



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

Diocese of Fargo  
NORTH DAKOTA, FARGO

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**Diocese of Fargo Archives**

**M-129**

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Open: By appointment only  
Access Some restrictions apply  
Copying facilities: No

History: The Diocese of Jamestown was erected in 1889 from part of the Vicariate Apostolate of Dakota and in 1897 it was renamed the Diocese of Fargo. Statewide for North Dakota, the Fargo Diocese reported 4,000 baptized Native American Catholics in 1900 and Bismarck and Fargo reported 1,800 and 1,000 respectively in 1999. Fargo and its predecessors have administered the following Indian missions and parishes in North Dakota:

1818-1823 (closed) (Fargo 1889)	St. Francis Xavier School (Métis and Ojibwa), Pembina
1821-1823 (closed) (Fargo 1889)	St. Francis Xavier Church (Métis and Ojibwa), Pembina
1834-ca. 1870s (no longer Indian) (Fargo, 1889)	Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church (Métis and Ojibwa), Pembina
1874-present (Fargo, 1889-present)	St. Michael Church (Sisseton and Wahpeton), St. Michael
1876-present (Fargo, 1889-1909)	St. Peter Church (Hunkpapa), Fort Yates
1882-present (Fargo, 1889-present)	St. John Church (Métis and Ojibwa), St. John
1883-1894 (no longer Indian) (Fargo, 1889-1894)	St. Paul Mission (Ojibwa), Tarsus
1885-present (Fargo, 1889-present)	Our Lady of Seven Dolours Church (Sisseton and Wahpeton), Fort Totten
1887-present (Fargo, 1889-present)	St. Ann Church (Métis and Ojibwa), Belcourt
1887-present (Fargo, 1889-present)	St. Anthony Mission (Métis and Ojibwa), Alcide/Laureat
1889-1963 (closed) (Fargo, 1889-1909)	Immaculate Conception/ Sacred Heart Mission (Arickara, Hidatsa, and Mandan), Packineau Dam Site/Elbowoods

1890-present (Fargo, 1890-1909)	St. Elizabeth Mission (Hunkpapa), Cannonball
1892-present	St. Jerome Mission (Sisseton and Wahpeton), Crow Hill
1894-present	St. Joachim Church (Métis and Ojibwa), Rolla
1896-present (Fargo, 1896-1909)	St. James Mission (Sisseton and Wahpeton), Porcupine
1897-1959 (closed)	St. Mary Mission (Métis and Ojibwa), Maryville
1906-1969 (closed) (Fargo, 1906-1909)	St. Andrew Mission (Arickara, Hidatsa, and Mandan), Nishu/ Armstrong
1906-1909 (closed) (Fargo, 1906-1909)	Holy Family/ St. Michael Mission (Arickara, Hidatsa, and Mandan), Shell Creek/ Shell Village
1907-1921(closed) (Fargo, 1907-1909)	St. John Mission (Arickara, Hidatsa, and Mandan), Crow Heart's Landing
1916-1950 (no longer Indian)	St. James Mission (Sisseton and Wahpeton), Warwick
ca. 1920s-present	Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church (Métis and Ojibwa), Olga
ca. 1920s-present	St. Boniface Church (Métis and Ojibwa), Walhalla
1929-present	Christ the King Mission (Sisseton and Wahpeton), Tokio
1940-present	St. Benedict Mission (Métis and Ojibwa), Turtle Mountain Reservation
1948-present	Immaculate Heart of Mary Mission (Métis and Ojibwa), Dunseith

Holdings of Catholic-related records about Native Americans:

Inclusive dates: 1818-1979, n.d.

Volume: Approximately 4 cubic feet

Description: 9 series include Native Catholic records:

/1 Parishes and Indian Missions

Inclusive dates: 1818-1970, n.d.

Volume: 1.5 cubic feet

Description: Arranged alphabetically by parish location, except for 5 folders of general Indian-related correspondence, which are filed under "Indian Missions-Miscellaneous" and "Indian Affairs."

A. Belcourt, St. Ann Church, 1891-1968, n.d., .15 cubic foot:

1. Correspondence, 1891-1893, 1913-1917, 1924-1925, 1931-1968, 3 folders: major correspondents include Bishops John Shanley (1852-1909), James O'Reilly, Aloisius Muench, and Leo Dworschak, Reverends J. Perrault, L.A. Ducharme, and Hildebrand Elliott, and Sister Genevieve.
2. Historical notes, 1899, n.d., 1 folder: includes a history of St. Ann's by Reverend John F. Malo, 1899, 13 handwritten pages

B. Dunseith, St. Louis Church and St. Paul and Immaculate Heart of Mary Indian Missions, 1892, 1908, 1923, 1937-1967, .1 cubic foot: major correspondents include Reverends Lucien Burque, Francis J. Lorscheid, and John E. Wolf and Bishops Aloisius Muench and Leo Dworschak

C. Fort Totten, Our Lady of Seven Dolours Church, 1913-1962, n.d., 2 folders:

1. Correspondence, 1913-1916, 1926-1927, 1930-1937, 1949, 1952-1962, 1 folder: major correspondents include Reverend Timothy Sexton and Bishop Leo Dworschak
2. Historical notes, n.d., 1 folder
- D. Fort Yates, St. Peter Church, 1898, 2 letters from Reverend Bernard Strassmaier, O.S.B.
- E. Pembina, Assumption Church, 1818-1880, n.d., .35 cubic foot:
  1. Correspondence, 1818-1880, .3 cubic foot:
    - a. Letters of Reverend George Anthony Belcourt, 1848-1857, 2 folders
    - b. Letters (copies) from the St. Boniface Archdiocesan Archives, Manitoba, Canada, 1818-1880, 3 folders
  2. Reverend Joseph Goiffon's "Autobiography" (copy), n.d., 50 pages: begins in 1824; from the Catholic Historical Society Collections of Archdiocese of
- St. Paul-Minneapolis, St. Paul, Minnesota
- F. St. John, St. John the Baptist Mission, 1894-1895, 1908, 1914, 1920, 1927-1929, 1936-1967, 2 folders: major correspondents include Reverends J.E. Pacaud, J.E. Ouellet, Jerome E. Filteau, Ervin Zerbes, Edward J. Sherman, William Crane, and Bishops Aloisius Muench and Leo Dworschak
- G. St. Michael, St. Michael Mission, 1893-1970, n.d., .4 cubic foot:
  1. Correspondence, 1893-1894, 1910, 1937-1970, .35 cubic foot: major correspondents include Reverends Jerome Hunt, Edward Berheide, Ildephonse Kreidler, Stanislaus Maudlin, O.S.B., and Alan Berndt and Bishops Aloisius Muench and Leo Dworschak
  2. Historical notes, n.d., 1 folder
- H. "Indian Affairs," 1890-1895, 1906, 1919-1965, .3 cubic foot: Correspondence; major concerns are the annual financial and statistical reports to the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions
- I. "Indian Missions-Miscellaneous Correspondence," 1890-1893, 1895, 1939, 15 letters: Most pertain to the Fort Totten Reservation

/2 Bishops' Papers

Inclusive dates: 1889-1926

Volume: 1 folder

Description: Arranged chronologically by administration. Most of the records in

this series do not relate to Indian affairs. Most correspondence between the bishops and Indian missionaries is in the series, "Parishes and Indian Missions." Indian mission records are found in the correspondence of Bishop John Shanley, 1889-1909, 1 folder. Major correspondents include Bishop

Martin

Marty, O.S.B. and Bishop Vincent Wehrle, O.S.B.

/3 Priests' Files

Inclusive dates: 1889-1970s

Volume: Approximately .2 cubic foot

Description: The files of most Indian missionaries contain no records pertaining

to American Indians. Most notable is the file of Reverend John F. Malo, which

contains 50 letters, 1890-1898, 1904, primarily from St. Ann Mission, Belcourt.

/4 Annals, Diaries, and Histories

Inclusive dates: 1874-1960, n.d.

Volume: 1.1 cubic feet

Description: A. "Chronicles" (copies) of the Soeurs grises, Fort Totten Reservation Schools, 1874-1960, 1 cubic foot: in French and English; originals at the Soeurs grises Motherhouse (Montreal, Quebec, Canada)  
B. "History of Devil's Lake Reservation Missions, 1867-1935," n.d., 1 folder: author unidentified  
C. Brother Giles Laugel's [O.S.B.] "Diary" (copy), 1883-1929, 1 folder  
D. "Establishment of the Fort Totten Catholic Indian Mission," by Reverend Vincent Wehrle, O.S.B., ca. 1901, 25 handwritten pages

/5 Financial Reports

Inclusive dates: 1890-1967

Volume: .5 cubic foot and 1 reel of microfilm

Description: Arranged alphabetically by parish location with records for 1923-1957 on microfilm.

/6 Statistical Reports

Inclusive dates: 1916-1967

Volume: .2 cubic foot

Description: Arranged alphabetically by parish location.

- A. Belcourt, St. Ann Church, 1916-1921, 1925-1936, 1938-1967, 1 folder
- B. Dunseith, St. Louis Church and Immaculate Heart of Mary Mission, 1943-1967, 1 folder
- C. Fort Totten, Our Lady of Seven Dolours Church, 1916-1921, 1924-1931, 1940-1967, 1 folder
- D. St. John, St. John the Baptist Church, 1916-1921, 1924-1932, 1934-1967, 1 folder
- E. St. Michael, St. Michael Church, 1916-1921, 1932, 1938-1967, 1 folder

/7 "Religious Sisters"

Inclusive dates: 1936-1979

Volume: .1 cubic foot

Description: Arranged alphabetically by community name.

- A. Sisters of Charity [Soeurs grises], Montreal, Canada, 1936, 1938, 1960-1961, 1978-1979, 1 folder: correspondence regarding St. Michael's Mission and the Little Flower Indian School; major correspondents include Mother E. Gallant, Bishop Aloisius Muench, and Bishop Leo Dworschak
- B. Sisters of St. Joseph, Crookston, Minnesota, 1943-1974, 1 folder: regarding Immaculate Heart of Mary Mission, Dunseith; correspondents include the mother superiors and the bishops

/8 Photographs

Inclusive dates: 1890s-1970s

Volume: Approximately 100 prints

Description: Arranged in a file entitled "Indian Missions and Missionaries" with the majority from St. Michael Mission.

/9 Sacramental Records

Inclusive dates: 1848-1969

Volume: 16 reels of microfilm

Description: Arranged alphabetically by parish location; locations of records for closed parishes and procedures for requesting sacramental records available online:

<http://www.fargodiocese.org/archives/SacramentalRecords.htm>.

- A. Belcourt, St. Ann Church, St. Anthony Mission, and surrounding missions and stations, 1887-1969, 2 reels
- B. Dunseith, St. Louis Church, 1883-ca. 1890s, 1943-1969, 1 reel: for St. Paul Mission, Tarsus, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Mission
- C. Fort Totten, Our Lady of the Seven Dolours Church, 1918-1969, 1 reel
- D. Leroy, St. Joseph Church, 1848-ca. 1870s (Indian-related), 1 reel
- E. Neche, Ss. Nereus and Achilleus Church, 1848-ca. 1870s; 1 reel: for Assumption Church, Pembina
- F. Olga, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, ca. 1920s-1969 (Indian related), 1 reel
- G. Pembina, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1848-ca. 1870s, 1 reel
- H. Rolla, St. Joachim Church, 1939-1969, 1 reel
- I. Rolette, Sacred Heart Church, 1908-1959 (Indian-related), 1 reel
- J. St. John, St. John Church, 1882-1969, 2 reels
- K. St. Michael, St. Michael Church, 1874-1969, 2 reels
- L. Wahpeton, St. John Church, 1883-1886, 1908-1969, 1 reel: for the Sisseton Reservation and the Wahpeton Government Indian School
- M. Walhalla, St. Boniface Church, ca. 1920s-1969 (Indian-related) 1 reel

/10 Diocesan Newspaper

Inclusive dates: 1941-present

Volume: Few articles

Description: *Dakota Catholic Action* includes occasional articles on American Indians and Catholic evangelization within the diocese.