

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

Finding Aid - Chetwynd, BC Annals series (HF01-S017)

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Chetwynd, BC Annals series

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Summary information

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| Repository: | Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada |
| Title: | Chetwynd, BC Annals series |
| Reference code: | HF01-S017 |
| Date: | [194-?-199-?] (creation) |
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Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of Hamilton was first incorporated on December 30, 1879 under chapter 167 of the Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1877. The name was changed to The Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton in 1989. The city of Hamilton is on the traditional territory of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Mississauga Peoples.

On April 19, 1852, at the request of the Very Rev. E. Gordon, Vicar General of Hamilton and with the approval of Bishop de Charbonnel, the only Bishop in western Ontario at that time, three Sisters of St. Joseph came to Hamilton from Toronto. They opened their first convent on Cannon and McNab Streets. Here the Sisters ran a private elementary school and cared for orphans until 1857. In 1854, there was a cholera epidemic, followed by an outbreak of typhus. The Sisters were placed in charge of immigrants stricken with the disease and housed in railway sheds.

The Sisters founded St. Mary's Orphanage in Hamilton in 1852. Orphan care began with two orphan girls in the first convent. Beginning in 1856, residential care was provided for girls at the Motherhouse. In 1857, a girls' quarters opened in the convent at 204 Park Street. In 1864, a separate building was built for St. Mary's Orphanage with additions in 1874, 1881, 1884, and 1886. Then from 1933-1935, a building owned by the diocese was purchased at 354 King Street West and used for orphan girls. In 1936, a new Mount St. Joseph at the same location opened for girls with both boys and girls in residence from 1951 to 1960. The Sisters also provided residential care for orphan boys at the Motherhouse from 1856-1879, and then at the House of Providence, Dundas, Ontario from 1879-1900. In 1903, an annex was built for boys at St. Mary's, followed by a new building for boys at St. Mary's Orphanage in 1909. After this, from 1951-1960, boys were housed at Mount St. Joseph. The first Orphans' Festival was held in the town hall to raise money for orphans with annual collections in the district starting in the autumn of 1854. The Orphans' Festival lasted until 1956.

In 1856, the Sisters were placed in charge of separate schools in Hamilton following the passage of the Separate School Bill. Also in 1856, Hamilton became a diocese and St. Joseph's Convent opened on Park

Street North as a Motherhouse and Novitiate, as the congregation became independent of the Toronto congregation. At the first Motherhouse, the Sisters cared for orphan girls, taught music, taught in the separate schools, visited hospitals, prisons, the sick and the poor, and served as sacristans, homemakers, and catechetics teachers. In 1858, the first election was held in St. Joseph's Convent chapel with Sister Martha von Bunning elected as General Superior on December 8.

The Sisters founded their first mission outside Hamilton in Paris, Ontario in 1858, where they served as teachers, organists, sacristans, homemakers and catechetics teachers. This mission lasted until 1974. This was followed in 1859, by the first mission house in Brantford, Ontario on Crown Street, and then by other mission houses in Brantford until 1983. In Brantford, they also opened Bethany House, a ministry to abused women from 1989-1994. Over time, the Sisters opened many other mission houses including in Kenilworth (1924-1971), Mount Forest (1908-1932 and 1944-1978), Hespeler (1944-1961), Arthur (1873-1876 and 1986-1989), Kitchener (1977-), Milton (1954-1989), Stoney Creek (1957-), Oakville (1860-1863), Guelph (1977-1989), Owen Sound (1886-1909), Red Lake (1981-), Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation mission (Cape Croker) (1952-1986), and Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg (Pic Mober) First Nation (2002-2020). In British Columbia, they opened missions at Nak'azdli Whut'en First Nation (Fort St. James) (1950-1969), Fort St. John (1954-1988), Dawson Creek (1976-1982), Chetwynd (1977-1983), and Terrace (1988-1992).

The Sisters briefly ran a boarding school in for girls in Hamilton from 1860-1867. More notably, they founded St. Joseph's Hospital in Guelph, Ontario in 1861, followed by the House of Providence in Guelph which was open from 1861-1959. In 1897, the Sisters started St. Joseph's School of Nursing in Guelph, and in 1948, opened a new school of nursing which lasted until 1972.

In 1878, the Sisters took charge of St. Vincent De Paul Society home on Bay Street in Hamilton for the care of the poor. After one year, the residents were transferred to the House of Providence. In 1879, the Sisters opened the House of Providence in Dundas. After a fire in 1900, it re-opened in 1902 and remained active until 1970. The year 1879 also saw the beginning of the House of Providence annual picnic on August 2. In 1970, the Sisters opened the new St. Joseph's Villa in Dundas, which replaced the former House of Providence.

In 1890, the Sisters founded St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton which had additions in 1894, 1916, 1941, 1947, 1951, and a new wing in 1962. This was followed by the opening of St. Joseph's School of Nursing in Hamilton which had its first nine graduates in 1915. The Sisters also opened a nurses' residence for St. Joseph's Hospital, called Undermount, on John Street in Hamilton. Later, in 1963, the Sisters opened St. Joseph's School of Nursing, Fontbonne Hall. The nursing school closed in 1972.

In 1923, the Sisters founded Casa Maria maternity hospital in Hamilton which was replaced by the maternity wing at St. Joseph's Hospital in 1951. In 1924, The Sisters opened St. Mary's Hospital in Kitchener, Ontario. In 1931, St. Mary's School of Nursing began in Kitchener, and remained active until 1972.

In 1951, the second Motherhouse, St. Joseph's Convent was completed in Dundas. Here the Sisters served as teachers, music teachers, catechetics teachers, and established a spirituality centre for retreats, workshops, and spiritual direction in 1983.

In 1955, the Sisters founded St. Joseph's Hospital in Brantford. This was followed in 1957 by the opening of St. Joseph's Training Centre for Registered Nursing Assistants in Brantford, which closed in 1980.

In 1959, the Sisters unveiled St. Joseph's Home in Guelph, and elderly people were moved into the second floor of the new building which contained a wing for the chronically ill. The programs and services were delivered in conjunction with St. Joseph's Hospital.

In 1960, Mount St. Joseph in Hamilton became a home to treat emotionally disturbed children and the remaining orphans were moved to foster homes.

The Sisters also started overseas missions. In 1963, they opened a mission in Teculután, Guatemala, and worked at a health clinic, as teachers, and as catechetics teachers until 1979. Later, they opened a mission in Nicaragua which ran from 1985 to 1989.

In 1991, St. Joseph's Community Health Centre opened in Stoney Creek, Ontario. Beginning in 1983 until 1991, the Sisters staffed and supervised Martha House, Good Shepherd Women's Centre for abused women and homeless girls in Hamilton. The Neighbour to Neighbour Program, St. Joseph's Women's Immigrant Centre, and Hamilton Out of the Cold program are but three more recent local initiatives where the Sisters have been instrumental in the foundation of local social services.

On November 22, 2012, the congregation amalgamated with those in London, 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 consists of records documenting the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton in Chetwynd, British Columbia and the surrounding communities between 1976 and 1983, along with supplemental records of earlier British Columbia missions. The records include historical reports, photographs, correspondence, event programmes, postcards and greetings cards, newspaper and magazine clippings, scrapbook pages, pamphlets, poetry, and song lyrics.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** The 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 Hamilton, Ontario.

Arrangement

Original order was maintained, arranged by record type and function.

Location of originals

HF01-S017 Box 1 (0089). 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, sub-series, and file list available.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Note [Sources]

College of New Caledonia. “Traditional Territories of B.C.” Accessed January 15, 2025. https://cnc.bc.ca/docs/default-source/default-document-library/indigenous-territory-guide.pdf?sfvrsn=60123e83_0.

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.

Note [General]

Chetwynd, British Columbia is located on the traditional unceded territory of the Treaty 8 First Nations, including the Dane-zaa peoples. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton were requested to send two Sisters to Chetwynd, British Columbia by Bishop O’Grady and Father Jungbluth of British Columbia in 1976. Sister Gemma was the first to accept the mission in 1977, followed by other Sisters from the Hamilton congregation. The Sisters helped with pastoral duties including visitation, taught catechism classes, assisted in the building of the Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Chetwynd, travelled between smaller British Columbia communities, and completed other missional work. The mission continued until 1983, at which time the Sisters withdrew due to a lack of need for their continued services.

Other notes

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

Access points

- Multiple media (documentary form)

Collection holdings

Subseries: HF01-S017-01 - Annals and Histories

Title: Annals and Histories

Reference code: HF01-S017-01

Date: 1976-[199-?] (date of creation)

Scope and content: This sub-series consists of records detailing the history of the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Hamilton to Chetwynd, British Columbia between the late 1970s and early 1980s, as well as brief accounts of the Sisters' other missions in British Columbia from the 1950s to the 1990s, including Fort St. James, Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, and Terrace, British Columbia. This sub-series contains handwritten historical accounts, photographs, reports, scrapbook pages, newspaper and magazine clippings, programmes, correspondence, poetry and song lyrics, a pamphlet, and a postcard.

Physical description: 4.0 cm of textual records

52 photographs: col.; approx.11.0 cm x 9.0 cm

Restrictions on access: File HF01-S017-01-01 contains financial information subject to restrictions.

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Multiple media (documentary form)

File: HF01-S017-01-01 - Annals

Title: Annals

Reference code: HF01-S017-01-01

Date: 1976-1982 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file consists of a handwritten account of the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Hamilton to Chetwynd, British Columbia between 1976 and 1982, along with supporting photographs and documentation. This file contains a postcard, a letter to the Sisters in Hamilton informing them of the mission opportunity, correspondence between church leaders in British Columbia and the Sisters, a scrapbook page with newspaper clippings of the pre-fabricated house plans for the Sisters' home in Chetwynd, photographs of the Sisters, priests, and parishioners in British Columbia at a variety of events and locations, copies of newspaper and magazine articles, a diocesan convention programme for November 1977, records of donations given to the mission, correspondence between Sisters, newsletters and newsletter clippings, a poem by Sister Stephanie Vincec, song lyrics, and a pamphlet with a timeline of the life of Sister Veronica Schaefer.

Physical description: 3.8 cm of textual records

52 photographs: col.; approx.11.0 cm x 9.0 cm

: 0089

Physical condition: This file has been split into two folders.

Location of originals: HF01-S017 Box 1 (0089).

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Multiple media (documentary form)

File: HF01-S017-01-02 - History

Title: History

Reference code: HF01-S017-01-02

Date: [199-?] (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file consists of a four-page typed report on the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton in British Columbia between 1950 and 1992. The report gives the general history of their missions in Fort St. James, Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, and Terrace, British Columbia. The information given includes the names of the Sisters involved, what their work was, and for how long they did it, as well as recounting the activities, events, clubs, schools, and other ministries of which the Sisters were a part.

Physical description: 0.1 cm of textual records

: 0089

Location of originals: HF01-S017 Box 1 (0089).

Publication status:

Published

File: HF01-S017-01-03 - Clippings

Title: Clippings

Reference code: HF01-S017-01-03

Date: [ca. May 1978-Oct. 1981] (date of creation)

Scope and content: file consists of three newspaper clippings detailing events in the Catholic Church in Chetwynd, British Columbia in the late 1970s and early 1980s with which the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton were involved. This file contains a clipping from *The Echo* newspaper of Chetwynd detailing the dedication of the Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church, including five black and white photographs of the festivities, a clipping from an unknown newspaper about the life of Father Emile Jung Bluth of Chetwynd, and a clipping advertising the proclamation of Family Month in Chetwynd,

including a black and white photograph of the signing of the proclamation which includes Sister Mainka (Gemma) of Hamilton.

Physical description: 0.1 cm of textual records

: 0089

Location of originals: HF01-S017 Box 1 (0089).

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

Subseries: HF01-S017-02 - Photographs

Title: Photographs

Reference code: HF01-S017-02

Date: [194-?]-1979 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This sub-series consists of a series of photographs taken of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton's involvement in missions in British Columbia, especially in Chetwynd, between early visits in the 1940s and the establishment of the mission in Chetwynd in the late 1970s. This sub-series also contains a poem recounting Sister Stephanie Vincec's visit to British Columbia, including stops in Vancouver, Quesnel, Dawson, Fort. St. John, and Chetwynd.

Physical description: 0.1 cm of textual records

68 photographs : col.

12 photographs : b&w

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Multiple media (documentary form)

File: HF01-S017-02-01 - Sr. Stephanie Vincec Visits British Columbia [album and poem]

Title: Sr. Stephanie Vincec Visits British Columbia [album and poem]

Reference code: HF01-S017-02-01

Date: 1978-1979 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file consists of a photo album and a poem recounting Sister Stephanie Vincec's visit to British Columbia, including stops in Vancouver, Quesnel, Dawson, Fort. St. John, and Chetwynd. The photo album is disassembled and contains 40 colour photographs of Sister

Stephanie and others in the winter of 1978 to 1979, as well as two pages of notes on the photographs. The poem was written by Sister Stephanie Vincec on January 16, 1979, and is five pages long, including some illustrations in the margins.

Physical description: 0.1 cm of textual records
40 photographs : col. ; approx. 8.5 cm x 8.5 cm
: 0089

Location of originals: HF01-S017 Box 1 (0089).

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Multiple media (documentary form)

File: HF01-S017-02-02 - Photographs

Title: Photographs

Reference code: HF01-S017-02-02

Date: [194-?] - 1979 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file consists of 28 colour photographs and 12 black and white photographs of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton's activities in and around Chetwynd, British Columbia. The 28 colour photographs depict Sister Gemma and others in Chetwynd, British Columbia in 1977-1979 at various events including a gift shower, a camping trip, and Mass. This file includes 12 black and white photographs of Sisters, priests, children, and others in various places including Moberly Lake, Chetwynd, and Dawson Creek, British Columbia between 1959 and 1963, and at Hudson Hope in the early 1940s before the first mission was established. There are inscriptions on the backs of some photographs in this file that contain language which may be offensive, derogatory, or harmful.

Physical description: 12 photographs : b&w

28 photographs : col.

: 0089

Note [generalNote]: Some records in this file contain 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.

Location of originals: HF01-S017 Box 1 (0089).

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Graphic material (documentary form)

Subseries: HF01-S017-03 - Correspondence

Title: Correspondence

Reference code: HF01-S017-03

Date: Dec. 1976-Mar. 1983 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This sub-series consists of correspondence between Sister Marina Flaherty of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton and Father Jungbluth and Bishop O'Grady in Chetwynd, British Columbia, as well as between the Sisters sent from Hamilton to Chetwynd and Sister Marina Flaherty, General Superior. This correspondence recounts the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Hamilton to Chetwynd, British Columbia from its beginnings in 1976 when Father Jungbluth and Bishop O'Grady requested two Sisters come to Chetwynd, to the departure of the Sisters from Chetwynd in 1983. Details are given of the building of a house for the Sisters, the missionary, educational, and pastoral work they engaged in, and the reasons for their initial engagement and their eventual departure.

Physical description: 0.9 cm of textual records

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

File: HF01-S017-03-01 - Correspondence

Title: Correspondence

Reference code: HF01-S017-03-01

Date: Dec. 1976-Mar. 1983 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file consists of correspondence between Sister Marina Flaherty of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton and Father Jungbluth and Bishop O'Grady in Chetwynd, British Columbia, as well as between the Sisters sent from Hamilton to Chetwynd and Sister Marina. This correspondence recounts the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Hamilton to Chetwynd, British Columbia from its beginnings in 1976 when Father Jungbluth and Bishop O'Grady requested two Sisters come to Chetwynd, to the departure of the Sisters from Chetwynd in 1983. Details are given of the building of a house for the Sisters, the missionary, educational, and pastoral work they engaged in, and the reasons for their initial engagement and their eventual departure.

Physical description: 0.9 cm of textual records

: 0089

Note [generalNote]: The records in this file contain 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.

Location of originals: HF01-S017 Box 1 (0089).

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

Subseries: HF01-S017-04 - Events

Title: Events

Reference code: HF01-S017-04

Date: 1978-1979 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This sub-series consists of records of church programmes from the Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Chetwynd, British Columbia, combined in part with churches in Hudson Hope and Moberly Lake, British Columbia with which the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton were involved. Included is a newspaper clipping with a photograph of the Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Chetwynd.

Physical description: 0.2 cm of textual records

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

File: HF01-S017-04-01 - Our Lady of Peace Church Programme

Title: Our Lady of Peace Church Programme

Reference code: HF01-S017-04-01

Date: May 1978 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file consists of a newspaper clipping and a church programme of the Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Chetwynd, British Columbia. The newspaper clipping includes a photograph of Father Jungbluth standing in front of the new church building. The programme includes times for Masses throughout the week, how and when sacraments can be done, a note of thanks for a birthday celebration for Father Jungbluth, the scripture readings for May 7 and 14, 1978, the week's events, religion classes, news, advertisements for youth retreats, birth notices, and times for Marian devotion.

Physical description: 0.1 cm of textual records

: 0089

Location of originals: HF01-S017 Box 1 (0089).

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)

File: HF01-S017-04-02 - The Padre's Easter Sunday Message

Title: The Padre's Easter Sunday Message

Reference code: HF01-S017-04-02

Date: Apr. 15, 1979 (date of creation)

Scope and content: This file consists of an Easter Sunday church programme of the Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Chetwynd, British Columbia, combined with the Our Lady of the Snows Church in Hudson Hope, British Columbia, and St. Theresa's in Moberly Lake, British Columbia for April 15, 1979. It includes an Easter message from "The Padre" Father John Farnik, C.SS.R. on the front and back covers. The interior of the programme includes times for Masses throughout the week, how and when sacraments can be done, themes and scripture readings for the week, assignments of readers and altar boys, prayer requests, Easter greetings, religious education and Bible study times, and opportunities for a leadership course, evenings for couples, a retreat, and a marriage encounter. There are handwritten names and notes in the programme.

Physical description: 0.1 cm of textual records

: 0089

Location of originals: HF01-S017 Box 1 (0089).

Publication status:

Published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
