

---

# PAST FORWARD

---

The Newsletter of the Sisters of Providence Archives, Seattle

---

Spring 1997 Volume 5, Issue 1

## Let's Celebrate!

**Anniversary:** (*L. Anniversarius-annus*, a year, and *verto, versum*, to turn) n. the annual celebration in honor of an event.

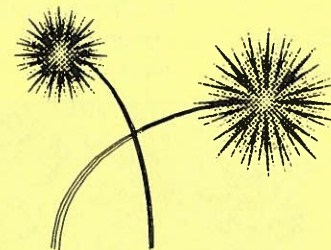
Let us join together and celebrate these 1997 anniversaries in the Sisters of Providence Health System:

- ◆ Providence Seattle Medical Center, Seattle - 120 years
- ◆ Providence St. Peter Hospital, Olympia - 110 years
- ◆ Mary Conrad Center, Anchorage - 10 years
- ◆ Sojourner Place, Seattle - 10 years

Oh, and one more: We are happy to be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Archives as a separate department under the Provincial Secretary. **Sister Rita Bergamini** established the Archives in May 1972, and has been on staff ever since. We are grateful to her for twenty-five years of dedicated service to the preservation and dissemination of the history of the Sisters of Providence.

Many of our institutions have found the Archives to be a rich resource for historical artifacts, photographs, and memorabilia, perfect for borrowing or reproducing for anniversary celebrations. We are currently

working with Providence St. Peter Hospital to prepare a traveling exhibit featuring both historic and current photographs from the Archives. Unfortunately, sometimes we are disappointed by the lack of material in an institution's collection, especially more contemporary items. Which leads us to remind you once again that the only way we can preserve and document the history of your institution is if you provide us with the material to begin with!



## THANK YOU

Many thanks to all who responded to our "Call for T-Shirts" in the last issue of *Past Forward*: **Central Washington Service Area, Providence High School, Providence Alaska Medical Center, and Providence Centralia Hospital**. We received many colorful shirts as well as sports bottles, buttons, balloons, and even a license plate holder from the high school (Go, Pioneers!). We haven't "pinned" down a date for the clothes-line exhibit, but we'll keep you "posted."

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

**... in 1891 there was a Provincial Administration in Vancouver, Washington, and another in Portland, Oregon?**

When Mother Joseph and her companions first came to the west in 1856, they established ministries throughout the present states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. Administration of this extensive territory--called the Vicariate of Nisqually--was based at Providence Academy, Vancouver, Washington.

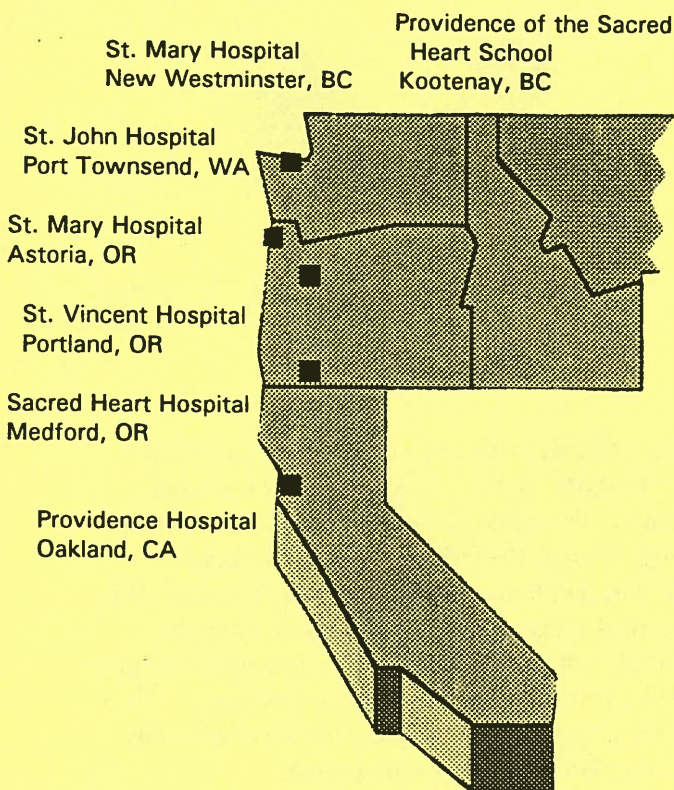
On Easter Sunday, March 29, 1891, the Sisters of Providence community was divided into seven administrative entities known as provinces. The Vicariate of Nisqually became three provinces, including the two we know today, Sacred Heart and St. Ignatius. The third, St. Vincent de Paul Province, comprised institutions in Port Townsend,

Washington, Portland and Astoria, Oregon, New Westminster and Kootenay, British Columbia. The Provincial Administration for Sacred Heart Province remained at Providence Academy, while just across the Columbia River in Portland, St. Vincent Hospital housed the Provincial Administration for St. Vincent de Paul Province!

St. Vincent de Paul Province seems to stand out now as a curiosity, and we do not know the reasoning behind the placement of these scattered houses into such an artificial boundary. Within a few years, Port Townsend was transferred into Sacred Heart Province. St. Vincent de Paul Province continued only until 1912, when all the provinces were reorganized to accommodate the forty-seven new institutions established in Canada and the United States since 1891. The institutions in western Canada became part of the new Holy Angels Province, while the Oregon and California houses were transferred to Sacred Heart Province.

Individual institutions continued to be shifted, with Sacred Heart Hospital, Spokane, moving several times before finding its home in St. Ignatius Province. The final transfer of institutions took place in 1960, when St. Vincent Academy and St. Mary Hospital, Walla Walla, also became part of St. Ignatius Province.

Today, the sisters in the west continue to work together much as they did in Mother Joseph's time, collaborating in such areas as governance, vocation and formation ministry, and the missions in El Salvador and the Philippines.



**Institutions of St. Vincent de Paul Province  
1891-1912**

**For more information about the Archives  
contact:**

**Sisters of Providence Archives  
4800 37th Avenue SW  
Seattle, WA 98126  
(206) 937-4600**