

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

Finding Aid - Missions Campbell's Bay series (50-0014)

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Missions Campbell's Bay series

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Summary information

Repository: Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
Title: Missions Campbell's Bay series
Reference code: 50-0014
Date: 1950-1975, 1988 (creation)
Physical description: 2 cm of textual records

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

The Sisters of St. Joseph for the Diocese of Pembroke in Canada was first incorporated by letters patent dated January 21, 1922 under the Ontario Companies Act. The town of Pembroke, Ontario is located on the traditional lands of the Algonquin and Anishinaabe Peoples.

In 1910, Sisters from Peterborough began teaching at St. Michael's Parish school in Douglas, followed by Killaloe in 1915 and Mount St. Patrick in 1916, all three being small rural communities in Ontario. Eleven years later, on August 25, 1921, a new community was formed at Bishop Ryan's request by 27 Sisters from Peterborough. 14 of these Sisters were already serving in Douglas, Killaloe, and Mount St. Patrick. Mother Vincent Carroll was elected General Superior.

The new community needed a motherhouse, and the O'Kelly farm was purchased by Bishop Ryan, giving the Sisters 40 acres of farmland and 107 acres of woods on the Ottawa River, along with an old farmhouse. On September 19, 1921 St. Joseph's-on-the-Lake, the first Motherhouse, was officially opened and blessed by Father Dowdall. St. Joseph's Convent, the first mission of the newly formed congregation, was established in Chapeau on August 27, 1921. Here the Sisters taught in the local school for many years.

The Pembroke Sisters spread out throughout Ontario and Quebec, and even made their way westward to Saskatchewan and Alberta. Some other missions included Calabogie (1924), Campbell's Bay (1925), Barry's Bay (1928), Renfrew (1928), Sheenboro (1936), Madawaska (1936), Deep River (1948), Quyon (1951), Des Joachims (1958), Whitney (1958), Bancroft (1959), Ottawa (1962), and Petawawa (1962).

The General Superiors of the Congregation were elected from the ranks of the founding Sisters until 1945 when Mother Magdalen Donegan was elected. She had entered the Congregation in September 1923. At the peak of its membership growth, the Congregation numbered approximately 190.

After three decades, on September 15, 1952, Bishop Smith took part in the sod turning for a new Motherhouse. On April 26, 1953 he blessed the cornerstone. The new motherhouse officially opened on December 12, 1953 – providing a home for years to which Sisters could return from missions outside Pembroke. Many of the convents outside Pembroke housed teachers, as education was a significant ministry. The first classes held at St. Joseph's Academy, a girls' high school in Renfrew, on September 10, 1928. A new building was completed in 1940 and the school stayed open for almost three more decades. In October 1940, the Normal School, later St. Mary's Teachers' College, opened in Chapeau, and saw its last graduates in 1969. This ministry was unique to the Pembroke Sisters, as no other of our communities provided teacher training.

Following the original thread of the Sisters in Le Puy, the Pembroke Sisters served others in corporal works of mercy through healthcare. On July 25, 1946 Sisters arrived in Radville, Saskatchewan to establish the first hospital, which they administered until 1998. Ten years after opening the hospital, they founded Marian Home to provide long term care, and senior care. Sisters also went to Regina, where they opened Santa Maria Senior Citizens' Home on October 12, 1968. On January 7, 1947 they assumed the administration and staffing of St. Joseph's Hospital in Barrhead, Alberta from the Religious Hospitallers of St Joseph. This ministry lasted until 1978.

Closer to home, St. Francis Memorial Hospital in Barry's Bay, Ontario was opened on October 25, 1960. This hospital was also staffed by the Sisters. Sr. Rosenda Brady, who administered this hospital, later took charge of Valley Manor, a senior's home in Barry's Bay, which opened on June 23, 1978. On August 24, 1968, Sisters arrived to administer and staff St. Joseph's Manor, a home for senior citizens, in Campbell's Bay, Québec, where they remained until 1982.

There was only a short-lived ministry of orphan care at Villa St. Joseph in Renfrew from 1940 to 1947. In a spirit of adventure, the Sisters set sail to South America on April 17, 1964, to found St. Joseph's Convent in Chincha Alta, Peru. On the feast day of St. Martin de Porres, November 2, 1964, they opened Clinica San Martin. In the spring of the following year, on April 1, 1965, the parish school opened in Chincha Alta. Classes began at Colegio San Jose in March 1970. On January 1, 1966 Clinica Tom Dooley opened in Chincha Baja.

Still following the thread of the Sisters in Le Puy, the Pembroke Sisters served others in spiritual works of mercy through parish work and spiritual development ministry. On August 15, 1978, Sisters began parish ministry in Penticton (to 1984). In September 1969, St. Joseph Centre, a renewal centre in Chapeau, opened for a brief period, followed in July 1989 by Stillpoint House of Prayer in Springtown, which has seen decades of service.

On November 22, 2012, the congregation amalgamated with those in Hamilton, London, and Peterborough 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 records related to the ministries in Campbell's Bay, Quebec, carried out by the Sisters of St. Joseph in the Pembroke diocese. There is a papal blessing from Pope Pius in 1950 for the Sisters as they started their mission. There is correspondence, much of it relating to the building that was rented for the convent and which contained a chapel. There are a few parish bulletins, a newsletter, and newsclippings, as well as a manuscript history of the Sisters in Campbell's Bay. The series also includes a souvenir booklet for St. John the Evangelist Parish from 1919-1989 which is illustrated with photographs and is in both French and English. After 50 years of service in the field of education, the Sisters were given a farewell tea in June 1975, organized by parishioners and the Catholic Women's League. When St. Joseph's Manor, a nursing home, opened in Campbell's Bay on October 27, 1968, the Sisters provided care. There is correspondence related to this staffing the facility, donations, and the eventual closure of the convent, which took place in April 1982. There are also newsclippings about St. Joseph's Manor and a program for the official opening.

Notes

Title notes

- **Source of title proper:** Title is based on the contents of the series.

Immediate source of acquisition

These records were created by the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph (Pembroke, Ont.)

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 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

There is a series and file list available.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Note [Sources]

C. Lacroix, *St. Joseph's Convent - School, Campbell's Bay, Quebec 1925 – 1975,* unpublished manuscript.

C. Lacroix, *St. Joseph's Manor, Campbell's Bay, Quebec, 1968 – 1982,* unpublished manuscript.

Note [General]

The Sisters of St. Joseph from the Pembroke diocese began their time in Campbell's Bay, Quebec as teachers, and later worked in the healthcare field with the elderly.

In May, 1925, the request of Rev. Father Murray, of Campbell's Bay for Sisters was granted, with the Community agreeing to supply two teachers for the parish school, and a sacristan for the church.

On Monday, September 1, Father Murray came to take the two teachers, Sister Winnifred Grier and Sister St. Philip to Campbell's Bay. They were informed that school would open the next day.

Since the convent was unfinished, the Sisters lived at the presbytery for two weeks, enjoying the hospitality of Father Murray and the kindness of Miss Annie O'Hare, his housekeeper.

Some mysterious factor in the transportation of their possessions caused a delay in the arrival of trunks and book boxes from Pembroke, and so the Sisters were inconvenienced for some time. This, along with an almost total lack of equipment in the classroom, presented a challenge to them which required plenty of courage. Besides the Treasurer not being on duty when the Sisters left the Motherhouse, Sister Winnifred, the Superior, had no money in her purse to give them. On the following Friday, after evening Benediction, Father Murray presented Sister Winnifred with a one dollar bill remarking, "A generous soul gave this for the Sisters." The cost of living was low at that time, and the next day, the two went shopping with a whole dollar bill to spend. It was surprising what a supply of essentials for the school were purchased.

In mid-September, Mother Juliana arrived with Sister Isabel, who was to be the housekeeper at the convent and the sacristan at the church. Sister Winnifred and Sister St. Philip were glad to move to the convent, even though it had been built for five people, and could comfortably accommodate three. There was a bountiful supply of food which had been stored by a member of the school board.

Energy was required for the ten minute walk to school, and classes were large. Sister Winnifred taught Grades 1 and 2, Miss Feeney, Grades 3 and 4 with instruction in French throughout the school, and Sister St. Philip, Grades, 5, 6, 7, and 8 Ontario course of study, plus elementary superior Quebec diploma classes. Dr. McNally, chairman of the school board, was open to suggestions regarding equipment, but on one occasion, he gave a startled glance at Sister Winnifred when, thinking of her number work class, she asked for a few boxes of splints, and he remarked, "You never knew what those Sisters were up to."

In 1926, Sister Helen Holly and Sister Hilda Hunt joined the Community, the former to serve as a school staff member, and the latter to form the nucleus of a music class.

Through the years many changes occurred, in the parish, the convent, and the school. The pupils of both elementary and high school classes were fortunate to have had their studies directed by teachers such as Sisters Winnifred, Catherine Healey, Margaret Conway, Clare Burke, Eileen Allison, Lillian Cunningham, Ann Morrissey, and Leona Harrington.

The necessity to house the high school classes adequately was recognized and a building was ready for occupancy in 1957. In 1964, the high school came under the administration of the regional school Board. In addition to three Sisters, there was one Sister teaching at the elementary school, a music teacher, and a housekeeper, thus making a community of six at the convent.

When the Sisters first came to Campbell's Bay in 1925, the Community was not in a position to supply qualified teachers for the French classes, but later, this was accomplished, and excellent results in French elementary and high school classes were achieved by Sister Alice Meilleur, Sister Jeanne Belec, Sister Marie Meilleur, and Sister Edna Gauthier. A special testimonial in recognition of excellence in teaching was given to Sister Edna Gauthier by the Department of Education. Throughout 46 years, the Sisters went about their duties in the schools, in the music room, with the church choir and in the sacristy, and won a place in the homes and hearts of a kindly people.

In the autumn of 1967, Monsignor Barry telephoned Sister Mary McGaghran, General Superior, with a request that the Community undertake the administration and partial staffing of St. Joseph's Manor to be built in Campbell's Bay. Land ideally located had been donated by Mr. Henry Ranger and Mrs. Peter Keon. The Manor would be one of two homes for senior citizens planned by the Quebec government for the county. It would serve English-speaking residents.

A ready assent was given by the Community administration, since the work of caring for the aged was an apostolate long cherished by the Sisters of St. Joseph.

On August 24, 1968, Sister Imelda Duquette, Superior, and Sisters Cecilia Whelan and Eleanor Serran arrived to take up residence in the nearly completed building. The rooms allocated for the Sisters' use were unfurnished except for the beds. With these, and three lawn chairs on loan from the Motherhouse, the Sisters had the feeling of modern pioneers as they looked around their almost empty apartment.

There was rejoicing among the Sisters at the convent in Campbell's Bay when the announcement was made of the opening of St. Joseph's Manor under the direction of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Five eligible residents with happy faces arrived on the first day of admission, September 16, 1968. The following day, the fourth member of the community, Sister Marie Bertrand, arrived. Her being bilingual was an added advantage.

The capacity of St. Joseph's Manor was approximately 37 guests, and by October 27, 1968, the date of the official opening, all rooms were occupied and there was a waiting list for acceptance of future guests was already on file. On the much anticipated day, the President Mr. Edgar Lance, and other members of St. Joseph's Manor, greeted the invited guests, among them Hon. Jean-Paul, Minister of Health, and the Minister of Family and Social Welfare. His Excellency, Most Reverend William J. Smith, Bishop of Pembroke, blessed the building and each room in the Manor during the afternoon. A history of the Manor was given by Rev. R. Pilon, pastor of Fort Coulonge. The Hon. Raymond Johnston, Minister of Revenue, and Member of Parliament for Pontiac County, introduced the guest speaker.

Bidding farewell to Sisters Imelda Duquette and Eleanor after three years was not easy. But life at the Manor continued, and Sisters Mary Keizer, Teresa Rice and Eleanor Larkin who replaced them gained the affection and loyalty of both the staff and residents.

In September, 1969, a new dimension of service was offered to the section of Pontiac County surrounding Campbell's Bay. Sister Emma Castonguay, R.N., devoted herself for a year to caring for the sick in their homes, a service greatly needed in an area where medical aid was not readily available.

The Sisters, realizing that they could not carry out their mission under the existing conditions, when the Board did not take a stand on some important issues, and with the approval of their General Superior, handed in their resignations to the director general. On April 24, 1982, the Sisters departed.

Other notes

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

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- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada (Pembroke, Ont.)
 - Textual record (documentary form)
 - Textual records (documentary form)
 - Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada (Pembroke, Ont.) (subject)
 - Quebec (place)
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Series descriptions

Reference code	Title	Dates	Physical description
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50-0014-1	File - Campbell's Bay Convent
50-0014-2	File - St. John the Evangelist Parish 1919-1939-1989 booklet
50-0014-3	File - Campbell's Bay Manor