

Past *Forward*

PROVIDENCE ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER

Sisters of Providence, Mother Joseph Province • Providence Health System • Providence Services

Legacy in Stone

Firmly cemented in the building's foundation, they hold secrets as old as the edifice itself. Yet people walk by them everyday and seldom glance at their inscrip-

tions. Cornerstones, that is, those marble or granite blocks of stone placed in prominent corners of each Providence building symbolizing Christ as foundation of the church.

Cornerstones are inscribed with the name and erection date of the building and hollowed out to receive a small copper box filled with mementos—a time capsule. In the Sisters of Providence tradition, such items can consist of medals and statuettes of Christ and saints; photographs of religious community leaders, the facility, personnel and the area; coins and current newspapers; letters written to

future administrators; and other items limited only by imagination and space. The stones are blessed during the dedication ceremony.

Over time, as Providence facilities were divested or torn down, some cornerstones and their contents have been transferred to Providence Archives for indefinite storage or until they can be remounted elsewhere. Recently four cornerstones were relocated around the West Seattle campus of Providence Mount St. Vincent and Saint Joseph Residence.

At the east entrance of the long-term care complex (called "the Mount") is the cornerstone for the House of Providence which was built on the grounds in 1924 to serve as provincial headquarters, novitiate, and infirmary. The House of Providence and its operations fully ceased in 1966 when Saint Joseph Residence was built.

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Cornerstone installation at St. Vincent Home for the Aged, now Providence Mount St. Vincent, in West Seattle, July 29, 1923

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A New Space for Artifacts

Formerly stored on the lower level of Providence Mount St. Vincent, Seattle, the bulk of priceless artifacts reflecting the "material culture" of Mother Joseph Province made its way this spring to the Archives' repository at Mount St. Joseph in Spokane. An estimated 367 sq. feet of objects were packed and transported joining the artifact

collection from the former St. Ignatius Province. Examples of relocated artifacts are liturgical objects, antique furniture, medical and nursing instruments, stained glass windows, and sisters' memorabilia and works of art such as the bronze-and-wood crucifix carved by Sr. Bernard of Jesus at right.



Legacy in Stone

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Under a spruce tree on the western driveway is the cornerstone that belonged to the School of Nursing at St. Vincent Hospital in Portland. The school educated nurses from 1892 until its official transfer to the University of Portland in the early 1960s. The building was razed in the late 1970s.

Nestled under trees in the gardens of Saint Joseph



Contents of the Mount's 1923 cornerstone box were examined by (l-r) Srs. Philias Denis, Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Dolorita, Beatrice Duval, Mary Priscilla Frank (1968)

Residence can be found the cornerstone for Providence Heights, College of Sister Formation, located in Issaquah, Wash. The college offered advanced degree programs for women religious for nearly eight years until it closed in 1969. Nearby another nursing school

Hospital, Oakland, Calif., founded in 1904.

Another cornerstone, in place for many years, rests in the upper garden behind Saint Joseph Residence. It is the original 1923 stone for the Mount, inscribed with its former name of St. Vincent Home for the Aged.

On your next stroll on the grounds of the Mount keep your eyes out for these new reminders of our past.—LG

is represented by the cornerstone from Providence



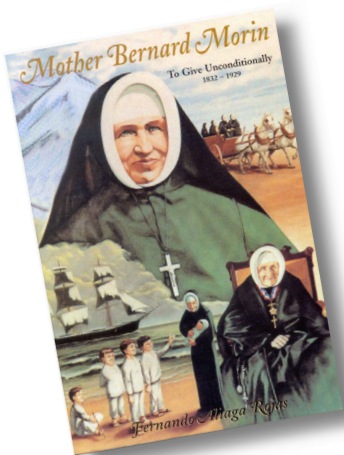
Removing cornerstone for the School of Nursing at Providence Oakland prior to demolition (1975)



Mother Judith Lang with Bp. Egidio Vagnozzi, Apostolic Delegate, and other clergy at the blessing of Providence Heights cornerstone (1961)

Reader's Corner

New titles relating to the history of the Sisters of Providence:



Mother Bernard Morin: To Give Unconditionally, 1832-1929 by Fernando Aliaga Rojas, translated by Lina Gaudette, S.P., Carte Blanche Editions, 2004.

The new biography immerses us into the life of Mother Bernard Morin, foundress of the Sisters of Providence in Chile. Rojas does not merely investigate her personal life and work within the religious congregation, but also the unique and influential role she played in the history of the Catholic Church of her adopted country. A worthy addition to the biographies of Providence founders.

A Century of Caring: A Pictorial History of Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, 2005

The Sisters of Providence, considered "founding visionaries" of this East Bay, Calif., healthcare facility, figure prominently in the commemorative book celebrating over 100 years of service to the Oakland and Berkeley communities. Providence began its work in 1902 and lasted until 1992 when the facility became Summit. The book is an extended and detailed timeline that includes numerous archival photographs and historical facts and stories.

Erratum

In the last issue (fall 2004) the photo caption for the new Leadership Team and Provincial Council for Mother Joseph Province incorrectly stated the members' term as four years. The governing group will serve for five years beginning this year.

PICTURING PROVIDENCE

by Peter F. Schmid, C.A., Assistant Archivist for Visual Resources

A column highlighting archival photographs and other resources that provide visual documentation of the Sisters of Providence. Peter selects notable materials from the collection of over 50,000 photographs and relates or interprets the stories behind them. He can be reached at 206-923-4012 or peter.schmid@providence.org.

From Panels to Pixels

For most women in the 19th and early 20th centuries, work outside the home and farm—much less a career—was an option that was very foreign. But as industrialization spread, immigration grew, education improved, and attitudes shifted, large numbers of them began entering the workplace. A profession that saw a spike in membership as it modernized was the field of nursing. The Sisters of Providence, many of them pioneering nurses themselves,

paved the way for many would-be caregivers by building schools of nursing affiliated with their hospitals.

The impact of these schools was felt in nursing education and practice and in the area's health care. Likewise the impact on archival

collecting of closed schools' photographs and records has been abundant and wide-ranging. An excellent example is the student portrait collection from the School of

pounds each. Needless to say reproducing the photographs was extremely difficult. Thus

digital imaging and cataloging of each photo became necessary. The in-house project took two weeks to complete. As a result staff can now search for portraits by name or year using the Archives image database.

Digitization has allowed us to provide portraits and other information to researchers, many having genealogical interest in relatives who attended

the school. In fact, previous requests for photos that were thought inaccessible have been fulfilled much to the delight of the researcher. Through these images the progress of women in nursing is made real and personal.



A portrait panel from Providence Seattle's School of Nursing. Bottom: Gail Parson, class of 1960. Top: Ruth Marshall, class of 1913



Nursing at Providence Hospital, Seattle.

Numbering a total of 1,057 photographs, portraits of students from 1913 to 1960 were glued on unwieldy wood panels measuring three by two feet and weighing about 20

Archivists Take Lead

Seattle Area Archivists is a local group devoted to providing continuing education for archivists, offering opportunities for student involvement in archives, and sharing information and establishing connections as professionals. The organization is 20 years old this year and will celebrate its anniversary in the summer. It was launched when the first members that included

provincial archivists Sr. Rita Bergamini and Loretta Greene met at Providence's St. Joseph Residence in West Seattle. Since October the group has been chaired by our very own Peter Schmid.

It is co-sponsoring in May the workshop "Understanding Archives: An Introduc-



Peter Schmid, Seattle Area Archivists chairman

tion to Principles and Practices," an educational program of the Society of American Archivists. Seattle Area Archivists is proud to have offered complimentary registration to a deserving member.

2005: A Year of Providence Anniversaries

Congratulations to facilities and ministries celebrating founding anniversaries or anniversaries of sponsorship by Mother Joseph Province.

125 years

St. Mary Medical Center,
Walla Walla, Wash.

100 years

Providence Everett Medical Center,
Everett, Wash.

50 years

Providence High School,
Burbank, Calif.

20 years

Vincent House,
Seattle, Wash.

Providence House,
Yakima, Wash.

15 years

St. Joseph Medical Center,
Polson, Mont.

Heritage House at the Market,
Seattle, Wash.

10 years

La Papalota Local Community,
El Salvador

Vashon Community Care Center,
Vashon Island, Wash.

Providence House,
Portland, Ore.

Deer Park Hospital,
Deer Park, Wash.

Providence Horizon House,
Anchorage, Alaska

Providence ElderPlace,
Seattle, Wash.

5 years

Brookside Manor,
Hood River, Ore.



The former Monte Cristo Hotel was the home of Providence Hospital, Everett, from 1905 to 1924.

New facilities in 2005

Providence Valdez Medical Center,

Valdez, Alaska

Providence Holy Cross

Health Center,

Valencia, Calif.

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