



Hospital Sisters of St. Francis

4849 La Verna Road ▪ Springfield, IL 62707

217-522-3387 ▪ hospitalsisters.org

From: Brian C. Blasco

Director of Communications and Archivist - Assistant Coordinator of Community Life

Date: April 10, 2025

RE: Sister Francis Dreisvogt, OSF

Birth	September 10, 1849, in Rheda, Germany, and named Elisabeth
Parents	Heinrich and Elisabeth (Poetter) Dreisvogt
Entered HSOSF	October 1, 1870
Profession of First Vows	October 11, 1873
Missionary to the USA	October 1875 at age 26

Assignments

Effingham, IL	St. Anthony's Hospital	November 13, 1875
Springfield, IL	St. John's Hospital	1877
Springfield, IL	St. John's Tuberculosis Sanitarium	1930

Entered Eternal Life

July 31, 1933, and buried in Crucifixion Hill Cemetery (Springfield, IL)

11/12

SISTER FRANCIS, ONE OF GROUP WHICH ESTABLISHED ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL, DIES.

Following an illness of only a few weeks, death descended suddenly but peacefully upon Sister Frances, 84-year old nun, the last of the group of five who established St. John's Hospital here almost sixty years ago.

Sister Frances died in the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Francis near Riverton at 3:45 P.M. Monday, her death coming as a shock to her associates who had expected her to survive the ailment which caused her to keep to her bed during the intense heat of the last few weeks.

Funeral services are to be conducted at 8 A.M. Thursday at the Motherhouse Church at St. John's Sanatorium, with Msgr. Joseph C. Straub officiating. Interment will be in Sister cemetery, Crucifixion hill near the Motherhouse, where Sister Francis has resided for the last three years since her retirement from active work in St. John's Hospital.

One of Twenty

Sister Francis was one of a group of twenty nuns who left their native Germany in 1875 to come to America as nurses. She and four other nuns, Sisters Cyrilla, Cassianne, Macaria and Angelica came to Springfield and established a small hospital in the Jacob Loose homestead on Seventh street near Lawrence Avenue. The house was fitted as a hospital with seven rooms to accommodate 10 patients, and was operated as a hospital for three years under the direction of Sister Angelica.

The willingness of the five sisters, their travels to every part of the city to assist not only the sick and ailing but the needy as well, soon began to wear down the prejudice of Springfield residents against the hospital. Because of this prejudice against entering a hospital for treatment, the five sisters were required to visit the homes of the afflicted, traveling through the muddy streets of the city throughout all seasons of the year, regardless of weather conditions.

After three years of intensive work, the five sisters were enabled to construct the first building of the order to be used for hospital purposes here. The building, erected in 1876, is today a part of the present St. John's Hospital institution which covers two large city blocks on Mason street from Seventh to Ninth.

The first building built under the direction of the sisters consisted of 16 private rooms and four wards for the accommodation of 16 additional patients, a small chapel, an operating room, and residential quarters in the attic for the sisters.

The constant application to their duties soon rewarded the sisters for their efforts and little by little the hospital grew to its present proportions.

Last of Founders

Of the five nuns who established the hospital here, Sister Francis was the sole survivor until her death Monday. Only one other of the group of 20 who came to America 58 years ago now survives, Sister Sylvania, who has resided at the Motherhouse for the last three years. Sister Sylvania settled in Effingham and resided there for her entire period of residence in America until her retirement and removal to the Motherhouse.

Sister Francis was revered by all who knew her, and particularly by her associates at the Motherhouse where in spite of her retirement, she proved of incalculable worth because of her exceptional sunny disposition.

Even during her period of illness, Sister Francis looked forward to her recovery and to the celebration of her diamond jubilee as a sister of the order, observed on the sixtieth anniversary of taking the religious vows.

During her residence in the Motherhouse, Sister Francis recalled to her friends and visitors many of the incidents in the struggles of the sisters to establish a hospital here, including her own service with Mary Todd Lincoln, whom she attended as night nurse during the illness of the president's wife.