



2011.02

Mercy Union Collection

Repository:

Mercy Heritage Center
720 Heritage Center Place
Belmont NC 28012

Physical Description:

408 linear feet, including
Documents
Bound items
Publications
Photographs, Slides
Audio-visual material

Dates:

1929-1991

Restrictions:

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

Provenance:

This collection was originally stored at the Sisters of Mercy of the Union Generalate in Bethesda, Maryland. The collection was held in the main office locations of the Sisters of Mercy leadership and transferred to Mercy Heritage Center from the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas office in Silver Spring, Maryland in January, 2011.

History:

Throughout the nineteenth century, as the Sisters of Mercy established foundations across the United States, difficulties with distance and communication meant that each community operated independently of one another. Although some communities had joined together over the years,

Mercy communities were largely independent of one another and customs and procedures varied. By 1929, there were over 9,000 Sisters of Mercy in sixty independent communities in the United States.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Rome began to urge the disparate groups to discuss unification. After several years of meetings and discussions, in 1929 thirty-nine of the motherhouses voted to create the Union, a centralized governance structure to unify customs, regulations, processes such as formation and allow for the sharing of ideas and best practices. The Sisters of Mercy of the Union decided to locate general headquarters in DC. Provinces were established, which would report to the new generalate: the provinces of Omaha, Providence, St. Louis, Chicago, Cincinnati, Scranton. Provinces were added as needs were more clearly defined: the provinces of New York and Baltimore were formed in 1935 and the Detroit Province was created from a portion of the Cincinnati Province in 1940. Nine other independent communities eventually joined the Union and were assigned to existing provinces: Red Bluff, California, Belize, two locations—Charlestown and Hosororo—in British Guiana, Fremont, Ohio, Aurora, Illinois and Fort Scott, Kansas in the 1930s, Jamaica in 1953, Argentina in 1962 and Worcester, Massachusetts in 1987.

The Union was led by an elected Mother General (later called Administrator General) and General Council (later called the General Administrative Team), while each province had an elected Mother Provincial and Provincial Council that reported to the Generalate.

In 1965, the Federation of the Sisters of Mercy was created to provide a forum for independent Mercy communities and the Sisters of Mercy of the Union to connect and collaborate (See Federation Collection 2011.03). This initiated a movement towards unification of the Union with the independent communities, beginning with the development of Core Constitutions and the Mercy Futures Project, which served to unite sisters across the Americas. These projects culminated in a vote which created the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, which replaced the Union as the national governance structure of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas in 1991.

Scope and Content:

The Mercy Union collection consists of administrative and historical records documenting the functions of the Union governance structure, both national and provincial, as well as documentation related to individual members, ministries and properties related to the Sisters of Mercy, both national and international. Administrative records include documentation related to individual members, properties, ministries and programs. Historical records include biographical material related to prominent individuals, research related to the history of the Sisters of Mercy, including reference material on international or independent Mercy communities, and photographs and other audio-visual material documenting various aspects of Mercy ministry and life.

Material is organized into two large groups, Administrative and Historical. Within these categories, material is broken into series, sub-series and sub-sub-series based on the topic, format, geographic location, and function through which the material was generated.

Series/Subseries

ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

A100 RECORDS OF SISTERS, HOUSES, WORKS AND ADMINISTRATIONS

- A 100 Sister Membership Cards Box
- A 101 Deceased Sisters 1929-1990.
- A 102 Dispensed Sisters 1929-1991.
- A 103 Sisters Dismissed 1929-1991
- A 104 Sisters Transferred to other Orders 1938-1989
- A 105 Appointments
- A 106 Houses/Works
- A 107 Old Generalate Records
- A 108 New Generalate Records
- A 109 Finance Office Records 1929-1991
- A 110 Miscellaneous Records
- A 111 Records of Administrations 1980-1992
- A112 Legal Records
- A113 Mercy Supplemental Retirement Corp 1981-89

A 200 NEWSLETTERS

- A 201 Generalate Newsletters
 - .1 *Generalate Quarterly* 1932-1963
 - .2 *Open to the Spirit* 1970-1973
 - .3 *Union Scope* 1973-1990
- A 202 Province Newsletters (From early 1960's; Incomplete)

A 300 CORRESPONDENCE

- A 301 Mother General and Mothers Provincial
- A 302 Circular Letters
 - .1 From Mother General
 - .2 From Provincial Administrator 1960-1989
- A 303 Clergy and Hierarchy
- A 304 Rome
- A 305 Apostolic Delegate
- A 306 Independent Sisters of Mercy

A 307 Procurator (Treasurer) General and Procurators Provincial 1930-1967

A 400 REPORTS

A 401 Reports to Rome

A 402 Annual Disciplinary Reports from Mother Provincial 1953-1967

A 403 Summaries of Annual Reports of Local Superiors and Vicars to Mother General 1953-1965

A 404 Annual Reports of Local Superiors

A 407 Annual Statistical Reports 1930-1990

A 408 Archives Reports 1980-1990

A 500 FORMATION

A 501 Receptions and Temporary Professions 1929-1989

A 502 Perpetual Professions 1929-1989

A 504 Reports of Sisters who did not make Perpetual Vows 1930-1980

A 505 Candidates referred to general Council 1936-1960

A 506 Sister Formation

A 507 Sister Formation Conference

A 509 Formation Materials from other Communities

A 510 Incorporation Statistics

A 511 Novice Program 1974-1990

A 512 Associate Membership

A 513 Ongoing Formation

A 600 CHAPTERS

A 601 General Chapters 1929-1988

A 602 Provincial Chapters (All Provinces) 1932-1973

A 603 Provincial Chapters (Assemblies) 1973-1990

A 700 MEETINGS AND COMMITTEES

A 701 General Council/Team

A 702 Generalate (National) Committees

A 703 Commissions

A 800 CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

A 801 Education

A 802 Health

A 803 Personnel Management

- A 805 Miscellaneous
- A 806 Leadership Seminars
- A 807 Spirituality Workshops for Religious

A 900 MISCELLANEOUS

- A 901 Organizations
 - .1 Federation of the Sisters of Mercy (Material transferred to Federation Archives)
 - .2 Leadership Conference of Women Religious
 - .3 National Assembly of Women Religious
 - .4 International Union of Superiors General
 - .5 National Catholic Welfare Conference and National Conference of Catholic Bishops
 - .8 Movement for a Better World
- A 902 Studies
- A 903 Pacem in Terris Convocation
- A 904 Ecumenism
- A 905 Social Justice
- A 906 St. Maurice School
- A 907 Canon Law Material
- A 908 Sisters Advisory Councils
- A 909 Regina Mundi bulletin
- A 910 Mercy Secondary Education Conference
- A 911 Vistandines, Experimental Community
- A 913 Farm Records
- A 914 Joseph Cantrel, Lawyer

A 1000 PROJECTS

- A 1001 WISH Fund
- A 1002 Leaven
- A 1003 Prison Ministry
- A 1004 Mercy Image Project

HISTORICAL RECORD GROUPS

H 100 RELIGIOUS INSTITUTE OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY

- H101 Foundress: Mother Mary Catherine McAuley
- H102 Approbation (1835) and Confirmation (1841) of the Rule and Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy
- H103 Superiors of early American foundations
- H104 Other persons connected with early American foundations

- .1 Bishop Michael O'Connor, SJ
- .2 Reverend Charles H. deLuynes, SJ
- .3 Sr. Mary DePazzi Lucas
- .4 Dr. Daniel McMeal
- .5 Foundresses of other orders
 - .51 Mother Mary Katherine Drexel
 - .52 Mother Elizabeth Seton
- H105 Other things connected with the Institute
 - .1 Mercy Shield
 - .2 Mercy Cross
 - .3 Picture of Our Lady of Mercy
 - .4 Feast Day
 - .5 First Communion Medal
 - .6 Music
 - .7 Books written by early Sisters of Mercy
 - .8 Mother Mary Catherine McAuley Award
 - .9 Register
 - .11 Miscellaneous Memorabilia
- H106 Other events connected with the Institute
 - .1 Crimean War
 - .2 Civil War
 - .3 Spanish American War
 - .4 Celebrations
- H107 Books used by Sisters of Mercy
- H108 Mercy Habit

H 200

UNION OF THE SISTERS OF MERCY IN THE UNITED STATES

- H210 Foundations of Sisters of Mercy of the Union
- H221 Mothers General (Administrators General, Presidents)
- H222 General Councilors/Administrative Teams
- H230 History of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Union
- H231 History of the Institute: Constitutions
- H233 History of the Institute: Generalate
- H240 History of Individual Union Institutions (Provinces)
- H250 Development of Religious Life and Government
 - .1 Adaption and Renewal
 - .2 Historical-Juridical Account of the Sisters of Mercy, 1951
- H290 Miscellaneous Historical Records

H 300

HISTORIES OF INDEPENDENT MERCY COMMUNITIES

- H310 Foundations of Independent Mercy Communities
- H320 History of Australian Union of Sisters of Mercy
- H321 History of Australian Federation of Sisters of Mercy

H 400

AUDIO/VISUAL RECORDS

- H421 Generalate Photographs
 - .1 Persons
 - .2 Events
 - .3 Things
 - .4 Communications Office
- H422 Province Photographs
 - .1 - .9 Individual Provinces
- H423 Mission Photographs
 - .1 Jamaica
 - .2 Belize
 - .3 Honduras
 - .4 Chacachacare (Trinidad)
 - .5 Peru
 - .6 Argentina
 - .7 Chile
 - .8 Guyana
- H424 Federation Photographs
- H425 Independent Mercy Community Photographs
- H426 Miscellaneous Photographs
- H427 Negatives
- H430 Slides
- H441 Reel to Reel Tapes
- H442 Cassette Tapes
- H443 Video Tapes
- H444 Films
- H450 Scrap Books
- H460 Floppy Disks