



**Guide to Catholic-Related Records in the Midwest about Native Americans**  
[See User Guide for help on interpreting entries](#)

Diocese of St. Cloud  
MINNESOTA, ST. JOSEPH

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**Benedictine Sisters of Pontifical Jurisdiction**

**M-93**

St. Benedict's Monastery  
104 Chapel Lane  
St. Joseph, Minnesota 56374  
Phone 320-363-7100

Open: By appointment only  
Access: Some restrictions apply  
Copying facilities: Yes

History: The Benedictine Sisters of St. Joseph, Minnesota, were established in 1857 and served and/or staffed the following Indian missions and schools:

1878-1980	St. Benedict Mission and School (Ojibwa), White Earth, Minnesota
1881-1882	Indian Boarding School (various), Grand Ronde, Oregon
1884-1896(closed)	St. Benedict Industrial School (Ojibwa), St. Joseph, Minnesota
1888-2009	St. Mary Mission School (Ojibwa), Red Lake, Minnesota
1941-present	St. Therese Church/ Little Flower Mission (Ojibwa), Vineland, Minnesota

Holdings of Catholic-related records about Native Americans:

Inclusive dates: 1870s-1982, n.d.

Volume: 6.3 cubic feet and 2 reels of microfilm

Description: 5 series include Native Catholic records:

/1 "Records of the Indian missions"

Inclusive dates: 1878-1982

Volume: 5.6 cubic feet and 2 reels of microfilm

Description: Arranged by mission and school.

A. St. Benedict Mission, White Earth, Minnesota, 1878-1982, 5 cubic feet:

1. "General Records," 1878-1982, .8 cubic foot:

- a. Baptismal register, 1885-1898, 1 volume
- b. Parish census, 1932, .15 cubic foot: includes place birth, age, dates when sacraments were administered, and remarks
- c. Memoirs of missionaries, n.d., 1 folder
- d. Chronicles or annals of significant events, 1958-1968, 1 folder
- e. History of St. Benedict Mission, 1878-1978, as told by Reverend Benno Watrin, O.S.B., 1 folder

- f. Transcripts of interviews conducted by Sister Carol Berg, O.S.B., for her dissertation on St. Benedict Mission, 1980, 1982, 1 folder
  - g. Clippings, re: St. Benedict Mission, 1889-1949, 2 folders
  - h. Government publications, re: White Earth Reservation, 1911-1918, .5 cubic foot
2. Correspondence, 1883-1924, 1937-1950, 1964-1969, .8 cubic foot:
    - a. "Superintendent's Correspondence," 1883-1924, .2 cubic foot: primarily correspondence between the school superintendent, the abbot of St. John's Abbey, the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the bishop of Crookston
    - b. "Administrative Correspondence," 1937-1950, .3 cubic foot: re: primarily operation of the School; major correspondents include the school superintendent, county, state, and federal government agencies, the Diocese of Crookston, and St. John's Abbey
    - c. "Correspondence with Benefactors," 1939-1947, .3 cubic foot: re: primarily donations of money, clothing, and food to the mission; major correspondents include the school principal, parish mission clubs, altar and rosary societies, and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith
    - d. "General Correspondence of Sister Ortrude Nester, O.S.B." 1964-1969, 1 folder: Sister Ortrude served as principal of the School, 1964-1969; correspondence pertains to the general school administration
  3. Financial records, 1881-1886, 1889-1972, .5 cubic foot: journals, ledgers, annual statements, and receipts and vouchers, re: school and convent
  4. "School Boards," 1885-1969, 2.8 cubic feet:
    - a. "General Records," 1885-1969, .3 cubic foot: mainly contracts with the federal government, classroom inventories, standardized test scores, enrollment and promotion lists, school publications, statistical reports, and statements of student arrivals, departures, transfers, and attendance
    - b. Monthly school reports, 1885, 1 folder: submitted to the Indian agent
    - c. Quarterly school reports, 1886, 1889-1945, .6 cubic foot: submitted to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs
    - d. Quarterly reports to the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, 1947-1969, .1 cubic foot
    - e. Student records, 1939-1969, 1.6 cubic feet: included admission, correspondence, permanent examination records, and achievement are applications for record cards, dental test scores
    - f. Records relating to the National School Lunch Program, 1963-1969, .2 cubic foot
  5. "Records of the Religious Community," 1878-1972, .1 cubic foot
    - a. "Personnel Records," 1878-1972, 3 folders: includes alphabetical and chronological lists of sisters at the school and annual statistical reports submitted to the prioress
    - b. "Records relating to the community life of the sisters 1951-1971, 2 folders: primarily reports sent to the prioress by the superior or Mission coordinator
  - B. Indian School, Grand Ronde, Oregon, 1880-1882, 2 folders and reel of microfilm: includes a listing of sisters at the school, receipts for goods received by the mission, and correspondence (microfilm) between the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, the agent, and the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions
  - C. St. Benedict Industrial School, St. Joseph, Minnesota, 1883-1896, 2 folders and 1 reel of microfilm: includes a listing of sisters who served at the School, miscellaneous School records, and a microfilm copy of

correspondence between the Office of Indian Affairs, the abbot of St. John's Abbey, and the bishop of the Northern Province of Minnesota

- D. St. Mary Mission, Red Lake, Minnesota, 1888-1981, .3 cubic foot:
  - 1. General records, 1888-1979; .1 cubic foot:
    - a. Memoirs of missionary sisters, 1888-1981, 1 folder
    - b. Chronicles or annals of significant events, 1959-1962, 1964-1966, 1 folder
    - c. Publications and clippings relating to the Mission and School, 1896, 1950-1979, 3 folders
  - 2. Financial Records, 1914-1975, .1 cubic foot: primarily annual statements submitted to the Motherhouse
  - 3. Records of the religious community, 1881-1981, .05 cubic foot:
    - a. "Personnel Records," 1888-1891, 2 folders: includes chronological listings of sisters at the School and annual statistical reports submitted to the Motherhouse
    - b. "Records relating to the community life of the sisters," 1921-1928, 1951-1979, 1 folder: primarily reports sent to the prioress by the superior or Mission coordinator
  - 4. "Records of St. Mary Hospital," 1897-1898, 1 notebook: register of admissions
- E. Little Flower Mission, Vineland, Minnesota, 1938-1982, n.d., .2 cubic foot:
  - 1. "General Records," 1960-1974, n.d., .1 cubic foot:
    - a. Chronicles or annals of significant events, 1960-1961, 1963-1970, 1 folder
    - b. Publications relating to Sister Laura Hesch, O.S.B., 1966, 1972, 1 folder
    - c. "Records relating to an updated approach to apostolic work on the Mille Lacs Reservation," 1973-1974, 1 folder: primarily correspondence and summary reports of meetings and conferences between representatives of various religious communities and Indian leaders
    - d. Records relating to religious instruction classes, n.d., 1 folder
  - 2. Correspondence, 1938-1967, .1 cubic foot:
    - a. "Incoming correspondence of Sister Laura Hesch, O.S.B." 1944-1963, 1 folder: Primarily letters received from Ojibwa Indians in Minnesota, government agencies, and the bishop of the St. Cloud Diocese; the letters relate chiefly to the procurement of land on the Mille Lacs Reservation for the Little Flower Mission
    - b. "Correspondence relating to the Spiritual Mothers' Union," 1938-1963, 1 folder
    - c. "Circular letters of Sister Laura Hesch, O.S.B." 1939-1967, 1 folder: Circular letters (copies) sent by Sister Laura Hesch to members of the Spiritual Mothers' Union and friends of the mission; excerpts from the circular letters, 1942-1966, were compiled and published as Sister Laura's memoirs
  - 3. Financial records, 1956-1975, 1 folder: Primarily annual statements to the Motherhouse and receipts
  - 4. "Records relating to the religious community," 1955-1982, 2 folders:
    - a. Personnel records, 1955-1982, 1 folder: annual statistical reports submitted to the prioress
    - b. "Records relating to the community life of the sisters," 1957-1981, 1 folder: Primarily reports sent to the prioress by the superior or Mission coordinator

/2 Office of Prioress

Inclusive dates: 1881-1973

Volume: .2 cubic foot

Description: Arranged by administration and chronologically there under.

- A. Mother Scholastica Kerst, O.S.B., 1881-1882, 10 letters: To the sisters and the priest at the Grand Ronde School, Oregon
- B. Mother Louise Walz, 1928-1931, 2 folders: Correspondence with sisters and priests at St. Benedict Mission, White Earth, and St. Mary Mission, Red Lake, Minnesota
- C. Mother Rosamond Partschner, O.S.B., 1938-1949, 3 folders: Correspondence with sisters and priests at Little Flower Mission, Vineland, and St. Benedict Mission, White Earth, Minnesota
- D. Mother Richarda Peters, O.S.B., 1949-1960, 2 folders: Correspondence with sisters and priests at St. Mary's Mission, Red Lake, and Little Flower Mission, Vineland
- E. Mother Henrita Osendorf, O.S.B., 1965-1973, 3 folders: Correspondence with sisters and priests at Little Flower Mission, Vineland; St. Mary Mission, Red Lake; and St. Benedict Mission, White Earth

/3 "Personnel Files"

Inclusive dates: 1916, 1922

Volume: 7 pages

Description: Arranged alphabetically by surname. "Ketten, Sister Philomena, O.S.B.": Accounts of life at St. Benedict Mission, White Earth

/4 "Manuscript Collections"

Inclusive dates: 1940, 1954, n.d.

Volume: 16 pages

Description: Arranged alphabetically by surname.

- A. "Eich, Sister Amalia, O.S.B." 1940, 1954, 2 transcripts (10-pages): Interviews with Sister Amalia
- B. "Rettenmaier, Sister Ambrosia, O.S.B." n.d., 6 pages: Account of an incident at St. Mary Mission, Red Lake, Minnesota

/5 Photographs

Inclusive dates: 1870s-1970s, n.d.

Volume: 609 prints

Description: Arranged alphabetically by mission or school.

- A. Grand Ronde Indian School, n.d., 2 photos
- B. Onamia, Little Flower Indian Mission, 1940s-1950s, 32 prints: majority are identified and dated; prominent subjects includes Sister Laura with Ojibwa Indians and mission buildings
- C. Red Lake, St. Mary Mission, 1889-1965, 54 prints: majority are identified and dated; most were created after 1940 and depict mission and school buildings
- D. St. Joseph, St. Benedict Industrial School, 1880s, 8 prints
- E. White Earth, St. Benedict Mission, 1870s-1970s, 495 prints: majority are identified and dated; most created from 1940s-1970s, although there are a significant number from the 1880s-1890s; prominent subjects include Ojibwa Indian children, mission and school buildings, and sisters who worked at the mission
- F. Portraits, 1880s-1920s, 18 prints: include photos of Reverend Aloysius Hermanutz, O.S.B., and Sister Philomena Kette, O.S.B.