

PROVIDENCE ARCHIVES NEWSLETTER

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

Fond farewell

Loretta Greene

By now most of you are aware that I have retired after 38 years in Providence Archives. I can't tell you where the years have gone, but I can tell you that they were filled with a myriad of experiences, friendships, opportunities, and challenges. These events have helped me grow professionally and personally, and I am most grateful for each one, and also for each of you.

After working at state and local historical societies in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, I came to Seattle as a newlywed in 1984. Sister Rita Bergamini, the founder of the archives for Sacred Heart Province in 1972 and its first archivist, hired me as her assistant archivist, a newly-created position. When Sister Rita stepped down in 1992, the provincial council appointed me as the second archivist (because Sister Rita can never be replaced!). The archival white glove was passed. And now I am happy to pass the glove to Peter Schmid and congratulate him as the new Providence Archives manager. You know Peter as our visual resources archivist for the past 22 years and he is well-versed in Providence history.

I know that not everyone can say this, but I truly was blessed to have a job doing what I love. Sure, there were inevitably stressful days, but those were greatly outweighed by my daily opportunity to be surrounded by history, dip into the past, help people access information, and enjoy the challenge of linking pieces of a puzzle to discover a story. With changes in record media and technology, archival work is challenging, and it ensures that future generations will have the opportunity to explore and learn what has created and formed our lives and society.

Over the years, the archives staff has grown from one to five, and several volunteers generously have given their personal time. Each of the past and current staff members and volunteers has been a committed colleague, sharing their talents and dedication to the archival profession, Providence Archives, and Sisters of Providence history. I have great appreciation for all that we have accomplished together. Today, I couldn't ask for a better staff in the work that they do, their professional knowledge, and their relationships with each other. The constant has always

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The second Sister Joseph of the Sacred Heart

Elizabeth Russell

The name "Joseph of the Sacred Heart" evokes images and stories of the woman who was born Esther Pariseau in Quebec and was the founding superior of the Sisters of Providence in the western United States. After Mother Joseph's death, however, there was another SP who bore the name Joseph of the Sacred Heart. This sister happened to be the only woman in the SP congregation with an M.D. after her name.

Margaret Guidinger was born into a large family in Manitowoc, Wisconsin on December 16, 1862. Her father died when she was a young girl. She earned her teacher's degree in Wisconsin, and according to her necrology, helped her mother to provide for the family. As of 1887, she was still in Manitowoc, attending a teacher's institute. From this beginning, it is unclear what prompted her to leave Wisconsin for the west coast, where she studied at the Cooper Institute in San Francisco, the pre-cursor institution to Stanford University School of Medicine. Cooper Institute awarded her the degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1898. According to her necrology, she worked at the

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Networks and networking

Jessica Long

News streams nationwide are increasingly dominated by stories about severe storms and flooding, heat waves and fires, or any number of other record-breaking weather events caused by climate change. There is also a growing awareness among heritage organizations of the need to prepare for such disasters (and even the more mundane ones, like broken pipes). Training and supplies are expensive however, and creating an emergency response plan from scratch can be daunting, so organizations are banding together to share knowledge and to support one another before, during, and after a disaster.

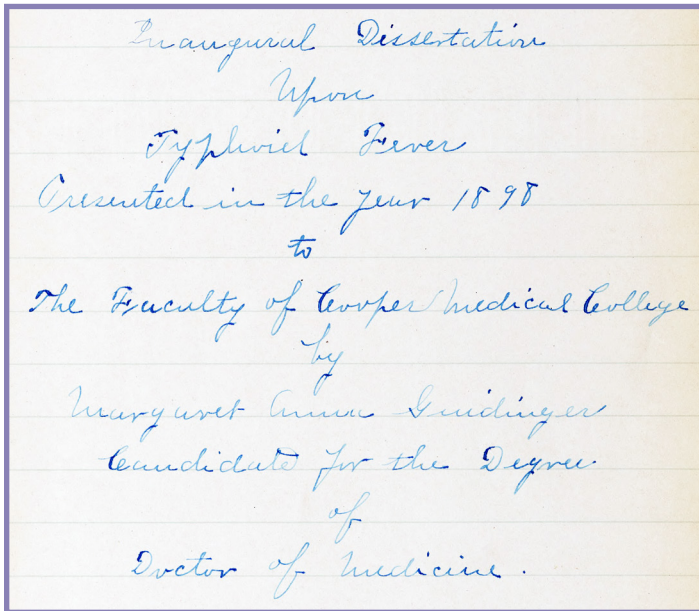
Providence Archives is already involved with Seattle Heritage Emergency Response Network (SHERN), which was formed in 2010 with the help of Loretta Greene and

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Second Sister Joseph

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children's hospital in San Francisco for four years. Stanford University archivists recently shared with Providence Archives a digitized copy of Dr. Guidinger's thesis, entitled *Inaugural Dissertation upon Typhoid Fever*.



Title page, Margaret Guidinger's handwritten 1898 thesis. Courtesy Stanford University Archives.

In another geographic leap, Guidinger went north to Douglas, Alaska (now incorporated into the city of Juneau) where she opened a medical practice. The local paper, the *Douglas Island News*, ran the following item on September 26, 1900: "Margaret A. Guidinger has her sign out as a physician and surgeon, on Second street." The medical practice was short-lived, however, probably due to Guidinger's poor health. The January 2, 1901 *News* carried another brief item: that Dr. Guidinger was a passenger on a recent sailing of the steamship *Victorian* southward with a final destination of Vancouver, Washington. After undergoing a surgery, Dr. Guidinger had decided to enter the novitiate of the Sisters of Providence, possibly through the advice of Father Rene, SJ whom she had met in Alaska. She entered the novitiate on January 3, 1901 at the age of 39 - unusually old for a novice in the early 1900s.

The last illness of Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart coincided with Sister Guidinger's time in the novitiate at Providence Academy, Vancouver. According to her necrology, the novice was tasked to make use of her medical training in the infirmary where she came to know and care for Mother Joseph. For this reason, when Margaret Guidinger pronounced her first vows on August 7, 1902, after the death of Mother Joseph on January 19th, she was given the name in religion "promised her by Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart on account of the special care given by her to this venerated Mother and Foundress dur-

ing her last illness." From then on, she was SP1355, Sister Joseph of the Sacred Heart. In addition to the name, she was given Mother Joseph's ring, and a cross that had been worn by Mother Joseph.

Mother Joseph's namesake was fated to live only to the age of 52. Stricken by a chronic illness which was eventually diagnosed as a form of tuberculosis, she nevertheless gave up the title of MD and worked in whatever capacity was asked of her by the Sisters of Providence: as teacher, nurse, nursing assistant, and hospital nursing director.

As with many early SPs, there is not much documentation of Sister Joseph's own thoughts about her religious life. However, her necrology quotes a December 3, 1914 letter from her to the Superior General Mother Julian. It documents her special devotion to the Sacred Heart, like Mother Joseph before her: "What a grand mission is ours, the salvation of souls! And yet it is to be feared that we often wear ourselves out with hundreds of trifling things, both forgetting and neglecting the one thing which so endears us to the loving Sacred Heart, our own true Spouse."

Sister Joseph of the Sacred Heart died at the age of 52 at St. Joseph Hospital, Vancouver, May 28, 1915. She remains the only documented professed SP who was also a practicing doctor.



Sr. Joseph of the Sacred Heart (Margaret Guidinger) photographed in 1902, the same year that Mother Joseph of the Sacred Heart died. Image SP1355.1.

Changes and challenges

Peter Schmid

Back in May, I attended the annual conference of Northwest Archivists held in Salem, Oregon. As with many professional groups, it was our first in-person conference since the Covid pandemic. It was great to see people outside of the little boxes provided by Zoom and MS Teams!

Professional conferences are always a good opportunity to reset and renew one's commitment to the profession. There is something about meeting with colleagues and realizing that you all have common challenges and that you're not alone – especially important for archivists, as we often work in relative isolation simply due to the nature of our profession. Often we return to work with a renewed sense of purpose, full of new ideas that we picked up at the conference – some of which we can implement, and lots we cannot – but it is the exchange of ideas which is so important to keeping our work fresh.

Renewal is especially important to me in taking over as head of Archives upon Loretta Greene's retirement. It's a bit intimidating following in the footsteps of a dedicated archivist who shaped the department over decades, but the support that I've received from Loretta, my colleagues in Archives, the Sisters, and friends in the health system has made the transition easier.

I look forward to refocusing our collection development, implementing new tools to manage the Archives, and last but not least finding a new staff member to replace the visual resources position. We move forward mindful of our roots and history, but also ready to meet the challenges and changes that await us!

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been change, and more change is on the horizon, but I am confident that Providence Archives is in good hands.

Again, I say thank you to the provincial councils and the Sisters of Providence for their support over the years since the establishment of Providence Archives.

I will miss my Providence family, Northwest professional colleagues, and friends, but I know that makes seeing each other again all the sweeter. May you all find reward in your continued work and in your personal and spiritual growth.

Providence of God, I thank you for all.



Networks

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Peter Schmid. Past attempts to start a similar network in eastern Washington have stalled, but that all changed in spring 2022 when I met Britta Keller Arendt, registrar at the Jundt Art Museum at Gonzaga University. She was new to the area and not only had experience in establishing a disaster network, but wanted to create a new one here in Spokane! I was eager to help and soon another enthusiastic museum colleague, Brooke Shelman Wagner, museum collection curator at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture (MAC), joined our little group and the three of us hatched a plan.

We began by collecting contact information and sending out a short survey to other local heritage organizations to gauge their interest. Although we received only a handful of responses, they were all positive, so we moved on to the next step which was to host an in-person meeting. It was held on April 24, 2023 at the MAC and the participants discussed their organizations' past struggles with emergencies, as well as their current needs and how a network could support those. Out of this was born Spokane Heritage Emergency Preparedness and Response District (SHEPARD for short). Although small and advancing slowly, we hope SHEPARD will continue to expand and provide heritage professionals in eastern Washington with resources, training workshops, and local hands-on help if they experience a disaster.

As SHEPARD members get to know one another at meetings and tour our respective facilities, we also share other relatable work challenges. It was during one of these side conversations that Brooke, Britta, and I realized that we were each involved in a collections database migration, just at different stages. Providence Archives was exploring options for future new databases, the MAC was in the middle of a data migration, and the Jundt had recently completed a move to a new system. Because database projects like this are so challenging, we decided that it might be helpful to others in our field if we presented a joint session at this year's Washington Museum Association conference in Yakima. Our presentation was titled "One Size Does Not Fit All: Demystifying the Search for a New Collections Management System" and focused on our unique situations and lessons learned.

Our joint session and my solo presentation, *The Ups and Downs of a Collection Move* about last year's artifact move (see the Summer 2022 issue of *Past Forward*), were both a success! The real icing on the cake though was the chance to spread the news about SHEPARD to fellow conference attendees. Perhaps next year we'll present about disaster preparedness in Spokane!



Sister Simonne, riding in style!

Pam Hedquist

Sister Simonne Begin rides with the 2002 Armed Forces Torchlight Parade in Spokane, Wash. Sr. Simonne won the queen's crown a month earlier in April, in the Celebrate Life Pageant. The annual event is sponsored by the Spokane Chapter of the Washington State Association of Activity Professionals. Participants are from Spokane area nursing homes and assisted living facilities. That year, 13 were represented. Official judging selects candidates who have helped provide services to

people in need, by their personal accomplishments and the ability to express themselves. A queen candidate from each of these institutions is entered at each pageant.

Sr. Simonne's story about taking a car mechanics class in which she had to remove an engine from an automobile, repair, clean and reinstall it, won her the contest. During the road test she was stopped by a State Patrol officer for doing eighty-five miles per hour! She told the officer that she couldn't get the car to go any slower, but this did not prevent him from giving her a ticket.

Sr. Simonne held many ministries as a Sister of Providence for over 65 years, but the one closest to her heart was working for the East Coast Migrant Health Project, based out of Washington D.C. She originally worked out of tents and under trees caring for the many migrant workers of Nash County, North Carolina. Finally, she was able to establish the Harvest Family Health Center there, in 1980. Sr. Simonne served this east coast migrant community for over 9 years, improving resources and conditions that helped care for the thousands of workers and their families. She died in 2006 at the age of 87.

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