

1954 ST FRANCIS WOODS



The ranch house renamed the "Villa Maria" became the Aspirants home.



The stone building became the Poverello. This is the only original building still standing.



1954 The new Novitiate Building. In 1964 this building became the Motherhouse for the Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart.

Sister Elizabeth Marie was the first Novice Director at the Woods Novitiate Building.



Prior to the novitiate the ranch house was the vacation residence for Sisters.



October 4 – The new St. Francis Statue placed at the entrance welcomed all to the new people to the novitiate.

“Saint Francis Woods” in honor of our Holy Father Saint Francis.

1947 August 23

A tract of farm land (55 acres) in Frankfort Township, Will county, Illinois and a part of the property of George and Clara Beutel was purchased.

After the necessary remodeling, the Sisters from the Motherhouse and various missions of the Order spent some time vacationing on the newly acquired property.

A chapel was arranged in one of the buildings and Holy Mass was offered there for the first time on August 29, 1947. This arrangement gives the sisters the happiness of having daily Mass and Holy Communion while there.

1948 St. Francis Woods

During the spring of 1948, the portion of property purchased from George and Clara Beutel in 1947 as a site for a new Motherhouse and Novitiate was given the name of “St.

On April 1 of this year, the work of beautifying the property was begun... landscaping, clearing the woods of unnecessary shrubbery and weeds, planting of new orchards, a sunken garden was improved and a new gravel road through the woods to the private entrance was made. This road was opened in August.

The total cost of improvement up to and including October 31, 1948 was \$ 9,744.78.

1953 New Novitiate

During the early part of 1953, ground was broken for the erection of a new Novitiate at Mokena, Illinois. The three-story building which was to cost approximately \$1,200,000 was soon under construction and was expected to be ready for occupancy by the middle of 1954.

1954 Dedication of the New Novitiate

On August 6, 1954, the Feast of the Transfiguration, the solemn dedication of the new Novitiate at Mokena took place. The Most Reverend Martin D. McNamara, D.D. blessed the new building and said it was dedicated “for use the service of God and the Community.”

The dedication services were attended by many priests and over 200 members of the Community. The services closed with solemn Benediction and the singing of the “Te Deum.”