



The Archival Spirit, June 2008 *Spring Issue*

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

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From the Chair -- With a Wing and a Prayer

By Gwynedd Cannan

Time is not just flying by, it is break-the-time-barrier rocketing by. Turn around and many of us, I hope most of us, will be foregathering in San Francisco for the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists. It seems just yesterday that we met in Chicago. The world is spinning much too fast.

However, I can't think of a better location for us to come together, slow down, and reflect. San Francisco is a beautiful town full of interesting sites, an added incentive to make the effort to attend this conference. Those of you who are coming, do include ARCS in your schedules. Chris Doan is hosting the reception at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of the Presentation. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet and greet your colleagues from near and far in a relaxed and convivial setting. And we'll have the opportunity to visit the archives of the good sisters whose history touches on the California Gold Rush and the San Francisco earthquake. Read more about it in the article by Chris in this issue.

At the business meeting, you will hear updates on our various activities. We also want to hear from you. We invite you all to participate and we welcome your ideas and suggestions. You can contact us before the meeting or at the meeting or both. We'll also be electing a member to be representative at large. Loretta Greene, Nominating Committee Chair, has named two fine candidates. Their qualifications can be found in this newsletter. I heartily thank both members for agreeing to stand.

The section session, which will occur after the business meeting, is being organized by Alan Lafever. It should prove to be every bit as enjoyable as it is informational. Several members will tell us about the faith they serve and how they document it. This session will build on the newsletter's virtual tour feature which has already helped members become better acquainted with each other.

So we will have much to look forward to at the end of August. In the meantime, have a wonderful spring and summer. We look forward to seeing you in San Francisco.

Nominating Committee Proposes Candidates for ARCS Officers and Steering Committee

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Representative-at-large

By Loretta Greene, Past Chair

The Section has one position open for election this year: Representative-at-large. The term of office is 2 years. This position is part of the ARCS Steering Committee, serves in an advisory capacity to the Chair, and may be assigned specific responsibilities by the Chair. Elections will be held at the Section meeting in San Francisco on Friday, August 29, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Paul Daniels, Archivist, Midwest Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and St. Paul's Seminary in St. Paul

I have served as archivist in a shared position for over 20 years, working as institutional archivist for Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. and as archivist for the nine synods of the upper Midwest (Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. While working with these religious archives collections, my responsibilities and accountabilities to two quite different organizations have taught me about program advocacy and promotion, flexibility and adaptability.

While working in this "double shop" setting I still function as a generalist within a larger organization, whose leadership needs frequent reminders of the critical value of its archival program. Among my hopes for ARCS is that we can encourage and support our membership to better position themselves and their programs within their larger organizations. This would be a priority for me as Representative-at-large. All of us are working with greater needs and fewer resources. We must find ways of becoming politically savvy advocates for our programs. Just as our section has shown real progress in improving our technical archival practice in the past several years, I feel we need to work even more on outreach and promotion.



Paul Daniels

Sarah Harwell, Vice President for Information Technology & Chief Archivist, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, Tennessee

Most of my professional career (thus far) has been in academic and government archives, respectively Vanderbilt University and the Tennessee State Library and Archives. I received my graduate degrees at Nashville institutions also (MLS, Peabody College and MA in History, Vanderbilt University). I worked with religious collections at both prior places of employment and majored in the cultural and religious history of the American South in graduate school.

Since coming to Disciples of Christ Historical Society seven years ago, I have become acutely conscious of the challenges specific to our type of archival endeavor. As a general ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a small mainline Protestant denomination, our agency faces the usual difficulties of not enough resources: staff, space, funding, all the usual constraints. In addition, religious bodies and spiritual communities everywhere are in a variety of transitional states for a variety of reasons, and it makes our own work of documenting both the continuity and the change of our parent institutions all the more daunting. I see the role of ARCS as a both forum and supporting community for tackling these challenges in new and creative ways.



Sara Harwell

ARCS SAA Reception at Presentation Convent

By Christine Doan

I wish to welcome you on behalf of the Sisters of the Presentation to their Motherhouse convent for this year's

ARCS reception.

With the California Gold Rush (1849) came the settlers, with the settlers came the immigrants, and with the immigrants came the Sisters of the Presentation. Five Sisters of Presentation left Ireland for San Francisco and arrived in 1854 to minister to the children of miners, immigrants and the poor.

Within a year, three of the five Sisters returned to Ireland and the remaining two Sisters established the Presentation Convent where they conducted a school for girls. From 1857 to 1869, the Sisters of the Presentation also had a school for African and Native American children. In 1869 Sacred Heart Presentation Convent was established. This foundation was followed in 1878 by Saint Joseph Convent, Berkeley and in 1882 Saint Joseph Convent, Sonoma. The four houses were amalgamated in 1888.

The 1906 Earthquake and Fire destroyed the two convents in San Francisco. The Sisters lived in various residences until Presentation Convent located at 281 Masonic Avenue was completed in 1912. They moved from this location to 2340 Turk Boulevard in 1970 when the new Motherhouse was completed. The Motherhouse is the last remaining of its kind for Catholic women religious communities in San Francisco. Presentation Archives was formally established here in 1978, and collection highlights include early annals, photographs, and artifacts of the Sisters' historic ties to San Francisco.

Through the years, the sisters stayed in education and later focused on pastoral ministry and social work. Presentation Sisters currently serve in the Archdioceses of San Francisco and Los Angeles; and the Dioceses of Oakland, Orange, San Jose and Guatemala.

The reception will be from 6:00 – 7:00 (or until it ends), and tours of the archive will be offered during that time. Directions follow below. Please e-mail your RSVPs to cdoan@pbvmsf.org.

I look forward to welcoming all of you to San Francisco.

Christine Doan

Archivist, Sisters of the Presentation, San Francisco



Scroll description: This is a section of a scroll measuring approximately 5 inches high and 16 feet in length. The scroll is a pencil drawing depicting the journey five Presentation Sisters made from Ireland to San Francisco in 1854. The Sisters traveled by ship from Ireland to New York and then down to Panama. They then crossed the Isthmus on mules to reach the ship, Golden Gate which took them up the Pacific coastline to their final destination, San Francisco. The provenance of the scroll is based on oral tradition. It is believed that the second superior of the community, Mother Mary Teresa Comerford (1821-1881) had drawn the scroll to use as a story-telling device to share with the Presentation Sisters she visited at Sacred Heart Presentation Convent, the novitiate and convent she founded in Ireland in 1879. The original scroll is on loan to Presentation Archives from Ireland for digitization, and will be featured in an upcoming traveling exhibition, *Women and Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America* (<http://womenandspirit.org/>). The exhibit is a collaborative effort between the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and the Smithsonian and is slated to debut in 2009.

Directions to the convent:

By bus: From the hotel, walk north up one block to Geary Street. Take the 38 Geary or 38L Geary bus line to the Presidio Avenue stop (approx. 20-30 minutes depending on cross-town traffic).

Cross Geary Street to head south on Presidio Avenue which becomes Masonic Avenue. Walk 3 blocks, and turn right on Turk Boulevard.

The convent is a low-rise building on the right-hand side of the street just past the bus shelter and behind the older convent with the University of San Francisco sign. Ring the bell for the receptionist.

Contact Information: 415-752-1601 (receptionist desk) and 415-751-0406 (archives)

ARCS Program Topic: "Chronicling Our Faiths"

By Alan J. Lefever

The ARCS session this year will have selected members of the group make presentations concerning the faith that their collection chronicles as well as an overview of each collection including when it was established, scope, unique holdings, triumphs, and challenges. Discussion will follow. It's hoped that this program will help make us all more familiar with how our faiths relate to one another and each of our missions to collect, preserve and communicate the impact these faiths have had on the world around us.

Dorothy Day Diaries Published

By Phil Runkel

Marquette University Press has published *The Duty of Delight: The Diaries of Dorothy Day*, a 700-plus page, fully indexed compilation of the personal diaries of Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement. One of the largest volumes ever published by Marquette University Press, the book was published in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Catholic Worker movement on May 1, 1933.

Biographical information about Day is widely available, including in Marquette University's Raynor Memorial Libraries' Dorothy Day -- Catholic Worker Collection, but the diaries show the human, everyday side of Day. The diaries begin in 1934 and continue until a few days before her death in 1980. Day had specified that her diaries and family correspondence would be sealed for 25 years after her death.

In 2004 Marquette's archives staff selected Robert Ellsberg, publisher of Orbis Books, to edit the Day diaries. He was selected for his publishing expertise and for knowing Day during the last five years of her life. "Sometimes her reflections were prompted by happiness, sometimes by sorrow," said Ellsberg in the book's introduction, "but mostly her diary entries were an expression of her intense interest in life and her responses to what was happening around her."

"The diaries give the reader a sense of the human side of Dorothy," said Head of Special Collections & University Archives Matt Blessing about Day's diary entries. "Here's one of the leading Catholic activists and intellectuals in the world having to deal with moody teenagers and cleaning up after her grandchildren."

Day, a radical journalist who converted to Catholicism, edited the Catholic Worker newspaper from its inception until her death in 1980 and many regard her as among the most influential lay people in the history of American Catholicism. The Marquette University Archives began to acquire the records of the Catholic Worker movement in 1962. The collection includes the personal papers of Day and others involved in the Catholic Worker movement, records of Catholic Worker communities, photographs, audio and video tapes and other materials.

Currently, Ellsberg is editing a second volume containing Dorothy Day's selected letters. Copies of letters in other repositories are eagerly sought, especially for the period 1916-1932. Please contact Phil Runkel at (414) 288-5903 or Email.

The Duty of Delight: The Diaries of Dorothy Day was produced in a print run of 3,000, is cloth-bound on acid-free paper and retails for \$42. Contact Marquette University Press, 414-288-1564, 1-800-247-6553 or www.marquette.edu/mupress/ for more information.

Heads and Executive Archivists of Denominations (HEADs) Meet

By Margery Sly

Since March 2006, HEADS (Heads and Executive Archivists of Denominations) has been meeting annually to discuss issues of common interest to institutional archivists of national denominations. Member archivists manage the records of denominations' national agencies or corporate entities.

Mark Duffy (The Episcopal Church) and Dale Patterson (United Methodist Church) convened the first meeting at the UM General Commission on Archives and History, Madison, NJ. The members include Elisabeth Wittman (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), Bridgette Kelly (United Church of Christ), Bill Sumners (Southern Baptist Convention); Sara Harwell (Disciples of Christ), and Margery Sly (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)).

The group has addressed issues of concern to the management of the national archives, working to identify which were of most interest and would respond to further research. The group has since met in Nashville in March 2007, at SAA in Chicago, and in Cleveland in April 2008. Current discussions include how national denominational archives might work together on shared grant initiatives for topics such as management and preservation of electronic records. The HEADs also meet at the SAA annual meeting.

Billy Graham Center Digital Audion Available

By Robert D. Shuster

The Billy Graham Center Archives of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill., has recently added several audio files to its website that give a glimpse into the development of African Christianity sixty years ago, with many indications of things to come. Go to: www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/docs/aim58.htm

In September 1958, the United States branch of Africa Inland Mission held their annual meeting at the America Keswick's conference ground on the New Jersey shore. The staff, board of directors, and supporters of the mission (which was active at that time primarily in east Africa, but also had workers in other areas) met to pray, encourage, review and plan. Several missionaries gave a first-hand account of their own experiences and their expectations of future trends and needs. In these talks, they were trying to explain to an American audience what was happening in Africa, an audience that in many cases had a limited or dated understanding of what was happening on that continent. While referring to past factors meaningful to the American audience, such as the history of the mission, denominationalism, and conflict between Catholic and Protestant mission efforts, the speakers also described factors that would be determinative to the future development of the Christian faith in Africa; such as the indigenous church leadership, the achieved or soon to be realized political independence of African nations from western colonial powers, and the enormous growth in the number of Christian believers.

The staff of the BGC Archives hopes that these tapes will help listeners better understand this moment in the history of the African church, American foreign missions, and global Christianity.

ARCS Officers and 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.

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