2011.17

Portland Regional Community Collection

**Repository:**

Mercy Heritage Center  
720 Heritage Center Place  
Belmont, NC 28012

**Physical Description:**

82.4 linear feet, including  
Documents  
Photographs, negatives, slides, glass slides  
Bound volumes  
Published reports, directories, theses  
Cassette tapes, VHS tapes

**Dates:**

1873-2006

**Restrictions:**

Some files subject to restriction, including the subseries “Withdrawn Sisters” and some leadership material. Consult Mercy Heritage Center archivists for more information.

**Provenance:**

This collection was transferred to the Mercy Heritage Center, Belmont, North Carolina, in November, 2011 from the Sister of Mercy Northeast Community Archives in Windham, New Hampshire. Prior to 2006, the collection was held at the Portland Regional Community’s Motherhouse, St. Joseph’s Convent, Portland, Maine.

**History:**

The Portland, Maine community of the Sisters of Mercy was founded in 1865, when Mother Frances Warde responded to Bishop David W. Bacon’s request to send sisters to Bangor, Maine. Warde sent six sisters from Manchester, New Hampshire under the leadership of Sister Mary Gonzaga O’Brien.

In 1872, again at the request of Bishop Bacon, Warde sent sisters to Portland, Maine to staff an orphanage and then schools in the city. In 1878, at the request of Bishop James A. Healy, the Sisters of Mercy were sent to missions with Penobscot and Passamaquoddy tribes.
When the Diocese of Manchester was created in 1883, the Sisters of Mercy, Portland, Maine became a separate community with a motherhouse, St. Joseph’s, located in Portland. The community continued to expand its ministries, opening schools, orphanages and hospitals in Maine, including Queens/Mercy Hospital and Madigan Memorial Hospital, Houlton. In the 1960s, the sisters expanded mission work to include sites on Andros Island, Bahamas.

The Sisters of Mercy, Portland, remained an independent community until 1991, when most members voted to join the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas. Remaining members voted to create a separate group supported by the diocese of Portland, the Diocesan Sisters of Mercy. In 2006, the Sisters of Mercy, Portland, joined communities in Albany, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire and Providence to form the Northeast Community within the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas.

**Scope and Content:**

The collection is organized into two main subgroups, Administration and History, and organized into 15 series based on function, geographic location and format (see schema list on page 3). Series are grouped into subseries further delineating the function, location and format of the records. Series and subseries are described in the “Series Description” section of this document. When possible (already numbered folders or the contents of binders), original order was maintained.

The collection includes administrative records relating to community governance, documentation of individuals, convents, ministries, and missions. The bulk of the collection dates from 1950-2000, although annals, photographs and personal records cover a broader span of time.
SCHEMA

Administrative: 100

100.1 General Chapter
100.2 General Council/Leadership
100.3 Committees and Boards
100.4 Projects, Studies, Workshops
100.5 Financials, Contracts, Donations

History: 200

200.1 Major Superiors
200.2 Annals
200.3 Convent Records
200.4 Ministries/Missions
200.5 Events
200.6 Reference Materials
200.7 Photographs
200.8 Audio-Visual Materials
200.9 Publications
200.10 Membership
Series Description:

A100.1 General Chapter.
4.38 l.f.
1955-2002
This series includes documents from General and Extraordinary chapters, including reports, votes, election of delegates, minutes and correspondence. The series is grouped into subseries by Chapter Year, with the exception of the subseries “Congregation” and “Reports.” Existing folder order was maintained.

A100.2 General Council/Leadership.
2.92 l.f.
1951-2006
This series is comprised mostly of minutes of the General Council/Leadership Team, divided into subseries by year. Communications and Reports are divided into separate subseries.

A100.3 Committees and Boards.
10.23 l.f.
1967-2005
This series includes Chapter Committees, Community Boards (approved by the General Chapter to study and improve various aspects of the community and apostolate, Corporator/Member Boards for various institutions, and various committees, such as SURGE, the retirement life committee

Subseries
1. 1967 Chapter: Committees on community life, the apostolate, formation, vows, the habit etc.
2. 1973 Chapter: Committees on poverty, chastity, obedience, education, prayer life, apostolates, community life, etc.
3. 1979 Chapter: Committees on constitutional revision, corporate reflection, charism, the habit, etc.
4. 1984 Chapter: Committees on constitution, governance, ministries
5. Constitutional Revision:
6. Community Boards: (Also called the Task Force) Education, Health, Community Life, Social Services. SURGE (Retirement Committee) is a subcommittee of the Community Life Board.
7. Member/Corporator Boards: Boards comprised entirely of sisters for particular ministries, including Mercy Hospital, McAuley Education Center, St. Joseph’s College, Blind Children’s Resource Center, St. Joseph’s Convent and Hospital, McAuley Residence
8. Various: Includes committees on formation, renewal and planning

A100.4 Projects, Studies, Workshops.
3.55 l.f.
1953-1999
Subseries
1. **Little Diamond Island Project**: Plans for usage of Little Diamond Island property
2. **Local Superiors Workshops**
3. **CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate)**: Personnel Project Study
4. **Study of the Apostolate**
5. **Center for Planned Change**: related to updating Constitutions
6. **Survey**: Election Process
7. **Personal Preference Indicator**: Surveys regarding the habit, new institute
8. **Baggot Street Project**: re: raising $ for Baggot Street/International Center
9. **Various**

**A100.5 Financials, Contracts and Donations.**
7.55 l.f.
1899-1991
This series consists of receipts and disbursements from the Motherhouse (St. Joseph’s Convent, Portland), bequests and donations

**H200.1 Major Superiors**
4.8 l.f.
1905-2006
This series is divided into subseries by individual and contains correspondence and communications to the community. Two sub-subseries are separated to address significant issues within the Major Superior’s administration. The majority of the subseries contains information specific to the Major Superior, but some also contain documentation generated by others. When general correspondence was grouped by subject, original order was maintained.

**Subseries**
1. *Margaret Mary, M. Michael Neilon, M. Emmanuel Scanlon*: Early Correspondence
2. *M. Eugenia Hennessey*: 1928-1940s
3. *M. Evangelist Ward*
4. *M. Denis Schwartz*
   - Madigan Memorial Hospital Merger
5. *M. George O'Toole*: This subseries also contains some annual assignments and communications to the community
6. *M. Laboure Morin*
   - Diocesan Group
7. *Jean Little*

**H200.2 Annals.**
7.72 l.f.
1873-2005
Annals are divided into subseries by group and location. Many annals have photographs, ephemera and histories included with them. Final date of annals generally corresponds with date that the convent closed.

**Subseries**
1. *Our Lady of Mercy Convent/St. Joseph's, Andros Island*
2. *Single Living*
3. St. Ann’s Convent, Indian Island
4. St. Ann’s Convent, Pleasant Point, Perry
5. St. Ann’s Convent, Dana Point, Princeton
6. St. Patrick’s Convent, Portland
7. Frances Warde Convent/St. Joseph’s Manor
8. Queens/Mercy Hospital, Portland
9. St. Mary’s Convent, Portland
10. St. Joseph’s College, Standish: St. Joseph’s College community consisted of several changing communities: St. George’s Hall, Marian Hall, Honoratus Residence (two separate communities were formed on campus in 1991)
12. Holy Cross Convent, South Portland
13. St. Mary’s Convent, Augusta
14. St. Mary’s Convent, Bangor: No annals after June 1986, but convent was open until 1990
15. St. Xavier’s Convent, Bangor: Name changed to St. John’s after they moved to a smaller house. This convent closed in 1986
16. Immaculate Heart of Mary Convent, Fairfield
17. St. Edward’s Convent, Bar Harbor
18. St. Mary’s Convent, Biddeford
19. St. Teresa’s Convent, South Brewer
20. Our Lady of the Rosary Convent, Brownsville Junction
21. St. Mary’s Convent, Eagle Lake
22. St. Joseph’s Convent, Farmington
23. St. Francis Convent, Saco
25. Convent of the Immaculate Conception, Calais
26. St. Mary’s Convent, Houlton
27. St. Joseph’s Convent, Lewiston
28. St. Benedict’s Convent, Benedicta
29. St. Joseph’s Parish Convent, Portland
30. Religious Vacation Schools
31. St. Rose’s Convent, Rumford
32. Our Lady of Ransom Convent, Mechanic Falls
33. St. Mary’s Convent, Old Town
34. King’s Academy
35. St. Mary’s Convent, Orono
36. St. Mary’s Convent, Westbrook
37. Madigan Memorial Hospital Convent, Houlton
38. St. Elizabeth’s Home, Portland
39. Holy Innocents’ Home, Portland
40. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Convent, Presque Isle: Closed 1991
41. St. Mary’s Convent, Bath
H200.3 Convent Records
4.59 l.f.
1927-1980
This series includes local council meeting minutes and financial ledgers ("House Books") from various convents throughout Maine.

H200.4 Ministries/Missions
5 l.f.
1778-1987
This series includes ephemera, clippings, small amounts of correspondence and meeting minutes, and histories of the ministry, parish or location. Original groupings and file headings were maintained.

Subseries
1. General: Includes schools, parishes and orphanages
2. Andros Island: Portland’s mission in the Bahamas
3. South America: Bolivia and Peru
4. Native Americans: Penobscot and Passamaquoddy tribes in Maine

H200.5 Events
5.71 l.f.
1948-1992
This bulk of this series consists of information related to various anniversaries.

Subseries
1. Sesquicentennial Celebration, 1981: Contains information on the sesquicentennial celebration of the founding of the Sisters of Mercy in the United States and in Ireland.
2. Anniversaries: Includes Portland centennial and some Jubilee information
3. Other: Various anniversaries and events

H200.6 Reference Materials
3.09 l.f.
1884-1989
This series contains histories of the Portland community, general information about Catherine McAuley, Baggot Street and booklets on the Sisters of Mercy.

H200.7 Photographs
6.42 l.f.
Various dates
The series was originally arranged into subject groupings. These groupings were maintained and used as subseries

Subseries
1. Miscellaneous: Primarily events
2. Parishes, Convents, Schools
3. Hospitals/Nursing Homes
4. Native American/Foreign Missions
5. Orphanages
6. **Motherhouse Complex**
7. **Jubilee Days**
8. **Vacation Houses**
9. **Celebrations**
10. **Individual Sisters:** Alphabetized by last name.

**H200.8 Audio-Visual**

0.83 l.f.
Various dates
The series contains audio cassettes, VHS tapes and slides grouped together from various series. Each item is listed individually with the number of its original series. A separation sheet is filed in each original series and is noted in the Box/Folder list in this document.

**H200.9 Publications**

1.46 l.f.
1955-2006
This series contains general communications such as newsletters and calendars that were to all of the Portland regional community.

**H200.10 Membership**

14.18 l.f.
1881-2006 and various dates
This series contains information on individual sisters, including person information and items as well as administrative information such as assignments and vows.

**Subseries**

1. **Deceased Sisters:** Filed alphabetically by last name
2. **Withdrawn Sisters:** Filed alphabetically by last name
3. **Administrative Records:** Contains community lists (organized by date of profession), annual assignments and bound copies of novitiate lists and other membership information
4. **Personal Records:** Contains Jubilee-related ephemera, theses and dissertations, diaries, retreat notes and scrapbooks