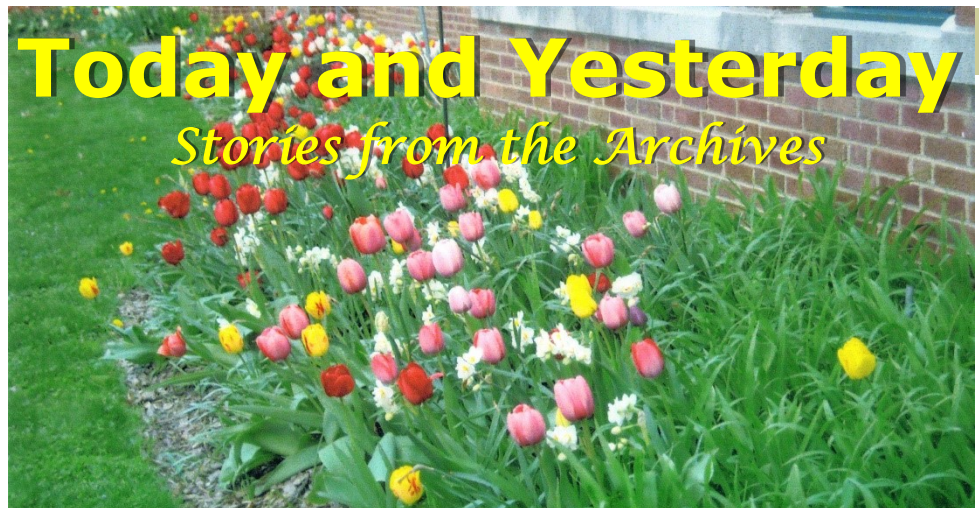


Spring 2021

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A collection of recent discoveries and activities in the IHM Archives

- Photo by Sister Ann Currier



Heritage for generations twice removed

The call came in the last 20 minutes of the work day. The woman was hoping we had photos of her three great-aunts who had been IHM Sisters. Her mother, in her 90s now, had been talking about them but wasn't confident she remembered their religious names accurately. It would mean so much to them if we had a photo that could jog her mother's memory.

The last name was Britz. From that it was easy to find out more. Their religious names were Lucina, Aquinata and Hiltrude.

We quickly e-mailed the caller a few photos. "These are absolutely wonderful," she e-mailed back.

But that was just the beginning.

The sisters all were teachers. Sister Hiltrude started teaching in 1913 as a postulant. She "commuted" across the river to St. Michael's, carrying the food for the day for the three Sisters there.

Aquinata was the youngest and she also taught at IHM schools



Seated (L to R) are IHM Sisters Lucina, Aquinata and Hiltrude

throughout Michigan, everything from chemistry to Shakespeare and art in Puerto Rico.

Lucina, the oldest of nine, taught for almost 50 years. She spent her last decade in the Motherhouse infirmary with heart failure; it didn't stop her from spending all that time bringing comfort and help to the other Sisters there.

Then a discovery: a copy of a 1995 letter written by a niece of the three IHMs. It was signed Aunt Grace, who was an S.S.J. Sister. She described their daily lives and the inspiration they were to her. She

called them "a vanished breed of heroine" worthy of talking about to future generations of their family. We sent off the letter.

By return e-mail, our caller revealed that she had been one of the relatives who should have gotten that letter, but she didn't receive it in 1995. What a treasure to receive it now. She is doing exactly what "Aunt Grace" had written to her: Pass this information down to your children.

She wrote back, "I am sharing these precious stories with my children and my nieces/nephews."

Sister Lucina Britz

Born: 7-30-1883

Entered: 2-2-1903

Died: 7-2-1963

Sister Hiltrude Britz

Born: 12-12-1893

Entered: 7-16-1913

Died: 5-16-1971

Sister Aquinata Britz

Born: 9-3-1900

Entered: 1-6-1919

Died: 12-31-1983

‘In Memory’: Beverly Hindson, IHM

On Nov. 21, 2020, the IHM community lost Sister Beverly Hindson, one of the rare IHM deaths due to the consequences of COVID-19. In early December, the Archives was asked to prepare a brief look at her life and work. This was to be sent to the nationally televised PBS NewsHour, hopefully for inclusion in its regular Friday Tributes to lives cut short by the pandemic. Understandably, not every submitted word can be used.

Unfortunately, Sister Beverly’s own words, the most compelling in describing her ministry, were not included when the Tribute aired on Dec. 18. Below is a reprint of the full text of the tribute prepared about this remarkable IHM Sister’s work.

Sister Beverly Hindson walked into hospital rooms and made them sacred spaces.

Growing up in Marine City, Mich., Beverly already knew in adolescence that she wanted to be a religious Sister. She entered the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, religious community based in Monroe, Mich., in 1965.

Although she began her mission work as a teacher and school librarian, her direction changed drastically as she became aware of the violence and pain in the lives of some of her students.

She moved into clinical pastoral education and became a founding member of the chaplaincy at Children’s Hospital of Michigan in Detroit. She was trained for critical care response, spiritual care at end of life, pain management and loss.

She spent 32 years at Children’s Hospital, on-call for the ICU and emergency room, providing pastoral care for families and staff, and entering what she called the “holy ground” of relating to children with cancer and other diseases. She became a



“kid whisperer” as she engaged with them as the “queen of fun,” played

games, stood by them during medical treatment or tests, and, most importantly, listened. As she told *The Michigan Catholic*: “the children tell me their secrets, their pain, their fears and tears.”

Sometimes Pediatric Intensive Care managers would tell their unit clerks to “get the nun.” But her goal was not to be strictly “religious” at those moments.

She wrote: “My ministry was rather simple in its intent; I just wanted children and families to

feel loved as they faced an arduous journey. I wanted my presence to be a tangible yet unspoken sign that God cares and is present in the midst of fear, anxiety, pain, and suffering.”

One mom who stayed in touch with Sister Beverly even years after her son died wrote: “Whenever I see angel things I think of you – an earthbound angel. I think of you often and the heartbreaking job you face daily.” Beloved was a word used to describe her.

She told The Michigan Catholic for a story: “I believe that I have some talents I use, but I believe that it’s God who does the work.”

She relied on her own friends

and Sisters in the IHM community, as well as prayer, meditation and creative pursuits, to keep herself centered and nurtured.

She was still working as a hospice volunteer and at a soup kitchen at the time of her death on Nov. 21. She was 73.



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Since 2000, all IHM sisters have been encouraged to submit individual chronicles to the IHM Archives. These records about your own life and ministry over the course of a year or more add breadth and depth to the documented history of the IHM Sisters. Your contribution will enrich the future record of the IHM, so please be sure your life's story is included in the community's story.

Well-timed book remembers St. Patrick IHMs

The Archives receives many, many requests for information about the life and ministries of IHM Sisters — from scholars, family history researchers and former students. Anything on a living sister is only shared with her permission, but in the case of a deceased sister, we can provide a copy of her Remembering or, from years past, a Menology (which served a similar purpose up until 1970).

Last fall, a 1958 graduate of St. Patrick School in Wyandotte made a monumental request: photos and biographies of every IHM who taught at St. Patrick — more than 330 — for a book he wished to publish in honor of those sisters.

As luck would have it, Archives staff had recently completed a special summer project to scan every Menology and every Remembering that only existed on paper — nearly 1,200. These electronic copies can now be shared via email with just a few clicks.

The book, *A History of the IHM Sisters at Wyandotte St. Patrick* by Richard M. Dawson is available as a paperback or a Kindle ebook, sold exclusively through Amazon.com.



Convent of St. Patrick, Wyandotte, built in 1955

A copy was also donated to the IHM Archives. The book is filled with the history of the school and the many contributions of the sisters who taught there for nearly 90 years, and it's available to anyone who wishes to borrow it.

But you may want to bring a shopping bag. The book is more than 600 pages long!