Guide to Catholic-Related Records in the Midwest about Native Americans

See User Guide for help on interpreting entries

Diocese of Grand Rapids
MICHIGAN, GRAND RAPIDS

Diocese of Grand Rapids Archives
M-45

Administrative Office
660 Burton Street, Southeast
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507
Phone 616-243-0491
http://www.dioceseofgrandrapids.org/

Open: By appointment only
Access: No restrictions
Copying facilities: Yes

History: The Diocese of Grand Rapids was erected in 1882. The Grand Rapids Diocese and its predecessors have administered the following Catholic missions, parishes, and school among the Ojibwa and Ottawa Indians in Michigan:

1829-present (Grand Rapids, 1882-1971) Holy Childhood of Jesus/ St. Peter Church, Harbor Springs
1830-present (Grand Rapids, 1882-1971) St. Mary Mission, Burt Lake/ Sheboygan Village
1832-1893 (closed) (Grand Rapids, 1882-1893) St. Leopold Mission, Beaver Island
1833-present (Grand Rapids, 1882-1971) St. Ignatius/ St. Francis Xavier Mission, Middle Village/ Middletown
ca. 1840-present (Grand Rapids, 1882-1971) Holy Cross/ St. Anthony Church, Cross Village
1853-present (Grand Rapids, 1882-1971) Immaculate Conception/St. Mary Mission, Peshabestown/ Eagletown
1859-1897 (closed), 1927-ca. 1937 (closed) (Grand Rapids, 1882-ca. 1937) St. Francis Solano Mission, Petoskey
1861-1899 (closed) (Grand Rapids, 1882-1899) St. Ignatius Mission, Beaver Island
1883-1973 (closed) St. Joseph Mission, Elbridge
1896-present (Grand Rapids, 1896-1971) St. Francis Solanus Mission, Bay Shore
1897-1920 (closed) Blessed Sacrament Mission, Elk Rapids
1897-1939 (closed) St. Joseph Mission, High Island
1918-ca. 1920s (no longer Indian) St. Helen Mission, Fern
ca. 1918-1938 (closed) Sacred Heart Mission, Garden Island
2001-present St. Kateri Tekakwitha Native American Center and St. Joseph Chapel, Elbridge
Holdings of Catholic-related records about Native Americans:

Inclusive dates: 1883-present, undated

Volume: 1 cubic foot and 5 reels of microfilm

Description: 6 series include Native Catholic records. When the Gaylord Diocese was created in 1971, the Grand Rapids Diocese sent most of the parish and deed files to the new diocese. However, bishops' files, priests' files, financial and statistical reports, and photographs remained at Grand Rapids.

/1 Parish Files
Inclusive dates: 1883-1970s, undated
Volume: .35 cubic foot
Description: This series is divided into active and inactive parishes and is arranged alphabetically by location of the parish and chronologically there under. When the Diocese was divided, only two former Indian missions remained within the Diocese
A. Active Parishes, 1885-1947, 3 folders:
1. Elbridge, St. Joseph, 1885-1947, 2 folders:
   a. Correspondence, 1919-1934, 1947, 22 letters
   b. Financial records, 1885-1927, 1 folder
2. Fern, St. Helen Mission, 1929-1931, 8 letters
B. Inactive parishes, 1883-1970s, undated, .3 cubic foot: When the Diocese was divided, the parish files of those Indian missions located in the Diocese of Gaylord were sent to the new diocese. However, some historical records on each parish remained in the Grand Rapids Diocesan Archives. Records are arranged alphabetically by the location of the parish.
1. Bay Shore, St. Francis Solanus Mission, 1894-1927, 2 folders:
   a. Statistical reports, 1894-1909, 1912, 1915, 1923, 1925
   b. Financial reports, 1894-1927
2. Beaver Island, Holy Cross Mission, 1884-1970, 3 folders:
   a. Correspondence, 1884-1970, 5 letters
   b. Statistical and financial reports, 1884-1927
3. Cross Village, Holy Cross Mission, 1883-1970s, 4 folders:
   a. Correspondence 1883-1889, 35 letters: correspondents include Reverend John Weikamp, T.O.R., and Bishop Henry J. Richter
   b. Diary (typed copy) of Reverend John Weikamp, T.O.R., 1883-1889
   c. Statistical reports, 1883-1885, 1903-1913
   d. Financial reports, 1883-1927
   e. Photographs, 1970s, 10 photos
4. Harbor Springs, Holy Childhood Mission, 1884-1971, undated 3 folders:
   a. Correspondence, 1892-1971, 12 letters
   b. Historical notes of Reverend Eugene Hagedorn, O.F.M., 1930s, undated
   c. Statistical and financial reports, 1884-1927
5. Peshabestown, Immaculate Conception Mission, 1884-1890, undated, 1 folder:
   a. Statistical reports, 1884-1890
   b. Photographs, undated, 2 photos
6. Petoskey, St. Francis Xavier Church, 1883-1970, undated, .1 cubic foot:
   a. Correspondence, 1928-1970, 80 letters: major correspondents include Reverend Aubert Keuter, O.F.M. and Bishop Joseph G. Pinten
   b. Statistical reports, 1883-1925
   c. Financial reports, 1883-1927
   d. Photographs, undated, 5 photos
e. Clippings, undated

/2 Bishops' Papers
Inclusive dates: 1883-1897
Volume: .1 cubic foot
Description: This series contains Bishop Henry Richter’s letterpress books of outgoing correspondence, which include numerous letters to Indian missionaries, including Reverend Servatius Altmicks, O.F.M.

/3 Financial and Statistical Records
Volume: .4 cubic foot
Description:
A. Financial and statistical reports, 1928-1949, 1970-present, .2 cubic foot: annual reports from each Indian mission; reports from 1883-1927 are in the parish files; reports for the years 1950-1969 are lost or destroyed
B. Mission and School statistics, 1900-1917, 1 volume: lists the number of priests, churched, families, teachers, and students and sacraments administered at diocesan churches and schools
C. School statistics, 1883-1900, 1 volume: provides statistics on the number of teachers, enrollment, attendance and the financial; status of diocesan schools
D. Sacramental statistics and financial data, 1883-1900, 1 volume: arranged alphabetically by parish or mission

/4 Sacramental Records
Inclusive dates: 1883-1973
Volume: 5 reels of microfilm
Description:
B. Fern, St. Helen Mission, 1895-1914, 1 reel
C. Fremont, St. Michael Church, 1933-1936, 1 reel: records for St. Joseph Mission, Elbridge
D. Montague, St. James Church, 1883, 1891-1895, 1920-1923, 1 reel; records for St. Joseph Mission, Elbridge
E. Muskegon, St. Michael Church, 1923-1933, 1 reel: records for St. Joseph Mission, Elbridge

/5 “General Correspondence Files”
Volume: 1 folder
Description: This series consists of alphabetically arranged subject files, which include a folder labeled “Indians and Negroes,” which contains correspondence between the Diocese and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions and the Commission for Catholic Missions among the Colored People and the Indians

/6 Diocesan Newspaper and Magazine
Inclusive dates: 1948-present
Volume: .1 cubic foot
Description: The magazine, Faith, succeeded the newspaper, The Western Michigan Catholic, in 2007. Both have been monthly publications with occasional articles on or references to American Indians and Catholic evangelization in the diocese. Faith has been archived online and key-word searchable since September 2011: