



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

*Diocese of Helena*  
MONTANA, HELENA

*new 2006*

**Diocese of Helena Archives**

**W-314**

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Helena, Montana 59624  
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<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 46<sup>th</sup> 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 include 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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

Inclusive dates: 1938-1953, n.d.

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

Description: The following diocesan newspapers have included articles on American Indians and Catholic evangelization in the diocese: *The Montana Catholic*, 1897-1900s, *The Catholic Bulletin*, 1921-1932, *The Register*, 1932-1972, *The WestMont Word*, 1972-1985, and *The Montana Catholic*, <http://www.diocesehelena.org/mtcath/default.htm>, 1985-present, the latter of which has been archived online, 2004-present.