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Searching the Archives

Picturing Providence

Ongoing Project: Cataloguing Artifacts

Pam Hedquist

The Providence Archives historical collection is not limited to paper and photographic records. A rich and diverse artifact collection is housed in the Spokane repository and has been heavily used in recent years for historical exhibits in the Archives rotating exhibit program and at ministries throughout the system. Access to artifacts is key to developing exhibits but is difficult without intellectual control.

The first phase of a cataloguing project for selected artifacts was completed in 1999. Two years ago, the staff began an effort to catalogue

the remaining artifacts, about three-quarters of the collection. The Archives holds thousands of artifacts acquired since 1971 providing tangible documentation of the ministries in Providence Health & Services as well as the religious community and related topics.

There are three goals to this cataloguing process which is detail-oriented and tedious: transfer the original handwritten accession records into an in-house database for preservation and easy access to information; evaluate artifacts for retention and disposition, and; add the catalogued artifact into the CONTENTdm database



Some of the artifacts displayed in the archives at Mount St. Joseph, Spokane.

(which you have read about in past newsletters) for documentation *continued on page 2*

News from the Archives

Loretta Z. Greene

Taking the show on the road

On October 4, more than 100 donors attended a recognition event sponsored by the

Fort Vancouver Historic Trust held at the former Providence Academy, Vancouver, Wash. Attendees were treated to a display of Mother Joseph artifacts and Academy photographs created by Loretta Greene. The Ar-

chives also provided the Sisters of Providence traditional habit for three actresses portraying Mother Joseph and two Sisters in a 30-minute play written by a local author. The evening concluded with a tour of the Academy led by Monty Hidden, one of the Academy owners who are selling the property to the Trust.

A second display of historical artifacts and photographs was created for the Critical Care Unit dedication and 125th anniversary celebration at Providence St. Peter Hospital, Olympia, Wash., on October 12. Hundreds of donors, staff and the public enjoyed an array of early- to mid-20th century medical and nursing artifacts which *continued on back page*



Loretta and Emily representing Providence Archives at the St. Peter Hospital Critical Care Unit Open House and Dedication, October 12, 2012. Photo by Chris Thomas.

Searching the Archives: Origin of “Aspirations to Divine Providence” Music

Emily Hughes Dominick

In the course of our daily work as archivists, it is not unusual to come across interesting tidbits that might otherwise be relegated to the realm of history, hidden from the light of day. One interesting case crossed my desk in September of 2012 when Sister Virginia Miller, SP, posed a question about the origin of the song titled “Aspirations to Divine Providence.” This song incorporates the words of the eponymous prayer. It was used as early as 1892 by the Sisters of Providence according to Sister Leona Hartman’s paper “To Trace the Origins of the Providence Hymn,” 1984. The prayer was subsequently set to music. But, the question remained: who wrote the music?

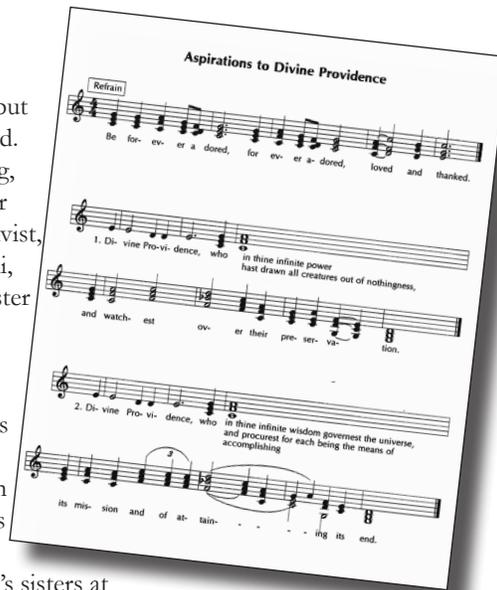
The Archives holds several

copies of this song but most are unattributed. After some searching, I came across a letter written to then archivist, Sister Rita Bergamini, SP, in 1981, from Sister Mary Mark Zeyen, IHM. This question had been raised before. The letter states that the music for this song was written by Sister Mary Denis Zeyen, IHM, one of Sister Mary Mark’s sisters at the request of another Zeyen sister, Sister Eugene Zeyen, SP. According to Sister Mary Mark’s letter in 1981, the music dated to 1954 or 1955. She stated further that it was written for a special occasion.

Further research revealed that Sister Eugene entered the Sisters of Providence community in 1955 so it is unlikely that the song predated her entrance. Sister Eugene, now Sally Zeyen McGahan, confirmed that her sister Mary Denis Zeyen did indeed write the music. She thought that it was performed at Mount St. Vincent (Seattle) for the centennial

celebration of the Sisters of Providence in the West in 1956.

While it might at first seem peculiar that this “Providence” song was not actually written by a Sister of Providence, it is notable that Sisters Mary Mark Zeyen (pianist), Mary Denis Zeyen (violinist) and Mary Anthony Zeyen (cellist), who were all members of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) community, performed together as the Immaculate Heart Trio. The sisters were well-known to the Sisters of Providence and to people of Seattle. They released three albums on Capitol Records starting in 1958. Before they entered religious life, the three performed as the Zeyen Sisters in and around Seattle, where they lived at the time. ☞



Do you have a “Providence Mystery” you’d like to solve? Contact any of the archives staff for help with your research.



Album cover of *the Immaculate Heart Trio*, 1958.

Projects

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tation and research. The process begins by matching each artifact to its original handwritten accession record that identifies the date received, brief description and donor. Once an item is approved for retention it is researched, described, labeled and photographed according to

professional museum standards, and placed in an appropriate storage container. The catalogue record and photograph are added to the database making the information readily available to staff and researcher alike.

To date, more than 1,200 items have been cataloged and made available online. These artifacts represent selected in-

stitutions, liturgical, educational and medical objects, as well as sisters’ personal items. You can browse the artifact collection by linking to our digital collections and typing ‘physical object’ in the search field. We look forward to providing you with many more wonderful artifacts to see online in the very near future. ☞

Picturing Providence: Archives in the Movies

Peter F. Schmid

A column highlighting archival materials that provide visual documentation of the Sisters of Providence.

SCENE I

Archives, in one form or another, are usually the unsung source of material for documentary film-making. Think of the engaging and well-produced films by Ken Burns. Years prior to release of his work on the history of baseball, jazz, or the Civil War, researchers fan out across the country to consult hundreds of sources for archival material - the raw stuff of history. Archivists generally work behind the scenes, providing the expertise to both locate and make sense of original materials in their care, nervously watching over a crew as they film precious journals, letters, or artifacts.

However, there are times when archivists find themselves, well, rather more in the picture. Such was the case in 1979, when the idea for a film about Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart was taken up by Kaye-Smith Productions here in Seattle. (The company was owned by entertainer Danny Kaye and business partner Lester Smith, who were also the original owners of the Seattle Mariners as

well as a number of radio stations). The script was written by Marvin Albert in consultation with then-archivist Sister Rita Bergamini, who made available the original documents and photographs, and ensured the

authenticity of the production. A film crew spent a day at the Archives capturing footage of the material. With this completed, it was time to shoot the film. Sister Rita agreed to play Mother Joseph, and so donned one of the traditional habits, and spent an entire day at a studio in downtown Seattle where a cabin scene had been constructed. Sister Rita endured hours of takes and retakes in her depiction of Mother Joseph praying and writing at her desk.

The resulting film was 17 minutes in length, and was shown throughout the province as well as to other audiences including fund-raisers at Providence institutions.

SCENE II

Last year, I was contacted by Greg Lyle-Newton, Director of Creative Services, and Susan Keyes, System Manager, Ministry Leadership Formation for Providence Strategic and Management Services, about a new series of videos and PowerPoint presentations exploring the history and mission of Providence. Among these would be "Providence Moments" which would focus on a particular event. They wanted to dramatize the 1858 foundation of St. Joseph Hospital in Vancouver,



Sr. Rita Bergamini portrays Mother Joseph in the 1979 film, "Mother Joseph: A Sister of Providence" (Image SHP.04.008)

Washington, and began consulting with us in Archives for historical materials, and David Solheim, Video Production Manager, on how a video might be created. Over the course of several months a script was developed, images selected and artifacts identified which could help re-create the early days in Vancouver. Michelle Mayo, a graphic designer in the Communications Department, agreed to portray Mother Joseph, and yours truly agreed to portray John Lloyd, the first patient accepted into the fledgling ministry.

In searching for a place to film the piece, David discovered the Job Carr Cabin Museum in Tacoma, a recreation of the 1865 cabin built by the pioneer millwright and machinist. The cabin was also home to the first post office in Tacoma.

The location shoot was done on September 25, and the museum's director, Mary Bowlby, was exceedingly gracious and accommodating in allowing us to move furniture and props, and place lighting and camera equipment. Loretta Greene helped Michelle dress in

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David Solheim captures the scene as Michelle Mayo portrays Mother Joseph at the Job Carr Cabin Museum, 2012

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stood in quaint contrast to the 21st century high-tech health care environment. ☞

New Exhibit Now on Display

A new exhibit showcases the history of the archives department in what is now Mother Joseph Province through a selection of artifacts and documents. The archives was officially established in 1971 in Spokane and 1972 in Seattle. The exhibit can now be viewed in the Archives reference room in West Seattle. Also on display: *This Mug's for You* at the Hawley Conference Center, Valley Office Park in Renton; and *The Wax Workshop* at Mount St. Joseph in Spokane. ☞

Providence Archives in National Publication

Providence Archives' volunteer program is included in a new publication from the National Archives, *Resources for Volunteer Programs in Archives*. Produced in partnership with the Society of American Archivists, this online resource introduces dozens of volunteer activities and provides examples of volunteer management tools. To download this free resource, go to <http://www2.archivists.org/publications/epubs>.

Volunteers are a valuable resource in the accomplishment of day-to-day and long term tasks. In Providence Archives, Sister Virginia Miller is in her third year as a volunteer and continues transcribing English

handwritten chronicles. ☞

Mother House Anniversary

Journey back in time to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the current Sisters of Providence Mother House and General Administration in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. An informative, interactive online exhibit using photographs, film clips and blueprints takes the reader on a historic tour of the construction, interior, art, Emilie Gamelin's tomb, and recent renovation of this impressive building. The five-part presentation was created by Marie-Claude Beland, General Administration Archivist, and can be found at http://prezi.com/user/qwonj_1oc93z/prezis/. ☞

Movies

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the traditional habit (not an easy task!), and directed Michelle in the action of using a pen and inkwell, wool carding, and needlework. My part as John Lloyd required considerably less talent – laying in a bed looking sick! David skillfully moved his equipment, including lights and a “pocket dolly,” into tight spaces to get just the right angle. It was a long day, but a lot of fun being both in front of and behind the camera.

The video will be used in a variety of pieces to be shown at the Hawley Conference Center in Renton, and at other ministries upon request. ☞

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