

# **Saint Joseph's Preparatory School records**

**01**

**Finding aid prepared by Sarah Leu and Anastasia Matijkiw through  
the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative  
for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories using information  
provided by the Villiger Archives of Saint Joseph's Preparatory School.**

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Last updated on September 22, 2016.

Villiger Archives of St. Joseph's Preparatory School

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## Summary Information

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| <b>Repository</b>  | Villiger Archives of St. Joseph's Preparatory School  |
| <b>Creator</b>     | Saint Joseph's Preparatory School   |
| <b>Title</b>       | Saint Joseph's Preparatory School records   |
| <b>Call number</b> | 01  |
| <b>Date</b>        | circa 1730-2016 (bulk 1890s-2016)   |
| <b>Extent</b>      | 325 linear feet   |
| <b>Language</b>    | English   |
| <b>Abstract</b>    | <p>Saint Joseph's Preparatory School is a Roman Catholic high school for boys in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania that was founded by Jesuit priests in 1851. It was established as a preparatory school for Saint Joseph's College (now University). The College and Preparatory School moved to Stiles Street and 17th Street in North Philadelphia in 1868. The College later moved to the Overbrook neighborhood of Philadelphia in 1927, while the Preparatory School remained at the North Philadelphia location. As of 2016, Saint Joseph's Preparatory School enrolls just under 1,000 male high school students. Many of the school's graduates have gone on to notable careers in government, business, and other areas. Saint Joseph's Preparatory School records, circa 1730-2016 (bulk 1890s-2016), consist of records and other materials from Saint Joseph's Preparatory School, records and materials relating to people associated with and the activities of the Gesu Parish, and materials documenting Jesuits, including those at the Church of the Gesu. The collection also includes administrative and financial records; publications; property, legal, and insurance materials; photographs, scrapbooks, and audiovisual materials; papers and other materials from people associated with Saint Joseph's Preparatory School</p> |

and the Gesu Parish; over two hundred relic authenticity certificates, 1730-1975, for Father Burchard Villiger's relic collection; and other documents.

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## Biography/History

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Saint Joseph's Preparatory School is a Roman Catholic high school for boys in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania that was founded by Jesuit priests in 1851. It was established as a preparatory school for Saint Joseph's College (now University), which opened in September 1851 at Old Saint Joseph's on Willing's Alley in Old City Philadelphia, the oldest Catholic Church in Philadelphia. The College and Preparatory School moved to Stiles Street and 17th Street in North Philadelphia in 1868. The College later moved to the Overbrook neighborhood of Philadelphia in 1927, while the Preparatory School remained at the North Philadelphia location. A fire in 1966 destroyed some two-thirds of the Preparatory School buildings, which were replaced by a new structure in the square between Stiles Street and Girard Avenue, and between 17th Street and 18th Street. As of 2016, Saint Joseph's Preparatory School enrolls just under 1,000 male high school students. Many of the school's graduates have gone on to notable careers in government (including three Philadelphia mayors), business, and other areas.

The Church of the Gesu is a large Cathedralesque Roman Catholic church in North Philadelphia that was built from 1879 to 1888. Now part of St. Joseph's Preparatory School campus, it served as home of the Gesu Parish of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia until 1993. The church was originally built as part of a complex of buildings constructed for the move of Saint Joseph's College and Preparatory School from their original location at Old Saint Joseph's Church in Old City to North Philadelphia in 1868.

Father Burchard Villiger, S. J. (1816?-1903), a Swiss immigrant Jesuit priest who had served as director of studies at the original Saint Joseph's College when it opened in 1851, moved to the area near Girard Avenue and 17th Street in North Philadelphia in 1868. Intending to establish a "Catholic University of Philadelphia" at the site, Father Villiger began by founding the Parish of the Holy Family. He had a chapel, rectory, and parish school built in the late 1860s/early 1870s. In 1878 the parish name was changed from Holy Family to Gesu and in 1879 work began on the new Church of the Gesu. It was designed by noted Philadelphia ecclesiastical architect Edward F. Durang and modeled on the Church of the Gesu in Rome, Italy. The church was completed in 1888 and served as home of the Gesu Parish until the parish was closed by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in 1993 and consolidated into nearby Saint Malachy's Parish. The Church of the Gesu then was taken over by Saint Joseph's Preparatory School, which maintains it as chapel for its students and for special events.

The Gesu School, originally the parish elementary school, is now an independent Catholic elementary school that is housed in a building owned by Saint Joseph's Preparatory School.

## Scope and Contents

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Saint Joseph's Preparatory School records, circa 1730-2016 (bulk 1890s-2016), consist of records and other materials from Saint Joseph's Preparatory School, records and materials relating to people associated with and the activities of the Gesu Parish, and materials documenting Jesuits, including those at the Church of the Gesu. The collection also includes administrative and financial records; publications; property, legal, and insurance materials; photographs, scrapbooks, and audiovisual materials; papers and other materials from people associated with Saint Joseph's Preparatory School and the Gesu Parish; over two hundred relic authenticity certificates, 1730-1975, for Father Burchard Villiger's relic collection; and other documents.

The collection is organized into three record groups: A. Gesu Parish, B. Jesuit collections, and C. Saint Joseph's Preparatory School. Researchers are advised to review materials in all three record groups since many of the records in each series are interconnected. An overview of the collection's organizational schema is listed below.

### **Record Group A. Gesu Parish**

- Series 1. Jesuit pastor and other church authorities
- Series 2. Deeds, mortgages, title searches and insurance policies
- Series 3. Financial management of the Gesu Parish
- Series 4. The Church of the Gesu
- Series 5. Laity (Parishioners)
- Series 6. The Elementary School
- Series 7. Publications
- Series 8. Neighborhood and community relations
- Series 9. Special Collections

### **Record Group B. Jesuit collections**

- Series 100. Society of Jesus
- Series 200. Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus
- Series 300. Jesuits at the Gesu
- Series 400. Buildings and properties
- Series 500. Ignatian anniversaries
- Series 600. Photographs of Jesuits

### **Record Group C. Saint Joseph's Preparatory School**

- Series 100. Scrapbook collection
- Series 200. Governance, Board of Trustees, Presidents, Treasurers, Policies
- Series 300. Financial management of St. Joseph's Preparatory School
- Series 400. Planning
- Series 500. Faculty and academics
- Series 600. Buildings and property, and facilities maintenance
- Series 700. Publications
- Series 800. Neighborhood and community relations

- Series 900. Alumni
- Series 1000. Students

A more detailed finding aid to the archival materials in records groups A, B, and C is available on-site.

This collection has several artifacts, books, and other objects associated with it that were not included as part of the survey.

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## **Administrative Information**

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Villiger Archives of St. Joseph's Preparatory School

Finding aid prepared by Sarah Leu and Anastasia Matijkiw through the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories using information provided by the Villiger Archives of Saint Joseph's Preparatory School.

### **Sponsor**

This preliminary finding aid was created as part of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories. The HCI-PSAR project was made possible by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

### **Access Restrictions**

Contact Villiger Archives of Saint Joseph's Preparatory School for information about accessing this collection. Some materials may be restricted due to privacy concerns.

### **Processing Information Note**

Summary descriptive information on this collection was compiled in 2014-2016 as part of a project conducted by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania to make better known and more accessible the largely hidden collections of small, primarily volunteer run repositories in the Philadelphia area. The Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories (HCI-PSAR) was funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

This is a preliminary finding aid. No physical processing, rehousing, reorganizing, or folder listing was accomplished during the HCI-PSAR project.

In some cases, more detailed inventories or finding aids may be available on-site at the repository where this collection is held; please contact Villiger Archives of Saint Joseph's Preparatory School directly for more information.

## Controlled Access Headings

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### Corporate Name(s)

- Saint Joseph's Preparatory School

### Geographic Name(s)

- Philadelphia (Pa.)

### Subject(s)

- Catholic high school students
- Catholic high schools
- Catholic high schools--Administration
- Church management
- Jesuits
- Parishes

## Collection Inventory

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### A.. The Gesu Parish, 19th century-2013.

#### Scope and Contents Note

Record Group A. The Gesu Parish contains materials from or relating to the Gesu Parish in Philadelphia, PA and is divided into nine series: 1. Jesuit pastor and other church authorities; 2. Deeds, mortgages, title searches and insurance policies; 3. Financial management of the Gesu Parish; 4. The Church of the Gesu; 5. Laity (Parishioners); 6. The Elementary School; 7. Publications; 8. Neighborhood and community relations; and 9. Special Collections.

**Series 1. Jesuit pastor and church authorities, 1878-2013**, consists of letters, anniversary and jubilee celebration materials, property records and maps, programs from masses, policy and planning materials, minutes, and other materials.

**Series 2. Deeds, mortgages, title searches and insurance policies, 19th century-20th century**, consists of materials related to properties purchased to establish the Gesu Parish and to build the Church of the Gesu, the residence of the Jesuit Community, Saint Joseph's College, Saint Joseph's Preparatory School, and the parish elementary school (The Gesu School).

**Series 3. Financial management of the Gesu Parish, 1894-1991**, consists of expense and receipt ledgers (for both the College and the Church), income sheets, account statements, financial statistics and reports and related correspondence, fundraising materials, and other financial records.

**Series 4. The Church of the Gesu, 1897-2012**, consists of materials and photographs relating to the Church's history, building, organ, artwork, and preservation. The series also includes miscellaneous publications for church liturgy.

**Series 5. Laity (Parishioners), 1895-1991**, consists of directories, parish censuses, records from a variety of church organizations and societies, and materials related to church related social activities. There are some photographs in this series.

**Series 6. The Elementary School, 1900-2003 (bulk 1960s-2003)**, consists of photographs, correspondence, mission statements, property and building materials, planning materials, handbooks, some listings of students, and other materials related to the school.



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**B.. Jesuit collections**


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**Series 7. Publications, circa 1895-20th century**, includes issues of the *Gesu Parish Bulletin*, a serial publication with neighborhood news and pew rental records, distributed to parishioners monthly and sometimes weekly. Early issues contain historic information on the Parish, the Church, the Jesuits, St. Joseph's College, St. Joseph's High School, and the Gesu Elementary School.

**Series 8. Neighborhood and community relations, circa 1930-1970**, includes materials related to Girard – Ridge Area Neighborhood Developers, Inc.; a North Philadelphia redevelopment area plan from the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, 1968, revised 1970; and a listing of residents, circa 1970, at St. Bernadette Nursing Home for Aged and Convalescent on North 18th Street in Philadelphia. The nursing home may have been owned by the Gesu Parish.

**Series 9. Special collections** includes papers of and related to church members and other associated with the parish. Of note in this series is the Anna M. McGarry collection, which contains photographs, notes for speeches, letters, reports from various organizations, newspaper clippings, and other materials from or related to Anna M. McGarry, a parish activist who supported and fought for racial justice and equality and who established the community group "Our Neighbors Association." McGarry passed away on January 3, 1978.

Other materials of interest in this record group include ledgers detailing visits to sick, 1922-1927; a ledger documenting daily church activities ("church announcements"), 1906-1967; the Gesu minister's house diaries, 1898-1909, 1936-1943, 1965-1970; materials from Saint Joseph's College, such as college diaries, 1896-1923, and financials, 1890s-1920s; correspondence, circa 1930s, relating to African American migration to and activities in the 47th ward; glass plate negatives, slides, and photographs, several of which are of the church building.

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**B.. Jesuit collections, late 19th century-2000s.**
**Scope and Contents Note**

Record Group B. Jesuit collections contains materials from or about the Jesuits, especially as they relate to the Gesu Parish and Saint Joseph's Preparatory School. This record group is divided into six series: 100. Society of Jesus, 200. Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, 300. Jesuits at the Gesu, 400. Buildings and properties, 500. Ignatian anniversaries, and 600. Photographs of Jesuits.

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**Series 100. Society of Jesus** (worldwide) consists of materials pertaining to the Society of Jesus, such as annual reports and other materials.

### **Series 200. Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus**

The Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus is a the regional group of the Society of Jesus in the United States that extends through nine states, including Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey. As such, Saint Joseph's Preparatory School and the Gesu School are two schools of the Maryland Province Jesuits. This series includes letters, planning materials, summaries of mission work by Jesuits in the Maryland Province, directories, and other materials.

**Series 300. Jesuits at the Gesu, 1898-2000s**, consists of materials from or about Jesuits who were active in the Gesu Parish, including house diaries from Gesu ministers, 1898-1970; papers from individuals, such as Fr. Joseph Bittner's diary, which contains letters from 1945 discussing his experience as a prisoner of Japanese soldiers in the Philippine Islands during World War II; various programs (funeral, jubilee, and others) relating to Jesuits assigned to the Gesu Parish; and other materials.

**Series 400. Buildings and properties, 1970s-1990s**, consists of materials relating to properties owned or connected to the Jesuits in the Gesu Parish.

**Series 500. Ignatian anniversaries** consists of materials relating to celebrations of the founding of the Society of Jesus and the birth and death of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

**Series 600. Photographs of Jesuits** consists of a large number of photographs of Jesuits, including those who were assigned to the Gesu Parish. There are various copies of some of the photographs which are on display throughout Saint Joseph's Preparatory School.

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## C.. Saint Joseph's Preparatory School, 1892-2016.

### **Scope and Contents Note**

Record Group C. Saint Joseph's Preparatory School contains materials from or relating to Saint Joseph's Preparatory School (SJP) in Philadelphia, PA and is divided into ten series: 100. Scrapbook collection; 200. Governance, Board of Trustees, Presidents, Treasurers, Policies; 300. Financial management of Saint Joseph's Preparatory School; 400. Planning; 500. Faculty and academics; 600. Buildings and

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property, and facilities maintenance; 700. Publications; 800. Neighborhood and community relations; 900. Alumni; and 1000. Students.

**Series 100. Scrapbook collection, 1891-1988**, consists of scrapbooks organized by calendar year with news clippings, event programs, ephemera, and other materials relating to SJP, the Gesu, and organizations associated with the school.

**Series 200. Governance, Board of Trustees, Presidents, Treasurers, Policies** includes resolutions, reports, correspondence, minutes, articles of incorporation, and other materials from the various administrative bodies at SJP.

**Series 300. Financial management of Saint Joseph's Preparatory School** includes financial ledgers and other general financial records, such as statements, expenses, receipts, utility bills, and check stubs; payroll records; legal, insurance, tax, and grant materials; records of donations or bequests made by or in memory of alumni (some of these records are on cards organized by graduating year, other are unsorted);

**Series 400. Planning** includes materials related to long-range planning, SJP's Middle States evaluation, and other related materials.

**Series 500. Faculty and academics** includes curriculum materials, faculty lists, course catalogs (1892-2016), some benefits and staff salary information, and papers from faculty members, including thousands of photographs and slides from Rev. Vincent Taggart, S.J. and faculty member, coach, and athletic director, Mr. James Murray (Class of 1959). This series also contains a faculty card file listing the faculty member's name, subjects taught, and active dates at SJP.

**Series 600. Buildings and property, and facilities maintenance** includes property records, materials relating to buildings on the school's campus, and building maintenance files. Information on renovations and proposals for new buildings and facilities can also be found in this series. There are several oversized maps, technical drawings, and blueprints relating to SJP's property and buildings.

**Series 700. Publications** consists of various publications and printed matter from SJP, such as annual reports, circa 1980s-2015; booklets; commencement programs; school calendars; student handbooks; family and alumni directories; yearbooks, continuously from 1927 from 2016, and a small number that pre-date 1927 but are not continuous; "The Chronicle" (student literary magazine), 1918-2000s; "The Wingspan", 1990s-2000s; "College Annual," 1901-1922; "Prep News," 2000s; "Something's Happening at the Prep," (alumni magazine), 1980s-2000s; "The Crimson and Gray Line" (student publication), 1980s-2010; "The Hawklet" (student newspaper), 1960s-1990s; "Hawkeye" (newspaper), 1990s-2015; and other publications. There are also published materials not produced by SJP such as materials used

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during services (e.g. music and liturgy books) and printed matter and other materials from other Roman Catholic schools in Philadelphia.

**Series 800. Neighborhood and community relations** includes materials from local neighborhood and Philadelphia groups.

**Series 900. Alumni** includes Alumni Association materials such as directories, letters, minutes, reports, and other materials; alumni records organized by class, circa 1930s-1970s; newspaper clippings related to alumni; an alumni card file with name, contact information, and any correspondence between the Association and the individual; materials relating to funerals of SJP graduates, including funeral service booklets and memorial cards, as well as a card file of deceased alumni with name, class year, and year of death; and other materials. There is a small portion of papers from alumni, including the Ferry family papers, circa 1900s-1940s, and some correspondence and articles written by Cardinal John P. Foley, a graduate of SJP (class of 1953).

**Series 1000. Students** consists of scholarship materials; student records (e.g class schedules and transcripts, 1923-1967, attendance books, and enrollment lists); a student card file with registration cards stating student name, date of birth, date of entrance, residence, phone number, classes assigned, parents or guardian names and occupation, school student attended previously and year(s), place of birth for student and parents, notes about the student leaving school before graduating (if applicable), parish information, and whether or not the father (or other family member) was an alum; attendee lists and other materials related to school trips; commencement programs and student speeches; materials and objects from school groups, including Cape and Sword, the Prep's drama group; and reel-to-reel, vinyl, and other recordings from school music groups. See also Series 700. Publications for related student publications.

Other materials in this record group include: materials relating to awards; large amounts of administrative files, circa 1960s-2000s, including folders on facilities, cafeteria, presidents files, athletic files, admissions, events, and other topics; ephemera related to SJP and its events and activities, including booklets, brochures, invitations (prom, regattas, graduations, and other school events and activities); ephemera from Pope Francis' visit to Philadelphia in September 2015; planning materials from SJP's auction fundraiser "Hawktion;" Fathers' Club records and ephemera, 1957-1960s; Mothers' Club records and ephemera, 1990s-present;

There is a large portion of materials in this record group relating to SJP's athletic program, including athletic files, circa 1970s-2000s, that contain minutes, financials, student information, game programs,

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and coach files; some athletic record books; team info, team notes, score keeping sheets and other materials from SJP's basketball, baseball, bowling, crew, football, tennis, and track and field teams; football team programs, 1913-1950s; a crew team scrapbook; and other materials.

This record group also contains a large amount of visual, audio, and audiovisual materials, including: photographs of athletic teams, school activities, graduating classes, students, school clubs, events such as Hawkton and other subjects, 19th century-present; photograph albums; VHS cassettes with recordings of graduations, VHS cassettes with videos produced for recruiting purposes, and VHS cassettes with a program about to SJP's centennial celebration; audiocassettes of the Prep Band, 1998-2001, as well as reel-to-reel audio and LP recordings of the band (found in Series 1000. Students); reel-to-reel films, VHS cassette recordings, and slides of SJP football games and some other sports, such as cross country, circa 1970-2000s; and additional slides of students, SJP's buildings and campus; school activities, and trips abroad, circa 1990s.