

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

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Annals Delhi, Ont. series

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Summary information

Repository:	Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
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Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of London, Ontario was first incorporated on February 15, 1891 under chapter 92 of the Statutes of Ontario, 1870-1. London, Ontario is on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, L̄naapéewak, and Attawandaron Peoples.

On December 11, 1868, at the request of Bishop John Walsh, five Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto arrived in London, Ontario. Mother Teresa Brennan, Sister Ignatia Campbell, Sister Ursula McGuire, Sister Francis O'Malley and Sister Appolonia Nolan were accompanied by Reverend Mother Antoinette McDonald and were welcomed by Bishop Walsh, Rev. J.M. Bruyere, V.G., and Rev. P. Egan, pastor of St. Peter's Church. Awaiting the Sisters were sleighs that transported them from the train station to a temporary home at 170 Kent Street.

In accordance with their mission in London, three Sisters began teaching at St. Peter's School in January, 1869. After classes, they visited the sick, the poor and the imprisoned. They were also mandated to open an orphanage in the future. In order to accomplish these tasks, more Sisters and larger facilities were necessary.

On October 2, 1869, the Barker House at the corner of Richmond and College Street in North London was purchased and the Sisters moved there from Kent Street. The building was named Mount Hope, and it became the first Motherhouse of the Sisters, eventually housing the elderly, orphans, Sisters and novices. On December 18, 1870, the Sisters of St. Joseph became an autonomous congregation in the London diocese, independent of the Toronto congregation. Sister Ignatia Campbell was appointed Superior General, an office she held until 1902. On February 15, 1871, the congregation became legally incorporated.

On October 7, 1877, an addition was made to Mount Hope. This building stood until it was demolished on August 3, 1980, surrounded by the growing healthcare institutions founded by the Sisters, beginning with St. Joseph's Hospital which opened at 268 Grosvenor Street on October 15, 1888, and followed by the opening of St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing in 1895, and the construction of a new nursing school

building in 1927, which saw its last graduation in 1977. On May 1, 1951, St. Mary's Hospital was opened, followed by Marian Villa on January 12, 1966. In 1985, the hospital complex was renamed St. Joseph's Health Centre, and ownership was transferred in 1993 to St. Joseph's Health Care Society.

But it was not only in London that Sisters saw the need for healthcare and nursing education. On October 15, 1890, they opened St. Joseph's Hospital on Centre Street in Chatham, Ontario, which remained under their control until 1993. In 1895, they opened St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing, which saw its last graduation in 1970. On October 18, 1946, they opened St. Joseph's Hospital at 290 North Russell Street in Sarnia which remained under their control until 1993. In Alberta, they administered St. Joseph's Hospital in Stettler (1926), St. Joseph's Hospital in Galahad (1927), the General Hospital in Killam (1930), and St. Paul's Hospital in Rimbey (1932).

On April 10, 1899, the Sisters opened Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse, Novitiate and Orphanage at the former Hellmuth College at 1486 Richmond Street North in London. The orphans were moved to this new location from Mount Hope, which remained a home for the elderly and was renamed House of Providence on June 3, 1899. The orphanage remained at Mount St. Joseph until it was moved to Fontbonne Hall in 1953 (to 1967). The original Hellmuth College building was demolished in 1976.

Later, on September 14, 1914, the Motherhouse and Novitiate moved to Sacred Heart Convent at Colborne and Dundas Streets in London, with the orphans remaining at Mount St. Joseph. The Sisters lived at Sacred Heart Convent until 1953, when they moved back to the newly built Mount St. Joseph, on the original location of the former Hellmuth College. The new Motherhouse and Novitiate was officially opened on June 29, 1954. It was here that they continued a private girls' school which had begun in 1950 at Sacred Heart Convent, and was now known as Mount St. Joseph Academy (to 1985). It was here too that they continued a music school which had also begun at Sacred Heart Convent and was now called St. Joseph's School of Music (to 1982). The Médaille Retreat Centre began here in 1992, and the Sisters also administered a Guest Wing for relatives of hospitalized patients (to 2005). The Sisters departed Mount St. Joseph for their new residence, a green building at 485 Windermere Road in London, in 2007.

On September 4, 1873, St. Joseph's Convent opened at 131 North Street in Goderich, Ontario, followed by other convents in Ontario, including Ingersoll (1879), St. Thomas (1879), Belle River (1889), Windsor (1894), Sarnia (1906), Kingsbridge (1911), Seaforth (1913), St. Mary's (1913), Woodstock (1913), Kinkora (1916), Paincourt (1923), Maidstone (1930), Leamington (1932), Delhi (1938), Tillsonburg (1938), Simcoe (1938), Langton (1939), West Lorne (1957), and Zurich (1963).

The Sisters also opened missions in other parts of Canada, including in Alberta: Edmonton (1922), Wetaskiwin (1929), St. Bride's (1934); and in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories Yellowknife (1953), and in British Columbia in Haney, now Maple Ridge (1956), and Rutland (1970). Branching even further afield, Convento San Jose was opened in Chiclayo, Peru in 1962.

Over the years, as well as their service as teachers in the separate school system, as music teachers, as healthcare workers, as nursing educators, in providing care to orphans, and in providing parish ministry, pastoral care, and administering spiritual retreats, the Sisters were also involved in social service ministry. In Windsor, they opened the Roy J. Bondy Centre on September 13, 1970 which was a receiving home for the Children's Aid Society, withdrawing in 1982 but continuing to provide residential care for disabled children afterward. In London, they opened Internos, a residence for teenage girls attending school and later for troubled teens (to 1979). This was followed by the opening of St. Joseph's Detoxification Centre on September 13, 1973 (to 2005) and St. Stephen's House, an alcoholic recovery centre on February 1, 1982 (to 2000). Loughlin House in London opened as a residence for ex-psychiatric female patients in 1986 (to 1989), followed by the Home for Women in Need at 534 Queens Avenue in 1979 (to 2004).

Later, St. Josephs' House for Refugees was opened in 1987 (to 2005), followed by St. Joseph's Hospitality Centre, a food security program, on February 2, 1983.

On November 22, 2012, the congregation amalgamated with those in Hamilton, Peterborough, and Pembroke into one charitable corporation under the name Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada Act, a Private Act of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which received Royal Assent on June 13, 2013.

Scope and content

This series contains the history of the Delhi Mission in Southwestern Ontario by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario. In 1936, Father John Uyen started an educational program in Delhi, Ontario to provide catechism classes referred to as Catechetical Summer Vacation School (also known as Catechetical School, Summer School, or Vacation School). Father Uyen succeeded in obtaining permission to use two classrooms in a public school and arranged six classes for an enrollment of 201 students. In July 1937, Sisters St. Philip Traynor, Denise Sullivan, Clotilde Morrissey, and Claude Kelly from the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario, arrived to provide catechetical instruction. Father Uyen appealed to the Reverend Mother Constance Dunn for a Separate School to be built for the Sisters to teach in. Construction began to build St. John Brebeuf School, a four-room school, as well as St. Joseph's Convent next to St. John Brebeuf Church. There were also renovations to extend the Church with an attached rectory. The school, convent, and rectory officially opened in 1938. However, on September 3, 1938, when a new staff group comprised of Mother Gonzaga Langan and Sisters Claude Kelly, Lidwin Sparr, Pauline McGuire, and Brendan Doherty arrived at Delhi, the Convent was still incomplete but habitable. In good spirits the Sisters served as teachers and established a music school and a rhythm band. On November 6, 1938, the new school was blessed by Bishop Kidd, and the first musical recital was on June 24, 1939. On January 18, 1953, the Sisters assisted with the formation of a Parent Teacher's Association that was well received by the parishioners. In September 1954, a new apostolate in Waterford, Ontario opened to provide religion and choir classes. In 1957, the construction of a new four-room school, St. Frances Cabrini School, was started to accommodate the overflow of students from St. John Brebeuf School. St. Frances Cabrini School officially opened in Delhi on September 3, 1958, and Sister Mary Laura Landry was appointed principal. In 1959, there was a four-room addition to expand St. Frances Cabrini School due to increased enrollment. On July 1, 1966, the Sisters withdrew from the Parishes of La Salette and Delhi, but Sisters Maura McGuinness and Mary Louis McSherry commuted daily from Tillsonburg to continue teaching at St. John Brebeuf School and at St. Frances Cabrini School in Delhi until 1968.

The Villages of Delhi, La Salette, Walsh, and Waterford in Norfolk County, Ontario is situated on the traditional and Upper Canada Treaty Lands, including the Two Row Wampum Belt, and One Dish One Spoon Wampum treaty lands of the Anishinaabe, Attiwoonderonk (Neutral), Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), and Mississauga Peoples.

Present in this series are historical summaries about St. Joseph's Convent in Delhi, which covers the early settlement of Delhi to the withdrawal of the Sisters from the area. There is also a chronicle of activities and events in Norfolk County, detailing the Sisters missions in Delhi, La Salette, Walsh, and Waterford. Some activities and events include teaching, supporting culturally and linguistically diverse students and parishioners, severe weather, a door-to-door fundraising campaign, and assisting those seeking food, shelter, and employment.

There are two booklets. One is titled, *Solemn Blessing of St. John Brebeuf and Companions Church, St. Frances Cabrini School*, dated December 16, 1957. This booklet includes a brief history of the parish, a short article about the school, priests who served in the area, Trustees of Delhi Separate School Board, names of Grade 1 to 8 students, printed pictures of the teaching staff, altar boys, girls choir, and adult choir, and the

newly built St. John de Brebeuf School. The other program booklet titled, *The Silver Jubilee Year of Our Parish – St. John Brebeuf and Companions Church* is about fundraising work.

This series also contains several lists of Sisters who served as principals and teachers, Sisters who taught at the Summer School, pastors, and benefactors. There is also correspondence between Sister Mary Zimmer and Ann M. Dol, Secretary of St. Frances Cabrini School on planning the celebration of the school's 50-year anniversary in Delhi, a newspaper advertisement for the sale of St. Joseph's Convent in Delhi, and news clippings related to Reverend Father John Uyen. There are also photographs of St. Joseph's Convent, St. Frances Cabrini School, St. John de Brebeuf Church and School in Delhi as well as Father John Uyen, Seminarians Mr. A. Meloche and Mr. Oroskovits, and Sisters St. Philip Traynor, Denise Sullivan, Clotilde Morrissey, and Claude Kelly posing with pupils in front of a public school in Delhi, 1937.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title is based on the contents of the series.

Immediate source of acquisition

These records were accumulated by the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario.

Arrangement

Original order was maintained.

Location of originals

The records are located at the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada Archives.

Restrictions on access

The Archives reserves the right to restrict access to the collection depending on the condition of the archival material, the amount of material requested, and the purpose of the research. The use of certain materials may also be restricted for reasons of privacy or sensitivity, or under a donor agreement. Access restrictions will be applied equally to all researchers and reviewed periodically. No researcher will be given access to any materials that contain a personal information bank such as donor agreements or personnel records, or to other proprietary information such as appraisals, insurance valuations, or condition reports.

Conditions governing use

Permission to study archival records does not extend to publication or display rights. The researcher must request this permission in writing from the Archives.

Finding aids

Series and file list available.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Note [Sources]

Ontario's Southwest, "Land Acknowledgement," <https://www.ontariossouthwest.com/land-acknowledgement/>, accessed 2024/09/12.

Note [General]

Some content within this record group contains language which may be offensive, derogatory, or harmful. This language does not reflect the values of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada. We want to acknowledge that this content exists and the harm it has done and can do, but do not want to erase it from the historical context.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Level of detail:** Minimal
- **Status description:** Final

Access points

- Multiple media (documentary form)

Collection holdings

File: F01-S041-01 - St. Joseph's Convent chronicles and photographs

Title: St. Joseph's Convent chronicles and photographs

Reference code: F01-S041-01

Date: 1910-1968 (date of creation)

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Location of originals: London Annals Box 6 (0345)

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File: F01-S041-02 - Delhi, La Salette, Walsh, and Waterford histories

Title: Delhi, La Salette, Walsh, and Waterford histories

Reference code: F01-S041-02

Date: 1910-2007 (date of creation)

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Location of originals: London Annals Box 6 (0345)

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File: F01-S041-03 - Postcard, Catechetical Summer Vacation School, group photograph

Title: Postcard, Catechetical Summer Vacation School, group photograph

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