

Meet Elizabeth Russell, Our New Associate Archivist

On July 25, Elizabeth Russell joined Providence Archives as our new Associate Archivist! Elizabeth holds a Master's degree in Library and Information Studies from the University of Washington, as well as a M.A. in Cinema Studies from San Francisco State University. For her undergraduate studies, she attended the University of Washington and majored in Comparative Literature. Elizabeth started her archival career as the founding archivist at Tacoma Community College Archive. Before coming to Providence, she was consulting archivist for the Washington State Jewish Archives located at the University of Washington Libraries Special Collections and worked with the UW photograph collections. Learn a little about Elizabeth through the following questions and then come meet her in Providence Archives!



How did you get interested in archives?

Before I started my MLIS program I had volunteered with the National Archives and the Museum of History and Industry, both in Seattle, and with a small local historical society. I found the work

with these different heritage and archival organizations fascinating so I was interested in more specialized library work. At the beginning of my first quarter, I saw a job opening for a student assistant in the Visual Materials section of Special Collections at UW Libraries. I was hired to process archival photograph collections and liked it so much I stayed throughout my

two years in the program. For quite a while, I kept trying to be practical and explore other options in librarianship since I knew that archivist jobs were scarce, but archival work kept drawing me back because it was such interesting work.

What is your favorite aspect of archival work?

There are a few favorites! I like unraveling mysteries that I happen across in the archives, such as identifying unidentified items. When I spend a lot of time with the collection of a person or family, or even an organization, it's fascinating to "get to know" the individual or group through the documentation. Often there are questions that never get answered, but the process of looking draws me in. There's also the satisfaction of

Continued on page 2

Saint Joseph Residence at 50: A Jubilee History

Peter Schmid

May 1, 2016 marked the 50th anniversary of an institution very close to home – Saint Joseph Residence - which is home in fact, to retired Sisters of Providence, and to Providence Archives!

But the history of "SJR," as it's known to us locals, has a deeper history related to the larger (and much older) building on its West Seattle campus – Providence Mount St. Vincent.

"The Mount," which has received a good deal of well-deserved press in recent years on its innovative programs,

Via Matris

Loretta Z. Greene

At Providence Mount St. Vincent, Seattle, Wash., is a small devotional chapel dedicated to Our Mother of Sorrows, a principal patron of the Sisters of Providence. These chapels were traditional in ministries that housed the provincial administration offices throughout the religious community. The Our Mother of Sorrows chapel at the Mount was dedicated in 1949 and included a devotional altar, statue of Our Mother of Sorrows, and Via Matris, a set

of stations marking the seven sorrows of Mary in her life with her son, Jesus. After Saint Joseph Residence was built adjacent to the Mount, the Mother of Sorrows statue and Via Matris were transferred to the chapel vestibule at the Residence in 1968, where they have remained. This is a natural location for this principal devotion of the Sisters of Providence. The shrine at the Mount was renamed for Our Lady of Grace. In 2015 it was rededicated to Our Mother of Sorrows and redecorated with a vintage statue and Via Matris taken from the Archives collection.

Continued on page 2



of stations marking the seven sorrows of Mary in her life with her son, Jesus.

After Saint Joseph Residence was built adjacent to the Mount, the Mother of Sorrows statue and Via Matris were transferred to the chapel vestibule at the Residence in 1968, where they have remained. This is a natural location for this principal devotion of the Sisters of Providence. The shrine at the Mount was renamed for Our Lady of Grace. In 2015 it was rededicated to Our Mother of Sorrows and redecorated with a vintage statue and Via Matris taken from the Archives collection.

Meet Elizabeth

continued from page 1

organizing groups of records so that researchers can find what they are looking for more easily.

Tell us about your job as Associate Archivist.

Right now I am primarily responsible for organizing and creating inventories of historical records for the health care and education ministries housed in the Archives; however, I also assist with reference inquiries, exhibits, and other projects as they come up. There is a lot of diversity.

In your time at Providence so far, what projects have you worked on?

So far, I've processed the records of St. Joseph School at Steilacoom, Washington, that operated between 1863 and 1875. I definitely learned a lot more about the town of Steilacoom's history while processing this collection. For instance, during the 1860s, Steilacoom was considered one of the possibilities for the Northern Pacific Railroad terminus. I had previously understood that the rail terminus competition was only between Seattle and Tacoma, but Steilacoom at the time was considered an up-and-coming metropolis. It's hard to

imagine today since Steilacoom is such a small town, but at this time in Washington Territory, Steilacoom had great prospects since it housed the territorial and federal jail and also the local "army base," Fort Steilacoom. If events had turned out differently, Steilacoom could have looked more like Tacoma does today.

My next processing project is the records for Sacred Heart School in Ward, Washington. This was also an early Providence institution in the West. Its foundation date is 1873. I'm looking forward to exploring the history of this school and the sisters who taught there. In

the past the school was usually identified as being located in Fort Colville/Ward so my task will be to clarify where it was officially located, which may be more difficult to determine than it sounds!

How do you like West Seattle?

Well, I lived in Edmonds, Washington so I've always had a lengthy commute whether I worked in Tacoma or at the University of Washington. I moved to West Seattle to be closer to work and I enjoy my 15 minute commute, whether walking or driving! I'm also enjoying sampling the restaurants and shops in the Junction.

SJR History

continued from page 1

the Home; and the residence for retired and infirm Sisters from throughout the province.

By the late 1950s, the Mount outlived its ability to serve the needs of the religious community and the public simultaneously. Part of the problem was solved when in 1961, the provincialate and novitiate moved to Providence Heights College of Sister Formation in Issaquah, Wash. However, the building was showing signs of age. A 1964 report on physical plant conditions found that the plumbing, electrical wiring, and the roof were just a few areas which required costly repairs and updating: The building's boiler had been harvested from a WWI battleship; storm water seeped through window casings and exterior walls; the length of dead-end corridors exceeded building codes. The report recommended crucial upgrades to the physical plant, and complete replacement of exterior walls to achieve "a 'new look' which... should be contemporary in spirit and a departure from the cold institutional appearance which now exists."

A November 1964 letter

from Mother Mary Loretta (Cecilia Abhold, 1915-2000), provincial superior, to Most Rev. Thomas Connolly, archbishop of Seattle, proposed complete renovation of the Mount and construction of a new retirement residence for the Sisters on the same campus. Interestingly, the proposal connected these improvements with solving two other problems: the deterioration of facilities and staffing needs of Ozanam Home in Tacoma, Washington, and St. Luke Infirmary in Centralia, Washington. Both institutions needed improvements due to age, and, as she pointed out, "our Sisters presently staffing these two institutions are nearly all jubilarians" (meaning that they were getting on in years – Sisters only began celebrating jubilees at 50 years of religious life in those days!). Mother Mary Loretta laid out the plan: first, build the new retirement residence (SJR) adjacent to the Mount; after completion, all the retired and infirm Sisters would be moved from the Mount into the new building, which would leave the west side of the Mount vacant; next, renovate the Mount exterior and the interior of the vacated west side;

and after that was complete move the "aged guests" into the renovated west side allowing for renovation of the east side of the building. Renovation of the east side would include larger, independent living apartments for both married couples and singles who wanted more space (called "The DePaul"). The DePaul was a new model for the Mount which would fetch higher prices and help to fund the construction program. Here is where Mother Mary Loretta saw the project as a sort of relief valve for the problems of Ozanam Home and St. Luke Infirmary: "Within two years we could close BOTH St. Luke and Ozanam and take all who wish to Mt. St. Vincent since in this plan we would be adding new beds for aged guests" she wrote, and the property purchased for a proposed new Ozanam Home could be sold, further helping finance the Mount/SJR project. Fund raising by the relatively new Development Office, headed by John P. Greeley and Bill Tobin, also made financing of the project possible.

Mother Mary Loretta's solution for the structural needs of these ministries points to the

difficulties in managing a large number of institutions at a time when many of them were falling into decay and/or lacked Sisters to staff them.

It was an intricate dance involving lots of people and money, but the project proceeded as planned, with Bouten Construction in charge as general contractor. Naturally there were cost overruns and problems, but records show that construction and logistics went quite smoothly considering the magnitude of the project. On the feast day of St. Joseph, May 1, 1966, just eighteen months after Mother Mary Loretta's letter to the Archbishop, Saint Joseph Residence was dedicated and renovation of the Mount proceeded apace. The intricate nature of this history is perhaps best viewed through a photographic lens: aerial photographs show the utter transformation of the West Seattle campus, as a new building appears and an existing building is transformed.

On dedication day, Sister Rose Imelda (Maria LaSalle, 1888-1984) received the keys to SJR as its first superior, and headed the staff of eighteen Sisters with another thirty-nine

continued on page 3

Vicariously

Yours...

Peter Schmid

It's always gratifying when our research illuminates something that we never quite understood; a concept is accepted over time, but only later are we made to think more deeply about the meaning behind it.

Such was the case about the meaning of the term "vicar" referred to in the nineteenth century Vancouver records. We read of the "Vicar General," "Mother Vicar" and "vicariate" and wondered exactly what was the status of these appellations. The answer came from Seth Dalby, archivist and Very Rev. Anthony Bawyn, canonist, Archdiocese of Seattle. In the context of the times, the title of vicar referred to a priest who assisted a priest of higher authority, such as a bishop, and held many of the powers of a bishop. In the far-flung Diocese of Nesqually, Bishop A.M.A. Blanchet needed an assistant who could act in his behalf: Father J.B. Brouillet, vicar general. It makes sense as we look at the word "vicarious," which denotes that which is experienced or happens indirectly, that which is derivative or surrogate. In this context, it is easier to understand why, prior to the establishment of provinces in the West in 1891, the Vancouver mission was referred to as a "vicariate" and Mother Joseph referred to as "Mother Vicar": all that happened in the mission depended on a higher authority, in this case, the General Administration in Montreal with Mother Joseph as assistant to the superior general but holding many administrative powers. Once the provinces were established, the mission in Vancouver went from being a vicariate to a province, with its own superior and the authority to act on its own behalf.

SP-okémon

Jessica Long

If you have noticed in recent months an abnormal number of people with their noses in their phones, there is a reason. People of all ages have taken to the streets in search of elusive cartoon monsters known as Pokémon in an augmented reality game for smart phones. PokémonGO is the newest in the widely successful Japanese Pokémon franchise, which includes trading cards, animated television shows, movies, toys, and other video games.

In this game, players become "Pokémon Trainers" by walking around until a Pokémon "appears" on their phone for them to catch. The phone's GPS signal tracks the player in a virtual map on which certain places, called "Pokéstops" and "Pokémon gyms," are flagged. These sites correspond to real world places, usually a historic marker, building, or landmark, and allow the player to collect items and use lures to attract Pokémon. What does this

augmented reality phone game have to do with the Sisters of Providence you ask? Well across the country, monuments and plaques dedicated to the Sisters have been tagged as Pokéstops! A photograph and short description will draw a player's



Dratini, a dragon-type Pokémon, 'caught' at the sculpture "The Call and the Challenge" by Kenneth Spiering. This Pokéstop is located on the approximate site of the original 1886 Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane, Wash.

SJR History

continued from page 2

Sisters in residence and a handful of lay staff. The second and fourth floors consisted of apartments for those who remained independent, and the third floor was home to the skilled nursing unit for Sisters. In the first year the library was opened on the fourth floor and the rhythm of the liturgical calendar, holidays, birthdays, jubilees, retreats, and of course, funerals, began in the new residence. May of 1968 saw the completion of the DePaul on the east side of the Mount, ending, at least for a time, major construction on the campus.

Though a tunnel connected the Mount and SJR, the year 1970 saw SJR come into its own, keeping separate

Chronicles for the first time. By its tenth anniversary in 1976, SJR was home to seventy-one Sisters.

A new aspect of life at SJR began in 1972 when the Archives, newly established as a distinct department of Provincial Administration (see the history of Providence Archives in the May 2012 issue), was given its first, and only, home in SJR. As we often remark, any inconvenience caused by the Archives being located within a retirement residence are far outweighed by the value of being near the Sisters who lived the history that is documented in our historical collections.

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of SJR, in 1991, Sisters were invited to record memories

attention to the Historic Bell Tower at Providence Academy, Vancouver, Wash.; the Mother Emilie Gamelin statues at Providence Health & Services offices, Renton, Wash. and Providence Portland Medical Center, Ore.; the Mother Joseph plaque at Centralia College, Centralia, Wash.; and the sign at the Mother Joseph Catholic Cemetery, Vancouver, Wash. Even in Canada the plaque dedicated to Emilie Gamelin at Place Émilie-Gamelin, Montreal, Quebec, is a spot to catch virtual creatures!

PokémonGO is a surprising and unique connection between the Sisters, technology, and the general public. With a bit of luck (and a lack of nearby distracting Pokémon), players will hopefully look up from their screens to gaze at the monuments in front of them and learn a little bit about the history of the Sisters of Providence.

Do you know of any other Sisters of Providence sites that are Pokéstops or Pokémon gyms? Let us know!

of the place, and it is here that we find the true community and humanity of the space, as well as its connection to the West Seattle neighborhood. One Sister remembered "We assisted the dying and went with them to the hospital when critical. We also stayed at Bonney-Watson's [mortuary] and helped dress our Sisters when they were ready...I picked up medication daily at Morton's drug store at the Junction [and] delivered [it] to each patient's room." Dr. Joseph Downs, who cared for those at SJR, was remembered as "a faithful coworker" who "shared his respect for each individual's right about making informed choices about their own care [and] encouraged us to turn

continued on page 4

SJR History

continued from page 3

to Scripture when we needed strength.”

Though the “footprint” and exterior of the building have not changed much over the years, major renovations of the interior space have occurred. Remodeling projects in 1994, 2004, and 2009 improved the facility and softened the look of the interior from its original 1960s hard lines.

Facilities have not been the only thing to change over the years; women religious from other communities including Dominicans, Carmelites, and

Benedictines have joined the Sisters of Providence in the residence. Lay women have lived in the residence since the 1980s. At first they were mothers of Sisters of Providence but now can include former Sisters as well as overflow residents from the Mount. In addition, the Sisters of Providence have had a relationship with the Daughters of Mary religious community in Uganda stretching back to 1960, wherein two or more Daughters would come to Seattle to study at the College of Sister Formation in Issaquah. Since 1991, SJR has hosted two Daughters at a time, for periods of five

years or more as they work towards their undergraduate and graduate degrees. Today, SJR also provides gracious hospitality to sisters’ families and friends, and Sisters of Providence in Seattle on religious community business, vacation, retreat, or visiting their companion Sisters.

With the celebration of 50 years of life at Saint Joseph Residence, a sister’s observance at the 25th anniversary rings true throughout the years:

“I remembered the deep spirituality that was lived out daily amidst much pain and suffering – sisters who would spend the night hours making

the way of the cross because they couldn’t sleep, sisters who prayed all the time in the ways that they could though they had to relinquish actual attendance at Mass and other spiritual exercises, sisters who were lovely whole human beings after living out many challenges in the depression and war years, the strict horariums and life styles... were meeting the challenges of illness and old age with grace and humor.”

May grace and humor be with all at Saint Joseph Residence for the next 50 years!

View northeast shows the Mount prior to SJR construction in the 1950s. SJR would be built in open space at left. Image #140.A1.39



View southeast shows SJR under construction at right, 1965. Image #140.A3.2



View west shows completed SJR in background; west portion of the Mount completed in center; and east portion of Mount under construction, 1967. Image #140.A3.7

A closer view shows the transformation of the Mount, with the east wing (left) completely stripped of the old exterior and the west wing (right) faced with new brick. Note the chapel windows in center. Image #140.A3.11



View northeast after project completion shows both SJR (foreground) and the Mount with unified architectural style. Image #140.A4.31

A Trading Card - but No Bubble Gum

Loretta Greene

Mother Joseph (upper right) joined a distinguished group of twenty women religious profiled on an inaugural set of trading cards created by the Archivists of Congregations of Women Religious. The cards were distributed at the Society of American Archivists annual conference held in August to share the value of religious archives and the impressive work accomplished by Catholic sisters. The teaser fact for Mother Joseph noted that Washington State celebrates her birthday while the other sisters worked tirelessly for social justice, aided the last infants airlifted from Saigon; created one of America's largest health care systems; met Billy the Kid; and were decorated for nursing by the Grand Army of the Republic.



What's Old Is New Again: Calendars Available!

Through the 'magic' of repeating calendars, the coveted 2006 calendar created for the 150th anniversary of the Sisters of Providence arrival in the West will be an accurate calendar for next year, 2017. A limited supply is available of these celebratory calendars filled with images of historic photographs, artifacts and quotes! The calendar is free; postage and handling is \$3.00. Contact us at archives@providence.org.

Providence Archives
4800 37th Ave SW
Seattle WA 98126-2793

Archivist
Loretta Zwolak Greene

Visual Resources Archivist
Peter Schmid

Associate Archivist
Elizabeth Russell

Assistant Archivist-Technical
Pam Hedquist

Artifacts Collection Cataloguer
Jessica Long

Telephone: 206.937.4600
Fax: 206.923.4001
E-mail: archives@providence.org
www.providence.org/phs/archives

Past Forward is published three times annually. Edited by Peter Schmid

Postage