

Providence Hospital stands in the middle of this historical scene, with Central School on the other side of Madison Street. Behind them is the horizon of First Hill. The picture was taken from the top of the old territorial University at Fourth and Seneca.

THE BUILDER'S HOSPITAL

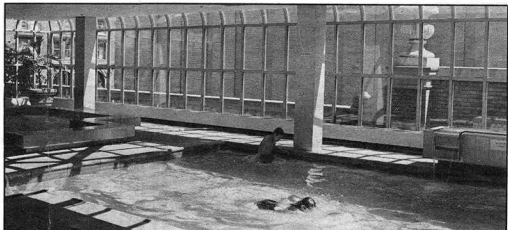
PROVIDENCE — DEDICATED TO MOTHER JOSEPH

WRITTEN BY PAUL DORPAT

This wonderfully detailed historical view — taken in the spring of 1888 — looks southwest from the old metropolitan campus of the University of Washington. The photogra-

pher (probably Charles Morford) carried his camera to the cupola of the university building for a high angle of his subject, Providence Hospital.

The completed hospital was designed



The swimming pool on the top floor of Four Seasons Olympic Hotel is just a few feet from the old University site.

Paul Dorpat

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by Mother Joseph, who was a founder of the Sisters of Providence in the Northwest. Self-taught, she was called "the builder" and eventually was honored by the American Institute of Architects as the first architect in the Northwest.

The Sisters arrived in Seattle in 1877 to run the county poorhouse in Georgetown. The next year they bought the John Moss residence at Fifth and Madison and converted it into their first hospital. They added 75 beds when they dedicated Mother Joseph's structure in 1883.

A century ago the religious temper was somewhat less ecumenical than it is now. The Sisters of Providence in their black habits seemed strange to Protestants. They constantly battled anti-Catholic sentiments.

When the Episcopalians opened Grace Hospital in 1886, the open competition for patients resulted in the area's first health-insurance plan. Grace administrators offered yearly health bonds for \$5 or \$10 to the sisters' "bread and butter" clients, the working class.

The sisters responded with their own plan. After eight months, a sister-chronicler wrote, "Our tickets are doing well, even in the territory of our adversary . . . A good number of patients left the hospital dissatisfied, while ours leave happy. His hospital is luxuriously furnished with Turkish carpets, furniture with marble tops, and so forth. Ours is simply furnished, but our Sisters are so devoted that they aptly compensate for the lack of wealth."

An overextended Grace Hospital failed during the great economic crash of 1893, but Providence survived and kept enlarging. When the last addition along Madison Street was ready in 1901, Providence was the largest hospital in the Northwest.

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