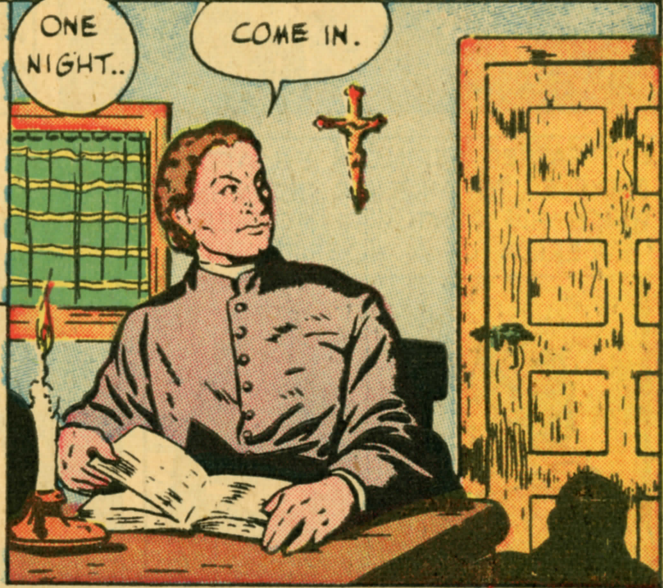


Nerinckx



SISTERS OF LORETTO AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

IN 1797, DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, FATHER CHARLES NERINCKX WAS PASTOR IN A SMALL BELGIAN TOWN. THE FRENCH SOLDIERS DID NOT LIKE THE CHURCH DOCTRINES HE TAUGHT THE CHILDREN OF HIS PARISH...



FRENCH SOLDIERS ARE COMING TO ARREST YOU!

WE HAVE COME TO HELP YOU ESCAPE. PLEASE DO AS WE SAY!



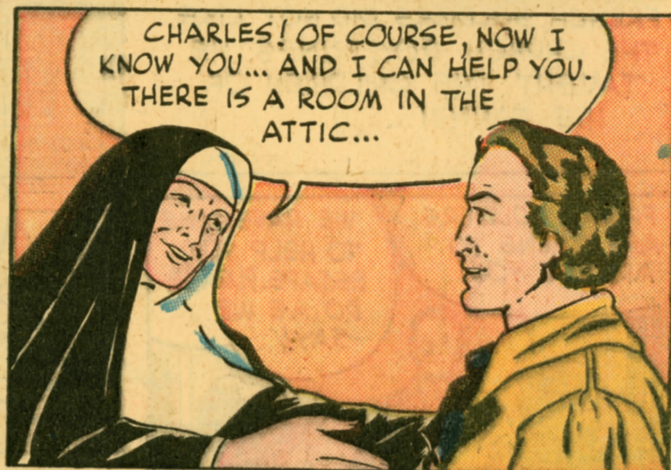
QUICKLY, FATHER! PUT ON THESE CLOTHES AND COME WITH US.

YOU LOOK LIKE A GOOD FLEMISH PEASANT NOW, FATHER.



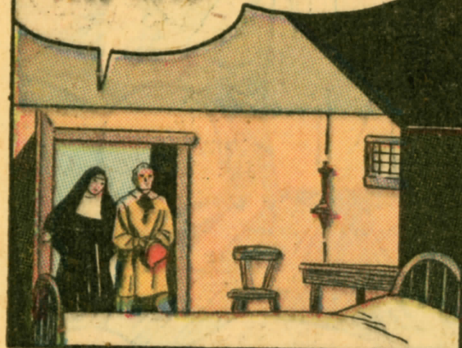


BUT FATHER NERINCKX ESCAPED, AND FLED TO ANOTHER TOWN IN WHICH HIS AUNT WAS MOTHER SUPERIOR OF A HOSPITAL.



FOUR YEARS PASSED. FATHER NERINCKX HID IN HIS ROOM ALL DAY, GOING OUT ONLY AT NIGHT.

YOU CAN HIDE HERE DURING THE DAY. AT NIGHT PERHAPS YOU CAN VISIT THE SICK, AND GIVE THEM THE SACRAMENTS. OUR PARISH PRIEST HAD TO FLEE ALSO.



AND THEN ONE DAY..

BISHOP CARROLL OF BALTIMORE HAS ANSWERED MY LETTER. THEY NEED PRIESTS IN AMERICA, AND THEY WANT ME TO COME THERE.

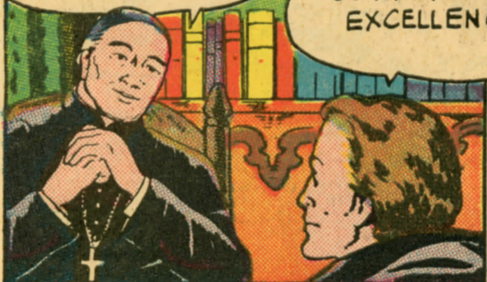
I'M GLAD FOR YOU, CHARLES. JUST THINK, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO HAVE YOUR OWN PARISH AGAIN!



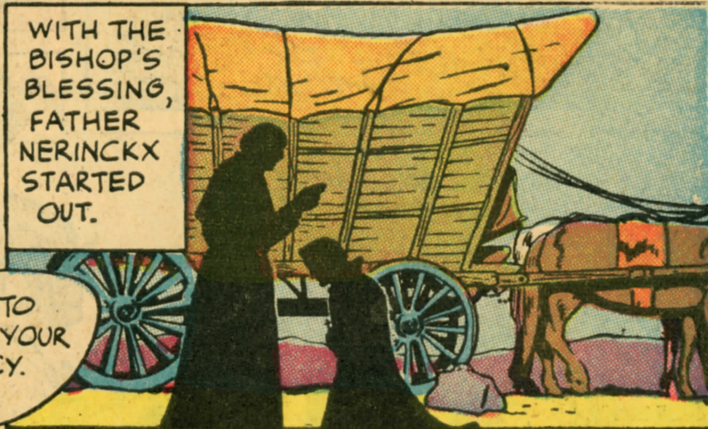
IN BALTIMORE..

THE MISSIONS IN KENTUCKY NEED ANOTHER PRIEST. THERE IS A GROUP GOING OUT THERE SOON, AND YOU CAN PROBABLY GO WITH THEM.

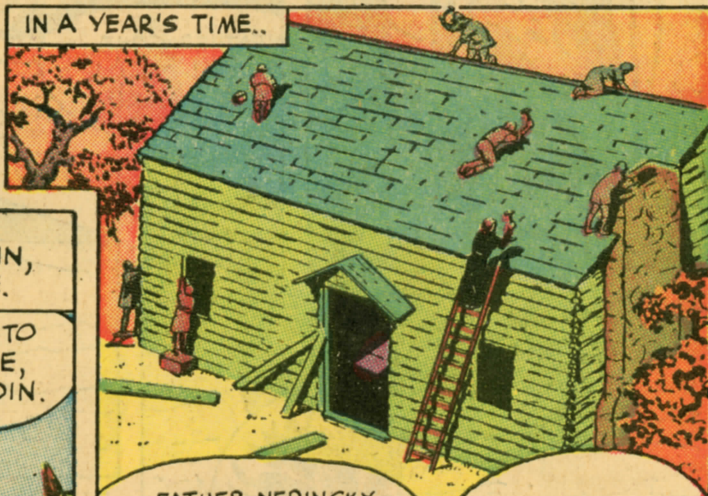
I'M READY TO GO ANYTIME, YOUR EXCELLENCY.



WITH THE BISHOP'S BLESSING, FATHER NERINCKX STARTED OUT.



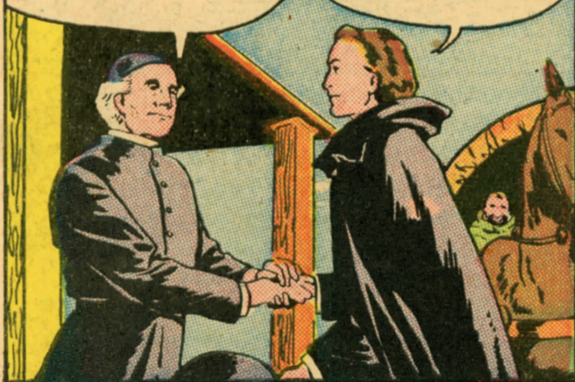
IN A YEAR'S TIME..



ON JULY 18, 1805, HE ARRIVED IN KENTUCKY TO HELP FATHER BADIN, WHO WAS THE ONLY PRIEST THERE.

WELCOME, FATHER, IT'S GOOD TO SEE ANOTHER PRIEST.

I'M HAPPY TO BE HERE, FATHER BADIN.



FATHER NERINCKX WORKS AS HARD AS ANY OF THE WORKMEN. HE'S GOING TO GET THINGS DONE AROUND HERE, THAT ONE!

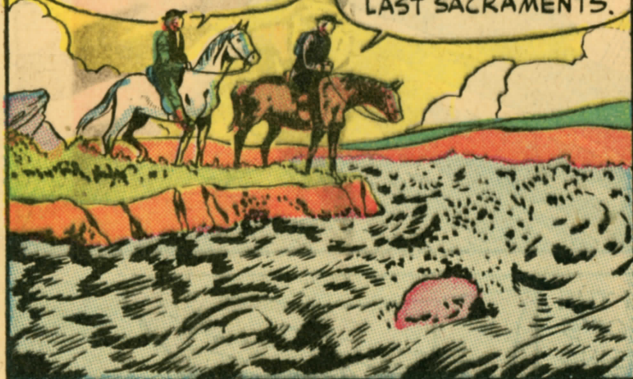
I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE LIKE HIM. HE'S WILLING TO COME TO SEE YOU ANY HOUR OF THE DAY OR NIGHT. I HOPE HE STAYS HERE A LONG TIME.



VERY FEW THINGS KEPT FATHER NERINCKX FROM HELPING HIS PEOPLE. ON ONE TRIP...

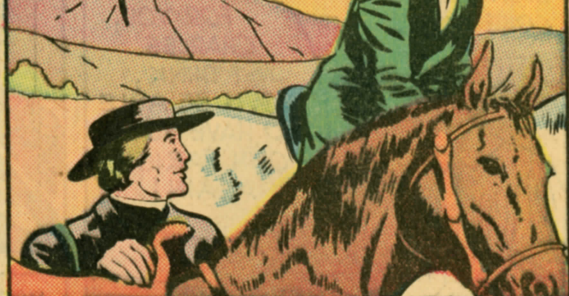
YOU'LL NEVER GET ACROSS, FATHER. BETTER GO BACK.

I'VE GOT TO CROSS. THERE'S A SICK MAN WAITING FOR THE LAST SACRAMENTS.



GET DOWN, AND GIVE ME YOUR SADDLE.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?



JUST THIS... WITH TWO SADDLES I SHOULD BE HIGH ENOUGH.



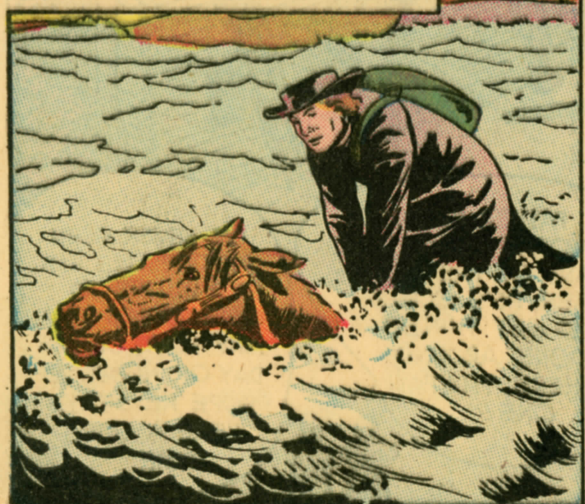
FATHER, COME BACK! YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT!



DON'T WORRY... I'LL BRING YOUR SADDLE BACK!

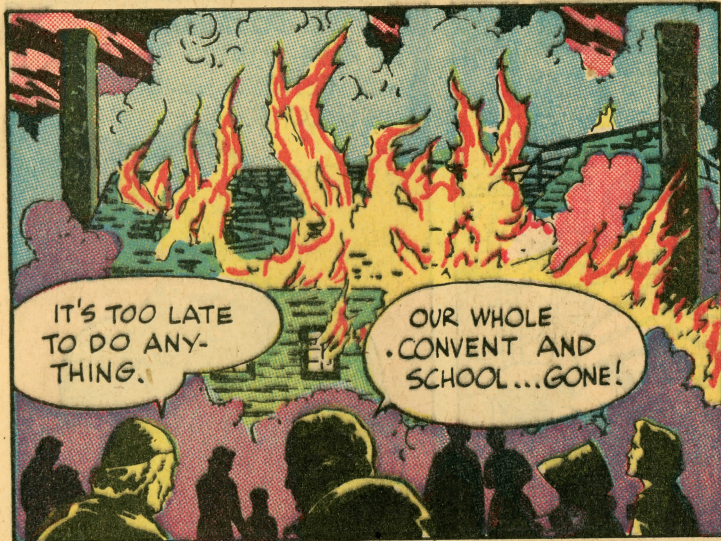


FATHER NERINCKX WAS DETERMINED TO HELP HIS PEOPLE IN EVERY WAY. IN KENTUCKY THERE WERE NO SCHOOLS FOR THE CHILDREN AND NO SISTERS TO TEACH THEM. HE WANTED EDUCATION FOR THEM, SO IN 1807, WITH FATHER BADIN'S HELP, A CONVENT WAS BUILT, AND SEVEN YOUNG WOMEN WERE READY TO START A RELIGIOUS ORDER.



BUT BEFORE THE SCHOOL OPENED...

FATHER! FATHER NERINCKX,
WAKE UP! THE CONVENT
IS BURNING!



IT'S TOO LATE
TO DO ANY-
THING.

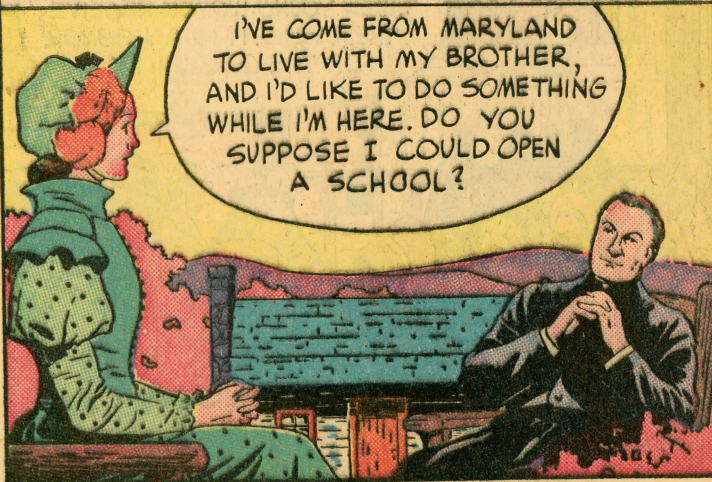
OUR WHOLE
CONVENT AND
SCHOOL...GONE!

BY THIS FIRE GOD HAS
CLEARLY SHOWN ME THAT
I'M NOT THE ONE TO START
A RELIGIOUS ORDER
IN KENTUCKY.

WE MUST
NOT BE
DISCOURAGED,
FATHER BADIN.
GOD WILL
HELP US.



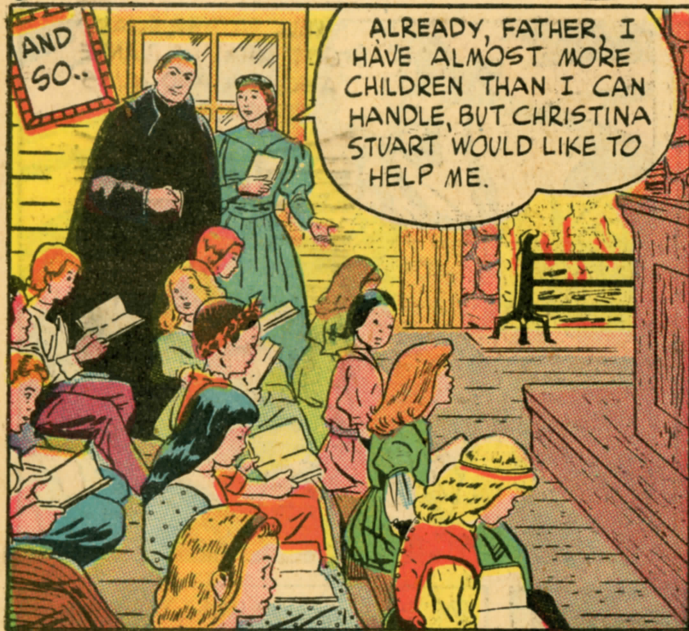
ONE DAY A YOUNG WOMAN NAMED MARY RHODES
CAME TO FATHER NERINCKX...



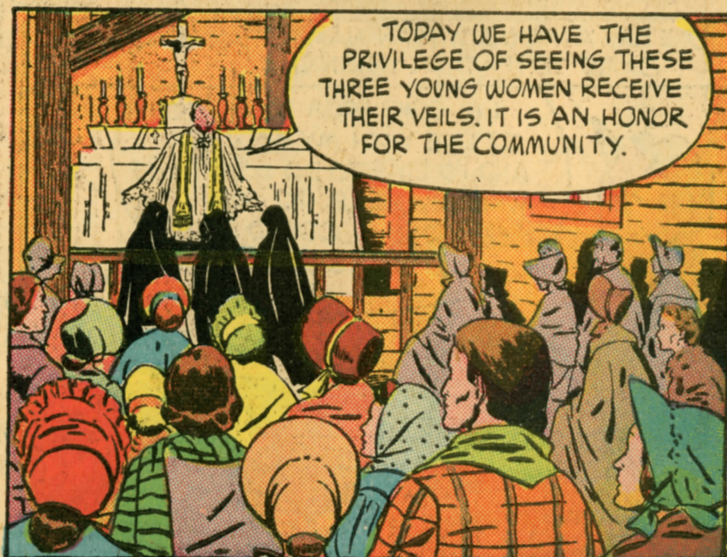
I'VE COME FROM MARYLAND
TO LIVE WITH MY BROTHER,
AND I'D LIKE TO DO SOMETHING
WHILE I'M HERE. DO YOU
SUPPOSE I COULD OPEN
A SCHOOL?

A SCHOOL! YOU'VE
ANSWERED MY PRAYER!
I'LL DO ANYTHING
TO HELP YOU!





LATER NANCY HAVERN JOINED THEM. THE THREE WOMEN LIVED TOGETHER, AND TAUGHT SCHOOL TOGETHER, BUT THEY WANTED TO DO MORE...





WELL, FATHER FINALLY GOT WHAT HE WANTED... A SCHOOL AND NUNS TO TEACH IN IT.

IN TIME A SUPERIOR, MOTHER ANN RHODES, WAS ELECTED, AND THEN IN 1816 FATHER NERINCKX WENT TO ROME, AND SAW THE POPE...

YOUR HOLINESS, DO YOU GIVE YOUR APPROVAL TO THIS SOCIETY OF THE SISTERS OF LORETTO AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS?



I GIVE MY FULL APPROVAL.. THIS INSTITUTION AND ITS PROGRESS PLEASES ME.



IN THIS WAY THE FIRST COMPLETELY AMERICAN CONGREGATION OF SISTERS HAD ITS START. EIGHT YEARS LATER FATHER NERINCKX DIED, BUT THE ORDER HE FOUNDED HAS SPREAD FROM KENTUCKY TO MISSOURI, NEW MEXICO, ILLINOIS, COLORADO, ALABAMA, TEXAS, CALIFORNIA, ARIZONA AND EVEN TO CHINA. TODAY THE SISTERS OF LORETTO AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS TEACH IN ALL THESE PLACES. FATHER NERINCKX'S DESIRE FOR A SCHOOL IN KENTUCKY HAS BEEN MORE THAN FULFILLED.

