



The Archival Spirit, July (Summer) 2006

Newsletter of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section, Society of American Archivists

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From the Chair

By Loretta Greene

Twice a year I get new bursts of energy. The first time is with the new year – out with the old and in with the new, New Year's resolutions and all that. The second time is summer vacation. Life takes a new turn in the summer. The first is in relation to the more mellow life style that summer entails. The second is the new schedule with my children out of school. The morning and evening routine is different which frees time to get into projects that are pushed aside when school demands take greater precedence. This spills over into work for me. Research requests decrease as more people are on vacation and this provides an opportunity to evaluate progress on annual goals, revise my daily work schedule and begin projects that have been pushed aside. How about you? Does the summer start a second "New Year" for you?

My summer work schedule this year includes looking forward to the annual SAA conference in Washington, D.C. I look forward to seeing many of you there. Beside the conference offerings, this will be an opportunity to visit museums or monuments that you missed during our last conference in our nation's capital. As we anticipate the annual meeting, we also approach the first anniversary of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We look forward to seeing our Gulf Coast colleagues and again share with you our concern for continued recovery in your archives.

We kick-off our annual gathering with a reception hosted at the American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives of The Catholic University of America. Join us on Wednesday, August 2 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Most of us are in town by then so I look forward to seeing everyone there. The reception provides an excellent venue to renew, and make new, acquaintances which make the SAA conference more enriching. Full information and directions are available on the ARCS site at <http://www.saa-arcs.org/receptionannouncement2006.html>.

ARCS Section Meeting

Our Section meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 4, from 10:00 to 12 noon. The Steering Committee will meet immediately after the Section meeting. Please see Gwynedd Cannan's column about the Section meeting program for more details. We are fortunate that Lee Leumas from the Diocese of Baton Rouge has agreed to share with us

her involvement in recovery efforts for the Archdiocese of New Orleans, religious communities and churches in the affected area. Lee has given this presentation to ARMA and the Society of Southwest Archivists and in a few weeks will present to the American Library Association and the Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists.

One item of discussion during the Section meeting will be development of any session ideas for 2007. This year's Session # 202, sponsored by ARCS, was directly developed from ideas offered at last year's lively Section meeting. Bring your ideas again this year and we can develop a session proposal for 2007.

In relation to Session #202, it is scheduled for Thursday, August 3, at 1:30 p.m. See the related newsletter article with more details. I look forward to seeing you there as we explore unique access issues and support our ARCS colleagues.

Last item to note in preparation for the Section meeting is to remind you to reread last year's minutes. It is best to know what you are approving when we call for that vote on August 5! The minutes are online at <http://www.saa-arcs.org/newsletter/2005/as05-nov.html#art12>.

Until I see you in August, I wish everyone a restful summer. And, have safe travels to D.C. See you then!

Shall We Gather?

By Gwynedd Cannan

Once again, the time for the ARCS annual meeting approaches. We are scheduled to meet in Washington, DC on Friday, August 4, at 10 a.m. We are looking forward to seeing a large representation of our members there.

We'll kick off the Section meeting with a review of the usual, and also new, business issues, so don't be late! Next, we will continue last year's discussion about how members can contribute to the vitality of the section. Make your voices heard! How can ARCS demonstrate our value to society and our special perspective on archival concerns? We will be handing out a leadership volunteer form, so now is the time to reflect on what you can do. Write an article for our newsletter; help update the directory; contribute ideas for the annual meeting program. Or you can listen and learn for now, with a view to playing a more active role in the future.

We also encourage you to come with ideas for the 2007 session in Chicago. All SAA sections will be entitled to endorse or co-endorse up to two program sessions and ARCS should be well represented. Think of themes and issues. We can work up your ideas with others to form a complete program. It is important that members arrive with some point of interest that we can explore together and develop further.

After the business meeting, the program this year will address the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Emilie Leumas, Archivist for the Diocese of Baton Rouge, will describe how her Diocese collaborated with the Archdiocese of New Orleans and religious communities to recover and salvage records in the affected area. Using a combination of PowerPoint and discussion, Lee will address the recovery, what lessons were learned, and how we can prepare for and respond to similar events in the future.

This year's Section meeting has something in it for everyone. Together we can produce an informative and worthwhile meeting that sends us home to our respective archives enthused, invigorated, and enlightened. We look forward to seeing you on Friday, August 4 at 10:00 a.m.

Eastern Province of the Ursulines of the Roman Union Sesquicentennial

By Martha Counihan

The Eastern Province of the Ursulines of the Roman Union is concluding its celebration of 150 years in the New York area. In 1855, German-speaking Ursulines from St. Louis opened the Ursuline Academy in East Morrisania, in what is now the Bronx. The nuns were invited to serve a German-speaking population and found it was mainly Irish and Irish American women who joined them; adaptation to the demands of the mission continues to prevail.

Joining the newly established Roman Union of the Order of St. Ursula in 1901, several Ursuline convents and schools had already been founded, and more independent Ursuline houses joined. At one point, the then Northern Province stretched from New York to California and Alaska. The present Eastern Province now extends from northern New York to Florida with its members mostly concentrated in the metropolitan New York area and

Delaware. Some members also serve in Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America.

Responding to the call of Vatican II to study and return to the spirit and charisma of their founder, Ursulines discovered in their foundress, St. Angela Merici, an inspiration and impetus to extend their ministries beyond schools. Presently, Eastern Province Ursulines continue to minister in three academies for girls, The College of New Rochelle, as well as a number of diverse ministries, particularly to women, children, and the disenfranchised.

Celebrations have included a fund-raising concert of sacred music and a reception for friends and former students with a CD and commemorative album. The celebration will end on June 17 with a mass of Thanksgiving for Ursuline Associates, families, former students, colleagues, and friends. Portable banners with a timeline, commentary and photographs have given a good visual and historic "picture" of the past century and a half. A Book of Memory, specially made for the anniversary will be presented as part of the Offering of Gifts, lists all Ursulines who have preceded the present Province membership states: "Memory is meant here in the sense of 'anamnesis,' an effective remembering which makes something genuinely past to be present and active in community today."

Ontario Jewish Archives launches Ontario Small Jewish Communities Project

By Ellen Scheinberg

The Ontario Jewish Archives (OJA), a department of United Jewish Appeal Federation of Greater Toronto, will be launching a small communities project, which will document the history of eleven small Jewish communities across the province. The OJA was awarded \$117,000 in funding to support this initiative from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Ministry of Culture, which receives \$100 million annually of government funding generated through Ontario's charity casino initiative. This project will involve the OJA partnering with the Ontario Historical Society (OHS) as well as the Regional Joint Communities Organization (RJOC), which is a branch of United Israel Appeal. In turn, the OJA will establish partnerships with community leaders from each of the towns, in order to ensure that they are included in the planning and decision-making process.



The project will last eighteen months and will involve sending two professionals - a researcher/writer and oral historian -- to these communities, to conduct research into the records that are there and interview some of the Jewish residents from each town. Oral history training sessions will also be offered in many of these towns by the OJA and OHS during the course of this initiative. The OJA will also secure a web designer, who will produce a large web site which will capture the history of each town and will be accessible to everyone around the world. After the grant expires, the OJA intends to include as many as fifteen additional small communities.



The eleven towns included in the first phase of this project range in size from 13 to 1400 Jews, and will include Cornwall, Kingston, Belleville, Kitchener/Waterloo, Niagara Falls, St. Catherines, Peterborough, North Bay, Owen Sound, Sudbury and Thunder Bay. These communities were selected based on their location, size, proximity from Toronto, and for most of them, the existence of a functioning synagogue. Although some towns like Cornwall and Thunder Bay no longer have operating synagogues, it is important to include them, since the history of those communities was unique and provides another facet of small community life for Ontario's Jews.



Many of the Jews who moved to these towns during the early twentieth century opened up businesses and became successful shop owners. Their businesses, however, were tied to the local economy, and as many of the large industries closed -- such as those in Cornwall and Sudbury - the Jews began to relocate to larger cities such as Toronto and Ottawa. In turn, many of the children from these communities attended universities out of town and found jobs elsewhere. As a result, many of the towns have been struggling to keep their synagogues open and their communities intact. Brooky Robins, Chair of the Ontario Jewish Archives, highlights the significance of this project stating "although the OJA possesses some records documenting many of these towns, we do not have a full picture of the experiences and accomplishments for each of them. It is therefore critical that we visit them and document their histories while some of the early citizens and their relatives are still alive and living in those communities." In turn, she states "if we truly want to fulfill our provincial mandate of collecting records documenting all of Ontario's Jews, we need to assist these communities and produce products such as this that will make their histories and records accessible to everyone on the Web."



This project will begin this summer and the web product will be launched in the winter of 2008. For more information please consult the OJA's website at www.ontariojewisharchives.org or contact them at 416-635-2883 ext. 170.

Laura Botts Joins Tarver Library, Mercer University

Laura Botts was named the new Head of Special Collections at the Tarver Library, Mercer University, Macon, GA. In addition to the university archives, Special Collections holds the collections of the Georgia Baptist History Depository. Before coming to Mercer in January, Laura was the Popular Music Archivist at Georgia State University in Atlanta.

Compact Shelving Installation Complete

By Margery Sly

The Presbyterian Historical Society is pleased to report that installation of compact shelving in our 10,000 square foot underground storage area is complete. The \$900,000, multi-phase project started in August and finished with the return of 3200 boxes from offsite storage in early April. This project supplies a 48% increase (11,000 cubic feet) in storage space for archival material, enabling PHS to continue to serve as the national archives of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) for years to come.

Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh

By Lynne F. Wohleber

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh has recently launched pages for the Archives on its website: www.pgh.anglican.org (click on Archives on the left-hand column). While still "under construction," an inventory of the collection is available for perusal, as well as some historical information. As our Communication Director's time permits, plans are being made to expand beyond this basic set to include more photos in an "album" format and an events/interest page, among others. For more information, contact: Lynne F. Wohleber, Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, 900 Oliver Building, 535 Smithfield St., Pittsburgh, PA 15222, 412-

The American Theological Library Association (ATLA) Moves to New Headquarters

By Diane Pugh

The American Theological Library Association (ATLA) recently moved to new headquarters, due to an unexpected change in ownership of the association's previous offices. ATLA's new address, which became effective April 1, 2006, is:

American Theological Library Association
300 South Wacker Drive
Suite 2100
Chicago, IL 60606
(914) 941-7636 ext. 2500
archives@maryknoll.org
www.maryknoll.org

Phone numbers and fax numbers have remained the same. Please watch the ATLA web site (at www.atla.com) for further updates and contact support@atla.com with any questions.

As Old City Churches Close, What Becomes of Fixtures and Sacred Objects?

By Cara Anna, The Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. - The altar was old. It was ornate. And it was on the gambling floor of the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. James Lang was startled when he saw it there. Lang, vicar of parishes for the Roman Catholic diocese in Syracuse, had a chat with the manager about desecration. The altar eventually was removed.

Read More: from the [Seattle Times](#).

Nomination For Representative-at-Large

By Ellen Pierce, Maryknoll Mission Archives

I have been a staff member of the Maryknoll Mission Archives since 1991 and Director of the consolidated archives from 1996-1999. I left Maryknoll from 1999-2002 to take a position as the Assistant Archivist for the IBM Corporation. After three years in the business community I returned to Maryknoll to continue the important work of preserving the historical assets of Maryknoll. I currently direct a team of four and several volunteers.

Professionally, I am a MLS graduate from Long Island University, a Certified Archivist and member of Beta Phi Mu, the International Library and Information Studies Honor Society. I am a board member of the Archivists of Religious Institutions (ARI) in New York. I have served on the program committee for MARAC in 1999, presented at a MARAC meeting in 1998, and served on a panel discussion for the Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious business meeting in 1998, on the "Problems with International Collecting". I am a member of several regional archival organizations as well as SAA.

SAA-ARCS Virtual Tour: Mennonite Library and Archives/Mennonite Church USA Archives, Bethel College

By John D. Thiesen

1. What is the mission of your archives?

From our web site: "The purpose of the MLA is to collect, preserve, and make available personal papers, documents, periodicals, books, and other media related to Mennonite studies. The MLA serves as the official archives of Bethel College, and one of two official archives for Mennonite Church USA (see Mennonite Church USA Archives - Goshen on the campus of Goshen College in Indiana), and as a research center promoting the study of Anabaptist and Mennonite history."

2. How many people work in your repository? Do you have volunteers?

It's a little hard to determine our actual FTE since we're closely integrated with the college library; many of the staff do work for both the college library and the MLA. Officially, we have a .75FTE archivist, a .75FTE assistant archivist, and a .25 FTE librarian. Student employment varies but is probably only about .10 FTE. We currently have 6 volunteers; most put in 3-5 hours per week; all of them are retired community members.

3. Describe your repository: office space, reading room, storage area.

Our space is broken up into several pieces. The Bethel College library building has an old section built in ca. 1950 and a new section finished in 1986. Much of our space is on the main floor of the old section about 4500 square feet for reading room, library stacks, work space, and offices. The major part of the archives is stored in the basement of the old library building, about 2500 sq. ft. We also use the attic of the building (very limited climate control) for some archival storage, about 1400 sq. ft. Then we have around 300 cu. ft. of archival items stored in 3 rooms of an unused older dormitory building on campus; we will likely lose this dormitory space in the next few years when that building is remodeled for other uses. So we're lacking significantly in archival storage space, plus we're short of office space and archival processing space. And also short of storage space for archival supplies.

4. Describe the holdings of your repository: volume of material, media, types of collections, etc.

We have around 4500 cu. ft. of paper records, plus several gigabytes of electronic records. The big bulk of it is the archives of Bethel College, and the archives of Mennonite Church USA, the denomination with which we're affiliated. (We are one of two official, national-level archives for Mennonite Church USA. The other one is at Goshen College in Indiana.) We have a fairly extensive personal papers collection, mostly of people with Mennonite affiliations, but also some with a local history focus. Our records are in all media: paper, photos (including nitrate negatives), films, electronic, wire recordings, CD, DVD, tapes, etc.

5. Who uses your repository? Describe reference services and research use at your institution.

Probably the largest group of users is faculty and students, both from Bethel College and from other nearby higher education institutions. Genealogists would be the second largest group of users. And some usage by administrative staff of the organizations for which we are the official archives. We try to operate fairly informally and avoid requiring users to fill out lots of forms or have extended reference interviews. We get many queries via email (hardly any by paper mail anymore) and we do try to respond substantively to these when an answer can be offered with a limited amount of research or sending a few pages of photocopies. For more intensive research, obviously, people need to come in themselves to do that.

6. Are there any interesting projects that you are currently undertaking?

One has to do with electronic records. Mennonite Church USA is a new organization, formed in 2002 by a merger of two older Mennonite denominations. As a new organization, they've taken the opportunity to redesign their computer systems from the ground up, including giving significant attention to records management and archival needs. So they have basic plans in place for systematically transferring electronic records to the archives (or rather, transferring them to an archival status, since the computer system they will reside on won't necessarily be physically located at the archives). This has involved an extremely large number of committee meetings.

Another current project is scanning a set of microfilms of 18th-19th century Mennonite church membership records from Europe. These are, of course, of much interest to genealogists. We plan to scan 15-20 microfilms and post the scans to our web site, thus making these records much more widely accessible. We have completed scans on four films so far and have posted parts of two of them.

Another project serving genealogical users is our work at creating an index database to Mennonite church records (mostly 19th-20th centuries from the Plains states). We're entering data into Brothers Keeper, a shareware genealogical database. In essence, we're creating a very detailed finding aid to this segment of our archival holdings. This project is being done in cooperation with the California Mennonite Historical Society, which distributes a larger genealogical database that they call by the overly cutesy acronym GRANDMA (Genealogical Registry and Database of Mennonite Ancestry).

7. Are there particular collections or aspects of your repository you want to highlight?

One part of our collections that is a surprise to most people is our Native American holdings, specifically Hopi and Cheyenne. Two early Mennonite missionaries, H. R. Voth and Rodolphe Petter, were pioneers in ethnographic studies of Hopi and Cheyenne respectively. We have their papers and those of other Mennonites who have worked with these two Native American groups.

Another strength of our collections is oral history. We have several hundred taped interviews with conscientious objectors during World War I and II, plus interviews in other subject areas.

8. Where are you located? What is your contact information?

Mennonite Library and Archives
Bethel College
300 East 27th Street
North Newton KS 67117-0531
(316) 284-5304
mla@bethelks.edu
www.bethelks.edu/services/mla/

Archivists of Religious Collections Section Officers

Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect: Gwynedd Cannan, Trinity Church in New York City

Chair: Loretta Zwolak Greene, Sisters of Providence Archives

Secretary: Lisa Jacobson, Maryknoll Mission Archives

Past Chair/Nominating Committee: Diane Wells, Episcopal Diocese of Olympia (Wash.)

Representatives-at-Large: Nancy J. Taylor, Presbyterian Historical Society; Judy Huenneke, Mary Baker Eddy Library

Newsletter Editor: Wesley W. Wilson, DePauw University

Web Coordinator: Mark J. Duffy, The Archives of the Episcopal Church USA

Editor's Notes

The Archival Spirit is published three times a year by the Archivists of Religious Collections Section of the Society of American Archivists. Feature pieces as well as announcements of acquisitions and projects are welcome. Send submissions to: Wesley W. Wilson at wwwilson@depauw.edu.

For membership information, contact: Society of American Archivists, 527 S. Wells, 5th Floor, Chicago, IL 60607, 312-922-0140, fax 312-347-1452, info@archivists.org

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