

LET US REMEMBER ...

WE ARE IN THE HOLY PRESENCE OF GOD



LET US REMEMBER

A HISTORY OF
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS HIGH SCHOOL
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

BILL ILIFF
CLASS OF 1976

FIRST EDITION 2010

BOOK REFERENCE

Introduction

Chapter 1 - Early Days

Chapter 2 - A Question of Curriculum

Chapter 3 - The Founder

Chapter 4 - From Old to New Again

Chapter 5 - Fight to Survive

Chapter 6 - The Times Are A'Changing

Chapter 7 - New Beginnings

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is not to put in a disclaimer before we even begin to tell the story of Christian Brothers High School in Sacramento, but history is being made literally every day in our school community. The accomplishments of teachers, administrators and staff, students, and alumni are occurring on a daily basis- some are recorded in one manner or another, many are not.

Therefore, the narratives gathered here represent no more than a snap shot or a quick glance at the different people or events that have made Christian Brothers the unique institution that it always has been. One friend, when talking about the almost impossible task of trying to capture our school in a simple book, said that this represents only the first edition, with many more to follow. And, of course, she was right. So, we would ask you to view this book as merely the first attempt to pass along our story.

One of the many great things about Christian Brothers throughout its time in Sacramento is that individual contributions have always been vitally important and celebrated, then woven into our greater community. As such, it is difficult, if not even a little counterproductive, to single out a relatively few individuals here in this project. Indeed, there are many, many stories not told and a far greater number that, as a history committee, we do not even know about.

Having said that, we hope this book jogs some memories and spurs along our CB community to share more anecdotes about people and events so we can record them and, therefore better preserve and continue to celebrate our unique history.

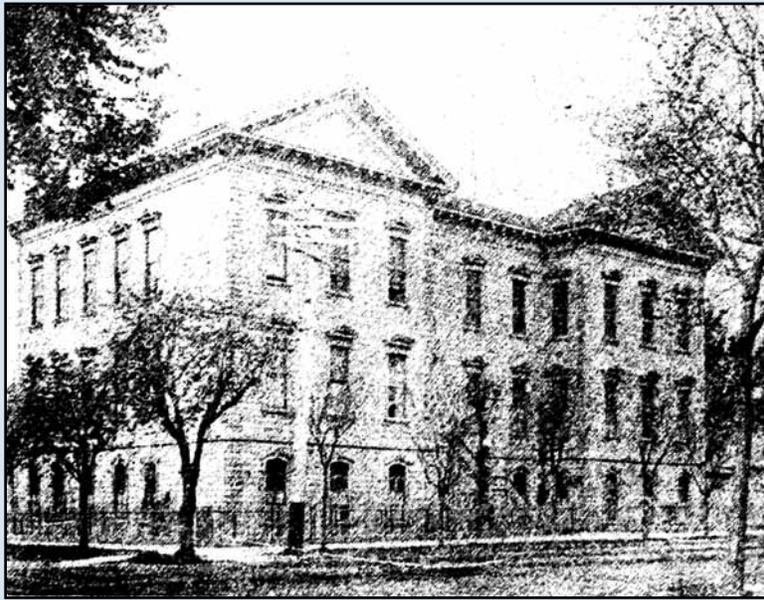
This book represents only one part of the history committee's effort to explore and chronicle the Brothers story. There are ongoing projects by members of the committee to research as much as they can, uncovering nuggets of information about sports teams, alumni careers/occupations, and club activities. We hope to establish an archive room that can be a repository for the recorded findings, photographs, oral histories, and CB memorabilia. We are also looking into the possibility of placing much of the information online for easier alumni access to this material.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the following for their patient and unflagging assistance in various stages of this project: Andrea Miller, District Archivist, Mont La Salle, Napa; Pat O'Brien, Retired Christian Brothers Faculty; Jerry Kirrene, History Committee Chair, and his committee members, Kevin McGovern, Dale Drozd, Chado Vasquez, Mac White, Dick Sperbeck, Jim McNamara, Mike and Kristen McCarthy, Rick Cabral, Troy Bird, Dave Jablonsky, Chuck Zannetti, Jim Westlake, Vince Juarez, and Jack Witry. Lorcan Barnes, the President of Christian Brothers High School, was kind enough to take the time out of his daily schedule to review the manuscript at different points and offer input and guidance. A thank you, also, to Br. Donald Johanson for reviewing the chapter on John Baptist de La Salle.

I owe my wonderful wife, Nina, in a big way for putting up with piles of notes and drafts in any number of places around our house during the past year.

And, finally, a special thanks to Suzie (Franzoia) Rozewski who made these otherwise pedestrian words come alive for us all.

Bill Iliff
September, 2010



*This book was written to honor all of the
dedicated teachers and staff who have so warmly
welcomed the students into their lives
with wisdom and enthusiasm.*

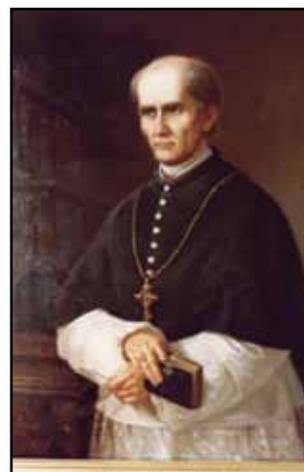
EARLY DAYS

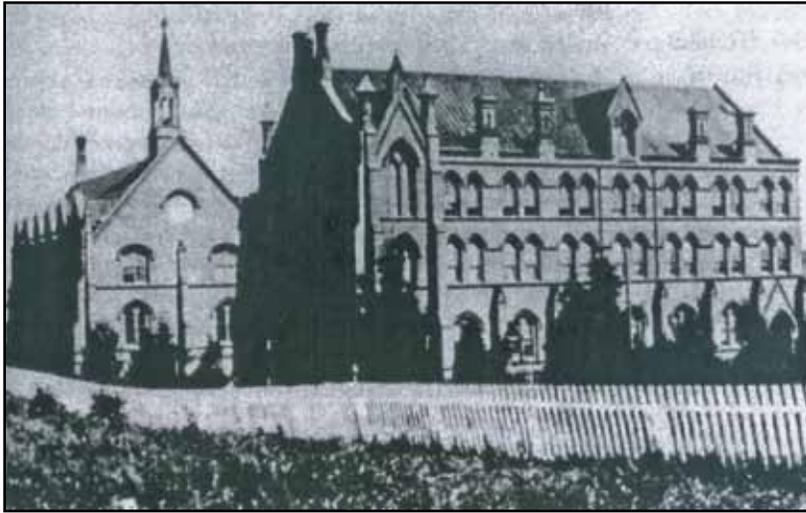
The historical roots for Christian Brothers High School begin not with its opening in 1876 but with a vision in 1853. That was the year that Joseph Alemany was named Archbishop of the San Francisco Diocese. Immediately upon his installation, he sought to better develop the nascent Catholic School system of education, feeling that strengthening of the system would address many challenges the Church faced in the newly admitted state in the union, California. Archbishop Alemany believed that from these types of schools, the Church could grow local vocations and also better provide for the spiritual and practical needs of the faithful. It was in 1853 that he started what turned out to be a fifteen year campaign to persuade the Church to send the Brothers of the Christian Schools to California. After a journey to the Vatican in 1867 to directly appeal to the Pope himself, Archbishop Alemany finally saw his vision come to fruition the following year with the arrival of eight pioneering Brothers in San Francisco.

St. Mary's College, then in San Francisco, was teetering on the brink of financial collapse in 1868 when the Archbishop assigned the Christian Brothers to staff its school. The college, not unlike other similar

Archbishop Alemany

On August 10, 1868, Brother Justin, as Director and Visitor, arrived with seven other Christian Brothers in the City by the Golden Gate after a nearly month-long voyage by boat from New York. The following Sunday, Archbishop Alemany, speaking to the assembled congregation at St. Francis Church, said, "I made a journey of twenty thousand miles to get the Brothers. I have at last succeeded! Let us give thanks to God!"





St. Mary's College on Old Mission Road

institutions of the day, offered enrollment for all grade levels, from primary to the college level student. As St. Mary's became stabilized both financially and in enrollment, Archbishop Alemany then looked elsewhere to repeat the successes that the Christian Brothers were able to achieve with their involvement upon their arrival in the San Francisco District.



Father Patrick Scanlan

In 1873, Father Patrick Scanlan had initiated a school for young children at St. Rose's Church in Sacramento, where he served as pastor. Prior to that, classes were held, either during the day or at night, beginning as early as 1853, in the church building but on an inconsistent basis primarily due to the inability to retain teachers for any length of time. St. Rose's, a beautiful, tall edifice, was located on 7th Street between J and K Streets in Sacramento. St. Joseph's Academy for girls, on 8th and G Streets, established in 1857, had enjoyed a much more stable existence. By 1874, the Brothers were educating students at two Bay Area locations, St. Joseph's Academy in Oakland and Sacred Heart in San Francisco, institutions which were effectively "feeder" schools for St. Mary's College.

By the mid-1870's, local sentiment amongst the Sacramento faithful seemed to have two apparent prevailing opinions: some dissatisfaction with the available public schools in the area and the desire for a larger Catholic institution to serve more students. More on that later. Father Scanlan, who could be considered in retrospect as one of if not the unofficial leader of the Sacramento Catholic faithful during that time period (the Sacramento Diocese was not to be established until the next decade), responded to that sentiment by leading a drive to build a new school in town.

Though it was all "unofficial," Fr. Scanlan had been laying the groundwork to entice the Christian Brothers to be part of a new school project not long after their early success in the Bay Area schools. There were fundraisers, possibly as early as 1871, with raffles, "gift concerts", and the like but never expressly advertised as a benefit for a new school building. The first known event, publicized as benefitting a "Christian Brothers School For Boys" was a picnic in May of 1873. Even though a decent

monetary success, the concept of a campaign was dormant for the next six months. Although records are not altogether conclusive, it would appear that Father Scanlan had taken a conservative approach in that the project was “pay-as-you-go,” so St. Rose’s would not be overextended. When the necessary monies had been collected, Father Scanlan purchased a parcel of land on K Street between 11th and 12th for \$3,100 in the name of Bishop Alemany in October of 1874. A building committee was then established with the total cost of the school, land included, estimated to be \$15,000. As of November of the same year, it was disclosed that \$9,400 had been raised, leaving some \$3,000 to be acquired.



The Golden Eagle Hotel and St. Rose of Lima Church

It was then that one Miss Maggie Cunningham stepped forward. A Bay Area transplant, she had seen firsthand the good works of the Christian Brothers and was eager to assist in their coming to Sacramento to do the same. Assisted by Mrs. M. Horan and Mrs. Mary Scribner, Cunningham went door to door via horse and buggy in what later would be termed a capital campaign. It is important to note that the last “phase” of the fundraising effort likely came not only from the Catholic community but with significant assistance from non-Catholics, as well. Further benefit dances and picnics were also held in 1875 to aid in the fundraising effort.



Maggie Cunningham

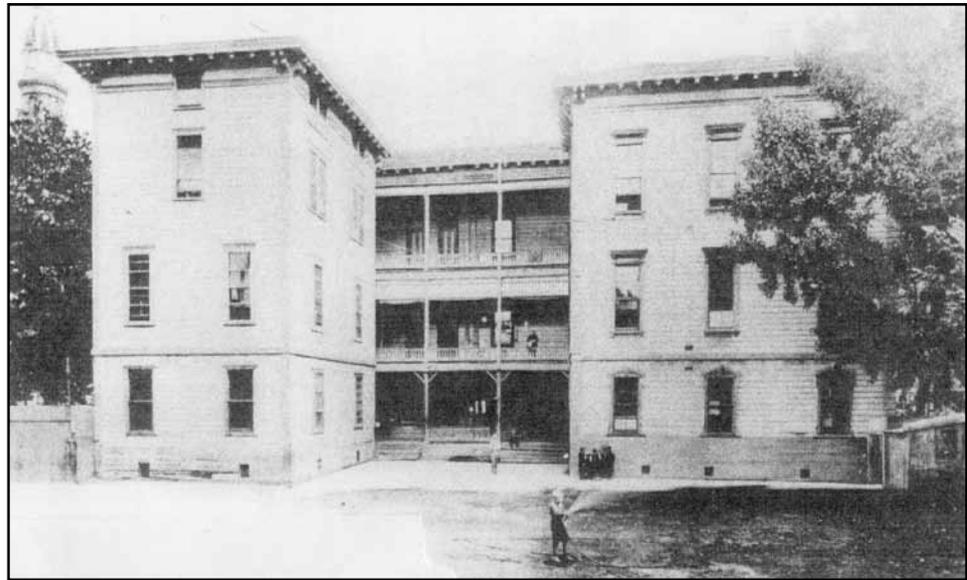
The school building, which included classrooms along with living quarters, was designed by architect William Kirk. The building and the aforementioned land was owned by St. Rose’s parish with the Brothers paying all insurances, taxes, and City assessments (the school was later deeded to the Brothers). Working with resolve and efficiency, the school was ready to receive its students on July 16, 1876, when Archbishop Joseph Alemany dedicated the building and the school, to be called St. Patrick’s Institute. It is theorized that the school was named as such in honor of Fr. Scanlan, though never apparently documented. At the dedication ceremonies, Archbishop Alemany, a strong proponent of education, spoke of a long history of the Church clinging very tenaciously to a culture of learning, that Popes and Cardinals valued an erudite approach, helping to establish libraries, colleges, and universities in many cities. Archbishop Alemany also cited the rise of teaching congregations of religious men and women and their representation in America. Finally, the Archbishop complimented the Christian Brothers humble origins and the extent of their far reaching accomplishments in education.



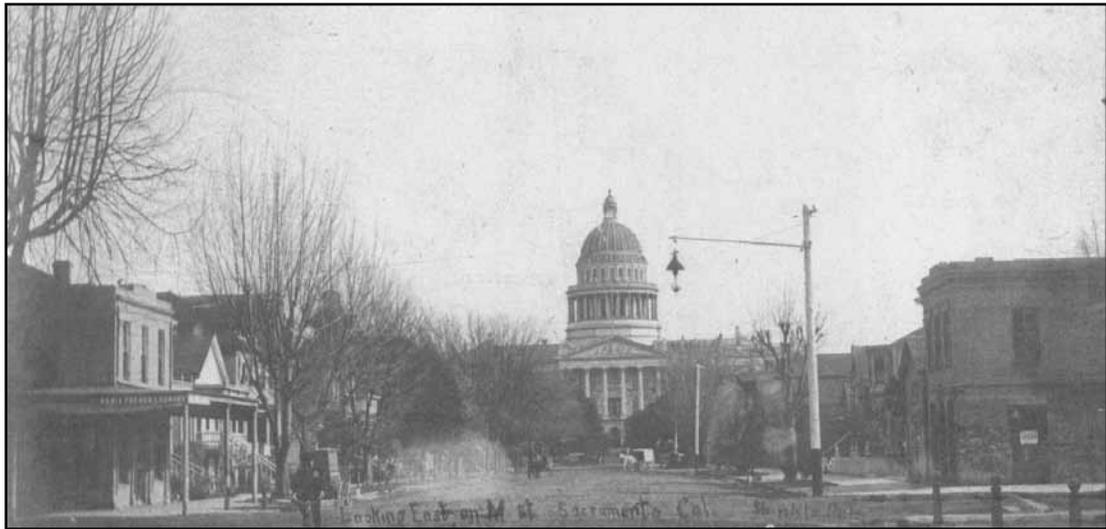
St. Patrick's Institute, later to be called Sacramento Institute then Christian Brothers College

Built amongst tall elm trees, the newly completed school and living quarters was a three storied Georgian style building. *The Sacramento Union* described it thusly, “plain in style, yet not cold and formal. It is of wood with rustic finish and has ornamental arched openings and tasteful trimmings.” The kitchen and dining room, able to accommodate thirty, was on the first floor, while the second floor contained two classrooms and two study parlors, equipped with two long tables and a dozen plain chairs each. The classrooms had enough space for 65 students per room. The third floor housed two more classrooms, the dormitories (twenty beds for the boarders) and living quarters for the Brothers. The balcony across the back of the school had a perfect view of the recently completed State Capitol. Father Scanlan of St. Rose’s furnished the otherwise bare classrooms with enough desks to accommodate the expected number of enrollees. Also, the gift included two Franklin globes, blackboard erasers, and pointers.

For the dedication ceremony, a platform was set up on 12th Street under the elm trees, to shade the well-wishers from the hot July sun. Governor William Irwin and Adjutant General Walsh of the State of California addressed the gathering. Many other state and locally elected officials attended, as well. The next day following the dedication, Monday July 17, 1876, the Christian Brothers opened the doors of St. Patrick’s Institute and, led by Principal-Director Brother Cianin Griffin, students were welcomed to the first day of instruction. The faculty included Brother Alexander (the first St. Mary’s College graduate to become a Christian Brother), Brother William, Brother Ulfrid Patrick, Brother Wenceslaus, Brother Fintan John, and Brother Lamand.



The back of the school and play yard. The balconies offered a perfect view of the newly constructed State Capitol. Below is the Capitol view from the river.



With the four completed classrooms that could accommodate 65 students each, 260 chairs were available to seat the children. Up to twenty could live in as boarders. The fees ranged from \$12 to \$40 for an annual tuition or from \$3 to \$10 for a two and a half month session. In a tradition that proudly exists to the present day, tuition was collected from those who could afford it, but the Brothers would not refuse pupils whose parents were too poor to pay. The initial enrollment was 200 students. Before the end of the year, the number had swelled to 250 as the Sacramento community had quickly become aware of the great works of the Brothers at 12th and K. By October, the unfinished portion of the building, which included 3 more classrooms (bringing the total to seven) was completed and furnished with the help of the San Francisco Diocese.

With the close of the first school year, May 28, 1877 saw St. Patrick's Institute celebrate its first graduates. Commercial diplomas were given to Francis Ryan and John Shag, with certificates presented to Henry Ryan, Isaac Trainor, Edward Figg, J.L. Hughes, J. Box, J. Murphy, and one B. F. Smith. Their diplomas were awarded in the Assembly Chamber of the State Capitol by Governor Irwin. Apparently enjoying a respectful relationship with Secretary of State Robert Beck, graduation ceremonies were also held in the Assembly Chamber for the next two years, as well. By 1879, the school's name was formally changed to Sacramento Institute, which remained until 1896 when it became known as Christian Brothers College. That same year (1879), school Principal Brother Cianin moved to San Francisco to continue his service and was replaced by Brother Bertram (1879-1880), followed by Brother Sabinian (1880-1881), Brother Bosonis John (1881-1883), and Brother Genebern (1883-1886). Brother Cianin then returned in 1886 and served as principal for three more years. For the next one hundred years, it was uncommon for a principal-director to remain in Sacramento to serve for more than three consecutive school years.

Of special note was the tenure of Brother Ambrose O'Malley, who was the Principal-Director from 1894 until his untimely passing in 1898. The popular brother was sailing towards Paris for a three month retreat when the French steamer he was on, La Burgoyne, crashed amidst heavy fog and sunk to the ocean floor. Brother Ambrose perished, along with some 500 other passengers. Some solace was passed along to his many mourners by a survivor of the shipwreck, recounting how Brother Ambrose calmly and valiantly counseled and encouraged many of the panic stricken passengers before his own demise.

Brother Ambrose O'Malley

Brother Ambrose O'Malley who served as Principal-Director until his untimely passing in 1898



Brother Cianin Griffin



A native of Ireland, young Cianin (1833-1898) eventually moved to Canada where he found work as a surveyor before later joining the Brothers order. Possessing an engineering intellect, Brother Cianin's expertise as a teacher was in mathematics. Thirty-five years old at the time of his passage to San Francisco, he always had a soft spot in his heart for the younger students, often exhibiting a boyish sense of humor. When St. Patrick's Institute was opened to students in 1876, Brother Cianin became the school's first Principal-Director. He returned later to serve in the same capacity from 1886-1889.

Brother Genebern Steiner

Brother Genebern Steiner (1844-1907) joined the Brothers in Montreal at age 13 after his family had emigrated to Canada from Switzerland. By the age of 24, he was in California with the original pioneering Christian Brothers serving as Prefect of Discipline at St. Mary's College in San Francisco. Brother Genebern also served at St. Joseph's Academy in Oakland and as an administrator at Sacred Heart College in San Francisco before becoming the Principal-Director at Sacramento Institute (later Christian Brothers College) in 1883. He is memorialized in the San Francisco cityscape where one can find Steiner Street, named after him, as well as Genebern Street.

Although it is not hard to envision the three story building, with its classrooms and living quarters, it should be noted that Thomas Edison, amongst his many inventions, did not develop a workable incandescent light bulb until 1880. Even then, that did not mean that the Brothers and their students had the use of electricity just yet. Instead, large chandeliers containing many candles supplied the indoor lighting. It was not until 1895 that Folsom Dam supplied economically available electricity to Sacramento. Therefore, for the first 20 years of the school's existence, the students attended to their studies and other responsibilities under candlelight!

It should also be noted there was no sewage system in Sacramento until at least 1890 in the area around the school. The challenges were many for the early students. But, a special bond enveloped the school and the Brothers from the very start. And, it was that spirit and sense of purpose that became quickly well known in the local community. As the reputation of the education received by the children under the Brother's tutelage spread, the demand for places in the school exceeded the available room. It became evident that the school would need to expand. Responding to the Brothers' appeal was Mrs. Michael Bethel, who generously donated \$5,000 in 1903 to offset the cost of adding a new wing to the original main building. She also helped fund renovations to the school chapel, as well.

**SIGNUM FIDEI**

Adopted by the General Chapter in 1751, this seal, a shining silver star on a blue shield with the inscription Signum Fidei became the seal of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. The motto Signum Fidei, translated from Latin, means 'Sign of the Faith'.

PETER J. SHIELDS



Born on the family homestead at Hangtown Crossing, Shields was an 1879 graduate of Sacramento Institute (later Christian Brothers College). A law apprenticeship under Judge Amos Catlin led to a position as private secretary to Governor James Budd, followed by being named the Secretary of the State Agricultural Society and a law partner of Hiram Johnson (later the governor of California). In 1900, Peter was elected to serve on the Superior Court bench of California, serving as the most tenured/longest serving Superior Court judge ever in the state. Combining his lifelong interest in agricultural affairs and his influence from the bench, Judge Shields is widely credited as the leader in the establishment of the University of California, Davis, beginning in 1908 as the University Farm. Shields was the driving force behind the acquisition of needed funding from the state legislature as well as selecting the site for campus construction.

There are three very visible landmarks around the UC Davis campus that signal his significant contributions. The main library at the college is Shields Library, named in his honor. Shields Avenue runs along the northern side of the campus. Finally, during the 1962 Charter Day centennial celebration, remembering the 100th anniversary of the Morrill Land-Grant College Act, an oak grove in the college arboretum was dedicated to him.

In addition to his long, distinguished legal career and his accomplishment in agricultural affairs, Judge Shields spent most of his life working with his Jersey cattle herd. Well past the age of ninety, he continued to be a recognizable participant at the State Fair cattle ring.



Shields Library, UC Davis Campus

Leaving a very sizable and enduring footprint on the state of California for his many contributions, Judge Shields passed away September 28, 1962 at the age of 100.



Looking down K Street with the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament at the end, c.1890's



From the Capitol building rooftop this photo shows the Cathedral with Christian Brothers College to the right on other side of K Street.



Color photo postcard depicting the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, 1890's. Christian Brothers College is located to the right across K Street.



Central Pacific Railroad Depot, 1897

Bishop Patrick Manogue (1832-1895)



The founding bishop of the Diocese of Sacramento was a large man, listed in various accounts as anywhere between 6'3" and 6'6", towering over the average person in the 19th century. Not only was he a man of large physical proportions, Patrick Manogue possessed a grand vision and he spent his entire life in the pursuit of seeing his out-sized dreams becoming fulfilled.

Manogue's family from County Kilkenny suffered greatly during Ireland's Great Famine. Property foreclosure and poverty forced the sixteen year old to leave his native country to seek employment in the United States in 1848. Despite his financial hardship, Manogue never lost sight of his dream of educating himself- he later became fluent in French, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.

Young Patrick eventually settled in Moore's Flat (Nevada City), California, realizing income from gold mining. He made enough money to travel back to Europe, studying for the priesthood at St. Sulpice in Paris (coincidentally, the same seminary where John Baptist de La Salle studied two centuries earlier).

After his ordination in France, Manogue returned to the mining environment, this time in Virginia City, re-establishing friendships and ministering to the miners. Despite his imposing size, Father Patrick was known as a man of gentle persuasion and encouragement to his parishioners. But, in the rough and ready Old West, Manogue knew how to take care of himself.

On one occasion, he learned that one of his parishioners was dying. He got on his horse, at night, and started out to the lonely cabin where she lived. Upon his arrival, the lady's husband came out of the cabin, and drew his pistol, waving it at the priest and ordering him to leave. Instead, Manogue decked the man, took the gun and went into the cabin to pray with the woman. When, exiting the cabin, he returned the pistol to the dazed husband and rode off on his horse back to Virginia City!

With the help of the sometimes explosive income from mining strikes, Father Manogue oversaw the building of churches, hospitals, schools, and orphanages. One of the men Manogue had mined with, John Mackay, became a lifelong friend. Mackay later discovered the Comstock Silver Lode, becoming the wealthiest man in the world at the time. But, he never forgot his friendship with Manogue.

When Manogue was later installed as the first bishop of the newly established Sacramento Diocese in 1886, Mackay was a significant donor in the building of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament.

Bishop Patrick Manogue was truly a man for all seasons: erudite, compassionate, and one capable of physically demanding work. He forged bonds with people from all corners of society.
