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# Local sisters have been involved in community since founding in 1916

By Marjorie Fitkin  
Contributing Writer

**Sentiments  
of  
sylvania**  
*The Sylvania Herald  
takes a step back into the  
past with an occasional  
series exploring the history  
of "old" Sylvania.*

In all of my travels around the world, I have had the privilege of worshipping in the quaint village churches in Norway, Mexico, and many parts of our country.

From the beautiful cathedrals of Europe to the charming chapels in the castles and palaces of the continent, various places of worship have given me great comfort during my many trips around the world.

Right here in Sylvania, we are fortunate to have a beautiful chapel in the heart of 89 acres belonging to the Sisters of St. Francis.

It is called Portiuncula, which means "little portion." It was built in 1936 and is an exact replica of a chapel located in Assisi, Italy, according to Sister Jeremias, director of grounds and the shrine.

From 1974 to 1975, the chapel was restored and modernized. The bells are from monasteries bombed during World War II.

The chapel is constructed of limestone from the Sylvania quarries. The building is open every day until dusk during the summer and until 5 p.m. during the winter.

It is important for visitors to know that there are no tours. The chapel exists solely for individuals seeking meditation and solitude.

The larger picture of the chapel

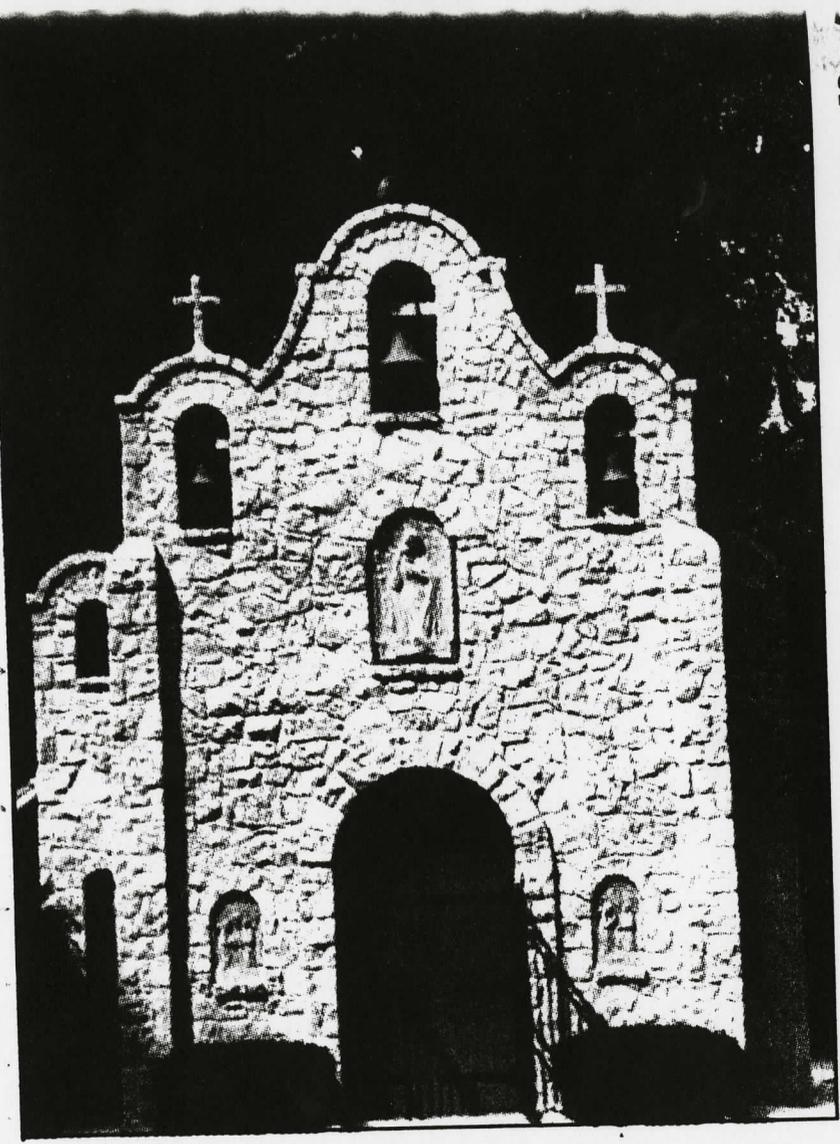
involves the history of the Sisters of St. Francis, located on Convent Boulevard.

Dec. 18, 1916 marked the foundation of a new Franciscan community of sisters in the Diocese of Toledo. The new foundation was made by the Sisters of St. Francis of Rochester Minn., at the request of Bishop Schrembs of Toledo to alleviate a critical need of staffing schools in the area.

The Rochester community had been conducting St. Hedwig School in Toledo since 1886, and in 1916, 18 sisters were stationed there.

This group, together with five other sisters sent to staff two small schools opening in the area, constituted the 23-member nucleus of the new foundation.

In August 1917, the parent community purchased 89 acres of land in Sylvania. In a short time, an unpretentious motherhouse and



Portiuncula, meaning "little portion" in Italian, is located on property owned by the Sisters of St. Francis in Sylvania and is a reproduction of a chapel located in Assisi, Italy.

novitiate were built on a small section of land and the provincialate of the Franciscan Sisters was established.

Mother Mary Adelaide Sandusky was chosen as the first

general superior of the Sylvania Franciscans, who became autonomous of the Rochester community in 1930.

In 1964, the sisters of St.

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Syl Herald Aug 23, 1995

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