

#(6) MICHIGAN FEMALE SEMINARY

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1. The Origin of the School

They were an impressive looking group, those men gathered about the table, the limelight flickering across their intent faces. It was December 9, 1856, and they had come to an important decision. Their meeting-place was the Presbyterian Church in the small village of Kalamazoo, Michigan, and they were churchmen from all parts of the country who had been chosen as delegates to this meeting which had been opened earlier in the day by the Reverend Mr. A. Bryant of Niles, Michigan. At first there was routine business, and then they settled down to discussing the main proposal of the meeting, which had been made by the Reverend Mr. Huggins of Kalamazoo. It concerned the idea of founding a Female Seminary to be sponsored by the Presbyterian Church. Addresses were made in favour of the movement by such well-known persons in church affairs as the Reverend Mr. J. J. Slocum of Michigan, Dr. Humphrey of Massachusetts, the Reverend Mr. Mead of Detroit, and several others.

The response to the proposal and to the succeeding speeches was one of enthusiastic agreement and the delegates were of the united opinion that the plan should be carried out as soon as possible. In fact, the only real issue that rent their complete accord was that of the location of the school, several towns wishing to become its home. But in the end, it was decided that the village of Kalamazoo, where their meeting was being held, should

have the new school, thanks to the many persuasive arguments of its adherents. And the meeting ended; the Michigan Female Seminary had been born.

Officials were selected to organise the school, and men were chosen to serve on the board of directors. It would be up to the board of directors to find a building site in Kalamazoo so that construction could be begun as quickly as possible. It was not an easy task, selecting a situation for the school which was intended to be the pride of all Presbyterians and of all residents of Kalamazoo, but finally they settled upon a thirty-one acre tract of land, covered with giant oak trees, on the east side of the river, located at the corner of Gull and Seminary Sts. (Seminary street was named for the school that was to be built and is now called Riverview Drive.)

"It was a fine and commanding location on the slopes and uplands of the bluff which gradually fell away to the river valley."¹ The Kalamazoo Gazette recorded that "no investment can be made that will so adorn our beautiful town or benefit its inhabitants as that which shall erect in our midst a second Mount Holyoke school."² This reference to a second Mount Holyoke was because it had been decided that the school was to be similar to the Mount Holyoke school in the east and to be

1. Kalamazoo Gazette, June 26, 1930, from a speech given by Mrs. John den Bleyker.

2. Kalamazoo Gazette, December 12, 1856.

conducted by much the same methods. It was widely known about the area in later years as the "Mount Holyoke" Seminary.

As soon as the site had been selected, plans went ahead for the building which was to be erected. On October 9, 1857, the Gazette announced that the building contract had been let to the Chicago firm of James C. Price for a cost of \$67, 889.00. The executive committee, composed of J. J. Slocum, H. G. Wells, F. W. Curtenius, Hiram Arnold and James Taylor, all prominent men of the area, was to supply the brick, stone, slating, and iron to be used.

The plans for the school were drawn by Bales & Coleman, a Chicago firm of architects. It is interesting to note that both the architects and builders were obtained in Chicago, as if the local firms were not of sufficient importance to be trusted with such an important undertaking. The original plans called for the construction of an immense three-story brick building 219 by 140 ft., to be shaped in the form of a Latin cross. In addition to the three stories there were to be basement and attic floors. The style of both the large main building and the two wings was to be Norman. According to these plans, the building would accommodate three hundred pupils and twenty teachers.

On October 27, 1857, a great event in the history of the school took place, the laying of the corner-stone. There was a good-sized crowd on hand at the exercises,

which were opened by the Reverend Mr. Slocum, founder of the enterprise, and who, through personal contribution and solicitation, had secured sufficient money to build the school. An Englishman, he died in 1870 without friends or relatives in this country, little recognized even by the school he had helped to bring into being.

"In addition to the large voluntary subscription for the school, architects, engravers and publishers (had) offered to assist in the different departments of their business without charge. The Chicago architects (gave) \$1000 toward the new school."³ The Gazette added that "the beautiful architectural design (was) to be engraved by Ed Mendel and the circular of the building management printed by that prince of good printers, S. P. Rounds of Chicago."⁴

Slocum told of the plans and purposes of the school in a speech. Then a hymn, written especially for the event by Mrs. C. W. Hall, wife of a gentleman very much interested in the school, was sung by the Kalamazoo Glee Club. After this the great white marble block, which was to be the cornerstone, was swung into place by Charles E. Stuart, who accompanied the action with a rousing speech.

3. Kalamazoo Gazette, October 9, 1857.

4. Ibid.

The block was donated to the school by a stranger from Chicago, who was ever to remain anonymous. The proceedings were closed by the Reverend Dr. Bittinger of Cleveland who spoke on the character of Mary Lyon, the founder of Mount Holyoke, as a Christian instructor of young ladies. The school was to be based on her teachings.

The Gazette was ecstatic over the whole affair. It reported that on "Tuesday last was the opening of a new and important era in the history of our already notable village. On that day was laid the foundation Corner Stone of one of the noblest edifices ever erected in a civilized country."⁵

In addition to the important people who did attend the ceremony, two others, Governor Kinsley S. Bingham and Zachariah Chandler, a Whig politician, had accepted invitations, but neither showed up. A few days later, Bingham sent a letter of apology which was duly printed in the Gazette and which explained that he had been summoned as a witness in court just as he was starting for Kalamazoo. Of the reason for Chandler's dereliction, there is no record.

Although the beginnings of the Seminary were truly auspicious, its progress soon became almost hopelessly mired. The Gazette of January 8, 1858 reported that "the stringency of the times was holding up, to some extent, the progress of

5. Kalamazoo Gazette, October 30, 1857.

construction."⁶ This was a reference to a slight depression which was occurring at the time. But in spite of this, the work of construction went slowly forward until 1860 when work was finally ceased altogether and no further advances were made until after the conclusion of the Civil War. It was 1866 when things were again underway. At this time the Reverend Mr. John Covert was appointed to take charge of the Seminary, and a prominent citizen, Luther H. Trask, was made business manager. The ambitious original plans were not finally adhered to for only the main building was completed at this time.

6. Kalamazoo Gazette, January 8, 1858.

II. The First Twelve Years

As soon as the building was ready for occupancy in 1867, Miss Jeanette Fisher, the first principal, arrived to take charge. With her came a staff of teachers, and the first graduating class, all from Lake Erie Seminary in Painsville, Ohio. There were 56 students and about 6 teachers. Miss Fisher was a graduate of the original Holyoke in Massachusetts and so were most of the staff. "What fine women they were, staunch, steady, true, such splendid examples to be leaders of young women," writes one lady who knew them.⁷ Of Miss Fisher herself, another lady, whose father, C. W. Hall, had been the one to go east and obtain Miss Fisher as principal, wrote, "She was in every way, the finest, most high-minded woman I ever met. As an instance of her consecrated work and loyalty to the interests of the Seminary she steadily refused to accept any increase to her salary, which was but \$500. Her aim was to send out Christian as well as educated women as graduates, and there were few failures."⁸

In those early days almost all of the girls' rooms were on the top floor, and this was before the elevator was installed.

7. letter from Mrs. Travis (of Plainwell, Mich.) to Miss Cora Roberts, February 15, 1928, Kalamazoo Public Library.

8. letter from Mrs. Rose Hall Stanley to Miss Jeanne Griffin, October 21, 1926, Kalamazoo Public Library.

Classrooms were on the lower floors. Of the first twelve years, during which time she was principal, Miss Fisher later wrote some reminiscences. She said that Science especially, was a subject for both learning and entertainment. A favourite occupation was scouring the surrounding wooded areas for specimens to be examined under the Biology microscope. In Chemistry, the usual work of lecture and laboratory was supplemented by frequent lectures given by visiting professors, And anatomy was studied with the aid of a skeleton to which the name of Sally had been attached.

As for a library, important in any school, there was, at first, little besides the main core of a copy of Webster's "Unabridged" and Appleton's Encyclopedia. But around this nucleus a library was growing, thanks to the efforts of many friends of the school. The old firm of Roberts and Hillhouse, booksellers and stationers, made frequent contributions, and Dr. Hitchcock, the physician in attendance at the Seminary, pledged his fees to the enlargement of the library. In later years a reading room was added, which contained such well-known publications as the Forum, the Century, Harper's Magazine, the Atlantic, and the Popular Science Monthly.

Another function of the early Seminary, in addition to academic training, was that of domestic training. The girls spent an hour a day doing the necessary housework, with the teachers planning and superintending their duties. While their lives were mostly spent at the Seminary, the girls had some

contact with the town. The Gazette mentioned the young ladies from "Mount Holyoke" who, every Sunday, marched to church in double line down Main Street. They were the object of the eyes of all the town young people; the boys looking for a pretty face, the girls noting the latest fashion in the gowns of the Seminary girls.

In June 1871, a fair was held in the Union Hall in Kalamazoo with the purpose of making money to aid in the completion of the Seminary buildings. Admission to this fair was placed at fifteen cents and exhibits were shown and articles sold. Another inducement to prospective patrons was in the promise of "agreeable" refreshments which were to be served. The next week, in the Gazette, there was an article indicating that the fair had been a resounding success and had secured about \$1000.00 to be donated to the school.

The fruits of the money gained from this fair and from other donations were to be seen in the new south wing which was erected in 1874. This wing was a two story wooden building which greatly enlarged the capacity of the school. At this time also, "the big chapel was partitioned making the library and reading room, and all was carpeted with beautiful red and brown carpet."⁹ It was noted that this carpet cost more than \$500.00 for its total of 500 yards.

9. Oak Leaves, Michigan Female Seminary, 1902 -Kalamazoo Public Library.

The twelve years regime of Miss Fisher as principal started the school on a firm basis. When she left to marry a gentleman of the area named Moore, attendance was increasing steadily and so were funds for completing the original buildings. During the eighties and nineties things continued on the basis of the way they had been originated under Miss Fisher. The faculty was always of the very highest standard. The ten women who succeeded Miss Fisher continued her fine work. It was stated that the main objective of the school, "kept constantly in view, was to send into the world young women with sound bodies, trained minds and well rounded characters, strong in Christian faith and life."¹⁰ There was to be no hint of a "finishing school" atmosphere, but instead an excellent college preparation.

10. Catalogue, Michigan Female Seminary, 1887-88.

III. Life at the Seminary

By 1880 the value of the Seminary property was considered to be about \$65,000, while the number of pupils which could be accommodated was about one hundred. But the evergrowing size of the student body, girls were coming from all over Michigan and even from other states, necessitated the finding of more space. In 1884 William Dodge gave \$40,000 as the nucleus of a fund for a new building. A temporary, two-story annex was built in 1887 but was no longer needed when Dodge Hall was opened for use in 1892. Dodge Hall was three stories tall and housed the music rooms, a gymnasium, cooking class and family recreation room, while the upper stories were used for student rooms. The family room was where students and teachers gathered for good times during their free hours, and was furnished by the ladies of the First Presbyterian Church of Kalamazoo. Dodge Hall contained an elevator and other "modern" conveniences. By 1897 the Catalogue announced proudly that the building contained a passenger elevator, fire escapes, soft water on every floor, and steam heat and electricity. There was also the notation that while the buildings were warm in winter, in summer the windows caught "every summer breeze."

By this time the school was a landmark to the citizens of Kalamazoo and the surrounding area. It stood on broad tableland at the top of a hill and surveyed the neighbourhood

below it with the disdain of a feudal castle. The main building was of red brick with long, arched windows and stone trimmings. Attached, and to the right, was Dodge Hall and a three-story tower with a cone-shaped roof which joined an archway. On the south side was a wide porch which rambled part way around the east of the building. Broad, well-kept driveways roamed up the hill and around the buildings on either side. "It was truly an academic spot. A spirit of old classic mythology seemed to pervade the place," with a druid or Pan hidden behind every oak tree.¹¹

In order to enter the Seminary, girls were to be at least fifteen years of age and in good health. Certificates showing good scholarship and deportment were required from the school previously attended. Candidates for admission were also required to pass examinations in English grammar, geography, and mathematics. At first the aim of the Seminary was to give a high school education, but later two years of courses equivalent to those of college were added, and from that point the emphasis was put on the last two high school years and the first two of college. After 1890 graduates were admitted to the University of Michigan with a full two years of credit. They could enter such colleges as Wellesley without an entrance examination.

11. Mrs. John den Bleyker, as cited.

The course of study at the Seminary was a rigid one, covering a four year period. The school year was divided into three terms and while some courses were studied during the entire year, others extended only over one or two terms. The required courses for the first year were Geometry (three terms), History of Greece and Rome, Physiology, and Botany (each one term). For the second year the girls studied Chemistry, Constitutional History of the United States (each one term), Physics, and History of England (each two terms). During the third year there was American Literature, Trigonometry, Geology, Astronomy (each one term), and History of Literature (two terms). The final year consisted of English Literature (two terms), Psychology, Ethics, Evidences of Christianity, and History of Art (each one term). In addition to these, English Composition and Bible study were required of every student during the entire course. There were also four years of electives in English, French, German, Latin or Greek. All students were to take the course in order as outlined by the Principal.

Occasional lectures were delivered on Domestic Economy, while some practical instruction in cooking was held in small classes. If enough girls wanted it, a class in bookkeeping, stenography, and typing was taught. There were several classes in music, both vocal and instrumental, and in art, such as in china painting. Twice a year a statement was issued by the

Seminary in regard to the condition of the student's work and her general progress in every direction. "Every effort (was) made to instruct the students in nice ways of doing things, and to instill that refinement of feeling about one's personal surroundings that marks a lady."¹²

All students at the Seminary were boarding students except a few day students who lived in Kalamazoo. To the boarding students the Catalogue issued a list of general directives. Each was to bring towels, napkins, sheets, pillowcases, blankets, a bedspread, a laundry-bag, and a teaspoon (to be used in the girl's room). As to a wardrobe, the girls were advised to bring strong walking shoes, warm wraps, and simple dresses. It was emphasised that there was "no need for an elaborate wardrobe or showy or expensive jewelry."¹³

Each girl needed a special gym dress which was made of Navy blue flannel and consisted of a long-sleeved blouse and a short, full skirt worn with heavy stockings and tennis shoes. There were many outdoor sports such as croquet, golf, and lawn tennis, and in winter, coasting and tobogganing. There were team sports, too, and both participants and viewers were enthusiastic. The school yell was Hobble Gobble, Razzle Dazzle, Sis Boom Bah--Michigan Seminary, Rah! Rah! Rah! In

12. Catalogue, Michigan Female Seminary, 1897-98.

13. Ibid.

the opinion of most, basketball was the most popular sport, although baseball, which was just making an appearance, was the favourite of some.

The Catalogue included a long list of rules and regulations by which the girls were to abide. One of these had to do with food and was directed more at relatives and friends than at the girls. It stated that "the Seminary makes ample provision of excellent food, properly prepared and nicely served, so that parents and friends are requested not to send boxes of food or confectionery."¹⁴ The students and faculty ate together in a dining-room at large tables with one faculty member presiding at each. Once a month the girls changed tables so as to get the benefit of different table companions and to make a better acquaintance with each of the faculty members.¹⁵

Exercise was required daily in gym except when a note was received by a physician. In case of illness a doctor would be summoned if it were considered necessary. Otherwise, every student was expected to participate. One could be excused from the daily outdoor exercise by the principal. This outdoor exercise time could be spent at croquet, tennis, golf, coasting, driving, or walking.

14. Catalogue, Michigan Female Seminary, 1901-02.

15. Mrs. H. Clair Jackson, Kalamazoo, interviewed May, 1956.

After 1892 a Students' Association was formed to which all the girls belonged. This Association held regular meetings and issued a paper which was called "Oak Leaves" and was often illustrated in the school colours of blue and gold. After ten years the Association was reorganized and became purely social and intellectual. A meeting was held every Friday night in the family room when a short program was given by some of the members. With the adjournment of the meeting the girls met in the parlour for cards and refreshments.

Because the school was church-related, emphasis was placed on the religious life of the students. Attendance at church on every Sunday morning was required unless an excuse was issued by the principal. This excuse does not seem to have been too difficult to obtain, as evidenced by a notation in the school's "Oak Leaves" which told of a gala Junior dinner for Seniors and concluded with the words, "most of these 'diners' were unable to attend church the next morning."¹⁶ Unless the parent expressed a special desire that the child be exposed to the Episcopal form of service, all girls, regardless of religion, attended the Presbyterian Church. Besides the weekly attendance of church in town, there were daily religious services held in the chapel at the Seminary, which were required. There was also an hour of Bible study

16. Oak Leaves, January-February, 1896.

together on the "Sabbath evening." In the later years of the Seminary there was a special meeting held each Thursday evening which was addressed by the President.¹⁷

In the Seminary Catalogue was a brief section which had to do with calling. This stated that "on Friday evening, pupils, at the discretion of the Principal, may receive callers whose names have been submitted by the parents or who have been properly introduced."¹⁸ There is a story of one young man of the village, looked upon unfavourably by the faculty head, who tried to make friends with her and at the same time pay a call upon one of the girls. The expensive box he sent to the lady was accepted with thanks, but he was then informed that he need never set foot again within the Seminary grounds. Needless to say, he could not even make the proposed call. So it seems that it was at times rather difficult to gain the permission of the principal to receive a certain caller.

Rules in regard to visiting in the village were very strict during most of the years of the Seminary. They were only lifted slightly during the last few years of the school, and probably only because of the multiple demands of parents. The Catalogue stated that "at the request of parents, pupils will be allowed to call upon friends in the city on Monday

17. Mrs. Effie Waters, Kalamazoo, interviewed May, 1956.

18. Catalogue, 1901-02.

afternoon, not oftener than once a month, and to spend Sunday with friends once during the term."¹⁹

Students were allowed to "visit appropriate places of amusement under proper chaperonage."²⁰ They were allowed under no circumstances to leave the school grounds without a chaperone. During their walks they were allowed to go no further west (toward town) than the Gull street bridge, a distance of two or three blocks. But in the other direction they were allowed to walk out quite far into the country.

"Many excursions (were) made after dinner to the soda water fountain down town, with some long-suffering teacher as chaperone."²¹ It was up to the girls who went to split among them the cost of the chaperone's ticket or refreshments.

They often attended events in the village such as plays, musicals, and lectures. "Several of the girls considered it a great privilege to attend a meeting of the Ladies' Library Club. A paper on 'American Humorists,' by Miss Thomas, was the attraction of (one) afternoon."²² During their recreation hours in the afternoons the girls were often allowed to go down town. On several occasions these expeditions were made

19. Catalogue, 1906-07.

20. Catalogue, 1901-02.

21. Oak Leaves, May-June, 1895.

22. Oak Leaves, November-December, 1895.

with the object of buying odds and ends for parties or jokes. The German teacher, Miss van Benschoten, was notorious for her dislike of perfume of any kind in any place. So one day some of the girls purchased several bottles of cheap perfume which they sprinkled all over that lady's room. She was a trifle upset.²³

Practical jokes of this sort were common in the otherwise strict Seminary atmosphere. Many episodes of this nature were reported. One "night the teachers were awakened by a terrible noise coming from the gymnasium. On investigation they discovered about eighteen young ladies arrayed for battle with pillows. The young ladies were consequently restricted from the gymnasium for several evenings."²⁴ Various organisations held parties which proved of considerable diversion. One such was held by the German club. "Blowing soap bubbles was the entertainment, and it furnished much amusement. Chocolate, wafers, salted peanuts, and lemons served in Wellesley style, were the refreshments."²⁵

At 9:30 all lights were supposed to be out for the night and all girls in bed so that they would be wide-awake at 7:00 in the morning when they were supposed to rise. But there are

23. Mrs. Hazel Geary, Kalamazoo, interviewed April, 1956.

24. Oak Leaves, September-October, 1895.

25. Oak Leaves, March-April, 1896.

several hints that things were not always completely silent after lights out. One item said that "'Paradise Alley' is gaining in popularity since the Misses Raff, Miller, and Sturgis have taken up their abode in that vicinity. This alley is not only popular among the girls but the teachers also have been frequenting it, especially after the light bell."²⁶ The term "Paradise Alley" refers to the name given to a corridor by the girls who inhabited it. Another corridor, "not wishing to be outdone" was entitled "Midway."

Another favourite amusement after dark took place when the boys from the town gathered together to serenade the young ladies. After dark they clambered up the hill to take their places beneath the oaks. Then they delivered a number of tender songs to their enthralled listeners, who leaned out of upper windows until the older ladies of the faculty chased the singers away. Sometimes they were allowed to finish the program and when they did it was always with "Good Night, Ladies."

In regard to the spending money which was allowed to girls by their parents, the school recommended that only a limited amount be allowed weekly or monthly. It also suggested that the girls be required to account for how this money was spent. Officials believed that girls had more

26. Oak Leaves, January-February, 1896.

spending money at school than was necessary.

The Catalogue for 1906 had a notation to the effect that "parents and guardians who place pupils here are understood to accept conditions as defined in the Catalogue, and to submit to the action of the Faculty in matters of discipline, even if it is considered necessary to request the removal of any pupil."²⁷ There is no indication as to what occasioned this paragraph, but it does not appear in any earlier Catalogues. It followed a usual item which stated that special requests must come directly from parents, not delivered through the pupil.

27. Catalogue, 1906-07.

IV. The Last Years of the School

Most of the running expenses for the Seminary came from contributions from Presbyterian churches around the state. It had no endowments or scholarships. The only assistance made to students was in a special rate offered to daughters of Christian ministers and missionaries and a small aid fund of \$50 a year. In 1906 the support of the church was withdrawn and the board of trustees found itself suddenly in the awkward position of not having sufficient funds to continue. At the end of the school year in 1907 the doors were closed for good.

Every year had been showing more and more red ink on the books. Tuition had risen steadily since the beginning of the school. In the beginning, board and tuition for the school year had been \$180. Just before the depression in 1873, the rates were raised to \$175. There were no more increases until 1887 when the price became \$200. By 1894 it was up to \$250 for the year. During the last year tuition was raised 20%, but this resulted only in a great loss of attendance. It was said at this time around the town that the president was charging a different tuition to each student, asking the highest amount that he thought they could afford to pay.²⁸

28. Mrs. Isabella Van Halst, Lansing, Michigan, interviewed April, 1956.

The last year there were less than fifty enrolled, a number that was far less than that of the first year. And the average number of students had varied between sixty and one hundred.

The first and only president of the school was Dr. John Gray, a Canadian who had come to Kalamazoo in 1893 as minister to the First Presbyterian Church. That same year he had received the honorary degree of D. D. from the new Presbyterian college, Alma. In 1900 he resigned from the Church to become the President of the Seminary. Although no one knew it then, the school had seen the last of its good days with the close of the eighteen hundreds. But the school officials did know that it was declining somewhat and had decided that a president who would devote his full time to the school might pull it out of its slump. So they chose Gray, who was a determined, rather pompous, typically British-looking man, to reorganise the school in order to increase its efficiency in the practical education of the young ladies.²⁹

But the efforts of Dr. Gray were to no avail. On May 10, 1907 the decision to abandon the Seminary at the close of that school year was made at the home of Mrs. Hannah Cornell. But optimistically, at the next meeting, on June 12, although hope had almost been given up, the officers were re-elected: Dr. John Gray, president; Dr. J. T. Upjohn, vice-president;

29. Mrs. Effie Waters, as cited.

Dr. H. W. Gelston, clerk; and A. W. Brownell, treasurer. The chairman, A. B. Connable, was the only one who did not accept this re-election. After the trustees gave up trying to save the school, the alumnae made an attempt. They proposed to raise \$15,000 to keep going, but this idea never passed the planning stage.

The most important reason for the failure of the school was the withdrawal of support from the Presbyterian Church. This was caused in large part by the organisation of Alma College, a co-educational institution, which type was then becoming popular. Another blow to the Seminary was the organisation in Kalamazoo of Western State Normal in 1904. This school drew a number of students from the Seminary. Some people said that the location of the school had something to do with its failure. By 1900 it was evident that the east side of the river was not the best section of town and people visiting the Seminary did not get a favourable impression of the neighbourhood, especially in rainy times when the area was often flooded.³⁰ "Some of the alumnae (ascribed) the failure of the institution to the poor management of the President, Dr. Gray....He was a scholarly man, but a poor administrator, they (said)."³¹

30. Mrs. Isabella Van Halst, as cited.

31. letter from Miss Jeanne Griffin to Dr. Thomas Woody, December 7, 1926.

When it was certain that, despite many valiant attempts, nothing could be done to save the school, the officials sold the property to O. M. Allen for a sum of from \$25,000 to \$30,000. This money was used to pay expenses and debts. Although it was believed at the time that Mr. Allen had a plan for making some use of the property, he died before whatever it was could be put into effect. In 1921 the place was almost sold to priests of the community of St. Basil by the estate for a price of about \$80,000. A St. Basil College was to have been established, but before the final papers were signed, the sale fell through.

In an attempt to make some use of the property, the Allen heirs rented apartments in the former Seminary buildings, which were now called by residents of the neighbourhood "the Tenement". By 1927 the place had fallen into partial ruin, with little remaining of its former glory. Weeds and tangled vines and bushes had encroached on the once well-kept lawns. The windows were cracked and broken, the porches fallen and rotting, the paint peeling, and five families inhabited the musty interior, where the plaster had long since tumbled down and the paper hung in tatters from the walls. The "spacious halls once decorated in the best of taste (were) cluttered with cane fishing poles, wash boilers, wash boards, wringers, heating and cooking stoves, etc."³²

32. Kalamazoo Gazette, September 19, 1927.

Soon after this the buildings were torn down, and the property left as it is now--vacant except for trees and weeds, a few broken bricks missed by the wrecking crew, a faint trace of the once broad and sweeping drive--almost as if there had never been such a place as the Michigan Female Seminary.

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