

# Archives News

August 2006

## Remodeling Finished!

In early May 2006 the Archivists moved into their newly renovated and expanded offices. The new office space provides additional room for meetings, processing records, and researchers. Make sure you come and visit the new Archives during your next visit to the Provincial House



Before



During



After

## Contact the Provincial Archives

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## In Memory of our Sisters 1991-2001

Sister Margaret has completed the first installment of an ongoing project to write biographies of the deceased sisters in the Northeast Province. The first installment of this project, includes 56 separate biographies of sisters who died between 1991-2001. These biographies have been compiled into a book which is available for download from the Northeast Province website and available in print form in the Heritage Library in the Provincial house.

The online version is available in PDF format on the DC-Express Website:

[http://www.dc-northeast.org/intranet\\_home.aspx](http://www.dc-northeast.org/intranet_home.aspx)

(adobe acrobat reader required).

You are encouraged to contact an Archivist to share any additional remembrances of sisters in the Northeast Province.

## Healing Touch

Much has changed about nursing over the past century, but one constant has remained—the power of the healing touch of the nurse’s hands.

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*This “comfort measures”, so common in past years, probably appears to the hospitalized patient of today as the “lost art of nursing”.*

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In the records of the Archives we have two early documents that provide evidence of what nursing was like at the beginning of the twentieth century. The first source is a booklet, undated, with the inscription “To Sister Raymond from Sr. Bernadette”, entitled *Nursing Notes and Methods for the Hospitals of the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg, Maryland* (Sisters Hospital, Buffalo, N.Y.). The major portion of this booklet of 52 pages focuses on bed making and the basic nursing procedures practiced in that era, with a strong emphasis on comfort measures, including the giving of a back rub. In a procedure entitled “To Prepare a Patient for the Night”, there is a detailed description of the purpose, method and method of giving a satisfying back rub. This “comfort measures”, so common in past years, probably appears to the hospitalized patient of today as the “lost art of nursing”.

However, the art of healing touch is being practiced actively at Sisters Hospital, Buffalo. This art, in the form of massage therapy, is the primary ministry of Sister Susan O’Neill. Those of us who peruse the international web site of the Daughters of Charity (see: April 2006) may have read the article, entitled “A Healing Touch”, originally published in the Buffalo News.<sup>1</sup>

“Pushing a cart with heated stones that came from the Dead Sea, bottles of scented oils and her cassette player is Sister Susan O’Neill, a member of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, ready to give a massage – sometimes to a person awaiting surgery, sometimes to a new mom, but always to add a personal touch to medical care. A sister giving a massage?

When the nurses at Sisters Hospital see Sister Sue coming, they don’t politely say: “Good morning,

## Healing Touch

Sister.” Instead they say: **“Here comes Sister Hot Rocks.”** ...

O'Neill said she learned that a healing touch was as close as her fingertips when she made evening rounds long ago as a hospital charge nurse. “It hit me so strong then that nothing, nothing, can replace our humanity. I have a great belief in the dignity of the body, even when it's falling apart. I want to care for that. Even when the hands are crippled with arthritis, they are beautiful. I want to comfort that, to bring the healing presence of Christ.” ...

The article concludes: “Norine Kirkpatrick, a patient consultant, said she's delighted that this form of holistic healing has been added to the hospital services. “It's unusual for a sister to be the one to bring it, to be the one having these crashing new ideas,” Kirkpatrick said. “She's like a ray of hope around the place, and she runs a wonderful shop. **“After you've been with Sister Sue,” she said, “you feel like a little piece of heaven has reached earth.”**”

<sup>1</sup> Voell, Paula. (2004, April 24). *A Healing touch*. The Buffalo News Inc.

## Lourdes Hospital Archives

Our Lady of Lourdes hospital suffered nearly 20 million dollars in damage as a result of floods that devastated the Binghamton area in late June and Early July. The hospital archives, located in one of the lower levels of the hospital managed to avoid any damage to the collections.

According to Jean Jenkins the Hospital Archivist' “Though we are on the ground floor, we are in the Ross wing which is several feet higher than the buildings in the back of the hospital, so the flood waters did not reach the Archives. I am so thankful.”

Jean is currently working to collect materials for the hospital archives to document the flood and the recovery process.

## Ghebre Michael Inn, Philadelphia, PA

The records of Ghebre Michael Inn currently being processed by the Archives tell us much about a special work of the Community done as consecutive individual insertions by three Daughters of Charity, Sister Donna Franklin, Sister Anne Marie Graham, and finally, Sister Patricia Bouza. This work is a good example of what can be achieved by collaborative efforts for the service of the poor by the parish community, the Vincentian Community, the Daughters of Charity, and benefactors. Although it came to an end in March 2006, for 17 years Ghebre Michael Inn was a refuge and hope for the future for the men who entered the program.

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*Records in the archives  
celebrate seventeen  
successful years of  
rehabilitating homeless  
men in Philadelphia*

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Ghebre Michael Inn was started in 1989 as a result of a needs assessment that identified the urgent need to help men whose lives had been filled with drug addiction, imprisonment or homelessness. The program was designed to be developmental, one-year in length, offering a disciplined life, personal support, and several counseling sessions per week. It was a safe place in which the men could be respected. During the program each man was required to work or to be actively looking for jobs. Most of the residents, ranging in age from 20 to 50, came from drug-rehabilitation centers or halfway houses. The men each paid \$90 a week for the program, \$30 of which went toward program expenses. The remaining \$60 was placed in personal savings accounts. The money was to be used as start-up funds to help the men live on their own when they either graduated or left the program.

The founder and administrator of the program was Brother Peter Campbell, C.M. In the first four years Sister Donna Franklin collaborated with him as a social worker. The Immaculate Conception parish of Germantown provided a convent that had previously housed the nuns of their school. In this building a residence was set up to accommodate 12 homeless men.

The annual program budget of \$226,000 came from grants from the two Vincentian communities and from fund raising efforts. Donations, however,

## Ghebre Michael Inn

became more difficult to acquire as societal needs continued to intensify. The need still exists, but financial difficulties were insurmountable.

It was with regret that this work was terminated in March 2006, but the records in the archives celebrate seventeen successful years of rehabilitating homeless men, made possible through the joint collaboration of the Immaculate Conception Parish, the Vincentian Community, the Daughters of Charity, and the individual donors