

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

## **Finding Aid - Annals Simcoe, Ont. series (F01-S068)**

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# Annals Simcoe, Ont. series

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## Summary information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
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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, 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

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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 of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario's mission in Simcoe, Ontario. Simcoe is in Norfolk County and is on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Neutral, and Haudenosaunee peoples. At the request of Reverend F. O'Drowski, the Sisters of St. Joseph of London came to Simcoe in 1938. The Sisters moved in a home at 253 Union Street which had once been Father Hannick's. While in Simcoe, the Sisters' primary ministry was teaching at St Mary's School, but they also did various parish ministries and taught catechism and music. In 1963, construction finished, and a new convent was opened at 251 Union Street. Due to a lack of personnel, the Sisters withdrew from Simcoe in 1974. Throughout the 1980s, a few Sisters rented residences in Simcoe and the surrounding area and did parish ministry. The last Sisters left Simcoe in 1989. The records present include annals, histories, event booklets, a guest book, correspondence, financial reports, meeting minutes, 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]

Norfolk County Public Library, "Norfolk County Public Library Board Meeting Agenda," April 24, 2024, <https://pub-norfolkcounty.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=44675815-5fb0-4c4b-b9a2-a7593750059d&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>.

Native Land Digital, "Simcoe, Ontario," <https://native-land.ca/>, 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-S068-01 - St. Joseph's Convent Simcoe

Title: St. Joseph's Convent Simcoe

Reference code: F01-S068-01

Date: 1938-1971 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains the annals of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London's ministry in Simcoe. Within the annals is a 1940 jubilee programme, a news clippings celebrating Reverend J. A. Finn, and a list of priests at St. Mary's Rectory. Topics in the annals include, but are not limited to: the Sisters' ministries and social activities, major world events, school activities, student achievements, and events in Simcoe.

Physical description: 2 cm of textual records

: 0431

Location of originals: London Annals Box 16 (0431)

Publication status:

Published

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**File: F01-S068-02 - St. Joseph's Convent Simcoe**

Title: St. Joseph's Convent Simcoe

Reference code: F01-S068-02

Date: 1938-1989 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains the annals of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London's ministry in Simcoe. Topics in the annals include, but are not limited to: the Sisters' ministries and social activities, major world events, school activities, student achievements, and events in Simcoe. There are also lists of Sisters stationed in Simcoe, pastors at St. Mary's Church, and the booklet St. Joseph's Convent which summarized the history of the Sisters in Simcoe and celebrates the blessing of the 1963 convent.

Physical description: 1 cm of textual records

: 0431

Location of originals: London Annals Box 16 (0431)

Publication status:

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**File: F01-S068-03 - St. Joseph's Convent Simcoe**

Title: St. Joseph's Convent Simcoe

Reference code: F01-S068-03

Date: 1966-1989 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains a guest book for St. Joseph's Convent and various histories on St. Mary's Church, the Catholic Church in Simcoe, and Simcoe in general.

Physical description: 0.5 cm of textual records

: 0431

Location of originals: London Annals Box 16 (0431)

Publication status:

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**File: F01-S068-04 - Simcoe**

Title: Simcoe

Reference code: F01-S068-04

Date: 1982-1983 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains an account of the Sisters' activities in Simcoe from 1982 to 1983. This includes renting and furnishing a house and the Sisters leaving Simcoe.

Physical description: 0.1 cm of textual records

: 0431

Location of originals: London Annals Box 16 (0431)

Publication status:

Published

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### **File: F01-S068-05 - Simcoe convent**

Title: Simcoe convent

Reference code: F01-S068-05

Date: 1938-1985 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains photographs of the 1982-1983 rental house, photocopied articles on the history of Simcoe, histories of the Sisters' ministry in Simcoe, lists of Sisters who were stationed in Simcoe, correspondence about the Sisters' ministry and leaving Simcoe, financial reports, and the December 1970 minutes of St. Mary's Parish Council. There are also the following booklets: \*St. Joseph's Convent, The Blessing of St. Mary's Church,\* and \*A History of Simcoe Parish.\*

Physical description: 2 cm of textual records

2 photographs : col.

: 0431

Location of originals: London Annals Box 16 (0431)

Publication status:

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