

Good Habits

Wed, Apr 24, 2024 10:07PM 55:11

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

sisters, archives, collections, work, materials, atla, researchers, women, community, archivists, notre dom, province, notre dame, research, projects, religious, exhibit, records, started, sister

 00:00

Hello everyone and welcome to today's webinar, good habits exploring the role and impact of women religious archives hosted by Atla. My name is Todd Aiello and I'm a Product Specialist for Atla. For those of you aren't familiar with us, Atla is a membership association of librarians and information professionals, and a producer of research tools committed to advancing the study of religion and theology. Our membership includes more than 800 individuals and libraries with academic institutions from diverse religious traditions and backgrounds. As a community of collectors and connectors. Atla works to promote worldwide scholarly communication and religion and theology by advancing the work of libraries and related information providers. Please use the q&a function to submit any questions, comments or technical difficulties during today's webinar. You can also use the function to submit an anonymous question as well. Our presenters will answer questions throughout the session, as well as time at the end for additional questions as we receive them. And now to introduce our presenters, I will turn it over to my colleague Atla head of metadata and editorial operations Jill and up.

 01:07

Hi, everyone.

 01:10

Welcome. Thank you for joining us today for good habits. My name is Gillian Nieto head of metadata and there's quarry operations of Atla. The webinars being recorded and will be posted in the next few days on the Atla webinar, page atla.com/webinars, where we'll also post the presentation slides. And if you have any feedback, we'd love to hear from you. You can write to us at connect@atla.com. Today we have representatives from three archives. Michelle Levandowski is the Director of the School Sisters of Notre Dame of North American Archive North American archives. She has worked in Catholic archives for 17 years, first with the diocese of Springfield in Illinois, then with the Order of St. Camillus and has been with the School Sisters of Notre Dame since 2017. She is currently the vice president president elect of the archivists for congregations of women religious, she earned her MA in history and MLS degrees from the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. Scott keeper has been the provincial archivist for the Daughters of Charity province of St. Louise in Emmitsburg, Virginia since 2018. He's a member of the Society of American Archivists, the Mid Atlantic Regional Archives

conference and as treasurer for archivists for congregations of women religious women religious. Cindy Hamill is an archivist for the Sisters of the Holy Cross congregational Archives and Records Office, the Sisters of the Holy Cross found at St. Mary's College in 1844. And the two institutions continue to share the campus today. Cindy serves as a liaison between the college and congregation, coordinating history tours of the sisters heritage floor and buildings on campus. She came to work for the sisters as an archivist in November 2015, and is currently studying for her digital archive Specialist certification from the Society of American Archivists. So without further ado, let's get started with Michelle.



02:59

Hi, thanks for having me. Today, I'm excited to talk about both the archivists for congregations of women religious AC WR, and the SSND Archives collection. So I'm going to start a little bit by talking about ECW or per few minutes. But before I begin that, I just want to talk a little bit about women religious archives and their importance. There were or are approximately 400 congregations of women religious, aka sisters and nuns in the United States. They built the largest private school and nonprofit health hospital systems in the US. By the 1950s 11% of American students were in Catholic schools, mostly taught by sisters, one out of five hospital beds or in the United States were run by sisters. And about 400,000 women in the US were living were members of religious orders. So the history of women religious is a very important piece of American history, one that I think is often under appreciated. So I'm really excited to have this chance to talk to you all. ECW er was founded in 1990. And the goal of the organization is to assist late and religious archivists in the management and preservation of the historical record of Catholic Sisters and nuns in the US and worldwide. We have a number of programs that we use, including mentoring, especially for like Sister archivists who maybe don't have a background in archiving. We have mentoring programs, we have webinars about a variety of issues that archives of women religious face. The biggest issue right now is obviously the idea that many communities are coming to completion, meaning they're ending. And so one of the big topics in this world right now is what to do with your archives. And this is something that ACW is working on. But we also assist research researchers outside of the organization, and we can do that in a few different ways. One of the ways that we do which is if you aren't interested in finding the archives of a particular community, you can send us an email and we can send out the general call to the listserv, if that community is not a member to see if anybody has a connection. We've also assisted people, like we just had an email recently come out where a university was trying to identify some pictures of sisters and trying to figure out what communities that were part of our group is really phenomenal about being able to identify religious habits. So if you have a random photo that you need to figure out who, where she belongs, like, we can often assist with that. And then finally, we can also help help researchers identify the community a particular sister belong to. So if you have like a family member, or somebody you're researching or anything like that, and you know, she became a Catholic sister, but you don't know what community she emailed, or what community she joined, you can send us an email, and then we can easily try to see if we can help track her down. Because we have quite a large number of archivists that are part of the group, and they're very persistent and really good at researching. So if you have any questions, please reach out to ACW. Our page did have a slide with their address email address. But I don't think that got included so I can add it to the chat later. And then finally, we're also looking for collaborations and ways to promote our collections individually and then collaborate as a group. So if you ever have any ideas of projects with women religious archives, please reach out to AC WR we'd be happy to hear from you. So with that, I am going to turn to the School Sisters of Notre Dame North American archives. I'm going to start with a general overview of the

congregation to give you a sense of its size and scope, where they were located and sort of what their main activities were. And then I'm going to talk a little bit about what is in the collection. And then I'm going to talk about a few of our notable collections are sisters. I want to mention that everything you will see in the presentation, any location, dates, schools, anything you see those things are all represented in our archives.



07:25

Sorry about that, the North American archives is located at Mount Mary University in Milwaukee. This is our contact information. We opened in 2018 as the consolidation of eight provincial archives. And we still collect materials from the two existing provinces. We currently have three full time staff so we are open full time hours. And our collection represents the history of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in North America, from their arrival in 1847, to the present, and that also includes mission extensions, basically foreign missions that they did, schools where they taught schools that they owned that sort of thing.



08:10

I'm not gonna go into a long history of the congregation but just briefly, it was founded in 1833. In Bavaria by blessing Teresa, Gerhard dinger, its primary focus was education. They first came to the US in 1847. Their first mission was in St. Mary's, Pennsylvania, which was a very short lived mission. But that same year, they opened three permanent missions in Baltimore. And those became the first permanent missions in the US. And then in 1850, the first motherhouse opened in the United States, and that was in Milwaukee. So they have a very long history, especially in Baltimore and Milwaukee, with their work. By 1966, there were eight provinces. And you can see the number of sisters, this is just to give you an idea of like the size of the congregation, it was a pretty big congregation, they worked in states all over the place, which I'll show you shortly. But the congregation grew pretty well, and was very spread out throughout the US and Canada. I should mention that there was a province in Canada and those records are also reflected here. By 1969, the sisters had served or were serving and 37 States, Washington, DC, Puerto Rico and Guam. By 1969, there was a change in the Constitution, which means they sisters were more easily able to expand their ministries. And so they often went far beyond these borders. These are sort of where they were working in like the more traditional teaching roles before that change in constitution. The seats that are bolded are the states where they have the strongest presence, where they've been for a very long time and where they had a lot of a high number of schools. And then the dates on here are the dates when they first arrive and each of those states in addition is I mentioned that there was a province in Canada so we have records from sisters serving in four different provinces. We also have records from sisters in England, which is going to seem a bit strange but England was actually part of the Canadian province, which is why we have records from England here. The first overseas mission was in Japan in 1949. And then from this, this was Rosslyn, Guam and 49. And then from Guam, especially they branched out to different parts of like Micronesia in the Mariana Islands. In 1956, the sisters moved into Latin America. And in 1970, they opened their first mission in Africa. So basically, the sisters have been all over the United States or in most parts of the world. We've had missions also in Pakistan, and Yemen. They've been all over the place. So it's a it's a pretty spread out growth. Prior to 1969, their primary function was teaching. Their main focus was parochial schools, but they did actually own and establish a

number of institutes and academies and colleges. They were also in kind of at the forefront of special education. They ran several orphanages. And beginning in the 1940s, they also started opening catechetical schools throughout the US.



11:25

This isn't a complete list, but this is a short list of some of the Hass and defunded schools. I'm going to point out two in particular that are pretty important. The first one is St. Mary's Institute. It was the first school they opened in 1851, in Milwaukee, and it was the first school of higher education for girls opened west of the Alleghenies. And so it was definitely the first one in the City of Milwaukee. The other important one is not predominate, Maryland. That open as a, like an institute, like the high school basically in 1873. But beginning in 1895, they started offering college courses, making it the first four year Catholic College for Women in the United States. And the importance of Notre DOM of Maryland goes beyond just the fact that it was the first you know, at this time, there were other women's academies and schools and colleges, but they tended to be have a lot of men operating them. But notre DOM represents one of the first where women held all positions of power. They were the Presidents they were the dean, they were the majority of the professor's the school and all the administrators were almost exclusively women. And that is a feature that really distinguishes Catholic colleges in the 19th century. And definitely Notre Dame, notre Dom, Maryland. I forgot to mention at the beginning, the sisters pronounced the congregation in two ways the Midwesterners say Notre Dame, the East Coasters say notre DOM. And so I've trained myself when I speak of in East Coast institutions to say notre Dom, but normally I say Notre Dame, so I'm not glitching you're not hearing things wrong. That's just how we go with things. Okay, oops. So after 1969 As I mentioned, there was a change in the Constitution, which allowed sisters to choose their own ministries as opposed to being assigned to a ministry. And as a result, sisters really started to branch out and engage in a huge variety of different types of work. We had a lot of sisters that started businesses, for example, we had a sister who had a cake decorating business travel agency, we had two that were graphic designers, one started a religious software program. We also had a lot of sisters that started nonprofit institutes that focused on social justice, ecology and human rights. We've had sisters that have worked in prison ministries, we had one that worked at Purdue, chicken plants, and worked with migrant workers there. We had another who was a disaster relief chaplain who was at 911, shortly within a week of the towers coming down. We also have a number who have engaged in social justice work. We had one who spent two weeks in jail for picketing with grape farm grape pickers in California, we had another one who founded the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission. So there's been a lot of organizations, nonprofits that have really been started by SSND, that many of which still exists today. And then we also have a really great collection of materials about the Milwaukee School boycott, which was the longest school boycott in American history, because the Catholic schools did engage, and there was a lot of controversy in Milwaukee around that. And so we have a pretty good collection of materials related to that as well. So what do we have? We have the records of the deceased sisters, which is over 9600 sisters. That also includes their personal and creative work, so if she started a business we might have been This records if she was a composer, we probably have some of our musical scores. If she was a writer, we're going to have her writings. We'll start the Chronicle, that's probably our most important collection. The Chronicles are sort of a diary of major events that would happen at a school or convent or a mother house. And they kind of vary in what they include. But we'll get to that a bit more in a second. We have photos, we have records for hesistant D on schools, records from the mission extensions, which were the Foreign Missions, and then obviously, leadership records. Now with the Chronicles, while they primarily focus on life in the convent or at the schools, they're also

really interesting because they often touch on larger events of the world. So for example, we have schools in Chicago during the Great Chicago Fire. And so we have really detailed records of particle entries about, you know, what they were living through one of the conference actually burned down. We have some great information about the Civil War, we had sisters in New Orleans, who, you know, were northerners essentially trying to help with orphans, but try not to run afoul of the Confederates. One of the more interesting things we have in the Chronicles are actually the correspondence is, in the 1850s, mother, Caroline Freese, who's considered the founders in North America was on a boat called the Pennsylvania river boat. And Mark Twain had actually been working on the boat and had quit the week before and his brother was on it, and it exploded. And quite a few people died. And a book was written about the explosion. But the author neglected to check the records for mother Caroline and sister Ellen, who was a daughter of charity, I believe, who were actually on there, and both of whom wrote very detailed descriptions of this explosion. So the Chronicles correspondence, while they are very focused on the congregation, there's often these other events that kind of seep in.



16:58

So a couple of notable collections that we have,



17:02

obviously, Catholic education, the SSND were very heavily involved in Catholic education. So we have a lot of stuff about that subject. One of the other things we have is the non study, beginning in the 1980s is a pilot study on aging and eventually expanded to include research on Alzheimer's. And it's been cited in numerous research studies, there was a book written about it, it's been on the news. It was a pretty big study. That's still I think it's just sort of finishing up, but it's still kind of ongoing. We have a large collection of records related to the Second World War, the mother house was in Bavaria, and when Hitler wasn't allowing sisters to teach in schools anymore, they sent a lot of sisters to the United States. Correspondence was cut off, but after the war, we have tons of correspondence, not just from the sisters, but from civilians, talking about the conditions in Germany and basically asking for assistance. So we have a lot of stuff on World War Two. Special Education is also really well covered here. The Archdiocese of St. Louis started a special ed program in 1951. And he has a Sunday with some of the poorest teachers. They also started Notre Dame of Dallas Special School, which is still in existence. The chin tuba Institute for the Deaf in Louisiana, opened in 1992. And there's others. And then also, because the sisters open the missions in Latin American Africa, we have all those foundational records. So we've had sisters that have lived through coos, we've had them lived through a variety of political upheaval. And so a lot of that is recorded in our collections as well. For example, we have sister in Chile, who assisted some guerrilla fighters sort of accidentally, it's a long story. But basically the government found out he came looking for them, and they did manage to escape but it was a pretty harrowing couple of weeks for them. Um, finally, I'm gonna just talk about a couple of notable SSND. I had mentioned mother Caroline Treece earlier. She's the founders in North America. She basically grew the congregation the United States. One of the interesting things she did was when she established the Milwaukee mother house, it was like an eight bedroom or an eight room house. And by the time she died in 1894, she had grown into almost an entire city block. So it was a huge and it was like a little city unto itself. We also have since Risinger. Kirk, who was a well known portrait painter in the 20s and 30s. She studied at the Chicago Art Institute, she created large pieces for

churches. In 1932. She wore the silver medal for the Warsaw international fair. We have examples of her work and then also records about her life. Sister Carolyn, hence skin she became the first female superintendent of a Catholic school system in Dallas. And in 1971 in tend to freeze enrollment and Catholic schools to avoid integration. She froze enrollment for seven years and got into a lot of trouble for that it was a very big problem, but she stuck to her guns. And she has very interesting stories about what life was like as the first superintendent of schools. And then the last one I'm gonna mention is Sister Margaret, Ella Trexler, who was actually pictured here. She's very interesting. She marched with Dr. Martin Luther King and Selma. She was the eventually became the Executive Director of the National Catholic Conference on interracial justice. She co founded the National Coalition of American nuns, and was a founder of the Institute for Women. She was also a prominent supporter of women's rights, especially within the Catholic Church, and very outspoken, very interesting woman. But we have a collection of her materials as well. So that is it. It's a very quick summary. I apologize for speaking quickly. But that's basically what we have at the North American archives. I would highly encourage you if you have any questions or ideas or thoughts to reach out, I would be glad to speak to you and help you in any way I can. Thank you.

 21:13

Thanks so much. Michelle, we have one quick question. Who decides what's eligible to be in the notable collections? Does the collection ever grow? And is it remain the same as it when it first began?

 21:27

Who decides I basically, I'm the director. So I'm the one who makes the biggest decisions about what comes in? Have we grown exponentially when we started, it was just me by myself. And we were just provincial collections. But we've recently brought in Mulberry University's collection. The Institute of Notre DOM was a very important institution school in Baltimore. When it closed their collections came here. We have Yes, we are growing faster than we can almost handle at some point, we're surely running out of space. So our collection is always changing. It's always growing.

 22:01

Excellent. Thank you, Scott, you have next

 22:10

Can I get a host to turn my video back on please?

 22:25

Thank you very much. My name is Scott Hagar and I am the archivist for the Daughters of Charity province of St. Louise in Emmitsburg, Maryland. For this talk, I was asked to answer two questions. What makes our archives unique? And what are our projects for the future? In terms

questions. What makes our archives unique? And what are our projects for the future? In terms of what makes us unique, I will point to three things in the history of the American community from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. This is a charity to the Daughters of Charity, the provincial mergers that have shaped the community in the last decade, and the relationship that the Archives has with the Seaton shrine. In terms of projects that we are looking to accomplish in the near future, I will highlight our digital partnerships with outside organizations, and our attempts to implement more rigorous formal documentation of loans and agreements in place of handshakes and unwritten understandings. The background the Daughters of Charity are a global community founded in the 1600s by St. Vincent DePaul and Louise de Marillac. In France. That's a picture of Vincent right there. In 1809, Mother Seton St. Elizabeth Ann Seton founded her community, the Sisters, a charity of St. Joseph's based on the French rule of the daughters. It was only in 1850 that the two communities merged the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph's becoming the first American province of the daughters. So the first reason that our repository is unique is that the province inherited the ministry work of Mother Seton as well as its archival history. Therefore, the archive and Emmetsburg is the largest holder of Mother Seton's writings and see Tony Jana as we call it in the world, and the collections related to the Seaton family and the canonization cause are very much our bread and butter collections in terms of research requests. Mother Seton died in 1821, and she was canonized in 1975. Second, the single province in 1850, became two in 1910, and in 1969, became five provinces. In the early 1980s, Sister Elaine Wheeler became one of the system leaders in the creation of archives for women religious communities. Her work led to each of the five provinces maintaining their own separate archives. In 2011, four of these provinces reemerged into the current province of St. Louise, encompassing the entirety of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains. So it looks a little map there, the blue and everything to the right and to the east is the current province of St. Louise. When the provincial mergers occurred, that means that all of the archives merged and combined. There are pluses and minuses to this. We have a spread of researchers that extends across the country and thus a spread of the use of the materials that we steward. What comes to mind are incredibly robust genealogy communities in St. Louis. They are some of our most frequent researchers. This also leads to difficulties in reaching our researchers who are often looking for materials related to their hometowns, but are very far removed from the records themselves. While there are many requests that we can handle remotely for the projects researchers truly need to search the materials themselves, this may place the records out of reach. Sister, daughter's friendly neighbor across the wall is the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth MC. While we have some shared leadership between us, and there's naturally a large amount of collaboration, we remain separate institutions. Located at the shrine is a museum related to Mother Seton's life, which is a ready venue for exhibit and interpretation of many of the artifacts in the daughter's collection. The space remodel in 2013 in the fall last year, or 2023, in the fall last year, excuse me. That is a photo from the grand opening and ribbon cutting. And here are some photos from the exhibits. On the left. Some of these are books that are on display. And yes, we do make sure to turn pages and monitor for light bleaching and all that. And on the right is a temporary exhibit featuring the needle works some of the surviving needle works from students of St. Joseph's Academy. Archives also has its own dedicated exhibit space in the museum where we can curate our own exhibits with fairly limited interference. This is the exhibit that is on display. Now, it is on the history and change and development of the habit of the Daughters of Charity. And this exhibit will be up through the end of this calendar year. You're in the area please stop by.



27:22

This takes us to our future plans. The first of which I'd like to highlight focuses on outreach and accessibility for our collections. We are looking to begin making some of our collections

accessibility for our collections. We are looking to begin making some of our collections available online in a systematic way. And I do want to emphasize some we are fortunate enough to have equipment on site to handle most of the digitization aspect of this. Thanks to investment from our leadership team, we do not have the capability of hosting or providing some type of Portal for access. This is where we have become to work with outside organizations. The archives will do the scanning and the metadata, and our partners will provide the platform. This will serve both preservation goals and access goals as well as ksn with some of the larger archival world in a way that private collections often are not. And it would be clear it is a private collection. Even though we are available to lay researcher than outside researchers. We do have to think about who our partners are for these projects. Due to the wide range of materials and the collections they do not all easily fit into one category. For example, we've worked with digital Maryland, which is the platform of the Enoch Pratt library and Baltimore highlight collections related to Maryland, and particularly our corner of Frederick County. We put up postcard and image collections related to the daughter's old college in Emmitsburg, and the collection of the St. John's school and Orphan Asylum in Frederick from the early 19th century. And that one should actually be up within the next few days here very shortly. These latter materials are particularly important for their accounts of events in the city, and for community lists and student names of interest to genealogists including those local African American community. We would like to place the college newspaper on this site as well of which we have a complete run and which has never been available before really as a way to bridge alumni and alumni groups and their descendants of the schools and colleges. From materials like these, we chose digital Maryland because it is a platform for state and local materials with user research who would not necessarily think to look in exclusively Catholic collections. In other words, they are a platform that researchers would be likely to go to. There are other collections which inherently deal with Catholic matters and are not limited in original scope. The mother seat and guild bulletin for example, the official newsletter of the leading group that achievement of Satan's canonization is now viewable in its entirety. Read through the Catholic research resources Alliance portal CRA. And that is, of course, now a part of Atla. Hey, look at that, and Caitlin was working with here look at that. As our next major digitization project, we would like to begin scanning the mother seat and writing selection, which would constitute the largest digitization project we have yet undertaken. There already exists a four volume set of the writings of Mother Satan, which are transcribed and annotated. But this only encompasses half of the correspondence with the two letters and her family's letters being yet unavailable. We will be working with the Vincentian Studies Institute at DePaul University to provide a platform for these materials, hopefully along with some updated transcripts, and will work exactly as I said, we will do the scanning in the metadata, and we will work with their libraries to discuss what metadata is necessary, and discuss with them how we would like to present it and they can go and do the back end the tech stuff and provide the portal and access site. This project will allow us access to university level infrastructure for hosting increase our scholarly contacts at a major Vincentian University and of course extended the reach of the materials with a lowered risk of fat loss or damage to the materials in the future. We would also like to use these type of projects to partner with more regional organizations outside of Maryland, where the daughters were once active, but if faced the effects of demographics and changing membership these days, by selecting materials that reflect the varying interests of our researchers say both a local historian interested in a hospital and the child of a nurse at that same hospital, we can determine materials that could be useful to remote researchers say the complete run of the hospital newsletter for which the daughters own their copyrights. And that example there is of the hospital newsletter from Hotel do Hospital in New Orleans. That's dated 1961. That's another little pet project that we'd like to do in the future. Our goal is to partner with local and regional historical organizations provide shared custody and remote access to materials through organizations that local researchers today are more likely to go to

in searching for these resources. I'd like to scale this down from our future external plans and take a moment to discuss our upcoming internal projects as a way of showing some of the work that does not get noticed or publicized by its important structure for everything else. One of these is correcting some habits of the past that did not necessarily reflect best practice. In the past several more positions in the archives shrine and building was staffed by daughters rather than laypeople. Rather than formal documentation regarding loans and uses or even formal accession processes. This led to a series of handshake agreements that were not documented anywhere. This means that the archives is now kind of stuck with several out of date documents regarding location of artifacts, who the donor was, or what's legal or copyright status is. Determining these pieces of metadata is frankly, a really, really big project in its own right. I included the photo here of these two statues for a certain reason. These two statues are in a multipurpose room on the other side of the building. One day, someone comes up to me and says, Hey, Vincent's hand in cross a broken and I sort of said, Wait, what, I have no idea what you're talking about. Please explain, I don't understand. And so I had it explained to me that these two statues over on the other side of the building were in the archives, apparently archival artifacts, and were under the archives care and it was now the fact that one of them had been damaged and broken was in fact now my problem, which was not a fun day, or a fun way to find out that you had to figure something out like that.



34:19

Even more important than all of this, however, is to ensure that we do not end up in the same place again. Many staff members are still around from the days of handshake agreements, and they aren't always the most understanding the first time they're asked to sign a document with conditions. Rather than simply being handed a historical artifact. You can have all of the best policies in place. The policies are only as good as their enforcement and their placement into practice, ensuring that we have things like clear ownership of all materials to help us provide access and outreach in the future with full confidence. There are some big trend topics but I did not mention here are passed over very quickly. The provincial mergers are occurring as the daughter states the dropping membership but so many other women religious communities are facing. Michelle went and talked about that with the SSN DS. The Daughters are a little bit better off. They're they're still getting new members with some reasonable rates, and they have the international aspect that they can fall back on. I've also talked far more about digital outreach than many other archivists in these communities likely would, which can only occur when there's a baseline model of sustainability already in place rather than one of impending completion. At the same time, I'm not trying to pretend like these trends are not happening. The expanded shrine opens the possibility of following the research central center model, which groups such as the Reto sisters have followed. But the Archives does remain a fully connected part of the daughter structure and will likely continue to do so not illegally connected to the shrine. But these looming trends make us want to ensure that illegal ducks are in order in case there are more murders or changes that arise. Women Religious archives have vast relevance to many different types of researchers that we often face difficulties connecting with our research are communities of genealogists, academics, and regions our communities have withdrawn from. But we still also wish to protect that genuine and legitimate need of some information to remain private community. Our goals, in short, are to find the range of materials that we think may be most useful to our constituencies, ease the burden of access, where we are able, and ensure that what we are sharing is done in a way that ensures archival sustainability. And I believe that Cindy is the next one after me. So thank you very much. And I'll take if there's questions for me, I'll happily take them.

 36:53

There was a question, how long was the process digitize your collections that you've worked on thus far? That is from the time you partner with an organization to the time the collection is up and running.

 37:06

So with the Frederick St. John's school, this is something that I reached out to them about maybe a year or so ago, at the time, we had a new archivist who was going to handle those tasks lined up, that individual had to withdraw and not accept the position. So we had to start the hiring process again. I completed the scanning myself, before the new archivist arrived, the new archivist went and completed the metadata. All of this new archivists started in October, and it's going up to we'll say, a year for that collection. And this is a two box collection set of postcards that took a few weeks. We're starting a process on some other scrapbooks. We signed the paperwork but have not started. We've done the scanning, we have not started the metadata yet hopefully we can move this along a little quicker in the future. And the project with DePaul is one that we've talked about sort of on and off for a while, and they had some restructuring in their libraries so that actual scanning is not starting until this summer. I can't give you a good answer to that because it kind of changes and is variable based on a lot of things. That's a long answer. I apologize. And

 38:23

What size is your archive staff that works on these projects. So

 38:27

we have a staff of five full time laypeople, which is very, very large for these women religious communities, especially not one not connected to a university, as well as three sisters who work part time in the archives and our mission and our formerly mission to the archives. And having their knowledge and that institutional legacy of the community around is is massively massively helpful.

 38:55

Silent, okay, that's, that's all the questions that we have right now. Um, Cindy, take it away.

 39:05

Okay, hello, everybody. My name is Cindy Hill. I'm one of the archivists for the Sisters of the Holy Cross. In Notre Dame, Indiana, we are on the campus we share the campus with St. Mary's College who is one of the sisters sponsored institutions, and we are across the street from the University of Notre Dame. Just some background on our sisters in 1841. Father basil Anthony

Moreau established the community of sisters in St. Croix in Amman, France. And on August 4 1841, our first sisters received the Holy habit in the chapel of the Good Shepherd sisters. In 1841, in August of that year, seven men departed from on France To begin a mission in the state of Indiana, and those among those men was Father Edward Soren, who was known as the founder of The University of Notre Dame. And as they were getting everything set up and establishing a new mission and a new university, they realized they needed more help than they had. So Father Soren, sent word to Father Moreau and father Moreau sent four sisters to the United States to help with the founding and working at Notre Dame. They did not establish or they weren't centered in the South Bend area because the local bishop didn't want another community of sisters. So Father Soren reached out to the Bishop of Detroit, and gave the Bishop of Detroit gave the sisters and father Soren permission to settle in Bertrand Michigan. And what you see on your screen is a picture of what's left of that site, there is a historical marker stating the founding of St. Mary's. And in August of 55, father saw and had procured land and across the street from Notre Dame, and the sisters moved to where we now are the mother house and it's the campus is actually known as St. Mary's of the Immaculate Conception. So, the mission, the main goal, or the mission of the sisters, is they go where they are needed. And, as we all know, in 1861, started the Civil War, the United States, and Governor Andrew Morton at the behest of General Grant, sent a messenger to Notre Dame to ask for some sisters to work as SR nurses in Cairo, Illinois. And we had six sisters who signed up and went, and this turns into one of our largest collections that we have one of our most well known collections. The sisters ended up becoming founding members of the Navy nursing corps, where they worked on the Red Rover, one of the first US hospital ships. And that's a letter from Governor Morton asking Sister Angela, or thanking her for her offer of six sisters. The Sisters of the Holy Cross also served in military hospitals in Paducah and Louisville, Kentucky, mountain city in Cairo, Illinois, Memphis, Tennessee, St. Louis, and Franklin, Missouri and in Washington, DC. And we have letters and journals from the sisters at that time. And those are some of the things that we get our most research requests for, and is probably when we do start digitizing our collection in the future. The Civil War collection is definitely one that we would like to make available. The sisters also worked as nurses in the Spanish American War, they were in Cambodia and in Lebanon. And I'm sorry, one of the exciting projects that we have for the future. And I do believe I saw her name one of the other members of the religious congregations, who is going to be part of this is the sisters are the sponsors of what is become known as the heritage and Research Center at St. Mary's College. It's sponsored by the Sisters of the Holy Cross, and it is an archive collaborative of 10 congregations of women religious and their sponsored ministries. It's going to be located here on the on our campus. Our campus was chosen, we're close to Chicago, it's easy to get to we have world class university across the street, to bring in researchers and to work with the colleges to have the student come and do research. And that's our that's our big project. We hope to break ground soon. So and that's pretty much what we have. If there's any questions or you know, I can ask like answer later



44:42

um, we don't have any questions lined up from the audience, but I have some questions. So, Scott talked about this a little bit and Cindy, you are saying that there's going to be a new research center, but currently how access A bowl are your collections through an online catalog? Or a digital archive currently? And what advice would you give a scholar or student or history enthusiast who wants to use your collection?



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 45:17

We did have. In 2019, we did a big project with the humanistic studies program here at St. Mary's College. And we had student researchers come in, and they did digitize some items. A lot of our stuff is not digitized right now we don't have the space or the capacity for it. That's one of the goals with hark is to hopefully have some of our stuff digitized, so it can be accessed. Right now, when people call us and they ask us for information, what we can send them we will, but we do invite people to come to our archives, and research we would send them finding aids, so they can, what materials we have available.

 46:02

So Scott talked about this, but Michelle, how what kind of research and folks do do they need to come to your archive in person? Or is there anything they can do? Before they if they even need to come in?

 46:18

So yeah, first off, I can't get my video to start again, because it's saying it's shut off. So. So yes, we do get researchers all the time, we get about we answer our bicep answers about 1000 reference requests a year. So we handle things all over the place. We've done media, we've done work with scholars, we've done a variety of things, if you can give us an idea of what you need, we are able to get you that information. People are also welcome to visit us here in Milwaukee, which we do have on occasion, to research collections. In person. We don't have a lot of stuff online, we just have been growing so much that like that is our first priority at this moment. However, we have made every effort to really be able to work with people that have needed our collections and to make them as accessible as possible.

 47:11

Question for Cindy from the audience. How would a religious community join the heart collaboration?

 47:17

I can give out the information our member of our leadership team and sister Suzanne Brennan would be the one that needs to be contacted. There's a whole process that needs to go through. I'm just the Archivist of one of the congregations who is a part of it. So she's one of the chairs. Our board vice president is actually on the Zoom webinar too. So

 47:44

um, so yeah. Would you be able to put some contact information in the chat? Yes, absolutely. Great. So what are some challenges your institutions are currently facing? We've talked about opportunities. So what kind of challenges and the the pandemic have any hand in that? What

kind of changes have happened in your institution? Do you do business differently? You post pandemic.

 48:23

That project that we were doing with St. Mary's College, was supposed to in, I believe, April of 2020, being shared with at the local history museum and in a co op that we were going to do. And it took off. They ended up obviously being shuttled, and they did like an online display. And then in November 21, we set it up at the library on campus with St. Mary's College and allow them we'll let started allowing researchers come back pretty quickly. So

 49:03

yeah, I would say COVID didn't really affect us too much. I mean, we obviously we simply shut down for a year. But once we opened up, we kind of just really got back into the scheme of things. So our collection is pretty accessible and kind of has been since we opened in 2018.

 49:21

We got pretty backlogged on requests for a while because we had to be selective. You know, there were some things we could answer remotely and some that we really couldn't. We tried to be a little bit more flexible with helping remote researchers. It's spurred our interest in taking the next steps into going into the digital world and making digitally accessible but even that took a lot of time afterward, before it really started to get off the ground. And I would say even now it's it's just getting off the ground.

 49:55

Give me another question from the audience. What advice would you give to recent archives management graduate to a recent archives management graduate who's helping her church organize their archives? And where should she begin?

 50:10

I think most archivists would say when you're beginning, it's good to get just a general overview of what's in the collection. So like an inventory to get an idea of what you have, and then kind of use that to help identify the most important collections or the ones that you think will be the most used. Because those are generally the ones you kind of want to focus on first. You know, and basically, you don't have to rearrange everything, you just kind of want to get a handle on what's there and how it's organized. And then just sort of document that somehow to make it so that others can find it going forward.

 50:45

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Start, start writing things down. Don't rely on it just being in your own head. And even talk to the people with the institutional knowledge, whether it's priest, Pastor, Deacon, sister, the parishioner volunteer who's been there the longest, get their institutional knowledge and get it into some codified written down and form that will outlast you and all of them.

 51:14

And then, unless we have any other questions for the audience, my last question was, what successes have you had connecting with local communities of the faithful?

 51:28

So we've done a lot of outreach here, one of the main things we've done it's been a lot of in person things. So we give lots of tours, we've given lots of talks, that's one of the main things we do is we give a lot of talks about what's in our collection history, various pieces of history of the SSND. You know, we've done I've read newspaper articles, like we closed a really historic facility, and I'm Grove, Wisconsin, and I wrote a series of articles about the history of the sisters, and Almagro, because it was a, basically, the community grew up around the convent. So we tried to do a lot of things like that we do put digital exhibits online as well that we tried to, like, you know, kind of, again, pull people into some of our history, our communication staff does a lot of social media posts that involve the archive. So a lot of our stuff is very much personal, we do a lot of like face to face things with people in various ways. And we've been pretty successful doing it that way.

 52:28

We have on Fifth floor, the boardroom that I work in, the building was built in 1862, or finished in 1862 is our heritage floor. And we have several rooms dedicated to different ministries of the sisters, we have a main room a museum, that people it's posted on our website, that people are welcome to come and visit and look through it. We have a lot of students from St. Mary's College come and take tours, and also

 53:05

um, we don't have any more questions. So I'll put a last call out, if any, does anyone have anything left to say? Otherwise we can, we can sort of wrap it up.

 53:20

The last thing I just want to say is, is that just on a general note, the history of women religious in the United States is so incredibly fascinating and rich, and deep and unexplored. And I would really recommend that researchers look into it because, you know, Cindy, scan a representative, just small percentage of what exists in this world. And we're barely scratching the surface. I mean, the few things we talked about doesn't even scratch the surface of the

things you will find in our collections, all of our collections. And so I can't say it enough. Please look into the history of women religious in the United States. It's incredibly fascinating. It's incredibly important, and it's very undervalued.



54:02

And it seems that if there's an aspect of history that you're interested in, there's probably a women religious group that had something to do with it. And looking at the map of the association's members, there's probably a congregational archive not too far from where you live, it seems like so that's right here in our backyard. So thank you to everyone who joined us today. So it's been an insightful session filled with valuable information. I'd like to extend our sincere gratitude to our speakers, Michelle, Scott, and Cindy for sharing their experiences with us. And I want to thank all of our attendees for your participation and thought provoking questions. It's your engagement that makes these webinars so valuable. Before we wrap up, I'd like to mention that we have more webinars coming probably in the next academic year. So please keep your eye on our website and social media for updates and once again thanks for joining us we hope you found today's webinar informative and until next time take care and goodbye