School of the Month featuring St. Catherine

In September 1914, five IHM Sisters and two lay teachers welcomed St. Catherine School's 350 students for the first time.

The convent chronicler relates that the building was still under construction when school opened, so until December, "Geography and plumbing, history and varnishing, arithmetic and carpentry were correlated..."

The school grew quickly, with more than 1,000 students in 1920. According to the chronicler, in September 1921, "School opened with an increased enrollment. Accommodations, however, were not increased." Hundreds of students had to be turned away.

By 1931, 27 IHM Sisters taught 1,961 students in grades one-12. That year, "A raffle was held to pay the teachers' salaries. It netted $1,200."

St. Catherine's athletic teams were established in the '30s. In 1935, the chronicler reports that, "Our football team covered themselves in glory by winning the title of East Side Champs...The victory was so pleasing to the whole body that the Reverend Pastor gave Nov. 18 as a free day to celebrate."

Enrollment dwindled during the '40s, but continued to hover around 1,000. There was no diminishment of school spirit, however, especially where the sports teams were concerned. The IHM Sisters shared their students' love of the teams.

"The football team made a tragic record (no victories)," the convent chronicler records in 1947. "The Basket Ball (sic) Team fared better with a District Trophy...The girls scored a few victories."

The students at St. Catherine had a great devotion to the rosary. In the late 1940s, the Family Rosary was the favorite community project, according to the chronicler, who comments that "its growth over the past year was gratifying."

In 1955, our featured class year, class officers were **Richard Bisson** (president), **Barbara Shedlock** (vice-president), **Patricia Hall** (secretary) and **Richard McCabe** (treasurer). **Mary Ann Saunders** was president of the student council, and **Rosalind Naebers** (now Sister Rosalind Naebers, IHM) was prefect for the Sodality of Our Lady.

Through the rest of the 1950s and '60s, the student population continued to decline; by the fall of 1966, only 449 students were enrolled in the 12 grades.

The chronicler notes that "With the graduating class of 1967, the history of St. Catherine High School closes..Next year, St. Catherine will become the central high school serving the

parishes of St. Rose, St. Charles, St. Edward, St. Margaret Mary, St. Bernard and Annunciation. Because of this change, our grade school children will attend St. Edward's."

The school became East Catholic High School, which is closed.

In 1955

Dwight D. Eisenhower was president of the United States. The U.S. population was 165,931,202, and life expectancy was 69.6 years.

Rosa Parks refused to sit at the back of the bus, breaking the Montgomery, Ala., segregated seating law.

Narinder Kapany (England) developed fiber optics. Owen Chamberlain and Emilio Segrè discovered the antiproton, a form of antimatter. The corticosteroid prednisone was developed.

It took seven games, but the Brooklyn Dodgers defeated the New York Yankees in the World Series. The Syracuse Nationals beat the Ft. Wayne Pistons in seven games for the NBA Championship. The Detroit Red Wings won the Stanley Cup, defeating the Montreal Canadiens in seven games.

On the Waterfront nearly swept the 1954 Academy Awards, winning Best Picture, Best Actor (Marlon Brando), Best Supporting Actress (Eva Maria Saint)

and Best Director (Elia Kazan).

Gunsmoke debuted and went on to be television's longest-running Western.

James Dean died in a car accident at age 24. Albert Einstein, Alexander Fleming, Thomas Mann, Carmen Miranda and Charlie Parker also died that year.

Emmy Awards went to *Dragnet* (Best Mystery or Intrigue Series), *Lassie* (Best Children's Program) and *This Is Your Life* (Best Audience, Guest Participation or Panel Program). Mary Martin won a Tony Award for Best Actress—Musical for her title role in *Peter Pan*.