

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

Finding Aid - Chronicles series (F01-S136)

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Chronicles series

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Summary information

Repository:	Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
Title:	Chronicles series
Reference code:	F01-S136
Date:	1927-2005 (creation)
Physical description:	82 cm of textual records 3 photographs: b&w
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	5-Feb-24

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, 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.

Scope and content

This series contains chronicles documenting the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario from 1853 to 1979. The records are chronological accounts of daily life and major events at specific locations. Most include an index or chapter list. Several of the chronicles have photographs, correspondence, event programs, and news clippings pasted or tucked within. One chronicle, “Sacred Heart Convent Motherhouse 1950-1952 X9”, is made up almost entirely of news clippings. Some also have transcriptions of relevant correspondence included, such as letters about the founding of the Sisters of St. Joseph in North America. The chronicles are a mix of primary recollections and secondary summaries of history.

Several of the chronicles were compiled, written, and collected by Sister Genvieve Hennessey. Variations of these chronicles are included, some of which are annotated, and there are inconsistencies between the versions. Sister Genevieve’s the “Chronicles of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London,” recounts the Sisters’ history from 1868 to 1928, the “Diamond Jubilee Books,” recount the Sisters’ history from 1868 to 1928 and 1933, and there is an addendum added to some versions of each volume which provide accounts up to 1954. Among these histories, there are also accounts by Mother Margaret Coughlin, Sister Placidia Walsh, and Sister Callistus Arnsby which detail local activities and pilgrimages to Rome and France.

The chronicles frequently note religious events and internal activities of the community such as receptions and professions, jubilees, election of congregational leaders, ordinations, changes to habits, and visits of prominent religious figures. Other topics concern the Sisters’ missions and ministries, such as travel arrangements, properties, events for the orphans, and the Sisters’ involvement in healthcare and education. Deaths of Sisters, clergy, and prominent figures, such as King George VI are also frequently mentioned, sometimes with the obituaries included. Local disasters and events are also frequent topics, such as the 1881 Victoria Steamboat Disaster, the 1925 fire at Mount St. Joseph, the 1929 fire at the Ingersoll convent, the 1935 earthquake, the 1937 flood of the Thames River, the first provincial election at which the Sisters voted in 1937, and the smog from the 1950 Alberta wildfires. There are also mentions of global events, particularly those that impacted the Sisters’ and their missions.

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.

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 following files contain some material which is restricted to public access: F01-S136-01-07 is restricted until 2029, F01-S136-01-11 is restricted until 2050, F01-S136-01-17 is restricted until 2065, and F01-S136-01-13 which is restricted to public access permanently.

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.

Related material

File F01-S136-01-03 is a typed copy of the obituary notices of Sisters created in 1992. The original is in F01-S050.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

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

Series descriptions

Subseries F01-S136-01: Community History

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
F01-S136-01-01	File - History Index from Gen. Secretary's Office to 1973		
F01-S136-01-02	File - The Earliest Foundation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto in the Diocese of London Ontario 1853-1875 X1		
F01-S136-01-03	File - Chronicles and Obituaries 1868-1947 X1A	Typed July 21, 1992	
F01-S136-01-04	File - Mount Hope Motherhouse 1853-1903 X2		
F01-S136-01-05	File - Mount Hope Motherhouse and House of Providence 1900-1928 X3		
F01-S136-01-06	File - Mount St. Joseph Orphanage and Motherhouse 1900-1941 X4		
F01-S136-01-07	File - Mount St. Joseph Orphanage 1927-1929 X5	1927-1929	
F01-S136-01-08	File - Sacred Heart Convent Motherhouse 1916-1947 X6	1916-1947	
F01-S136-01-09	File - Sacred Heart Convent Motherhouse 1947-1953 X7		
F01-S136-01-10	File - Sacred Heart Convent Motherhouse 1947-1958 X8		
F01-S136-01-11	File - Sacred Heart Convent Motherhouse 1950-1952 X9	1950-1952	
F01-S136-01-12	File - Sacred Heart Convent Motherhouse [Happenings of Interest] 1950-1954 X10	1950-1954	
F01-S136-01-13	File - Sacred Heart Covent and Mount St. Joseph Motherhouses 1947-1965 (Also, Addenda - 1950's) X11	1950-1954	
F01-S136-01-14	File - Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse 1954-1956 X12		
F01-S136-01-15	File - Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse 1965-1971 X13		

F01-S136-01-16	File - Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse 1971-1979 X14
F01-S136-01-17	File - Fontbonne Hall 1951-1965 X15
F01-S136-01-18	File - House of Providence 1956-1962 X16

Subseries F01-S136-02: Sister Genevieve Hennessey

Publication status:

Published

File / item list

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
F01-S136-02-01	File - Table of Contents		
F01-S136-02-02	File - Index		
F01-S136-02-03	File - Chronicles of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London 1868-1928 and Addendum 1954 [Formation Group Copy]	1981-2005	
F01-S136-02-04	File - Chronicles of the Sisters of St. Joseph of London 1868-1928 and Addendum 1954	1992-2005	
F01-S136-02-05	File - Diamond Jubilee Books Volume A		
F01-S136-02-06	File - Diamond Jubilee Books Volume B	1927-1933	
F01-S136-02-07	File - Diamond Jubilee Books Volume C		
F01-S136-02-08	File - Diamond Jubilee Books Volume D		
F01-S136-02-09	File - Diamond Jubilee Books Volume E		
F01-S136-02-10	File - Diamond Jubilee Books Volume A1		
F01-S136-02-11	File - Diamond Jubilee Books Volume B1		
F01-S136-02-12	File - Diamond Jubilee Books Volume C1		
F01-S136-02-13	File - Diamond Jubilee Books Volumes A, B, C, D, E with 1950s Addendum [Typescript]		
F01-S136-02-14	File - Gleanings of Sixty Years Vol. I		
F01-S136-02-15	File - Chronicles Addenda 1954		
F01-S136-02-16	File - Accounts of Sisters' Activities	1950, 1955, [1964?]	
F01-S136-02-17	File - Research Notes		