

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

## **Finding Aid - Collection about Mother Ignatia Campbell (F01-S001)**

---

Generated by Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada on April 30, 2025

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/collection-about-mother-ignatia-campbell>

# Collection about Mother Ignatia Campbell

---

## Table of contents

---

Summary information .....	3
Scope and content .....	3
Notes .....	3
Access points .....	6
Series descriptions .....	7

## Summary information

---

**Repository:** Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada  
**Title:** Collection about Mother Ignatia Campbell  
**Reference code:** F01-S001  
**Date:** 1856 [photocopied 198-?]-2005 (creation)  
**Physical description:** 4 cm of textual records  
9 photographs : b&w  
7 photographs : col.  
4 negatives : b&w  
2 negatives: col.  
**Dates of creation, revision and deletion:** 25-May-23

---

## Scope and content

---

This is a collection of material related to the life and work of Mother Ignatia Campbell which comprises two subseries. It includes several biographical chronologies and summaries of her work which were considered in the drafting of her profile in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography (University of Toronto Press). There are news clippings and photographs of the 1991 “People and the City” monument in London, Ontario which includes a depiction of Mother Ignatia Campbell. There is information related to the “Mother Ignatia Campbell Bursary for Women” introduced at Regis College, Toronto in 2005. There are genealogical research notes and correspondence about Mother Ignatia Campbell prepared by Sister Esther Bardawell. There are also several undated photographs of Mother Ignatia Campbell.

---

## Notes

---

### Arrangement

These records were collected by the archivist of the London congregation.

### Location of originals

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

Subseries and file list available.

## Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

## Note [Sources]

Dictionary of Biography of Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada.

## Note [General]

Catherine Anne Campbell was born in Thorah Township, Brock Settlement, Ontario on November 17, 1840. Catherine Anne's parents were Kenneth A. Campbell (born ca. 1800, died 1877) and Anne McEwen (born 1803 in Scotland, died February 18, 1872). The family lived in the Brock Settlement in Ontario, situated southeast of Lake Simcoe. The first resident priest in the Settlement in 1855 was Rev. John Walsh, who was later named Bishop of London in 1867. Catherine's father was a farmer and was appointed postmaster in 1829 to carry mail on foot from Thorah to Whitby every two weeks to the store of Mr. J. B. Warren. As there were no postage stamps, he received a small amount of money from those for whom he carried letters or parcels.

Catherine Anne attended S. S. #1 School in Thorah Township. It was later known as Riverview or the "Swamp" school. On October 9, 1855, scarcely fifteen years of age and having never known a religious sister, she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto at their Motherhouse on Power Street. However, homesickness overcame her and she asked for her father who came for her. As they were ready to leave, she decided to go to the Chapel for moment. She came out of the Chapel and told her father that she had changed her mind. He was said to be a little indignant, but he rejoiced at her remaining. She never experienced any more doubts about her vocation, and it taught her compassion for others who struggled in the same way.

Catherine Anne was formally received into the Congregation on May 3, 1856, and she was given the religious name, Sister Ignatia. The Reception ceremony was under the guidance of Mother Delphine Fontbonne, niece of Mother St. John, from whom she imbibed the spirit of the original foundation in LePuy, France. Mother Ignatia professed her vows on October 15, 1858. She taught elementary classes at St. Patrick's School in Toronto and in the separate schools of St. Catharines and Barrie. In 1867 Sister Ignatia was assigned to Thorold to teach in the Catholic school and named Superior of the newly opened Convent.

The following year Sister Ignatia travelled to London along with four other Sisters to establish a convent in response to a request from Bishop John Walsh. He announced to the parishioners of St. Peter's Parish that the Sisters would visit the sick and the poor, teach in the separate schools, visit prisoners, and establish an orphanage. They arrived on December 11, 1868, and settled in their first home which was situated on Kent Street. However before long they moved to Mount Hope to prepare the orphanage for seventeen orphans arriving October 2, 1869. On December 18, 1870, Bishop Walsh received the vows of the Sisters who were

residing in London, establishing a separate Congregation and he appointed Sister Ignatia to be the General Superior. She was then known as Reverend Mother Ignatia Campbell. Mother Ignatia arranged for an Act of Incorporation which gave legal status to the London Community on February 15, 1871.

The children in the orphanage were Mother Ignatia's first concern and she did everything to clothe and feed them. She was known for her compassion and concern for the old people who came to live at Mount Hope. In order to meet all their needs a bazaar was organized at City Hall and three thousand dollars were realized.

A few hundred dollars was the salary of the Sister-teachers for the year, so Mother Ignatia and the Sisters canvassed the people of London and surrounding areas for food and clothing for the orphans. Mother Ignatia was always concerned for her Sisters who were entering and teaching in some of the separate schools in the city and surrounding towns. She arranged for lecturers to teach and assist the teachers. At Bishop Walsh's request, Mother Ignatia discontinued the "lay" Sisters. Therefore, all new members were allowed to assume the regular habit.

She was known for her kindness to priests of the diocese as she opened Mount Hope to retreats and ordinations for the priests until the new St. Peter's Cathedral was completed in 1885.

Requests for teachers increased and Mother Ignatia opened a convent in Goderich where the Sisters taught in the school. As more requests came, Sisters were missioned to St. Thomas and Ingersoll to teach in the Catholic schools. As the Community, the number of orphans and the elderly at Mount Hope grew, the building became inadequate, and it was necessary to build. The official opening of the new building took place in 1877.

Mother Ignatia, who was worn out with the responsibilities of her position and anxiety over finances, was ordered to rest to regain her health so she travelled with Sister Francis O'Malley to Orillia where her brother, Rev. Kenneth Campbell was parish priest. While she was away, Sister Aloysia Nigh arranged for gas to be installed in the building and when Mother Ignatia returned the entire house was illuminated to welcome her home.

The Community celebrated Mother Ignatia's 25th anniversary in 1881. Her brother, Archdeacon Kenneth Campbell of Orillia, presented her with a silver Monstrance for the Chapel.

When the pleasure boat, "The Victoria," sank on the Thames River after leaving Springbank Park, Mother Ignatia sent Sisters, two by two, to visit and to help the families who had lost a loved one.

In 1884 she arranged for the Sisters to take charge of the domestic arrangements at Sandwich College, later known as Assumption College, where priests were educated. The Sisters of St. Joseph remained there until 1904.

Mother Ignatia was truly a dedicated apostolic religious. No matter how demanding her administrative duties, she was always attentive to the needs of the Sisters, especially the sick and suffering.

When the new St. Peter's Cathedral opened, Mother Ignatia and the Sisters hosted a banquet at Mount Hope for Bishop Walsh and his guests.

In 1887 there was an epidemic of "black diphtheria" at the orphanage. Two Sisters, who were with the orphans, remained quarantined with the sick for three months. Mother Ignatia initiated prayers to St. Roch during the epidemic as he was known as a protector from contagious diseases.

The Inspector of Charitable Institutions, Dr. W. T. O'Reilly encouraged Mother Ignatia to open a hospital in London. The first hospital in the former home of Judge W. T. Street across from Mount Hope, was opened in 1888. Another hospital was established in Chatham, ON when the vacant Salvation Army Barracks was leased for two years. The new hospital was built on King Street West and was formally opened and blessed on November 15, 1891.

Due to overcrowding at Mount Hope, the need to separate the children and the senior residents was the catalyst which encouraged Mother Ignatia to seek a new property. When Hellmuth Ladies College closed, she planted a statue on the grounds outside the gate and when it was announced that Norwood House,

Hellmuth College, the Chapel and one hundred and forty acres of land were for sale, Mother Ignatia immediately sought the help of Mr. Philip Pocock who bought the property for her with the approval of the Administrator of the Diocese, Rev. Joseph Bayard. The Sisters began collecting for funds to repair the buildings. Another bazaar and orphans' benefit program helped to finance the project. After the blessing on April 26, 1900, Mount St. Joseph Motherhouse, Novitiate and Orphanage officially opened. The task of moving one hundred and eight orphans across the river on the stepping stones where the bridge had been torn down, was a mammoth one, along with having to say goodbye to their first home at Mount Hope. She rejoiced though with the Sisters and orphans who were enjoying the invigorating air and scenic beauty of their new home, named Mount St. Joseph.

After Mother Ignatia sent two Sisters to study as graduate nursing specialists, the St. Joseph's Schools of Nursing at the London and Chatham hospitals were established.

Mother Ignatia, who had governed the Community for thirty-two years, from 1870-1902, resigned as General Superior and was elected first councillor in 1902. She resided at the Convent in St. Thomas. At her Golden Jubilee, which was celebrated on May 3, 1906, she was given a gold Chalice as a gift from the Community. Present for the celebration were her four nieces. Three were members of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peterborough and one was a member of the Loretto Sisters of Toronto.

Mother Ignatia lived in the Convent in St. Mary's when it opened in 1913. That same year, Convents were opened in Seaford and Woodstock and St. Joseph's Hospital in Chatham was enlarged. The Motherhouse was moved to Sacred Heart Convent in 1914 which had been the Academy of the Sacred Heart Religious. In 1916, Mother was honoured by the Community on her Diamond Jubilee. The celebration of three days, consisted of a Solemn High Mass each day, programs honouring her, and festivities celebrated at St. Joseph's Hospital, the House of Providence and Mount St. Joseph Orphanage.

In December 1918, the Community celebrated the Golden Jubilee of the coming of Sisters of St. Joseph to London. Mother Ignatia was present for the Mass and was the only living member who was with the original band of Sisters who arrived in London in 1868.

Mother Ignatia also observed the sixtieth anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of St. Joseph to London. Mother Ignatia's death came on January 3, 1929, on the closing day of the Sisters' annual retreat. The Ceremony of Reception of the Habit which was to occur the next day was held as planned. The Vicar General reminded the postulants who were to receive the habit that they would never be called upon to make such sacrifices or experience such difficulties as Mother Ignatia had realized in her long religious life as pioneer and founder. "Her fingers had been worn and her Habit often frayed during her long years of charitable service."

## 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.)
- Campbell, Ignatia (subject)
- Multiple media (documentary form)
- Photographs (documentary form)
- Textual records (documentary form)

- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada (London, Ont.) (subject)
- London (place)

## Series descriptions

### Subseries F01-S001-01: Biography

Date: 1856 [photocopied 198-?] - 2005 (creation)

Scope and content: This subseries consists of biographical information on Mother Ignatia Campbell. The biographical material consists of photocopies of the original Act of Reception and Act of Profession. There are materials related to the Dictionary of Canadian Biography (University of Toronto Press) entry, and correspondence between Dr. Elizabeth Smyth and Sister Pauline Leblanc regarding the editing process of the revised entry. The City of London also included Mother Ignatia Campbell in the monument for downtown London created by artists Stuart Reid and Doreen Balabanoff that was unveiled on August 5th, 1991. The sculpture is located on Wellington Street near Queens Avenue, and there are newsclippings, photographs, and correspondence about this. There is information related to the "Mother Ignite Campbell Bursary for Women" that was implemented at Regis College in 2005 in honour of Mother Ignatia as well as other newspaper clippings. There is also the research notes and correspondence of Sister Esther Bardawill, who was conducting genealogical research on Mother Ignatia Campbell. The subseries comprises biographical transcripts, brochures, chronicles, correspondence and facsimile, information sheets, newspaper clippings, obituary information, photocopies of books and original records, photographs, and a sermon transcript.

Physical description: 5 cm of textual records

7 photographs : col.

1 photograph : b&w

2 negatives : col.

Publication status:

Published

#### File / item list

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
F01-S001-01-01	<b>File - Biographical material</b>	1856-1870 [photocopied 198-?], 1988	
F01-S001-01-02	<b>File - Candidate for Dictionary of Canadian Biography</b>	1988-1997	
F01-S001-01-03	<b>File - Histories and index to chronicles</b>	1986-2004	
F01-S001-01-04	<b>File - Monument</b>	1991	
F01-S001-01-05	<b>File - News clippings</b>	1929, 1966, 2005	
F01-S001-01-06	<b>File - Genealogy research</b>	1988-2002	

### Subseries F01-S001-02: Photographs

Date: [n.d] (creation)

Scope and content: All the photographs in this subseries represent Mother Ignatia Campbell at different ages, but the dates of each photo are not provided. One photograph was printed at Jas. Egan's photographic gallery in London, Ontario, and another by Frank Cooper, also of London, Ontario. One of the photos has the label: "Mother Ignatia Campbell, 1840-1929, First Superior General of The Sisters of St. Joseph of London Diocese"; and on the photocopy taken from the same photo a note is added: "who accompanied Sister Rose Bondy and Sister Ambrosia Durkin to Windsor when they began teaching at Notre Dame School in Windsor," and another version "when they began teaching at Our Lady of the Rosary Church."

Physical description: 8 photographs : b&w  
4 negatives : b&w

Publication status:

Published

**File / item list**

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
F01-S001-02-01	<b>File - Photographs</b>	[n.d.]	