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

Archdiocese of Chicago

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Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:30-11:45 and 1:00-4:30
Access: No restrictions
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History: In 1843, the Diocese of Chicago was erected for Illinois from portions of the Dioceses of St. Louis and Vincennes. With reduced area in 1880, Chicago was elevated to the Archdiocese of Chicago, which reported no baptized Native American Catholics in 1900, but 1,500 in 1999. The Chicago Archdiocese and its predecessors administered the following American Indian ministries in Illinois:

1821-1833 Fort Dearborn (Métis and Potawatomi)
1833-ca. 1840 (no longer Indian) St. Mary Church (Métis and Potawatomi), Chicago
1883-1884 St. Mary Training School (Santee and/or Sisseton and Wahpeton), Feehanville [near Des Plaines]
1912-1930s Rev. Georges P. Mathieu (Potawatomi, 1912-1996), Chicago-born and raised who attended seminary there, later served as a priest of the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin
1952-1982 Chicago Archdiocesan American Indian apostolate (various)
1982-present St. Kateri/ Anawim Center (various), Chicago

Holdings of Catholic-related records about Native Americans include sacramental records for (Old) St. Mary Church and school records for St. Mary Training School. Fort Dearborn and Old St. Mary Church had been served by Reverends Gabriel Richard and John Mary Irenæus St. Cyr. Parishioners included Chief Billy Caldwell [Sauganash] (Potawatomi), 1780-1841).