

Holy Names Heritage Center

SUMMER 2009

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Oral History Project Takes to the Road

Karen Kinzey, Program Manager

Holy Names Heritage Center's Oral History Project demonstrates what a fascinating group of women belong to the community. From S. Mary Alice Shannon, who met such luminaries as Aaron Copland and Katherine Anne Porter while growing up at Yaddo, a vibrant artists' community in Saratoga Springs, New York, to S. Molia Sieh, whose family fled from China during the ascendancy of the Communist Party, the Holy Names congregation reflects the diverse life experiences of the extraordinary women who have joined its ranks.

Program Manager Karen Kinzey recently travelled to Albany, New York, and Washington, DC, to interview sisters of the former New York Province. In the greater-Albany area, Karen interviewed thirteen sisters. Among the highlights of the interviews were the recollections of three former lay sisters who provided medical care within and outside of the congregation. S. Barbara Andes' tells of the many years she spent

working with the Basotho people in the African nation of Lesotho. S. Mary Elizabeth Lagoy spoke of her experience working with students from the Seminole Tribe on the Brighton Reservation in Florida.

Nine SNJMs in Washington, DC, also completed oral history interviews. S. Eileen Fitzgerald discussed her experiences working with sisters from other congregations to educate parish members in Florida about the outcomes of Vatican II. Sisters Eileen Dunn and Maria Faina had just celebrated their 50th Jubilee in Montreal, Canada, and reflected on their experiences completing the novitiate there so many years before. S. Molia Sieh shared her memories of working with the DC Chinese Catholic community and her current ministry as a licensed social worker. Many sisters in that region spent time at St. Gabriel Parish in Washington, DC, including several who recalled the turbulent days there following the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A growing number of sisters from around the province have visited the

Heritage Center. Many who attended the congregation's chapter gathering commented on how much they enjoyed the Heritage Center's exhibit on community life, which included vignettes from oral history interviews.

(All exhibits may be viewed on the Heritage Center's website.)

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Holy Names
HERITAGE CENTER

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Research hours:
Wednesday - Friday
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Administration hours:
Monday - Thursday
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Friday: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Letter from the Executive Director

The Heritage Center is proud to share in the mission of the sisters in providing educational opportunities to encourage sustainable living. Karen Kinzey and I, along with Adrianna Carr of the Holy Names Sisters' Foundation, have developed an innovative environmental educational program that would introduce an entirely new audience of potential supporters to the Sisters' work on earth stewardship, including their stand that water is a basic human right.

Ecolutions is a monthly event for young professionals with a passion for the environment, their community and deeper understanding of sustainability. Environmental leaders from various fields share their expertise, not in a lecture format, but rather an open dialogue at a trendy sports lounge during happy hour in downtown Portland.

Ecolutions' unique format provides an opportunity for young professionals with busy schedules to gather with like-minded individuals to discuss pressing ecological issues. This series is designed to challenge and motivate participants to live more sustainably.

Each month will focus on a different topic. The series opened with "Greenwashing: Navigating the Sea of Sustainability", presented by Lisa Jo Frech of Raindrops to Refuge. Upcoming topics will examine locally grown food choices, plastic recycling, and virtual water. We are looking forward to the growth and success of this new program.

Please see our new sustainability page on our website. Related web links that will be added as well as featured articles.

Thank you,
Tamra Brosseau
Executive Director

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For those who have not had the opportunity to visit, the Oral History Project provides an opportunity to meet Heritage Center staff and learn more about its programs, outreach, and educational services.

The primary purpose of the Oral History Project is to preserve the history of the congregation through the collection of individual sisters' experiences and to record their thoughts on important issues such as the ramifications of Vatican II and changes in the community. Each interview is recorded in digital form, saved electronically, and eventually transcribed as a written document. In the future, Karen hopes to interview newer members of the congregation who are just beginning their careers of carrying on the community's fight for social justice, stewardship of the environment, and educational opportunities for all.

Fourth Grade Program Scores with Students

Heritage Center volunteers S. Rosalie Anderson and S. Kathleen Hepner have just completed a second year presenting the Fourth Grade Program "Oregon in 1859." The program brings a little-known episode of Northwest history into Catholic classrooms as it teaches students about the sisters' remarkable 1859 journey from Canada to Portland. The sisters draw on their professional teaching experience to involve students through storytelling and mapping exercises.

The program has special meaning this year as 2009 marks the sesquicentennial of Oregon statehood as well as the arrival of the Holy Names Sisters in the state and the opening of their first school. This year, the program was presented in 37 schools to 909 students in three dioceses across Oregon and Eastern Washington. The program has proved popular with students and teachers alike. Perhaps the ultimate measure of success is the response of Reed, a student at St. Paul School: "the history of the Holy Names Sisters is cool!"



Above: Sister Kathleen Hepner (left) and Sister Rosalie Anderson (right) engage students with fascinating tales of the sisters' westward journey in 1859.

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Thank you to our members!

Your memberships help to support the Heritage Center in providing quality educational programming such as the Fourth Grade Program, History Pub, Ecolutions, and the numerous individual events such as special guests speakers, poetry readings and even a special showing of the pre-1950s sisters' home movies in partnership with Marylhurst University's Oregon 150 Film Festival.

If you are not a member yet, please consider partnering with us today. Membership information is provided on the last page of this newsletter or on our website.

From the Archives

Sarah Cantor,
Director of Archives, U.S.-Ontario Province

With only one full time employee in the archives, it would be difficult to make forward progress without the help of committed volunteers. At present, there are six regular volunteers. One donates a day's work every other week, four come weekly, and one intrepid person comes both morning and afternoon, five days a week. During the last three quarters, these six people have donated an amazing 563 hours of time—or three and a half months of full time work!

Projects are developed by the archivist and the volunteer in order to maximize individual interests and abilities: for example, a retired textile historian and conservator from New York is cataloging the entire textile collection. Another volunteer is an extremely fast and thorough typist; she is transcribing handwritten chronicles.

This month we will meet two of these wonderful volunteers; others will be profiled in later newsletters.

Sue Woodruff, SNJM, is a former Oregon Province archivist and has continued her involvement with the archives as a volunteer. Her career includes years spent as a junior high teacher, educational coordinator for the Urban Indian Council, magazine editor, author, and member of the Congregational Leadership Team. Her book, *Meditations with Mechtild of Magdeburg*, was published in 1982. Her interest in community history and the archives extends back to the 1970s, when she began doing summer volunteer projects in the Oregon archives under Sister Anne Harold. Sister Sue volunteers twice a week at the Heritage Center cataloging the papers of individual sisters. She enjoys putting the materials into an organized form so that they can be easily accessed by researchers. Sister Sue found cataloging the papers of Sister Marian Dolores Robinson particularly satisfying because she was able to work with Sister Marian Dolores at her request before she died, bringing order to years of professional files and thus giving others a richer sense of who Sister Marian Dolores was.

Sister Sue says that “by working in the archives, one gains a sense of being part of something larger than oneself: it provides a connection to the past, present, and gives glimpses into the future.”



Above: Sister Sue Woodruff

Elizabeth Hecker, SNJM, has volunteered once a week at the Heritage Center since 2007 but worked several years before that with Sister Sue Woodruff in the former Oregon Province archives. In her multi-faceted career she was a primary teacher, school administrator, Director of Religious Education, Pastoral Associate, and Rite of Christian Initiation instructor. She became interested in community history when, during a year spent in Windsor, Ontario, she volunteered in the former Ontario Province archives under Sister Sue Malette. That introduction to the Ontario sisters' interesting history made her realize she didn't know much about her own province's history.

Sister Elizabeth recently finished processing the archives' largest collection to date, 52 boxes and over 23 cubic feet of papers comprising the files of former SNJMs from across the U.S.-Ontario Province. This project took over two years and incredible organizational ability. Sister Elizabeth is now using her organizational skills to bring order to a variety of loose material that has found its way to the archives since 2007. Sister Elizabeth says that she has enjoyed learning more about the community, particularly about the lives of some of its most prominent sisters. She likes the feeling of accomplishment gained from putting things in order and being able to see what has been done. In addition, she “gets great satisfaction in making our history available.” Thank you Sister Sue and Sister Elizabeth!



Above: Sister Elizabeth Hecker

Upcoming History Pubs

History Pub takes place the last Monday of the month at McMenamins' Kennedy School

5736 NE 33rd Ave., Portland

Free and open to the public

July 27, 7:00 PM

“On Paper Wings: The Story of the Japanese Balloon Bombs of World War II”

Filmmaker Ilana Sol traces the fascinating but little-known history of the Japanese balloon bombs manufactured during WWII.

Holy Names Heritage Center
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