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 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 110 Miscellaneous Records  
A 111 Records of Administrations 1980-1992  
A 112 Legal Records  
A 113 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 Founder: 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