, who used part of it to build St. Joseph's Orphans' Home.²⁴

** "One at the site of the present St. Joseph's Orphans' Home and the other on Phoenix Avenue north of the Northern Pacific right-of-way.

Bishop Brondel, however, refused to surrender his dream of a Catholic college in Montana. In a letter of 1899, he wrote,

All that I need now is a good College with a classical course, and a sufficient number of good missionaries. These two things would afford much satisfaction to my apostolic life. And I think that, with prayer, patience, and work, these things will come.²⁵

Sadly, Bishop John Baptist Brondel's, prayers, patience, and work failed to bear fruit in his lifetime. He died on November 3, 1903, seven years before Mount St. Charles College opened its doors. Still, Bishop Brondel achieved a great deal during his tenure. He left behind a diocese with 38 diocesan priests, nine parochial schools, and 50,000 Catholics.²⁶

On May 18, 1904, Pope Pius X issued a brief creating the Diocese of Great Falls which divided the large Diocese of Helena. Father Mathias C. Lenihan of Marshalltown, Iowa, was named Bishop of the Diocese of Great Falls.²⁷ Father John Patrick Carroll, president of St. Joseph's College in Dubuque, Iowa, was appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Helena in September of 1904.²⁸

Bishop J. P. Carroll arrived in Helena with a strong background in education. In 1889 as a newly ordained priest, Father J. P. Carroll was assigned to his alma mater, St. Joseph's College, where he taught philosophy. On September 12, 1894, Archbishop Hennessy of the Archdiocese of Dubuque, named Father Carroll president of St. Joseph's College. During President Carroll's tenure, the student body increased in number, and the faculty was upgraded, and the college soon earned a reputation for academic excellence.²⁹ For John Patrick Carroll, education ranked next to religion—the school must follow in the wake of the church. As The Dubuque Telegraph-Herald put it,

Bishop-elect (J. P.) Carroll is a well-known educator, a prominent dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church. . . . Professor Carroll is better known as an educator than as an administrator, but that will not bar him from receiving the appointment [as Bishop of the Diocese of Helena].³⁰

Bishop J. P. Carroll was concerned with the education of all the Catholic youth of his diocese. "In an endeavor to further the cause of Catholic education in his diocese he increased the number of parochial schools and raised the standard of those already in existence."³¹ Bishop Carroll directed his parish priests and teachers to "secure the attendance of all Catholic children at parochial schools. . . . He even succeeded in establishing high schools in the large cities of his diocese."³² In the fall of 1905, J. P. Carroll reopened St. Aloysius High School, which had closed three years earlier due to sparse attendance. While St. Aloysius was run only as a day school in 1905, its re-

opening marked the beginning of Bishop J. P. Carroll's plans for Catholic education in Montana. With the help of Sister Cornelia of St. John's Hospital, who took control of the domestic affairs of the boarders, St. Aloysius High School opened as a day and boarding school on September 8, 1906. The Reverend Joseph M. Venus served as St. Aloysius' first principal.³³

St. Aloysius took firm roots under Bishop J. P. Carroll. By 1908, the student population had grown to the point where it was obvious that more commodious quarters would have to be provided.³⁴ When Bishop Carroll of Baltimore had struggled to establish Georgetown College, his first task had been to find the land on which to build. So too, it was with Bishop J. P. Carroll of Helena. He had determined that the college would be built in Helena, as it "was the capital of the state and the See of the Diocese."³⁵ Because Bishop J. P. Carroll had a strong desire to be directly involved in the affairs of what was to be Montana's Catholic college, Helena remained his first and only choice for the school. Capitol Hill, the site where the people of Helena had originally planned to build the capitol building, became the natural location for the new college. With its magnificent view of the Prickly Pear Valley, Capitol Hill was far enough removed from Helena and the distractions of city life, yet close enough to the town to allow the school to grow with the community.

This tract of land, owned jointly by the Great Northern Railroad company, the family of former Governor Samuel T. Hauser and Mr. George Bertine of New York, encompassed some 50 acres. Its owners had hoped to save the land for a structure that should lend pride and ornament to the hill,³⁶ and Bishop J. P. Carroll could think of no better structure to grace its heights than a place of religion and education.

The accounts of the manner in which Bishop J. P. Carroll acquired the land vary. For example The Mount St. Charles' Scholastic, October 1912, stated that the entire 50 acres tract was donated to the college. But The Helena Independent, on October 13, 1908, ran a headline, "University for Helena: Bishop Carroll Announces Purchase of Tract for Catholic College on Capitol Hill," and on September 8, 1984, in an anniversary issue, The Independent Record stated, "Fifty acres of land to the north of Helena are bought for the college under Bishop John P. Carroll" Whether acquired by purchase or donation, the importance of the story was Bishop J. P. Carroll's success in obtaining the land needed to build his college.

Both Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore in 1789 and Bishop Brondel and his Jesuit allies in 1887 had succeeded in acquiring land and limited funds in their attempts to establish Catholic colleges, but the lack of adequate funds hampered and plagued their efforts. Bishop John P. Carroll, as a former college president, knew full well how to raise funds. J. P. Carroll also had an "ace in the hole," in the form of some mining property. In 1893, James Twohy, a miner from Butte, had bequeathed several mining properties in Butte and Meaderville to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Helena. Over the years, the property had increased in value, until in early April of 1907, Bishop Carroll, through a Butte broker, sold the mines to a "big mining company" for \$275,000.³⁷

Two hundred, seventy-five thousand dollars would surely go a long way towards building a college, but again, the stories varied on where the money actually went. The Mount St. Charles' Scholastic of October 1912, stated that the money was put into a building fund for the college. The Register--Westem Montana Edition for April 19, 1959 stated that, "Bishop Carroll later sold the property, and from the proceeds was able to begin the new college." An article in The Butte Miner, on April 4,

1907, mentioned that the money went into what was called the "bishop's colonization scheme" and the building fund of the cathedral. As Bishop J. P. Carroll was building his cathedral at the same time he was building his college, it is felt that at least some of the money went into the college building fund.

Mining properties at Butte were not Bishop J. P. Carroll's sole source of funds. On September 26, 1908, he received a donation of \$5,000 from the Ancient Order of Hibernians of Butte, an Irish nationalist organization. In early 1909, the Power family from Helena raised their subscription to the college to \$28,000.³⁸ In April 1914, James J. Hill, President of the Great Northern Railroad, told Bishop Carroll that he would give \$50,000 to the endowment fund if the Bishop could raise \$100,000. Hill, not a Catholic himself, married a strong Irish Catholic girl, Mary Theresa Mehegan, on August 19, 1867. While James Hill never embraced the Catholic Church he made a number of large donations to Catholic institutions, amounting to approximately one million dollars.³⁹ It seems James J. Hill made good his pledge for on November 16, 1914, Bishop Carroll wrote, "J. J. Hill [gave] me [the] check for \$50,000 for [the] endowment fund of Mt. St. Charles College, Helena, Mt.--I invest[sic] it in Minnesota farmlands at 6% through Northwestern Trust Co. of St. Paul."⁴⁰ Others who donated to the endowment fund were John D. Ryan, President of the Amalgamated Copper Company, \$5,000; Judge John J. McHatton of Butte, \$5,000; Mrs. D. J. Hennessy, President of the Hennessy Mercantile Company, \$5,000; Margaret Larson, President of the Uttle Nell Mining Company, \$10,000; and Sarah E. Power of Helena, \$5,000.⁴¹

Senator Thomas H. Carter not only contributed to the college and cathedral, but worked on behalf of the bishop to secure a loan. During 1908 and 1909, Bishop J. P. Carroll and Senator Caner carried on a correspondence regarding the possibility of securing a loan. On November 14, 1908, Bishop J. P. Carroll wrote to Senator Caner, "I wish you would push the \$200,000 loan as quickly as possible as I need the money to commence work on the College." Bishop Carroll wrote again on November 20,

I do not wish to borrow money for either cathedral or school. It would be ruinous to our little congregation. Now about the loan of \$200,000, the sooner you can swing that for me, the better it will be for the Good Shepherd and our college. The plans are ready for the college, but I cannot commence work until I am sure I can make the loan."

When the Equitable Life Assurance Society of the U.S., New York, wrote Senator Carter on January 5, 1909, they informed him that the information for the loan was "not very satisfactory," and that more relevant data was needed. Bishop Carroll questioned this when he wrote on February 9, 1909,

... Bishop Carroll must have seen a difference between borrowing money and receiving a loan.

"I don't see why the company will not loan at 4%. Bishop O'Dea of Seattle borrowed \$150,000 at 4%, and our security. . . is at least as good as his." The correspondence ended in July of 1909, without any indication of whether or not a loan was secured.

However, the correspondence did show that Bishop J. P. Carroll was not above asking for donations, as each letter to Senator Carter contained a request for donations: November 14, 1908,

". . . and don't forget your check for \$1,000"; November 20, 1908, "If you can possibly send the whole \$5,000 or even \$2,000 within a month, I would appreciate it as a personal favor"; February 9, 1909, "Let me put you in it for \$10,000. All the others are increasing their subscriptions"; and March 24, 1909, "All joking aside, I could use another \$1,000 in April and the balance in May."

On September 23, 1914, Bishop John P. Carroll cleared the debt on Mount St. Charles College by donating \$22,949.50 to the college fund; this was money he had received in celebration of his Silver Jubilee to the priesthood. On that day, during a banquet at the Eddy Hotel with the priests of Helena, Bishop Carroll gave the note of debt on the college to Reverend John L McMullen, the president of the college, and instructed him to tear it Up.⁴²

Not content with acquiring Capitol Hill and raising funds for his college, Bishop Jo Po Carroll also took an interest in the design of the building. In a letter to Senator Carter on November 20, 1908, Bishop Carroll mentioned that the plans for the college were ready. The Helena Independent on October 13, 1908 not only announced the purchase of the land, but stated,

The plans which have been prepared by Architect A. W. Von Herbulis and approved by Bishop Carroll, provide for the construction of a five-story, rectangular-shaped building, one hundred and eighty feet in width and fifty-three feet in depth, connecting by an annex with a rear building fifty-three feet wide and one hundred feet in depth. This building will be of either porphyry or brick.

The Daily Missoulian, on October 13, 1908, reported that the structure would be in the "Greek style of architecture." The Mount St. Charles College Bulletin, June 1911, described the building as, "Gothic in style, with four stories and basement. The building is red porphyry with granite trimmings and is absolutely fue-proof."⁴³

On June 16, 1909, The Helena Independent reported,

Immediately after the exercises (commencement for the high school, St. Vincent's and St. Aloysius), Bishop (J. P.) Carroll and several members of the faculty were conveyed to Capitol Hill where the bishop broke the ground for the new Catholic college. The ceremony was witnessed by a large number of spectators.⁴⁴

Work had progressed far enough on the construction of the college building that by late September it was time to lay the cornerstone. As it happened, in September of 1909, the President of the United States, William Howard Taft, was traveling through Montana on his way to Washington State. While in Helena, on September 27, 1909, the president attended the Montana State Fair at the Helena fair grounds, and as the president was returning to Helena, he became lost or at least separated from his entourage. "It was the original intention for the president and his party to proceed downtown by way of Madison Avenue. But he was asked if he would lay the cornerstone of a new Catholic college, he kindly consented."⁴⁵ It was when his car turned toward the college grounds that the Secret Service, in the car behind, lost the biggest president of the United States. "For the space of an hour. . . Secret Service men and local officers scurried hither and yon to locate the 'missing' William Howard Taft."⁴⁶

While the Secret Service searched, President Taft assisted Bishop J. P. Carroll in laying the cornerstone for the new college, before an audience comprised of the priests of the Dioceses of Helena and Great Falls, the faculty and students of St. Aloysius, and many people from around the State of Montana. After the stone was in place, Bishop Carroll spoke:

Mr. President, we have laid the cornerstone of Capitol Hill College. The building which will rise on these foundations we have named from the eminence whereon we stand--an eminence so lofty and beautiful and so set apart from the city, valley, and mountains that it commands a complete view of the magnificent panorama which nature and man have spread out before us at this gate of the Rocky Mountains.

Bishop Carroll mentioned that the people of Helena, who had hoped that the capital building would be built on this hill, would be consoled by the thought that the college, Capitol Hill College, would carry on the name of the hill. He went on to mention the aims of the new Catholic college,

The aim of Capitol Hill College will be to give the young men of Montana a thorough, liberal education which will fit them for leadership in any vocation they may choose and at the same time, so surround them with a religious atmosphere that they will ever follow conscience as their king. Knowledge and virtue are the armor with which Capitol Hill College shall strive to equip its students. And these, says Washington, are the chiefest supports, firmest props of both state and nation.

President Taft was honored to participate in the laying of the cornerstone for an institution of learning. Responding to the Bishop's address he stated, .

It gives me great pleasure indeed to participate in the laying of the cornerstone of this and other educational institutions. We are liberal enough in this country to assist in the promotion of the work of all religious denominations. The college you are building here will be a blessing to Helena and to the whole state of Montana. The only trouble is we have not institutions enough of this kind in the United States. . . . I feel honored in being asked to take part in this ceremony; the laying of the cornerstone of what is undoubtedly destined to be a great educational institution, and I wish you God speed in the completion of the institution.⁴⁷

The name of the college is not merely a name--it is something with which alumni can identify, it is something with which to build pride. Bishop J. P. Carroll mentioned the name Capitol Hill College in his speech, and yet, because it was a Catholic college, Bishop Carroll felt it needed a more religious name. St. James College was considered and even appeared on the first blueprints for the college. However, it was at this time that Pope Pius X issued an encyclical commemorating St. Charles Borromeo. The saintly and scholarly Archbishop of Milan, St. Charles Borromeo, first promoted the idea of a diocesan college at the Council of Trent in 1609.

Inspired by this encyclical, Bishop Carroll decided to name St. Charles Borromeo as the patron of his college and gave to it the name Mount St. Charles College.⁴⁸

At St. Joseph's College in Iowa, today's Loras College, Bishop J. P. Carroll had succeeded in elevating the academic level of the faculty. He knew that to make a college strong, it needed highly-qualified professors. "For five years, I have been giving the formation of a faculty the most serious attention, and I have now prepared for work a sufficient number of professors to warrant me launching the institution."⁴⁹ Bishop Carroll chose Father S. J. Sullivan to serve as the first president of Mount St. Charles College. Father Sullivan was a Montana native, who attended parochial schools in Helena and in Butte. The faculty included:

Very Rev. Stephen J. Sullivan, D.D., Philosophy and History; Rev. Victor Day, French; Rev. Joseph C. Wilging, A.B., B.D., Scripture and Languages; Rev. Michael Hannan, Sciences and Mathematics; Rev. William M. O'Maley, A.B., English and Bookkeeping; Rev. John L. McMullen, M.A., Christian Doctrine and Church History; Rev. William P. Joyce, Elocution; Rev. Joseph J. Carroll, B.C.L., Economics; Prof. Charles A. Scullon, Stenography and Director of Athletics; Prof. Henry F. Kelley, Preparatory Department; Prof. F. V. Vollert, Music; and B. V. McCabe, M.D., Attending Physician and Surgeon.⁵⁰

This first faculty, with eleven faculty with Irish surnames, fails to show the actual ethnic breakdown of Montana in 1910. The Bureau of the Census in 1910, stated that Montana had a population of 376,053, 14.3% with Irish origins, 13.4% with German origins and the largest group, 14.9% with Canadian origins. The Mount St. Charles faculty reflected more the Irish ancestry of Bishop J. P. Carroll, his diocesan priests and those who contributed to the college, as well as the fact that many of the Germans were not of the Catholic faith. The fact that many of the first students to attend Mount St. Charles would come from Butte, a strong Irish mining town, also gave Carroll the desire to have Irishmen on the faculty.

It can also be said that the faculty showed the tendency of Bishop J. P. Carroll to be an Americanist Catholic. During the last decade of the nineteenth century the American Catholic church suffered difficult times as it attempted to become more Americanized. Four bishops, James Gibbons, John Ireland, John Keane and John Lancaster Spalding, led the fight of the Americanists⁵¹. This fight included what type of Catholic education was to be taught in the parochial schools as well as in Catholic colleges. The two main opposing ethnic groups were the Germans, who were against the Americanist, and the Irish, who were attempting to bring the Catholic church more in line with American society.⁵² Bishop J. P. Carroll actually came after the issue had been decided, however he did appear to lean towards the Americanist ideas.

The first faculty brought favorable recognition to Mount St. Charles College. The editor of The New World (a school evaluating agency) of Chicago stated on August 19, 1910,

We have been greatly impressed with the wisdom shown in the arrangement of the curriculum of Mount St. Charles College. We regard the curriculum of Mount St. Charles College as excellent, and we predict for this Catholic institution of learning a marked success.⁵³

For Bishop J. P. Carroll, the opening of Mount St. Charles College completed the educational system that he had struggled to create since he arrived in Helena. Because it was the over-crowding

of St. Aloysius that had led to the creation of Mount St. Charles College, Bishop J. P. Carroll's school, unlike Georgetown College, would have a ready supply of students to fill its halls and classrooms. Still, Bishop Carroll sent a letter to the clergy and laity of Montana in early September of 1910, announcing the opening of Mount St. Charles College. He encouraged the priests to enlist students from their parishes, 'The College is here. Mount St. Charles stands ready to receive two hundred of the sons of our people. Let the Catholics of Montana realize their opportunity and do their full duty.'⁵⁴

Although nearly everything was ready for the opening on September 14, 1910, the furniture had not yet arrived, and this postponed the grand opening until September 22. When the doors finally opened, fifty-six students began their studies at Mount St. Charles. Thirty-three enrolled in the junior high, and twenty-three enrolled in the senior high level; there were no college students the first year.⁵⁵ This was not unusual, "actually in the Catholic colleges, two-thirds of the students were really following high-school programs maintained by the same faculty."⁵⁶

While the chief aim of Mount St. Charles College was to give young men the remote preparations needed for the priesthood, courses were also provided for those who aspired to a professional, business or agricultural career. The courses offered included English, mathematics, history, science, chemistry, astronomy, philosophy, Latin, Greek, German, French, and elocution and debate.⁵⁷

Included in their education, the students found Christian doctrine,

Thoroughness in every branch of study will be insisted upon, and special attention will be given to moral and religious training. A series of weekly instructions on Christian Doctrine will be given in the College chapel.⁵⁸

This was the same for all Catholic colleges of the day, 'The function of the Catholic college is to inculcate accepted Catholic doctrine in all Catholic students.'⁵⁹ While the study of Christian doctrine was required for the Catholic students, those of another faith were not required to attend the class. In June 1911, Mount St. Charles College emphasized this in its Bulletin,

While the college is conducted under Catholic auspices and is intended primarily for Catholic students, still no religious test is required. . . . All denominations are respected, and no influence is brought to bear against the religious convictions of any student. Non-Catholic resident students, for reason of discipline, are required to be present at the services; but they are not required to pursue the courses in Christian Doctrine.⁶⁰

The First Student Rule Book for Mount St. Charles College came out in 1911, and while the majority of the 24 rules no longer exist today, they included rules that the faculty, at the time, felt would be the continuation of a good home life. "All Catholic Students [were] expected to receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist at least once a month." Unexcused absences from class or a student exercise incurred ten demerits. While visitors were always welcomed, they were to "be received and entertained only in the parlors." Rule number four stated that "all mail [was] subject to inspection by the College authorities." Permission from the Dean of Discipline or the President was required to visit the city, a student would receive ten demerits for leaving campus without permission during the daytime and 50 demerits after night fall. Rule thirteen, prohibited the

wearing of sweaters, "except in the gymnasium or on the Athletic Field." Students received three demerits for running, jumping, shouting, or whistling, and five demerits for loitering or talking in the toilets or baths. The students were prohibited from drinking intoxicating liquors or visiting a place that sold such liquors. They received 50 demerits for smoking, except for a student over 17 years of age, who with parental permission, could smoke in the smoking room. Every student was to correspond with his parents or guardian once a week, failure to do so incurred five demerits. A total of 175 demerits could cause a student to be suspended.⁶¹

Mount St. Charles College offered much more than just classrooms and Christian doctrine. Students were provided with their own sleeping apartments, rather than the more traditional open dormitory setting. There were even 30 private rooms at a moderate rental. Recreation was encouraged, with a modern club room with indoor apparatus. Outside there was a baseball field with amphitheater and a covered handball court.⁶² In front of the college, where O'Connell Hall stands today, a 300-foot by 200-foot pond known as "Lake Bluff" was built, which functioned as a skating pond during the winter months.

Costs for that first year were quoted in the First Annual Prospectus of Mount St. Charles College, 1910-1911. "Board, tuition, bed, bedding, washing, and mending of articles washed--\$150; Private rOom-\$25-40; Tuition Day Scholars-\$25." To help the less affluent attend Mount St. Charles scholarships were offered. \$5,000 was required to found a Scholarship for a boarding student. D. J. Hennessy, founder of Hennessy's Mercantile, established the Hennessy Scholarship. John D. Ryan, president of the Amalgamated Copper Company in Butte, established the Ryan Scholarship. Judge John J. McHatton from Butte established the McHatton Scholarship. Sarah E. Power from Helena, established the Sarah E. Power Scholarship. Margaret Larson from Helena gave \$10,000 and established the two Peter Larson Scholarships. The Ancient Order of Hibernians of Silver Bow County established the Hibernian Scholarship, and Patrick John Patton from Merrill, Montana established the Patrick John Patton Scholarship.⁶³ By 1923, the cost to the students had risen only slightly: tuition, board and lodging--\$200; a private room--\$37.50; and tuition for day scholars--\$30. Bishop J. P. Carroll claimed that:

It is cheaper than sending their boys away, as traveling and other incidental expenses are often greater than the total cost in their own institution. . . . Higher education is absolutely free at Mount St. Charles College, the small fee. . . cover[s] the expense of board, light, heat, water, and ordinary repairs. Professors' salaries, equipment, buildings, and extraordinary repairs have thus far been provided for from other sources.⁶⁴

Mount St. Charles's low rate of pay for faculty was standard for a Catholic college which depended mainly on the clergy; lay professors at these institutions received the same pay as the clergy and found it difficult to live on such salaries.

The school's first commencement was held on June 14, 1911. Five students received their diplomas: Carl J. Gabisch, William K. McDennott, Angus McKinnon, Emmet J. Reilly, and Francis E. Sheehan.⁶⁵ Carl Gabisch, along with Frank W. Carpino of Meaderville, entered the college-level courses on September 12, 1911.⁶⁶ Mount St. Charles College offered its students two courses of study: a Bachelor of Arts degree in the combined fields of Latin and Greek, and a general Bachelor

of Science degree.⁶⁷

The first students to enter Mount St. Charles College were not the first to graduate, Patrick McVeigh of Butte, who entered Mount St. Charles College in the fall of 1912, was the first to receive his diploma. On June 15, 1916, "Mount St. Charles College conferred the AB. degree on Patrick F. McVeigh, after he had successfully completed four years of standard college work."⁶⁸ McVeigh went on to attend the Provincial Seminary of Cincinnati, he was ordained a priest, and returned to his alma mater to teach Chemistry. Father McVeigh remained at Mount St. Charles College until his death in 1933.

The mere enrollment and matriculation of students does not assure the success of a college, for, "Far too many of these colleges. . . did not have the means or the teachers to survive."⁶⁹ Even in 1915, Mount St. Charles College was not yet assured of success as it continued to struggle. Yet, during this period of uncertainty, in 1914, James J. Hill made his donation to the endowment fund, helping to push the fund nearer to its goal and Bishop J. P. Carroll used some of his own money to clear the debt on the college. In the fall of 1915, the first students enrolled in the full four year bachelor's program at Mount St. Charles College.⁷⁰ While the college's prospects had improved, Mount St. Charles' survival was far from assured.

On June 13, 1916, Mount St. Charles College was incorporated under the laws of Montana. The board included: Right Reverend John P. Carroll, D.D., Bishop of Helena; Right Reverend Victor Day, V.G.; Reverend John L. McMullen, A.M., Diocesan Chancellor; Reverend August D. Leitham of Bozeman, and Mr. William Scallan of Helena.⁷¹ This number of trustees was average for a Catholic church college, and was below the average for other church-related colleges. This may have been due to the tradition, according to Myron Wicke, that "Catholic institutions, for the most part, have boards of trust which deal with legal matters, especially the holding of property"⁷²

For Myron Wicke, "A preliminary indication of institutional quality [was] to be found in the accredited status of a college."⁷³ In 1916, Mount St. Charles applied for accreditation for the high school department. The high school was finally admitted, on March 21, 1919 to the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools as a degree-granting institution.⁷⁴ In 1922, Mount St. Charles College was entered on the list of Junior Colleges by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and in 1932, it was elevated to the rank of a senior four-year college as a degree-granting institution.⁷⁵ In 1924, Mount St. Charles College was registered and approved by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York.⁷⁶

Assisting in the effort for the accreditation of Mount St. Charles College was its program of expansion in the college curriculum. In 1917, with the growing importance of medicine and law, two pre-professional fields of study, pre-medicine and pre-law, were added to the college curriculum. With the addition of the new scientific laboratories, a higher scientific course was offered. In 1922, a two-year basic engineering curriculum was added, and the Department of Education which opened in 1923 soon became very popular.⁷⁷

During this period the college not only enlarged its curriculum, it expanded its physical plant as well. The original design had called for a group of three buildings, and on November 24, 1917, Bishop J. P. Carroll presided over the laying of the cornerstone for the wing that would house the

new gymnasium and science building. This wing, on the north slope of Capitol Hill, was actually near completion, since the cornerstone was to be laid on the third floor of the new wing. The plans show that this was to be a seven-story building with dormitory rooms above the gym. These rooms, however, were never built. The first three floors included:

On the first story, bowling alleys and the biological laboratory; on the second floor, the gymnasium with adjoining shower and locker rooms; while the third floor will contain the running track and spectators' gallery and the college physics and chemistry laboratories.⁷⁸

The gymnasium was "conceded to be the finest structure of its kind in the northwest." The laboratories contained the most up-to-date equipment for the study of chemistry, physics, biology, and botany.⁷⁹

On May 20, 1923, Bishop J. P. Carroll laid the third and final cornerstone for the original buildings planned for Mount St. Charles College. This wing was erected on the south side of Capitol Hill. Although the chief purpose of the new wing was to provide rooms for resident students, it also included the library, chapel, auditorium, dining room, and kitchen.⁸⁰

In 1924, construction began on the last building for which Bishop John P. Carroll was responsible at Mount St. Charles College. This building, placed behind the main college building, to the southeast, was to be the convent. Bishop Carroll was looking for a society of Sisters to take over the domestic affairs of the students at Mount St. Charles College. The Bishop finally sent to Speyer, Germany for a group of Dominican Sisters, who accepted his request to come to Helena, Montana. The Sisters began their duties on August 13, 1925, and continued in this capacity until 1961 when a professional food service was hired to take Over from the Sisters. The professional food service was much more expensive, since the Sisters worked for little or no pay.⁸¹ The Sisters added much to the life of the campus. A few of the faculty took it upon themselves to teach the Sisters English. One story tells of a priest walking down the hall and hearing a Sister use profanity, and when asked where she had learned such language, it turned out to be from Father Patrick McVeigh. One former student remembers seeing the president of the college shoveling snow at 5:30 a.m. so that the Sisters would have a clear path.⁸²

The students and faculty of Mount St. Charles College demonstrated their patriotism during the era surrounding the First World War. The college flag pole was donated in 1916 by the Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, and the flag, donated by C. B. Power, always flew from its lofty top.⁸³ The Very Reverend John L. McMullen, president of the college, was chaplain for the Montana State National Guard. On July 2, 1916, the second regiment, along with Father McMullen, departed for duty on the Mexican border and returned the following October.⁸⁴

When the United States entered the war in 1917, so too did Mount St. Charles College. The Prospector of April 1917 wrote:

Patriotism is aflame on Capitol Hill. From the lofty flag pole, Old Glory floats over Mount St. Charles College and the boys who are training for their country's service. Already two students, Eugene McKennon and George Whitcome, have joined the colors, and 16 more have made application for enlistment. The others, in the meanwhile awaiting the scream of

the eagle, are making the very best preparation. Under the direction of Dr. Joseph Gilmore, military drill is conducted Weds. and Sat. afternoons, in the outdoor handball court.⁸⁵

The students' patriotism showed in the November 1917 issue of *The Prospector*, with articles like "Patriotism," "Compromise of U.S. Constitution," and "The Flag," along with a pastoral letter from Bishop J. P. Carroll, entitled, "The College, A War Asset." The issue included the roster of former students who were already serving in uniform. Bishop J. P. Carroll, while supporting the war, feared that the decline of the student population would force the closure of his college after only nine years of existence. In an effort to forestall this event, the Bishop requested that Mount St. Charles College be accepted into the Student Army Training Corps, SATC. In a letter to the young men of Montana, on August 30, 1918, Bishop J. P. Carroll announced that a unit of SATC would be established at Mount St. Charles College, and that 100 candidates were needed to sign up. According to Bishop Carroll, Mount St. Charles College was the only Catholic college given the opportunity to participate in the SATC program.⁸⁶ One hundred and forty-five young men eventually joined the Mount St. Charles SATC unit.⁸⁷ The group was in place for only one month before the Armistice was signed and the Mount St. Charles College SATC unit was subsequently disbanded on December 12, 1918.

While Mount St. Charles College survived the war, three former students did not. On "January 16, 1919, a solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated, in the College Chapel, for the happy repose of the souls of Lieutenant Harold Joyce, Private Raymond Brent, and Private Roy Piedalue, who gave their lives for their country."⁸⁸

With the end of the war, the college's population increased. Mount St. Charles College was now, "the Catholic Higher Education center for the whole Intermountain region. North Dakota, Idaho, and Utah are sending us their students every year in increasing numbers."⁸⁹ While the 1911-1912 student body had only one student from outside Montana, the 1921-1922 catalog included a student roster listing students from Montana, Idaho, Massachusetts, New York, North Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming, and the Philippine Islands.⁹⁰ By 1932, 72 students had received degrees from Mount St. Charles College, of whom went on to enter the priesthood. Two, Father Emmet Joseph Riley and Father Robert Vincent Kavanagh, later served as president of their Alma Mater, and one, Father Bernard Joseph Topel, was elevated to the post of Bishop of Spokane.⁹¹

The struggle to establish a Catholic college in Montana was in many ways similar to the struggle of Bishop John Carroll, of Baltimore, to establish Georgetown College in Washington, D.C. and St. Mary's College in Maryland. While Bishop Brondel was unable to fulfill his desire for a Catholic college, he fostered that desire and passed it on to a man who had the skill and knowledge to get it done. Perhaps Bishop Brondel attempted it too soon. Montana's Catholic population needed to grow, and establish a strong parochial school system before it could support a college.

Bishop John Patrick Carroll came to Helena with the background and skills needed to build a strong Catholic educational system. He did not rush into a building program, he first began with the parochial schools. Carroll established Catholic high schools in the larger towns of his diocese, and when the time came to expand the school in Helena, he knew it was time to establish a Catholic college. As did Bishop Carroll of Baltimore, Bishop Carroll of Helena struggled to raise funds for his dream. Fortunately for both the Bishop and his dream, by the time Montana was ready for a

Catholic college, there were Catholics who had funds and the desire to construct such a college. While the college continued to struggle and grow after 1932, the foundation had been established and Mount St. Charles College enjoyed a solid reputation in the region. It seemed only natural for the college's name to be changed in 1932 to Carroll College, in honor of its founder. As the Very

Reverend Dr. Hoff, president of Mount St. Charles College said at the time of Bishop John P. Carroll's death on November 4, 1925: "[The} building of Mount St. Charles he financed singled-handed. It was his burden. It was also the child of his predilection."⁹²

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