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

See User Guide for help on interpreting entries

Diocese of St. Cloud
MINNESOTA, COLLEGEVILLE

Benedictines,
St. John's Abbey M-71
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Open: By appointment only
Access: No restrictions
Copying facilities: Yes

Access: Some restrictions apply

History: St. John’s Abbey was established in 1856. Benedictines from St. John's have administered the following Ojibwa Indian missions and parishes:

1878-present St. Benedict Church, White Earth
1883-present St. Mary Mission, Red Lake
1885-1896 (closed) St. John Industrial School, Collegeville
1893-present Holy Family Church, Cloquet
1895-ca. 1940 (no longer Indian) St. Michael Church, Mahnomen
1895-1971 St. Joseph Church, Beaulieu
1896-1964 (closed) Sacred Heart Mission, Onigum
1901-1908 (closed) Purest Heart of Mary Mission, Rosebud
1903-present St. Theodore Church, Ponsford
1906-present St. Joseph Church, Ball Club
1907-ca. 1950s (no longer Indian) St. John Church, Grand Marais
1907-present Holy Rosary Mission, Grand Portage
1908-1917 (no longer Indian) Assumption Church, Callaway
1910-present St. Ann Church, Waubun
1911-present Most Holy Redeemer Mission, Ogema
1912-present St. Patrick Mission, Brookston
1915-1966 (closed) Sacred Heart Mission, Round Lake
1916-1971 Immaculate Conception Mission, Bejou
1917-1923 Immaculate Conception Mission, Nett Lake
1918-present St. Anne Church, Naytahwaush
1923-present St. Ann Mission, Bena
1926-1952 (closed) St. Catherine Mission, Cass Lake
1926-1952 (closed) St. Joseph Mission, Mission Corner
1928-1971 (closed) St. Agnes Mission, Island Lake
1933-1940 (closed) St. Francis Xavier Mission, Chippewa Village
Holdings of Catholic-related records about Native Americans:

Inclusive dates: 1835-1980s, n.d.

Volume: Approximately 21.7 cubic feet, 6 reels of microfilm, 2 motion pictures, and 4 audiotape cassettes

Description: 6 series include Native Catholic records:

/1 "Abbots' Papers"
Volume: 1.3 cubic feet
Description: Mostly correspondence arranged by administration. Correspondence for 1856-1921 is transcribed, with the transcriptions arranged alphabetically by the correspondent's surname. When surveyed in 1980-1981, the Abbots' papers since 1971 had not been transferred to the archives.
A. Abbot Alexius Edelbrock, O.S.B., 1875-1890, .2 cubic foot: incoming correspondence from:
1. Borgerding, Reverend Thomas, O.S.B., 1879, 1888-1890, 14 letters
2. Buh, Reverend Joseph Francis, 1886, 3 letters
3. Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, 1880-1881, 1883-1885, 1889, 8 letters
4. Drexel, Saint Katharine, S.B.S., 1886, 1889, 3 letters
5. Ehner, Reverend Claude, O.S.B., 1879, 1883-1884, 1889, 5 letters
6. Poffa, Reverend John Chrysostom, O.S.B., 1878-1879, 1889, 18 letters
7. Hermanutz, Reverend Aloysius, O.S.B., 1878-1890, 101 letters
8. Lampe, Reverend Simon, O.S.B., 1889, 1 letter
10. Tomazin, Reverend Ignatius, 1875, 1883, 2 letters
B. Abbot Bernard Locnikar, O.S.B., 1891-1894, .1 cubic foot:
1. Borgerding, Reverend Thomas, O.S.B., 1891-1892, 4 letters
2. Drexel, Mother [Saint] Katharine, S.B.S., 1892, 1 letter
3. Hermanutz, Reverend Aloysius, O.S.B., 1891-1892, 1894, 11 letters
4. Homar, Reverend Roman, O.S.B., 1894, 1 letter
5. Lampe, Reverend Simon, O.S.B., 1891, 1893, 3 letters
C. Abbot Peter Engel, O.S.B., 1894-1920, .2 cubic foot:
1. Borgerding, Reverend Thomas, O.S.B., 1895, 1897-1906, 1914, 1920, 30 letters
3. Ketcham, Reverend William, 1900, 1902, 1907, 1915, 5 letters
D. Abbot Alcuin Deutsch, O.S.B., 1907-1950, n.d., .5 cubic foot: Records are divided into various subseries according to topic
1. "Correspondence with Monks," 1921-1950, .25 cubic foot: The sub-series contains outgoing and incoming correspondence arranged alphabetically by surname.
   a. Fruth, Reverend Alban, O.S.B., 1940-1950, 1 folder
   b. Goeb, Reverend Egbert, O.S.B., 1929-1950, 2 folders
   c. Homar, Reverend Roman, O.S.B., 1927-1950, 2 folders
   d. Hoppe, Reverend Leo, O.S.B., 1923-1948, 1 folder
   e. Lampe, Reverend Simon, O.S.B., 1922-1940, 1 folder
   f. Locnikar, Reverend Florian, O.S.B., 1923-1943, 1 folder
   g. Nelles, Reverend Felix, O.S.B., 1921-1930, 1 folder
   h. Parnell, Reverend Denis, O.S.B., 1922-1950, 2 folders
   i. Stovik, Reverend Jordan, O.S.B., 1943-1950, 1 folder
   j. Thelen, Reverend Valerian, O.S.B., 1925-1950, 2 folders
   k. Watrin, Reverend Benno, O.S.B., 1922-1950, 2 folders

2. "Indian Missions," 1907-1950, n.d., .1 cubic foot:
   b. "Ball Club," 1939, 1 folder: correspondence and historical notes
   c. "Cloquet," 1919-1949, 1 folder: correspondence and historical notes
   e. "Ponsford," 1929-1941, 1 folder: correspondence and historical notes

3. "Dioceses," 1919-1950, .1 cubic foot:
   a. Crookston Diocese, 1920-1950, 2 folders: correspondence with bishops, containing frequent references to Indian evangelization
   b. Duluth Diocese, 1919-1951, 2 folders: correspondence with bishops, containing frequent references to Indian evangelization

4. "Convents," 1920-1950, 1 folder: correspondence with sisters at St. Benedict's Convent, St. Joseph, Minnesota, with frequent references to Indian evangelization and school administration

E. Abbot Baldwin Dworschak, 1951-1967, .3 cubic foot: Records are divided into topical sub-series.

1. "Correspondence with Monks," 1951-1955, .1 cubic foot: outgoing and incoming correspondence arranged alphabetically by forenames
   a. Reverend Alban Fruth, O.S.B., 1955, 1 folder
   b. Reverend Benno Watrin, O.S.B., 1951-1955, 1 folder
   c. Reverend Denis Parnell, O.S.B., 1951-1955, 1 folder
   d. Reverend Jordan Stovik, O.S.B., 1951-1955, 1 folder
   e. Reverend Roman Homar, O.S.B., 1951-1952, 1 folder
   f. Reverend Valerian Thelan, O.S.B., 1951-1954, 1 folder

2. "Dioceses," 1951-1967, .1 cubic foot:
   a. Crookston Diocese, 1951-1967, 2 folders: correspondence with bishops, containing frequent references to Indian mission activity
   b. Duluth Diocese, 1951-1967, 2 folders: correspondence with bishops, containing frequent references to Indian evangelization

Historical Records
Volume: Approximately 4.6 cubic feet, 6 reels of microfilm, 2 motion pictures, and 4 audiocassettes

Description: This series is divided into various subseries, primarily by type of record or subject.

A. "Audio-Visual Collection," 1875-1981, n.d., 6 reels of microfilm, 2 motion pictures, and 4 audiocassettes:
   1. Microfilm, 1875-1901, 6 reels: selected records (copies) relating to Benedictine Indian missions from the Bureau of Indian Affairs Records, 1880-1881, the Minnesota Historical Society, 1875-1891, and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions Records, 1880-1901
   2. Motion pictures, n.d., 2 films: "Hoppe, Leo, O.S.B., Red Lake"; and "Blackfeet [Siksika] Indians"

B. Audiotapes, 1979, 1981, 4 tapes:
   b. "Watrin, Reverend Benno, O.S.B., Indian Missions," 1979, 1 tape
   c. "Thelen, Reverend Constantine, O.S.B., White Earth," 1979, 1 tape

C. Diaries, 1922, 1934, 1939-1943, 3 volumes: created by Reverend Florian Locnikar, O.S.B., while at Red Lake, Minnesota

D. "Indian and Industrial School, Pupils Accounts," 1886-1896, 2 volumes: St. Benedict School, White Earth, Minnesota; entries for some years also provide student entry and departure dates, Indian tribe, weight, height, sex, age, and parents' names

E. "Photographs and Slides," 1890s-1960s, approximately 1,440 prints:
   1. "Albums," 1900s-1920s, 1940s, 2 albums containing 70 prints:
      a. "Dimpfl, Clement," 1900s-1920s, 60 prints: photographs and articles created by Reverend Dimpfl on Indians and missionaries of Minnesota and North and South Dakota
      b. "Grand Portage," 1940s, 10 prints
   2. "Photograph Collection of Individuals," primarily 1940s, several hundred prints: By Reverend Leo Hoppe, O.S.B.; many from the Red Lake Reservation
   3. "Print Collection, Missions," 1890s-1960s, 995 prints:
      a. "Cloquet," 1960s, 11 prints
      c. "Indians: Churches, Rectories, etc.," majority 1920s-1940s, 160 prints of Benedictine Indian missions in Minnesota
      e. "Indians: Groups, Individuals, etc.," majority 1890s-1940s, 150 prints
      g. "Red Lake: Monks and Nuns," 1950s-1960s, 35 prints
      i. "Red Lake: School Activities," 1950s-1960s, 10 prints
      j. "Red Lake: Miscellaneous," 1950s, 35 prints
      k. "White Earth: Indians," 1920s-1960s, 140 prints
      m. "White Earth - Buildings," majority 1900s-1920, 40 prints
      n. "White Earth - Sisters," 1900s-1960s, 30 prints
      o. "White Earth - Miscellaneous," 1940s-1960s, 120 prints
F. Sacramental records (copies), 1835-1900, .1 cubic foot: copied by Reverend Simon Lampe
1. Baptismal registers, St. Francis Xavier Church, Crow Wing, Minnesota, and Holy Family Church, Belle Prairie, Minnesota, 1852-1879
2. Baptisms, St. Joseph Mission, Beaulieu, Minnesota, 1899-1900
3. Baptisms and marriages, St. Francis Xavier Church, Superior, Wisconsin, 1856-1891
4. Baptisms and marriages, Holy Family Mission, Bayfield, Wisconsin, 1835-1884
5. Baptisms, Leech Lake Station, Minnesota, 1883-1889

G. Writings on Indian missionaries by Reverend Benno Watrin, O.S.B., n.d., 54 pages:
1. Reverend Joseph Buh, 5 pages
2. Reverend Francis Pierz, 22 pages
3. Reverend Ignatius Tomazin, 27 pages

/3 "Indian Missions"
Volume: 9.4 cubic feet
Description:
A. Alphabetical name and subject files, 1869-1981, n.d., 3.0 cubic feet: prominent files or types of records include: "Drawer 146A"
2. "Hermanutz, Aloysius, O.S.B., 'Leech Lake Indian Uprising'," 1898, 2 letters: from Reverend Hermanutz, O.S.B., to Abbot Peter Engel, O.S.B., regarding the Leech Lake Indian uprising of 1898
3. "Indian Bureau, Catholic Indian Missions," 1939-1940, 1945, 1952, 10 letters: between the Bureau, the abbots, and the superiors at the White Earth and Red Lake missions
4. "Chippewa, Minnesota," 1894-1956, 1 folder:
   a. A transcript (2 pages) of an interview conducted in 1956 with John Morrison, a former student at St. John Industrial School, Collegeville, Minnesota
   b. "Indian missions in the Diocese of Duluth," by Reverend Simon Lampe, O.S.B., ca. 1895, 10 pages
5. "History, Benno Watrin, O.S.B." 1934-1939, 3 folders: Reverend Watrin's historical notes on Red Lake, the Beaulieu and Mahnomen area, and the Benedictine Indian missions of northern Minnesota
6. "Mallessy, Brother Gonzaga de, O.S.B." 1874-1912, 5 folders:
   a. Correspondence, 1874-1877, 1881-1882, 1884-1892, 1895, 1898-1900, 1904-1908, 104 letters: primarily to Brother Mallessy, O.S.B., from St. Benedict Mission, White Earth, Minnesota; major correspondents include Reverends Aloysius Hermanutz, O.S.B., Ignatius Tomazin, and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions
   b. Journal, ca.1910-1912, 15 pages on Indian missions, particularly from Belle Prairie, Minnesota
7. "Mission Reports," 1904-1929, 1 folder:
   a. "Ball Club," 1927
   b. "Beaulieu," 1905
   d. "Naytahwaush," 1927
   e. "Ponsford," 1912, 1923, 1929
   g. "White Earth," 1909, 1911, 1923
8. "Nelles, O.S.B., Felix, 'Thirty Years on the Missions,'" 1930, 160 pages
"Drawer 146B"

10. "Cloquet, Carlton County," 1900-1920s, 1 folder:
   a. Census record created by Reverend Thomas Borgerding, O.S.B., 1920s
   b. Photographs, 40 prints

11. "Red Lake, Benedictine Sisters," 1907, 1909, 1911-1914, 1 folder:
    letters from Sister Hyacinthe, O.S.B., to Abbot Peter Engel, O.S.B.

12. "Red Lake, Borgerding, O.S.B. Thomas," 1893-1956, 2 folders:
    a. Correspondence, 1893, 1901-1902, 1906-1909, 1912-1914, 1923-1924, 1956,
       primarily correspondence from Reverend Borgerding, O.S.B. to
       Abbot Peter Engel, O.S.B.
    b. "Catholic Missionary Activity Among the Red Lake Chippewas," 1949, 1
       folder: By Reverend Thomas Borgerding, O.S.B., and Charles Vanderslius
       primarily from interviews with Reverends Borgerding, O.S.B. and Valerian
       Thelan, O.S.B.

    letters: primarily correspondence (copies) between Mother Katharine,
    Reverend Thomas Borgerding, O.S.B., and Abbot Bernard Locnikar, O.S.B.

    items: correspondence, financial reports, and contracts

15. "Red Lake, Manuscripts," 1890-1895, 1897-1900, 23 letters (some copies)


17. "Red Lake, St. John's Correspondence," 1902, 1914-1917, 1920, 1923-1930,
    correspondents include Reverends Thomas Borgerding, O.S.B., Simon Lampe,
    O.S.B., and Alban Fruth, O.S.B. and Abbots Peter Engel, O.S.B.,
    Alcuin Deutsch, O.S.B., Baldwin Dworschak, O.S.B., and the Bureau of Catholic
    Indian Missions

18. "St. Benedict Industrial School," 1876, 1884-1886, 31 items:
    correspondence, financial reports, and contracts

19. "St. John Industrial School," 1884-1887, 1892, 42 items: correspondence,
    financial reports, and contracts


21. "White Earth, Becker County," 1885, 30 pages: historical notes by
    Reverend Aloysius Hermanutz, O.S.B.

22. "White Earth, Abbatial Correspondence," 1881, 1883, 1889, 1911-1912,
    1922, 1925-1927, 1930, 1933, 1937-1942, 55 letters: correspondence
    between the abbots, mission superiors, the Bureau of Catholic Indian
    Missions, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs

23. "White Earth, Beaulieu Correspondence," 1869, 1873, 1875, 1878, 8
    letters to/ from the Beaulieu family

24. "White Earth, Benedictine Sisters," 1879-1880, 1882-1884, 8 letters from
    Sisters Philomena, O.S.B. and Lioba, O.S.B. to Abbot Alexius Edelbrock,
    O.S.B.

25. "White Earth, Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions," 1911-1912, 1915,
    1917, 1919-1920, 1922, 1925-1926, 22 letters: primarily between Reverend
    Aloysius Hermanutz, O.S.B. and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions

    folder:
    a. Correspondence, 1888-1889, 1909, 9 letters
    b. Account of a visit by Saint Katharine Drexel to St. Benedict Mission
       by Reverend Benno Watrin, n.d.

27. "White Earth, Government Correspondence," 1883, 1908, 1910-1913, 1915,
    1918-1922, 1924-1925, 1928, 34 letters: primarily between Reverend
    Aloysius Hermanutz, O.S.B., Mr. Beaulieu (Ojibwa), and the Bureau of
    Indian Affairs
28. "White Earth, Hermanutz, O.S.B., Aloysius," 1869-1927, 1 folder:
   a. Correspondence, 1869, 1899, 1910-1913, 1915, 1920, 1923, 1925-1927, 19 letters
   c. "Reminiscences about White Earth," by Reverend Alexius Hoffmann, 1926, 15 pages

29. "White Earth, History," 1887, n.d., 1 folder: includes histories on missions at Grand Portage, Leech Lake, Ball Club, and White Earth by Reverends Benno Watrin, O.S.B., Aloysius Hermanutz, O.S.B., and others

30. "White Earth, Land Grants" 1878-1926, 1 folder:
   a. Correspondence, 1878, 1907, 1910-1912, 1920, 8 letters
   b. Notes on visits to White Earth and discussions with Reverend Aloysius Hermanutz, O.S.B., 1926, 10 pages: author unidentified

31. "White Earth, Photographs," 1880-1900, 80 prints

   1. "Ogema, Minnesota, Most Holy Redeemer Church," 1925-1972, .8 cubic foot:
      a. Census for Onigum and Round Lake area, 1940s-1950s, 1 volume: includes names of parents and children with birth and marriage dates
      b. Announcement book, 1940-1949, 1 volume
      c. Financial records, 1925-1933, 1943-1948, 1950-1972, 8 volumes
   2. "Ponsford, St. Theodore Church," 1920s-1972, .4 cubic foot
      a. Census, 1920s, 1940s-1950s, 3 volumes: lists names of parents and children with marriage, birth, death and baptismal dates
      b. Notifications of confirmations, 1956-1972, 1 folder
      c. Minutes of Board of Trustees meetings, 1951-1972, 1
      d. Financial records, 1964-1972, 2 volumes
   3. "White Earth, St. Benedict Mission and School," n.d., 1.6 cubic feet:
      a. Census records, 1890s, 1920s, 2 volumes: lists names of parents and children, birth and death dates, and whether sacraments were received
      b. Enrollment books, 1878-1956, 2 volumes
      c. Notebook with Ojibwa to English translations by Reverend Benno Watrin, n.d.
      d. Announcements, 1925-1970, 9 volumes
      a. Correspondence, 1933-1934, 1966, 1973, 1 folder: major correspondents include Reverend Roman Homar, O.S.B. and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions
      b. Historical notes, n.d.
   5. "Various Records," n.d., .4 cubic foot:
      b. Items written in Ojibwa, n.d.
      c. Historical notes, n.d.

C. "White Earth Reservation, Jude Koll, O.S.B., Records," 1886-1970s, .8 cubic foot:
   3. Transcript of interview of Reverend Aloysius Hermanutz, O.S.B., conducted by Reverend Cuthbert Goeb, O.S.B., 1924, 25 pages
5. Photographs, 1940s, 15 prints
6. Clippings, 1950s, 1970s, 4 folders
7. Published histories and articles, 1900-1960, 1 folder
E. "Borgeyding, O.S.B., Thomas," 1858-1938, .3 cubic foot:
   1. Ojibwa catechisms, prayer, and hymn books, published 1858-1931, .2 cubic foot
   2. Financial records, 1932-1938, .1 cubic foot
F. "Nelles, O.S.B., Felix, 'Thirty Years Among the Indians—Memoirs of an Indian Missionary and Historical Sketches of the Chippewas in Northern Minnesota,'" ca.1900, 170 pages
G. Verwyst, Reverend Chrysostom, O.F.M., 1913-1920, .8 cubic foot:
   2. "Repertorium of Chippewa Words and Expressions," 1913-1916, 4 volumes
I. Photographs, 1900s-1970s, 850 prints: primarily from Red Lake but also Other Benedictine Indian missions in Minnesota
J. Clippings, 1970s, .3 cubic foot: re: Red Lake Mission, School, and Reservation

/4 "Monks"
Inclusive dates: 1870s-1980s
Volume: Approximately 2 cubic feet, re: Indian missionaries
Description: Primarily biographical and personal records, such as biographies, chapter reports, chronologies, death cards, and photographs with contents and quantity of files varying widely. The series is divided into living and deceased monks and alphabetically there under.

/5 "Parishes"
Volume: .4 cubic foot
Description: Primarily historical notes and published histories with some correspondence and census records.
   1. Beaulieu, Minnesota, St. Joseph Church, 1912-1950s, n.d., 1 folder:
      a. Correspondence, 1912-1913, 3 letters
      c. Financial statements, 1939, 1944-1949
      d. Photographs, 1950s, 50 prints
   2. Grand Marais, St. John Church, n.d., 1 folder: historical notes and clippings
   3. Mahnomen, St. Michael Church, 1922-1946, n.d., 1 folder:
      b. Photographs, n.d., 20 prints
      c. Historical notes, n.d.
B. "Parish Histories," 1900s-1980s, .1 cubic foot: Published histories for anniversaries of parishes; histories exist for Indian missions at Fort Totten, North Dakota and Ball Club, Cloquet, Grand Marias, Ponsford, Red Lake, and White Earth, Minnesota
C. "Parish Records," 1880s-1930s, .2 cubic foot:
   1. "Elbow Lake and Island Lake Missions, Census," 1930s, 1 volume: Lists names of parents and children with birth, marriage, death, and baptismal dates
2. "Fond du Lac Reservation: Cloquet, Sawyer, Kettle River, Census," 1880s-1890s, 1 volume: created by Reverend Simon Lampe, O.S.B.; lists names of parents and children, and birth dates
3. "Naytahwaush, St. Anne Mission, Census," 1930s, 1 volume: Lists names of parents and children with birth, marriage, death, and baptismal dates

/6 "Personal Papers of Monks" Inclusive dates: 1878-1950s, n.d.
Volume: 4 cubic feet
Description: Arranged alphabetically by surname.
A. Borgerding, Reverend Thomas, O.S.B., 1883-1950s, 3 cubic feet:
1. Correspondence, 1890s, 1950s, 2 cubic feet: personal and official correspondence
2. Diary, journal, 1883-1885, 1888-1895, 2 volumes
3. Sacramental records, Red Lake, 1913-1919; Cloquet, 1932-1938; 2 volumes
4. Financial records, 1885-1888, 1890-1892, 1901-1903, 5 volumes
5. School record, grades, 1879-1886, 1 volume
B. Hermanutz, Reverend Aloysius, O.S.B., 1878-1929, .1 cubic foot:
1. Correspondence, 1878, 1880-1881, 1883, 1886, 1910, 1912, 1917-1929, 50 letters: personal and official correspondence
C. Homar, Reverend Roman, O.S.B., 1928, 1935-1936, 1940, 1945, 1953, 10 letters
D. Hoppe, Reverend Leo, 1930s-1940s, approximately 1,000 prints: primarily of missions at Naytahwaush, Red Lake, Big Elbow Lake, Bejou, Island Lake, and White Earth
E. Lampe, Reverend Simon, O.S.B., 1894, 1922, 1931, 1933-1935, 1939, 8 letters
G. Parnell, Reverend Denis, O.S.B., 1935-1937, n.d., 1 folder:
2. Photographs, n.d., 15 prints
H. Thelen, Reverend Valerian, O.S.B., ca. 1940s, 50 photographs: primarily from St. Benedict Mission, White Earth