

Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada

Finding Aid - Sacred Heart Convent series (F01-S124)

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Sacred Heart Convent series

Table of contents

Summary information	3
Administrative history / Biographical sketch	3
Scope and content	5
Notes	5
Access points	7
Collection holdings	7
F01-S124-01, History (1914-1985)	7
F01-S124-02, Property (1914-2008)	9
F01-S124-03, Correspondence (1935, 1952)	10
F01-S124-04, Newsclippings and Photographs (1916-1986)	11
F01-S124-05, Sacred Heart Commercial School (1939, 1950)	11
F01-S124-06, Music (1919)	12

Summary information

Repository:	Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
Title:	Sacred Heart Convent series
Reference code:	F01-S124
Date:	1914-2008 (creation)
Physical description:	6 cm of textual records 17 photographs : col. 18 photographs : b&w 1 postcard : b&w
Language:	English
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	October 30, 2018July 2, 2020May 22, 2023

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of London, in Ontario was first incorporated on February 15, 1891 under chapter 92 of the Statutes of Ontario, 1870-1.

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. Joseph's 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

Series contains Sister Norita Keenan's single page memoir, a postulant requirement list, souvenir booklet of the Diamond Jubilee, chaplain list, meal seating plan, farewell ceremony agenda and schedule, photographs, land and property maintenance receipts, property sketch, chronology of property transfers and sales, rededication ceremony program and speech, letter from General Superior to Sisters, decorative Christmas card and envelope with list of donors of a car, newspaper clippings, student created books, and Bach sheet music owned by Cesar Borre.

Notes

Title notes

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

Immediate source of acquisition

Records were transferred from Sacred Heart Convent to the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada Archives – London site.

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

Series and file list available.

Accruals

No further accruals are expected.

Note [General]

The building which became Sacred Heart Convent was built in 1854. It was originally the home of Lawrence Lawrason, London's first Police Magistrate. The first structure, which had the Sacred Heart statue facing it, was the part that overlooked Dundas Street. In 1867, an additional and major structure was added. The Religious of the Sacred Heart operated a school at this location, but withdrew in September, 1913. The Sisters of St. Joseph began to use the building for commercial classes in two rooms as well as elementary classes in two other rooms. The commercial class provided training in typing, stenography, commercial law and other subjects related to business. On March 31, 1914 through the efforts of Sir Philip Pocock and Mr. T. J. Murphy, the Sacred Heart Convent and property ownership was secured by the Sisters of St. Joseph. The owners, the Religious of the Sacred Heart, discounted the price for the Sisters who were aided by donations from Philip Pocock and Ed Shea. The building became the new Mother House and Novitiate for the Sisters of St. Joseph. The address was 401 Queens Avenue.

The convent housed a Casavant organ, made in Quebec by a company known world-wide for their craftsmanship, and installed in 1931. The Sisters who lived at the convent started teaching music, establishing the Sacred Heart School of Music, later the St. Joseph School of Music, and even an orchestra called the Sacred Heart Concert Orchestra. Mr. César Borré, a renowned Belgian musician, was a friend to the Sisters and helped with music.

The first six students from Sacred Heart Commercial High School attended their graduation ceremonies at St. Peter's Hall Auditorium in October, 1938. When a Departmental inspection took place at the school, it was determined that instruction was above average, and that graduates with a general business or diploma had an education equivalent to a secondary school diploma.

In 1915, the Separate School Board bought some of the Sacred Heart School property at the northwest corner. Three years later, the School Board rented room in the convent for a household science class. In 1936, the City Council asked that eight feet in from the property line be given to them, and an iron fence was erected along the new line. In 1946, property on the corner of Queens Avenue and Colborne Street was sold to the School Board.

In 1946, the Sacred Heart Convent site was chosen to build a new Catholic high school which would include both a junior and senior school. Until rooms were built for the senior high school, the first two floors of the west wing of the convent were rented to the Catholic School Board and became Catholic Central High School. The boys, with the Christian Brothers as teachers, were on the first floor, and the girls with Sisters as teachers were on the second floor. The Sisters continued to teach girls at Sacred Heart School in grades 9 and 10, while boys in grades 9 and 10 remained at St. Peter's Parish Hall at what was called De La Salle High School. In 1950, a boarding school for girls was started at Sacred Heart Convent with six students. In the same year, rooms in the convent were rented for high school classes.

The Senior School, named Catholic Central High School (grades 11-13) opened in September 1950 in the former Sacred Heart Convent, being the amalgamation of Sacred Heart Commercial School (1914-1950), St. Angela's College (run by the Ursuline Sisters from 1913-1950) and De La Salle High School (1920-1951). The Senior School was administered separately from the Junior School. This latter school which opened in September, 1952, was named Catholic Central Separate School (grades 7-10). Classes started being taught at Catholic Central High School on September 2, 1950 in its new building, with Father Joseph Finn and Sister Mary Angela Flaherty as associate principals. Eventually, the Christian Brothers left in 1952. The next year, a special class for special needs students was set up, which moved the following year to three rooms in Sacred Heart School.

In 1953, the building ceased to be a convent and the boarding school moved to the newly built Mount St. Joseph, and in 1958 to the newly completed wing. It was now called Mount St. Joseph Academy. In 1955, the property was transferred to the Catholic School Board for offices and classrooms. By 1959, most of Sacred Heart Convent had been demolished except the chapel wing, which was torn down in 1986. The new Catholic Central building opened in September 1959 with Sister Elaine Dunn as Principal and with 247 students. In 1960, the formal opening of Catholic Central High School took place. In 1967, the separate school (grades 9-10) and high school (grades 11-13) operated under one principal as Catholic Central High School. In 1986, the North Wing was built, and further renovations took place up until 2000. A blessing and rededication of the school was held in October, 2000. Catholic Central High School held a 50th anniversary reunion in 2001.

Other notes

- **Publication status:** published
- **Level of detail:** Partial
- **Status description:** Revised

Access points

- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada (London, Ont.)
- Graphic material (documentary form)
- Textual record (documentary form)
- Photographs (documentary form)
- Textual records (documentary form)
- Postcards (documentary form)
- Women and girls (subject)
- Music (subject)
- Religion and religious people (subject)
- Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada (London, Ont.) (subject)
- History (subject)
- Schools (subject)
- Property (subject)
- London (place)

Collection holdings

Subseries: F01-S124-01 - History

Title: History

Reference code: F01-S124-01

Date: 1914-1985 (date of creation)

Scope and content: Sub-series contains Sister Norita Keenan's one page memoir, postulant requirement list, souvenir booklet of the Diamond Jubilee, chaplain list, meal seating plan, and stationery.

Physical description: 1 cm of textual records

Publication status:

published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
-

File: F01-S124-01-01 - Sister Norita Keenan's Memoir

Title: Sister Norita Keenan's Memoir

Reference code: F01-S124-01-01

Publication status:

published

File: F01-S124-01-02 - Postulant Requirement List

Title: Postulant Requirement List

Reference code: F01-S124-01-02

Publication status:

published

File: F01-S124-01-03 - Souvenir of Diamond Jubilee 1944

Title: Souvenir of Diamond Jubilee 1944

Reference code: F01-S124-01-03

Publication status:

published

File: F01-S124-01-04 - Chaplains

Title: Chaplains

Reference code: F01-S124-01-04

Publication status:

published

File: F01-S124-01-05 - Daily Living

Title: Daily Living

Reference code: F01-S124-01-05

Publication status:

published

Subseries: F01-S124-02 - Property

Title: Property

Reference code: F01-S124-02

Date: 1914-2008 (date of creation)

Scope and content: Sub-series consists of photographs related to a farewell ceremony in 1985 when the school board administrative offices moved from Sacred Heart Convent. There was an opening of the cornerstone at this event. There is also a farewell ceremony reception invitation, a farewell ceremony boardroom gathering agenda. Besides these records, there are land and property maintenance receipts, property sketch, and a chronology of property transfers and sales. Finally, there is also a program and speech from the 2008 rededication of the original convent cornerstone.

Physical description: 0.25 cm of textual records

17 photographs : col.

Publication status:

published

Access points:

- Graphic material (documentary form)
 - Textual record (documentary form)
-

File: F01-S124-02-01 - Farewell Ceremony

Title: Farewell Ceremony

Reference code: F01-S124-02-01

Publication status:

published

File: F01-S124-02-02 - Land and Maintenance Papers

Title: Land and Maintenance Papers

Reference code: F01-S124-02-02

Publication status:

published

File: F01-S124-02-03 - Cornerstone Rededication Ceremony 2008

Title: Cornerstone Rededication Ceremony 2008

Reference code: F01-S124-02-03

Publication status:

published

Subseries: F01-S124-03 - Correspondence

Title: Correspondence

Reference code: F01-S124-03

Date: 1935, 1952 (date of creation)

Scope and content: Sub-series consists of letter from General Superior to Sisters and decorative Christmas card and envelope with list of donors of a car that was given to the Sisters.

Physical description: 0.25 cm of textual records
1 greetings card and envelope

Publication status:

published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
-

File: F01-S124-03-01 - Letters

Title: Letters

Reference code: F01-S124-03-01

Publication status:

published

Subseries: F01-S124-04 - Newsclippings and Photographs

Title: Newsclippings and Photographs

Reference code: F01-S124-04

Date: 1916-1986 (date of creation)

Scope and content: Sub-series consist of newspaper clippings about the school, and photographs of daily activities and of the building.

Physical description: 0.25 cm of textual records

18 photos : b&w

1 postcard : b&w

Publication status:

published

Access points:

- Graphic material (documentary form)
 - Textual record (documentary form)
-

File: F01-S124-04-01 - Education 1916-1986

Title: Education 1916-1986

Reference code: F01-S124-04-01

Publication status:

published

File: F01-S124-04-02 - Daily Activities and Building

Title: Daily Activities and Building

Reference code: F01-S124-04-02

Publication status:

published

Subseries: F01-S124-05 - Sacred Heart Commercial School

Title: Sacred Heart Commercial School

Reference code: F01-S124-05

Date: 1939, 1950 (date of creation)

Scope and content: Sub-series consists of books created by Sacred Heart Commercial School students, and a newsclipping with notes.

Physical description: 3 cm of textual records

Publication status:

published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
-

File: F01-S124-05-01 - Chronicles 1950 [2014-64]

Title: Chronicles 1950 [2014-64]

Reference code: F01-S124-05-01

Publication status:

published

File: F01-S124-05-02 - History of London Parishes-Students of Sacred Heart Commercial 1939

Title: History of London Parishes-Students of Sacred Heart Commercial 1939

Reference code: F01-S124-05-02

Publication status:

published

File: F01-S124-05-03 - Newsclipping and Note

Title: Newsclipping and Note

Reference code: F01-S124-05-03

Publication status:

published

Subseries: F01-S124-06 - Music

Title: Music

Reference code: F01-S124-06

Date: 1919 (date of creation)

Scope and content: Sub-series consists of Bach sheet music owned by Cesar Borre who was the consultant who supervised the building of the organ in 1930. He taught organ to Sisters Electa and Callistus and trained the Sisters in Gregorian chant, according to a note on the cover of the sheet music booklet.

Physical description: 1 cm of textual records

Publication status:

published

Access points:

- Textual record (documentary form)
-

File: F01-S124-06-01 - Bach Album [2015-42]

Title: Bach Album [2015-42]

Reference code: F01-S124-06-01

Publication status:

published
