

# **Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada**

## **Finding Aid - Annals Seaforth, Ont. series (F01-S067)**

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# Annals Seaforth, Ont. series

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## Summary information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
<b>Title:</b>	Annals Seaforth, Ont. series
<b>Reference code:</b>	F01-S067
<b>Date:</b>	1913-2005 (creation)
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## Administrative history / Biographical sketch

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### 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.

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## Scope and content

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This series contains the records from the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario's mission in Seaforth, Ontario. Seaforth is part of Huron County which is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral Peoples. At the request of Reverend P. Corcoran, the Sisters of St. Joseph of London came to Seaforth in January of 1913. Their primary ministry was teaching at St. James School, but they also did various parish ministries and taught catechetics and music. Due to a personnel shortage in 1971, the convent in Seaforth was closed and two teaching Sisters commuted from Zurich to teach in Seaforth. Due to weather conditions that made commuting hazardous, the convent in Seaforth was opened again in 1977. In 1983, the Sisters withdrew from Seaforth. The convent building was demolished in 1985. The records present include annals, histories, correspondence, news clippings, and photographs.

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## Notes

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### 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 Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario.

### Arrangement

Original order was maintained.

### 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]

Huron County, "Land Acknowledgement," <https://www.huroncounty.ca/land-acknowledgement/>, accessed 2025/05/27.

## Other notes

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

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## Access points

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- Multiple media (documentary form)

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## Collection holdings

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### File: F01-S067-01 - Chronicles St. Joseph's Convent Seaforth

Title: Chronicles St. Joseph's Convent Seaforth

Reference code: F01-S067-01

Date: 1927-1983 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains the annals of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London's ministry in Seaforth, Ontario. There is a summary of the history of Seaforth and the Sisters establishment of the mission. The annals are recorded from 1927-1983 with some gaps. Within the annals are also news clippings and photographs. Topics in the annals include but are not limited to: the Sisters' ministries and social activities, activities at the schools, the blizzard of 1971, deaths, jubilees, holidays, music recitals, events in Seaforth, music recitals, and world events. There is also a list of Sisters who served at this mission.

Physical description: 2 cm of textual records

3 photographs : col.

1 binder

: 0431

Location of originals: London Annals Box 16 (0431)

Publication status:

Published

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**File: F01-S067-02 - Seaforth St. Joseph's Convent chronicles**

Title: Seaforth St. Joseph's Convent chronicles

Reference code: F01-S067-02

Date: 1913-1983 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains the annals of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London's ministry in Seaforth, Ontario. Topics in the annals include but are not limited to: the Sisters' ministries and social activities, activities at the schools, the blizzard of 1971, deaths, jubilees, holidays, music recitals, events in Seaforth, music recitals, and world events. There is also a list of Sisters who served at this mission.

Physical description: 1 cm of textual records

: 0431

Location of originals: London Annals Box 16 (0431)

Publication status:

Published

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**File: F01-S067-03 - Correspondence and histories**

Title: Correspondence and histories

Reference code: F01-S067-03

Date: 1971-2005 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains correspondence about the Sisters' activities in Seaforth and the closing of the convent. There is also a photograph of a school, a list of Sisters who were in Seaforth, histories of the Sisters' ministry in Seaforth and St. James Parish, and an excerpt from the minutes of the Board of Advisors of St. James Church in 1971 about the closing of the convent.

Physical description: 0.3 cm of textual records

1 photograph : b&w.

: 0431

Location of originals: London Annals Box 16 (0431)

Publication status:

Published

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**File: F01-S067-04 - Seaforth St. Joseph's Convent history**

Title: Seaforth St. Joseph's Convent history

Reference code: F01-S067-04

Date: 1977-1983 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains annals documenting the Sisters' activities in Seaforth and a letter chronically the activities of the Sisters in Seaforth from 1979 to 1983. Topics include, but are not limited to: re-opening the convent, Mass, jubilees, social activities, celebrations, a communion, the Sisters' ministries, and the rent of the house. There is also a list of furniture.

Physical description: 0.2 cm of textual records

: 0431

Location of originals: London Annals Box 16 (0431)

Publication status:

Published

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### **File: F01-S067-05 - Seaforth news clippings and photographs**

Title: Seaforth news clippings and photographs

Reference code: F01-S067-05

Date: [1945], 1970-1985 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains news clippings about the Sisters' activities in Seaforth. St. James School, and events in the town. There are also photographs of Sisters Mary Catherine McSherry and Mary Louis McSherry at the closing of the convent in 1983, the convent in 1985, and two photographs of students from St. James School posing with a hand-made "VICTORY" sign, likely from the end of the Second World War in 1945.

Physical description: 1 cm of textual records

3 photographs : b&w.

1 photograph : col.

: 0431

Location of originals: London Annals Box 16 (0431)

Publication status:

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