



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

*Diocese of Helena*  
MONTANA, STEVENSVILLE

*new 2006*

**Research Library**

**Historic St. Mary's Mission**

**W-327**

West End of Fourth Street  
P.O. Box 211  
Stevensville, Montana 59870  
Phone 406-777-5734

<http://www.saintmarysmission.org/>

Hours: April-December, Monday-Friday, 10:00-5:00  
Access: No restrictions  
Copying facilities: Yes

History: St. Mary Church was a Salish Indian parish until 1891. Since then the church has had a few mixed-blood Indian parishioners.

Since ca. 1820s	The Northwest Fur Company employed lay Iroquois Catholics from Canada who intermarried and catechized among the Salish Indians
1831, 1834, 1837, and 1841	Four delegations of Salish, Iroquois, and Nez Perce Indians attempted to reach and request Jesuit missionaries the Bishop of St. Louis; only the first and fourth delegations reached St. Louis to made their requests whereas the others were killed in route by Indians from enemy tribes. Narcisse and Paul, two Salish Indians of first delegation, died in 1831 and were buried in the St. Louis cemetery.
1841-1850 (closed)	In response to the fourth request, Reverend Pierre J. De Smet, S.J. visited the Northwest tribes in 1840-1841 and with other Jesuits (Turin, Province, Italy) established St. Mary's Mission and Academy (Salish)
1865-1866	Jesuits from St. Ignatius Mission reopened and attended St. Mary's
1866-1888	Jesuits administered St. Mary's Mission and Academy
1891 (no longer Indian)	Chief Charlo and the Salish Indians moved to the Flathead/ Jocko Reservation
1891-present	Diocesan priests administered St. Mary's
1911-present	Annually in September, Salish Indians have visited Historic St. Mary's Mission and cemetery to commemorate the arrival of Reverend Pierre Jean de Smet, S.J. in 1841

Jesuits from St. Mary's attended St. Francis Borgia station (Kalispel), Flathead Lake, 1850-1853.

Holdings of Catholic-related records about Native Americans:

Inclusive dates: 1825-present

Volume: Approximately 3 cubic feet

Description: The records in the Historic St. Mary's Mission Library are not organized according to a classification scheme. Consequently, description is by record type.

A. Maps

Inclusive dates: 1825-1876

Volume: Approximately .5 cubic foot (20 items)

Description: Maps (copies) of Northwest Jesuit missions and travels and U.S. explorers and military expeditions.

B. Photographs

Inclusive dates: 1841?-present

Volume: Approximately .5 cubic foot

Description: Pilgrimage at St. Mary's Mission with Jesuits and Salish Indians; black and white and mostly in color after 1975; most are copies before 1900.

C. Reference File

Inclusive dates: 1911-1980

Volume: Approximately 2 cubic foot

Description: Clippings and commemorative pamphlets including *The Story of St. Mary's Mission*, Reverend Martin Florian, 1959