

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

Finding Aid - Annals Sylvan Lake, Alta. series (F01-S018)

Generated by Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada on January 09, 2026

Language of description: English

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

485 Windermere Road P.O. Box 487

London

Ontario

Canada

N6A 4X3

Telephone: 519-432-3781 ext. 404

Fax: 519-432-8557

[Email: csjarchives@csjcanada.org](mailto:csjarchives@csjcanada.org)

<https://atom.csjarchive.org/index.php/annals-sylvan-lake-series>

Annals Sylvan Lake, Alta. 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 Sylvan Lake, Alta. series
Reference code:	F01-S018
Date:	1960-2015 (creation)
Physical description:	7.2 cm of textual records 1 album (51 photographs : col.) 1 album (38 photographs: col., 12 photographs: b&w)
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	This project has been made possible in part by Library and Archives Canada's Documentary Heritage Communities Program.July 2024 by Lyllie Sue, edited by Rhiannon Allen-Roberts.Revised November 14, 2024 by Lyllie Sue and Rhiannon Allen-Roberts.Revised January 2026 by Rhiannon Allen-Roberts.

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 primarily contains the financial and legal documents of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario, for the Sylvan Lake property in the Summer Village of Birchcliff, Alberta. Documents include official appraisal reports, property surveys, purchase and sale of land records, a subdivision land map, drawing of a diagram for the construction of a garage and extension for storage. There are also invoices and receipts for the building, repair, and maintenance of the Sylvan Lake cottage, as well as correspondence with construction contractors. There is a report authored by Cuthbertson Sandall Chartered Accountants titled, Summer Village of Birchcliff Financial Statements, Year Ended December 31, 2001. There is also a folded and certified land survey plan indicating the subdivision plots by the City of Red Deer Land Surveyor, Mr. J. C. Horn, dated July 2, 1974. In addition, there are photographs of the landscape and the interior of the house. There are also two photograph albums, one created by Colin George Arthur and Lorna Mae Arthur and the other by the Sisters.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title based on content of series.

Immediate source of acquisition

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

Arrangement

Order imposed by the archivist.

Location of originals

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

Restrictions on access

Some content in file F01-S018-06 is restricted for 30 years after creation due to confidential business and financial information. 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]

Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations, “Our History and Purpose,” <https://www.treatysix.org/our-history>, accessed 2024/07/29.

Town of Sylvan Lake, “History,” https://www.sylvanlake.ca/en/public-services/history.aspx?_mid_=34551#, accessed 2024/07/22.

Town of Sylvan Lake, “Arts and Culture,” <https://www.sylvanlake.ca/en/explore-sylvan/recreation-arts-and-culture.aspx>, accessed 2024/07/29.

Note [General]

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario expanded their ministry in Canada and established a western mission in Alberta. From 1922 to 1990, they contributed to the development of education, healthcare and social services in the Archdiocese of Edmonton, as well as in the rural areas in the province. In October 1964, the Sisters purchased a property from Reverend Lucien Robert in the Summer Village of Birchcliff located at a cross point of a 163 km south of Edmonton on the eastern shore of Sylvan Lake, and 30 kilometres northwest of Red Deer, Alberta. This area is situated within Treaty No. 6, which includes 50 First Nations and encompasses western Alberta, Saskatchewan, and part of Manitoba. Sylvan Lake is within Region 3 of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

In September 1973, the Sisters submitted an application to the Red Deer Planning Commission to re-survey the property, and the Regional Council approved the sub-division of three new titles of land into three lots. The lake house property at Sylvan Lake originally covered five acres of lake shore land. The original building on the property was completed in July 1965 with additions in October 1965 and 1979. The blessing ceremony for the chapel was on July 4, 1966, and was conducted by Monsignor J. A. MacLellan. On October 16, 1974, the Sisters sold one lot to Colin George Arthur, the caretaker of the house, and the other lot to Father Mathias (Matt) Kuefler. In June 2015, Colin George and Lorna Mae Arthur created and gifted to the Sisters a scrapbook style photo album, “Memories of Sylvan Lake” containing photographs of the house and grounds at Sylvan Lake.

Throughout their time at Sylvan Lake, the Sisters kept the ownership of the remaining lot, and they undertook extensive efforts to build and renovate a house and chapel on the lake shore property. During their time there, the Sisters organized and participated in Community Days, workshops and spiritual retreats at the Sylvan Lake cottage.

Note [General]

This project has been made possible in part by Library and Archives Canada’s Documentary Heritage Communities Program.

Other notes

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

Access points

- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada (London, Ont.)
- Multiple media (documentary form)
- Textual records (documentary form)
- Photographs (documentary form)
- Albums (documentary form)
- Alberta (place)

Collection holdings

File: F01-S018-01 - Land subdivision and lot sale

Title: Land subdivision and lot sale

Reference code: F01-S018-01

Date: 1973-1974 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file consists of a report concerning the acquisition and sale of the Sylvan Lake property in Alberta by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario.

Physical description: .1 cm of textual records

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

File: F01-S018-02 - Photo album, Memories of Sylvan Lake by Colin Arthur

Title: Photo album, Memories of Sylvan Lake by Colin Arthur

Reference code: F01-S018-02

Date: June 2015 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains a photo album titled "Memories of Sylvan Lake," which was put together by Colin George Arthur and Lorna Mae Arthur as a gift to the Sisters on June 15, 2005. The

photographs depict the landscape surrounding the property and interior and exterior of the home in which the Sisters carried on in conducting their pastoral work.

Physical description: 5 cm of multiple records
1 album (51 photographs : col.)

Publication status:

Published

Alpha-numeric designations:

[2015-58]

Access points:

- Multiple media (documentary form)

File: F01-S018-03 - Photograph, statue of St. Joseph outside lake house

Title: Photograph, statue of St. Joseph outside lake house

Reference code: F01-S018-03

Date: July 24, 1988 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains one colour photograph, dated July 24, 1988, of an outdoor statue of St. Joseph grasping a lily bouquet, perched on the grassy lawn at Sylvan Lake, encircled by trees, and framed with a view of the lake in the background.

Physical description: .2 cm of multiple records
1 photograph: col.

Publication status:

Published

Alpha-numeric designations:

[2015-60]

Access points:

- Multiple media (documentary form)

File: F01-S018-04 - Land survey plan, legal and financial documents

Title: Land survey plan, legal and financial documents

Reference code: F01-S018-04

Date: 1964-1979 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file primarily contains the legal and financial documents concerning the building and renovation of property at Sylvan Lake by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph

of London, Ontario. The Sisters purchased, built, updated, and repaired a cottage lake house in the Summer Village of Birchcliff during their western mission in the Archdiocese of Edmonton, Alberta. There are communications with the City of Red Deer, Edmonton House Builders' Association about the construction of a house on the property, and legal letters to engage a contractor, Fekete Construction Co. Ltd. The certified land survey plan titled *Sylvan Lake Plan Showing a Subdivision of Lot B* by the City of Red Deer Land Surveyor, Mr. J. C. Horn, on July 2, 1974, is present. There are also two newsletters titled, *The Summer Village of Birchcliff*, one dated Fall 2001 and the other Summer 2002. The topics include the official election results of the new Mayor and Councillor, council meetings, estates subdivisions, shoreline restoration, and a septic system study and sewer inspection for the Birchcliff region. This file also contains a purchase of property legal record and financial documents on taxes for residential improvements. There is also the *Santae Viae Crucis Erectio Canonica* (The Canonical Erection of the Holy Way of the Cross), the blessing of the Sylvan Lake house chapel on July 4, 1966, conducted and signed by Monsignor James Alexander MacLellan.

Physical description: .4 cm of textual records

Publication status:

Published

Alpha-numeric designations:

[2016-80]

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

File: F01-S018-05 - Lake house construction

Title: Lake house construction

Reference code: F01-S018-05

Date: 1964-1979 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file primarily contains the financial and legal documents concerning the building specifications for the construction of a lake house in the Summer Village of Birchcliff by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario. As part of their western mission in the Archdiocese of Edmonton, the Sisters lived and worked in a rural area near Red Deer, Alberta. This file contains records on specific building requirements for the lake house such as for the flooring, indoor and outdoor painting, dry walling, finishing carpentry, fireplace mantel, carpet, electrical wiring, driveway, garage, and extra storage space. There are also communications and building contracts with surveyors and contractors such as Horn Surveys Ltd., Fekete Construction Co. Ltd., 4 Star Construction Ltd., and Forest Construction Ltd. In addition, there are building invoices and receipts for building supplies and labour services. There is one hand drawn plan by the 4 Star Construction Ltd. for a garage with an extension for storage.

Physical description: .5 cm of textual records

Publication status:

Published

Alpha-numeric designations:

[2017-11]

File: F01-S018-06 - Lake house invoices and correspondence

Title: Lake house invoices and correspondence

Reference code: F01-S018-06

Date: 1992-2011 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains the financial and legal documents concerning the Sylvan Lake house property in the Summer Village of Birchcliff in Alberta, by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario. There are property appraisal reports, proof of loss forms from the General Accident Assurance Company, and insurance company adjusters for water damage encountered due to flooding. There are also invoices and receipts for roofing, plumbing, flood clean up, furnace repair, hot water tank system replacement, lawn mower repair, bathroom tile repair, and veranda screen repair. In addition, there are other payment records on landscaping and the maintenance of the house grounds, such as tree removal and chipping, pruning, shrub trimming, edging, lawn mowing, and lakefront shoreline erosion control work. There are two reports of significance. One is *Summer Village of Birchcliff Financial Statements*, for the year ending on December 31, 2001, authored by Cuthbertson Sandall Chartered Accountants. The other is *Lacombe County Highland Park Concept Plan by Engineering and Land Services*, May 2009, with topics such as: land use conditions and concept plan for transportation access and environmental management, water distribution, sanitary sewage, storm water drainage, steep slopes, municipal landfill site, and wastewater treatment.

Physical description: 1 cm of textual records

Restrictions on access: This file contains material which is restricted until 2041.

Publication status:

Published

Alpha-numeric designations:

[2017-11]

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

File: F01-S018-07 - Sylvan Lake Cottage 1965-1982 L-SL-1 [photo album]

Title: Sylvan Lake Cottage 1965-1982 L-SL-1 [photo album]

Reference code: F01-S018-07

Date: 1960-1981 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file contains a photo album by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, in Ontario, related to the Sisters and guests, the construction, and landscape of the Sylvan Lake Cottage.

Physical description: 1 album (38 photographs: col., 12 photographs: b&w)

Location of originals: London Annals Box 8 (0376)

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Multiple media (documentary form)
