

'Indomitable' O'Neill Businessmen Credited

Progress Is Slowed by Shortages, Weather

(Editor's note: Mother M. Erica, the former Miss Agnes Hughes of Battle Creek, is a graduate of St. Mary's academy, an institution which she now heads. During hospital planning and most of the construction period she was Mother Superior of the Sisters' of St. Francis Mother House in Denver, Colo.)

By MOTHER M. ERICA, OSF

The possibility of building, equipping and maintaining a community hospital in O'Neill became the subject of conjecture and discussion as early as 1939. That it received official notice is evidenced by the fact that the advisability of such an undertaking was written into the minutes of a corporation meeting of St. Mary's academy in January of that year.

The undertaking received no encouragement because the effects of the economic depression were still being felt and the future did not look promising.

Two or three years later federal aid for such a project was promised in the form of WPA funds and labor. The stipulations made by the government at that time were such that neither the community nor the Sisters were able to accept the offer.

In 1946, O'Neill's indomitable businessmen again took up the gauntlet. O'Neill community was in a better financial condition, and with the aid of friends in influential positions, federal aid could still be procured.

W. J. Froelich, whose work placed him in a position to be of great assistance to the project, was chosen chairman of a fund-raising committee. Mr. Froelich gave liberally of time and effort and was most influential in gaining the goodwill of the federal government in favor of the undertaking. The initial steps having been taken, Mr. Froelich, whose business takes him away from O'Neill for the greater part of his time, resigned the chairmanship in favor of a local businessman.

Then, in 1949, the new chairman, James M. Corkle, with a corps of able executives, went into action. After the official name of St. Anthony hospital had been given to the enterprise, these executives erected a building fund headquarters, canvassed the whole sandhill region for funds, and provided publicity for the much needed hospital. Civic and religious organizations, as well as individuals, responded with enthusiasm. The initial drive for funds resulted in a sum well over 50-thousand-dollars. After six months of campaign-

ing, this sum grew to a hundred thousand dollars.

Frank N. McNett and company of Grand Island were chosen architects for the new building; official federal approval of the plans came in May, 1950; bids were let out immediately; Busboom and Rauh of Salina, Kans., were awarded the contract; ground breaking ceremonies were held on July 16, 1950; and construction began at once.

Subcontracts were let to James Davidson and Sons of O'Neill, and Lester Electric of Wayne. Olaf Mathisen, construction foreman for Busboom and Rauh, supervised construction from start to finish. Discouraging obstacles had to be overcome.

The steel shortages delayed shipments of vital materials, rail strikes interfered in the progress, and bad weather slowed down construction.

Finally, July 22, 1952, Mother M. Bertrand and the Sisters arrived to take over and add the finishing touches. The men and women of O'Neill and vicinity came to the rescue with volunteer labor, and it wasn't long before the void of equipment and furnishings had been filled.

The same spirit that had been responsible for its construction had now readied St. Anthony's for the dedication and official opening.

Meet Perfect Hospital Visitor

The perfect visitor trampeth not on hard heels; neither does he shout. He walks softly and and speaks quietly, for ill people are easily disturbed.

The perfect visitor goeth home soon. He (or is it more often she?) might like to chat all afternoon, but is considerate of the weary patient.

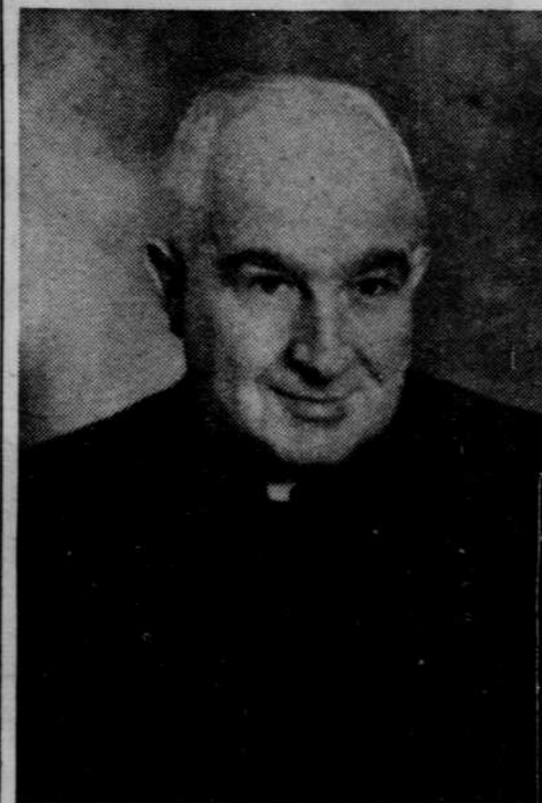
The perfect visitor talketh of the pleasant things in life; he smileth often and his demeanor is cheerful. Though at heart he may be a pessimist, he knows that the patient has his own troubles.

The perfect visitor knoweth what a chair is for—he sits on it. He percheth not on the bed, jouncing the aching head or obstructing the restless foot.

The perfect visitor beareth with him no cold in the head. Though he be up and about and considers a sneeze or a cough as nothing, he inflictheth not his germs on the helpless patient.

The perfect visitor thinketh twice about gifts; he brings plants, instead of cut flowers, for they last longer. He brings not candy to the weak stomach.

The perfect visitor is always welcom, for he observeth visiting hours. Patient and nurses smile upon him, for he is as precious jewels, above price.



ACTIVE IN MOVE
Very Rev. Timothy O'Sullivan (above), successor to the late Rt. Rev. J. G. McNamara as pastor of St. Patrick's Catholic church, has been active in assisting the St. Anthony's hospital building committee. He is scheduled to appear on the dedicatory program. Father O'Sullivan was born in Ireland, was educated in Innsbruck, Germany, served pastorates at Tilden and Jackson before coming to O'Neill. Father McNamara had been the successor to the late Rt. Rev. M. F. Cassidy, who was a pioneer priest.

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Thanks!

WE SAY "THANKS" to the people of the O'Neill area for their magnificent cooperative effort which has created hospital facilities second to none! We say "thanks" because this spirit is what makes a good city even better. We say "thanks", too, for the privilege of supplying some of the furnishings in the beautiful new St. Anthony's Hospital.



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