

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

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Annals Kingsbridge, Ont. series

Table of contents

Summary information	3
Administrative history / Biographical sketch	3
Scope and content	5
Notes	5
Access points	7
Collection holdings	7

Summary information

Repository:	Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
Title:	Annals Kingsbridge, Ont. series
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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, L#naapéewak, 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 annals of St. Joseph's Convent and St. Joseph's School in Kingsbridge, Ontario, from 1839 to 1942 by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario. Topics regarding St. Joseph's School include teaching classes, student academic progression, and repairs and improvements to the building. Topics regarding St. Joseph's Convent include the comings and goings of Sisters and activities such as retreats, celebrations, devotional days, and harvesting fruit from the apple trees in the yard. There are also topics on St. Joseph's Church that concern the building such as replacing the broken tabernacle and the fallen cross on the tower as well as repairing two stained glass windows. There are several lists pertaining to the Kingsbridge Mission, such as the Sisters who were stationed in St. Joseph's Convent, Sisters who entered St. Joseph's Community, and priests who served in the Kingsbridge Parish. There are also photographs of the Kingsbridge Convent, Sisters during a 1953 summer reunion at St. Joseph's Church in Kingsbridge, and Sisters Sebastian Murphy and Vincent Halford with Father Michael McCormack and students.

This series also contains other material related to Kingsbridge. There is a brochure from 1980 commemorating the 75th anniversary of St. Joseph's Church in Kingsbridge. There is a newspaper article from 2006 about the closing of St. Joseph's School in Kingsbridge and the transfer of 54 students to St. Joseph's School in Clinton, Ontario. In addition, there is a souvenir booklet commemorating the 75th anniversary of St. Augustine Church in the Wawanosh Parish, Ontario. The booklet has short articles on the history of the parish, the construction of churches, St. Augustine School, St. Augustine Cemetery, St. Augustine Catholic Women's League, printed pictures of parishioners and buildings in the Wawanosh area, and lists of Sisters, Priests, and Organists.

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]

Township of Ashfield–Colborne–Wawanosh, “Land Acknowledgement Declaration & Statement,” <https://acwtownship.ca/about-the-community#>, accessed 2024/09/24.

M. D. Sullivan, “A History of Ashfield Parish, Huron County, Ontario,” University of Ottawa, 1946, p. 92, <https://ruor.uottawa.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/8058519a-5ae4-4715-b3ba-7b6a7c87d806/content>, accessed 2024/09/24.

Note [General]

Some content within this record group contains language that is offensive, derogatory, or harmful. This language does not reflect the values of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada.

Note [General]

In 1861, Father Louis Auguste Wassereau visited the rural settlement of Kingsbridge in southwestern Ontario. He built a house, a small, framed church named St. Joseph’s Church, and a one-room log school named St. Joseph’s School for the Irish Catholic settlers in the area. In 1873, it became necessary for a second room to be built as an addition to the school to accommodate increased enrollment. Kingsbridge is a community along the western shores of Lake Huron in Huron County, Ontario. Kingsbridge is situated on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and Neutral people, and on land that is subject to the Upper Canada Treaties, Treaty 29, Treaty 45 1/2, and the Dish with One Spoon wampum. In 1876, the Sisters of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario, toured the area of Kingsbridge collecting donations for the orphans and the elderly. While there, the Sisters stayed in the private home of Mr. Joseph Griffin. By 1891, St. Joseph’s School was still a 2-room school, but was now part of the newly established separate school system. In March 1900, Reverend Father Michael McCormack was named pastor of St. Joseph’s Parish and wanted to provide a religious education to the children in his parish. He purchased property and a house conveniently nearby St. Joseph’s School and requested the Sisters move to Kingsbridge to help administer the school. He began to build a two-storey, yellow brick, four-bedroom residence named St. Joseph’s Convent. Father McCormack petitioned Reverend Mother Celestine McCarthy, Superior General of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, to supply a staff of teachers to commence teaching in January 1912. The first group of Sisters arrived in Kingsbridge on December 26, 1911. Mother Aloysia was the Superior, Sisters Vincent Halford and Sebastian Murphy were appointed teachers, and Sister Imelda Doyle was the housekeeper. Although the convent was far from finished when they arrived by horse and buggy from Goderich, Ontario, the Sisters persevered and opened

the school on January 7, 1912, with 60 students. The Sisters taught elementary classes in the basement and high-school classes upstairs.

In 1925, the Sisters taught a 4-year high-school curriculum to award winning pupils who passed their matriculation examinations with the highest level of class honours. Students received scholarships and won first prizes in Latin, English, and other subjects at the University of Western Ontario. In March 1927, the old St. Joseph's Convent was torn down, and a new house was built in the same location. That same year, the parishioners celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the Parish and the re-opening of a renovated St. Joseph's Church. In 1934, St. Joseph's School had an enrollment of 22 junior and 16 senior students. St. Joseph's School was closed in June 1942 due to low enrollment, and the decision was made to close St. Joseph's Convent ending the teaching mission of the two remaining Sisters in Kingsbridge.

Other notes

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

Access points

- Multiple media (documentary form)

Collection holdings

File: F01-S045-01 - Chronicles of St. Joseph's Convent

Title: Chronicles of St. Joseph's Convent

Reference code: F01-S045-01

Date: 1911-1942 (date of creation)

: 0375

Location of originals: London Annals Box 7 (0375)

Publication status:

Published

File: F01-S045-02 - Chronicles of St. Joseph's School, and photographs

Title: Chronicles of St. Joseph's School, and photographs

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