Diocese of Helena

MONTANA, HELENA

Diocese of Helena Archives

515 North Ewing Street
P.O. Box 1729
Helena, Montana 59624
Phone 406-442-5820
http://www.diocesehelena.org/archives/default.htm

Hours: By appointment only, Monday-Wednesday 9:00-4:30
Access: Some restrictions apply
Copying facilities: Yes

History: The Vicariate Apostolate of Nebraska was erected for Montana east of the Cascade Mountains and Wyoming, 1857-1884, and the Vicariate Apostolate of Idaho and Montana was erected for Idaho south of the 46th parallel and Montana west of the Cascade Mountains, 1858-1868. In 1868, the Vicariate Apostolate of Idaho and Montana was expanded to include all of Idaho and in 1884, the Diocese of Helena was erected to included all of present-day Montana. In 1900, the Helena Diocese reported 9,000 baptized Native American Catholics and in 1999 the dioceses of Helena and Great Falls-Billings reported 7,000 and 12,000 respectively. Helena and its predecessors have administered the following Indian missions, parishes, and schools in Montana:

1841-1891 (no longer Indian)  St. Mary Mission and Academy (Salish), Stevensville/ Bitterroot Valley
1847-1853 (closed?)  St. Michael Chapel (Salish)
1859-1917 (closed)  St. Peter Mission (Assiniboine, Atsina, Crow, and Siksika), Cascade/ Fort Shaw
1854 (relocated)-present  St. Ignatius Mission (Kalispel, Kootenai, and Salish), St. Ignatius, Flathead Reservation
1864-1962 (closed)  St Ignatius School (Kootenai and Salish), St. Ignatius, Flathead Reservation
1864-ca. 1880 (closed)  Dolores Mission (Kalispel)
1864-ca. 1880 (closed)  St. Louis Mission (Kalispel) [Montana?]
1865-1866  Cootenay/ Courtenay’s Mission (Kootenai)
1884-present (Helena, 1884-1904)  St. Labre School (Cheyenne and Crow), Ashland
1884-present (Helena, 1884-1904)  St. Paul Mission (Atsina, Assiniboine, and Métis), Hays, Fort Belknap Reservation
1884-1931 (closed)  Holy Family Church (Siksika), Browning, Blackfoot Reservation
1887-present  St. Francis Xavier Mission (Crow), St. Xavier, Crow Reservation
1887-1933 (closed)  St. Francis Xavier School (Crow), St. Xavier, Crow Reservation
1889-present  St. John Berchman Mission (Salish), Jocko/ Arlee/ Jocko Valley, Flathead Reservation
1889-1897 (closed)  St. John Berchman School (Salish), Jocko/ Arlee/ Jocko Valley, Flathead Reservation
1890-1932 (closed)  Holy Family School (Siksika), Browning/ Birch Creek, Blackfeet Reservation
1890-present  St. Charles Mission (Crow), Pryor, Crow Reservation
1890-1898  St. Charles Mission School (Crow) Pryor, Crow Reservation
1891-present  St. Anne/ St. Peter Claver Church (Siksika), Heart Butte, Blackfeet Reservation
1904-present  Church of the Little Flower (Siksika), Browning, Blackfeet Reservation
1910-present  Immaculate Conception Mission (Kootenai and Salish), Polson, Flathead Reservation
1911-present  Sacred Heart Mission (Kootenai and Salish), Ronan, Flathead Reservation
1912-1940 (closed)  St. Michael Church (Siksika), Browning, Blackfeet Reservation
1940-present  St. Joseph Mission (Kootenai and Salish), Charlo, Flathead Reservation
1941-present  Sacred Heart Mission (Salish), Arlee, Flathead Reservation
1954-present  St. Mary Mission (Siksika), Babb, Blackfeet Reservation

Holdings of Catholic-related records about Native Americans:

Inclusive dates: 1877-present
Volume: Approximately 3 cubic feet
Description: 8 series include Native Catholic records:

/1 Bishops’ Papers
Inclusive dates: ca. 1883-ca. 1932
Volume: Approximately .3 cubic foot
Description: Includes papers to 1962; unprocessed thereafter and not included:
A. Bishop Jean-Baptiste Brondel (1841-1903), ca. 1883-ca. 1903, approximately 25% of 1.4 cubic feet
B. Bishop John Patrick Carroll (1864-1925), ca. 1903-ca. 1927, few items possible within 1.5 cubic feet
C. Bishop George Joseph Finnigan (1885-1932), Bishop, 1927-1932: ca. 1927-ca. 1932, few items within .4 cubic foot; includes address at St. Michael Mission, Browning, 1928

/2 Sacramental Records
Inclusive dates: 1877-present
Volume: Approximately 10% of 1 volume and 52 reels of microfilm
Description: Arranged alphabetically by parish location and there under by name; includes baptisms, first communions, confirmations, marriages, and burials for Indian and non-Indian parishes with attended Indian missions and stations or at least a few Indian entries; Siksika sacramental records
compiled by Robert C. Gilham, 2001, as the online Blackfeet Family History database, http://members.shaw.ca/blackfeet.

A. Browning, Blackfoot Reservation, Church of the Little Flower, 1926-present; Siksika baptismal and marriage entries compiled and translated by Robert C. Gilham, 2001; includes Babb, St. Mary Mission and Birch Creek, Birch Creek Mission

B. Browning, Sacred Heart Mission, 1926-present

C. Browning, St. Michael Mission, 1912-1957; Siksika baptismal and marriage entries compiled and translated by Robert C. Gilham, 2001

D. Cascade/ Fort Shaw, St. Peter Mission, 1855-1905; includes 1 baptismal volume, 1859-1879; Siksika Indian to 1879; Siksika baptismal entries compiled and translated by Robert C. Gilham, 2001

E. Cut Bank, St. Margaret Mary Church, 1914-present

F. Helena, Cathedral of St. Helena, 1864-present

G. Helena, St. Joseph’s Orphanage, 1905-1963

H. Heart Butte/ Browning, Holy Family Mission, 1877-1931; Siksika baptismal and marriage entries compiled and translated by Robert C. Gilham, 2001

I. Heart Butte (Little Badger), St. Anne Church/ St. Peter Claver Church, 1891-present

J. Missoula, Christ the King Church, 1865-present

K. Polson, Immaculate Conception Church, 1923-present

L. Ronan, Sacred Heart Church, 1919-present; includes Charlo, St. Joseph Mission, 1918-1945

M. St. Ignatius, St. Ignatius Mission, 1874-present; includes Arlee, Sacred Heart Mission and Jocko, St. John Berchman Mission

N. Stevensville/ Bitter Root Valley, St. Mary and St. Ignatius Missions, 1877-1937

/3 Photographs
Inclusive dates: 1941, 1944, n.d. (since 19th century)
Volume: Approximately 150 prints processed; oversize unprocessed and excluded
Description: Arranged alphabetically by location of parishes and there under by name; re: church buildings, clergy and/ or women religious with Indian parishioners, and special events
A. Browning, Church of the Little Flower, 1948, n.d.; re: includes 1948 ordination of Reverend John J. Brown, S.J. (Siksika)
B. Heart Butte (Browning), Holy Family Mission, n.d.
C. St. Ignatius, St. Ignatius Mission, 1944, n.d.; re: includes 1944 centennial celebration
D. Stevensville, St. Mary Mission, 1941, n.d.; re: includes 1941 centennial celebration

/4 Scrapbooks
Volume: 2 volumes
Description: Clippings, pamphlets, and photographs; includes Atsina, Crow, Salish, Siksika, and Yakima Indians and special events at Holy Family, Sacred Heart, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius, St. Labre, St. Mary, St. Paul, and St. Peter Missions.

/5 Video Recordings
Inclusive dates: 2004
Volume: 1 DVD disc
Description: St. Ignatius Mission, St. Ignatius.
6 Parish Records
Inclusive dates: 1930s-present
Volume: Approximately 1 cubic foot
Description: Arranged alphabetically by parish location and there under by name; includes correspondence, annual reports, and commemorative books for Indian parishes and/or attended Indian missions and stations; records after 1975 are unprocessed and not included:
A. Browning, St. Michael Church and Church of the Little Flower, .2 cubic foot
B. Heart Butte/ Browning, Holy Family Mission and Badger, St. Anne/ St. Peter Claver Church, .2 cubic foot
C. Polson, Immaculate Conception Church, .1 cubic foot
D. Ronan, Sacred Heart Church with Charlo, St. Joseph Mission, .1 cubic foot
E. St. Ignatius, St. Ignatius Mission with Arlee, Sacred Heart Mission and Jocko, St. John Berchman Mission, .1 cubic foot
F. Stevensville, St. Mary Mission, .2 cubic foot; includes 1941 centennial celebration

7 Personnel Files
Inclusive dates: 1866-present
Volume: Several folders
Description: 1 folder/person arranged alphabetically; includes diocesan and religious clergy but not all religious clergy are included.

8 Religious Community Files
Inclusive dates: 1864-present
Volume: Approximately .6 cubic foot
Description:
A. Christian Brothers, Irish Province, 1923-present, .1 cubic foot
B. Dominican Sisters, n.d., .05 cubic foot
C. Jesuits, Oregon Province, 1970-present, .1 cubic foot
D. Premonstratensians, De Pere, Wisconsin, 1914-present, .05 cubic foot
E. Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, 1869-present, .2 cubic foot
F. Sisters of [Charity of] Providence, Seattle, Washington, 1864-present, .05 cubic foot
G. Ursulines, 1884-present, .1 cubic foot

8 Diocesan Newspapers
Inclusive dates: 1897-present
Volume: Several articles