

2013.04

Omaha Regional Community Collection

Repository

Mercy Heritage Center
720 Heritage Center Place
Belmont NC 28012

Physical Description:

417 linear feet, including
Documents
Photographs
Sound Recordings
Bound Volumes
VHS Tapes
Digital Media
Publications

Dates:

1864-2008

Restrictions:

Some files may be subject to restrictions, including unprocessed series. Consult Mercy Heritage Center archivists for more information.

Provenance:

This collection was transferred to Mercy Heritage Center from the former Omaha Regional Community Archives in Omaha, Nebraska in 2013.

History:

The former Province/Regional Community of Omaha was formed in 1929 as thirteen foundations in nine states joined together to become part of the Sisters of Mercy of the Union. From 1929 until 1991, the Province of Omaha existed as a larger governance structure for this broad geographic region. In 1991, the Province of Omaha became the Omaha Regional Community, part of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. In 2008, the regional community joined with five regional communities to form the West Midwest Community of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas.

The **Grass Valley, California** community was founded in 1863 by Mother Mary Baptist Russell and six sisters from San Francisco. The independent community operated orphanages and Mt. St. Mary Academy, voting to join the Sisters of Mercy of the Union in 1928.

In 1864, seven sisters from Manchester, New Hampshire, arrived in **Omaha, Nebraska**, sent by Mother Frances Warde to create a new foundation. The group included Sister Teresa Austin Carroll, who had helped to found communities in New York and would go on to lead foundations in New Orleans, Belize and along the Gulf Coast. The sisters began to operate schools in the city and soon spread to surrounding areas. The College of St. Mary opened in 1923. The foundation also began operating hospitals in 1870, with the opening of St. Joseph's Mercy Hospital and St. Catherine's hospital (now Bergan Mercy Medical Center) in 1910. Upon voting to join the Sisters of Mercy of the Union, the Omaha community became the headquarters for the Province and serves as the administrative center of the West Midwest Community.

The **Red Bluff, California** foundation was originally located in the mining town of Yreka. Founded in 1871, the sisters of the Yreka community encountered many hardships in the declining town, and eventually split into the Rio Vista foundation (later part of the San Francisco community) and Red Bluff in 1881. The small community operated the Academy of Our Lady of Mercy and St. Elizabeth's Hospital. The Red Bluff Sisters of Mercy initially voted against joining the Sisters of Mercy of the Union, but a subsequent vote affirmed the decision to join and the Red Bluff sisters became part of the Omaha Province in 1931.

In 1882, Sisters of Mercy from St. Louis established a foundation in **Colorado**. After a short initial period in Conejos, the community moved to Durango and immediately opened a hospital and school. The community also began to operate hospitals in the remote mining towns of Ouray and Cripple Creek. In 1889, the community moved its motherhouse to Denver, opening a home for working women, schools and a hospital. Ministries expanded throughout the state and included schools, hospitals and the Montcalm Sanatorium in Manitou Springs. The Sisters of Mercy in Colorado voted to join the Sisters of Mercy of the Union and became part of the Omaha Province.

Sisters of Mercy arrived in western **Missouri** as three separate foundations: A group led by Mother Mary Jerome Shubrick from Worcester, Massachusetts arrived in Carrollton, Missouri in 1881 and settled in **Independence** in 1884; the **Joplin** community, founded from Louisville, Kentucky in 1885 by Mother Mary Ignatius Walker, and **Kansas City**, founded from Louisville, Kentucky in 1887 by Mother Mary Agnes Dunne. The Kansas City community remained affiliated with the Louisville community until 1891. The three foundations combined to form one community in 1911, with its motherhouse in Kansas City, which became part of the Omaha Province of the Sisters of Mercy of the Union in 1929.

Sisters Mary Magdalen Bennett and Mary Vincent McDermott arrived in **Council Bluffs, Iowa** in 1887 from a disbanded Mercy community in Minnesota. There the sisters founded St. Bernard's hospital, which soon focused on mental health, and Mercy Hospital, which served as a general hospital. The **Des Moines** community, founded in 1893, ran a hospital as an affiliate of the Davenport Sisters of Mercy until they became independent in 1916. In 1922, the Des Moines

community joined with the Council Bluffs community. When the community joined the Omaha Province in 1929, the Mt. Loretto Academy in Council Bluffs served as the province's novitiate.

The **North Dakota** foundation, led by Mother Mary Ignatius Lynch, arrived in Yankton, North Dakota from Omaha, in 1878. After several years of conflict, the community was dissolved by the bishop in 1883. A group chose to remain in North Dakota and moved to Belcourt to teach at a Native American mission. When the mission burned in 1907, the North Dakota community moved its motherhouse to Devil's Lake, where they had established a hospital in 1895. The North Dakota community joined the Union in the 1929 as part of the Omaha Province.

The **Oregon** community of the Sisters of Mercy was founded by a group led by Mother Mary Joseph Lynch in 1896. The group moved to Portland at the request of the bishop from a failed foundation in Morris, Minnesota. The group immediately founded a home for working women, which eventually became known as Jeanne d'Arc Young Women's Residential Hall, a home for the aged, and took over a children's home. The community also operated schools and hospitals in the area. In 1929, the Oregon Sisters of Mercy joined the Union as part of the Omaha Province.

The **Idaho** community was founded in 1916 by a group of Sisters of Mercy who had previously formed a community in Salt Lake City. Upon the closure of their hospital ministry in Utah, the community moved to Pocatello, Idaho under the leadership of Mother Alphonsus Brady. The community operated St. Anthony's Hospital in Pocatello and Mercy Hospital, Nampa. The community joined the Union as part of the Omaha Province in 1929.

The **Raton, New Mexico** community was founded by a group of sisters from Stanton, Texas, led by Mother Mary Angela Hostetter. The group began operating schools in the area and joined the Union in 1929 as part of the Omaha Province.

Scope and Content

This collection is organized into seven series with subseries divided by location, format and function. Historical materials for foundations that formed the original Province of Omaha are organized by state and city/town. Research and reference material compiled by Sister Cecilia Mary Barry is separated by geographic location and located at the beginning of each subseries.

Administrative material is divided into two series, 200 and 300, delineating governance and specific administrative functions. Series 400 includes information on individuals, events and programs. More recent material related to ministries may be found in series 500. Audio-Visual materials and publications are grouped in distinct series.

Unprocessed portions of the collection may be subject to restrictions.

Schema:

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101.1 General

101.2 Grass Valley

101.3 Red Bluff

101.4 Sacramento

102 Colorado

102.1 General

102.2 Denver

102.3 Durango

102.4 Broomfield

102.5 Greeley

102.6 Manitou

102.7 Northglenn

102.8 San Luis

103 Idaho

103.1 General

103.2 Nampa

103.3 Pocatello

104 Iowa

104.1 General

104.2 Centerville

104.3 Council Bluffs

104.4 Des Moines

104.5 Dubuque

104.6 Granger

104.7 Imogene

105 Missouri

105.1 Joplin

105.2 St. Louis

105.3 Kansas City

105.4 Independence

105.5 Marshall

106 Nebraska

106.1 Omaha

106.1.1 High Schools and Colleges

106.1.2 Grade Schools and Special Education

106.1.3 Mercy Centers

106.1.4 Mercy Hospitals

106.2 Omaha Province

106.3 Outstate Nebraska

106.4 Chadron

106.5 Greeley/O'Connor

106.6 Lincoln

106.7 Loop City

107 New Mexico

107.1 Raton

107.2 Costilla

107.3 Mesilla/Silver City/La Union

107.4 Springer

107.5 Anthony

108 North Dakota

108.1 General

108.2 Balta

108.3 Devil's Lake

108.4 Fargo

108.5 Langdon Oaks

108.6 Valley City

108.7 Williston

109 Oregon

109.1 General

109.2 Portland

109.3 Marshfield/Coos Bay

109.4 North Bend

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200 Omaha Provincial Governance

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202 Regional Meetings

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206 Corporation Records

207 Strategic Planning

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300 Omaha Provincial Administration

301 Office Files

302 Miscellaneous

303 Financial

304 Property

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306.2 Provincial/Regional Communication

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403 Member Files

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502 Education

503 Health Care

504 Housing

505 Justice

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600 Audio/Visual

700 Publications

701 Theses/Dissertations