

Provincial House Timeline

Groundbreaking – 27 September 1961

Move-in Day – 12 September 1964

“Open House” – 27 March 1965
(more than 1400 “neighbors” visited)

Dedication – 1 May 1965
(Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore, officiated; Most Rev. Patrick O’Boyle, Archbishop of Washington, D.C., gave the homily)



Exhibit credits

Curation and Design:
Dee Gallo and Bonnie Weatherly

Interviews and Video:
Carole Prietto

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Thanks also to George Brenton, Director of Campus Facilities, for the loan of original architectural and construction plans.



*“We Saw the First Spade of
Earth Turned...”:
The Building of
St. Joseph’s
Provincial House*

Provincial Archives
Emmitsburg, Maryland

Sept. 29, 2014 – January 9, 2015

“This is a very simple ceremony, but I hope that it will mark a memorable occasion. We have, by God’s Providence, been able to prepare a place for our sick and ancient Sisters. We are faced at home now with an acute problem of providing for the members of the Community itself. The buildings you occupy have served wonderfully well, many of them for more than a century. They are not now adequate. Besides that, the maintenance is growing year by year. So, the economic thing to do is to prepare a new Central House. A few years ago, we had Seminary Sisters for a few months; the Postulants did not come here; we did not have a Juniorate. Now we have Postulants, Seminary Sisters and the Sisters of the Juniorate. And the Juniorate will soon be for two years.... So a larger building is needed. That is

why we meet on this occasion to turn the first spade of ground in the work to be begun.”

Fr. Francis Dodd, C.M.

History

The new Provincial House was considered the flowering of the seed planted by St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. She and her first sisters arrived in Emmitsburg in 1809 and on July 31 took possession of their first home, the Stone House, moving into the White House the following year. In 1826, the growing community took up residence in a larger building that served, with necessary additions, as the Central House for 138 years. The ground breaking for a new Provincial House took place on 27 Sept. 1961 and in less than three years, the building was ready. The Sisters moved in on 12 Sept. 1964.

- Many sisters carried desks and chairs from the Central House but were sent back. Project Manager Sr. Margaret Hickey (known among the contractors as “The Drill Sergeant”) insisted the Provincial House furnishings be “modern.”
- Early architectural renderings show another wing was planned.
- The original crucifix above the chapel altar had a double corpus.
- The 69 postulants were amazed by the building’s size – and the amount of red mud!
- Locals dubbed the large, new building “the Seton Hilton.”