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Guide to the Ursuline Sisters of Maine Papers

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Guide to the Ursuline Sisters of Maine papers, 1937-2010, bulk 1978-2010 CSC.015

Finding aid prepared by Colleen Mahoney

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September 28, 2012

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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Summary Information

Repository	U.S. Catholic Special Collection, Roesch Library
Creator - Collector	Thibodeau, Martha Helen, O.S.U.
Title	Ursuline Sisters of Maine papers
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1978-2010
Date [inclusive]	1937-2010
Extent	0.5 Linear feet (1 box)
Location:	U.S. Catholic Special Collections, 302 Roesch Library
Language	Multiple languages
Language of Materials	Collection is in English and French.
Abstract:	Collected papers by and about the Ursuline Sisters of Maine, the history of the Ursuline order, and local parishes in the Waterville, Maine area.

Preferred Citation

[Item title], Ursuline Sisters of Maine papers, 1937-2010, bulk 1978-2010. U.S. Catholic Special Collections, University of Dayton Libraries, Dayton, Ohio.

History of the Ursuline Sisters of Maine

The Ursuline order was founded by Angela Merici in Brescia, Italy in 1535. The first Ursulines arrived in North America in 1639, settling in French Canada as the Ursuline Sisters of Three Rivers. In 1888, a group of six sisters from this convent travelled to Waterville, Maine at the behest of the Reverend Narcisse Charland, whose parishioners-mostly French Canadian immigrants-needed schools for their children. The Ursulines in Maine requested independence from the Three Rivers in 1891, in order to be allowed to take in English-speaking postulants. The Ursulines ran seventeen different parochial schools in New England between 1888 and the present, educating thousands of students. Mount Merici Convent and Academy in Waterville, Maine was established in 1912, and became the home of the community for the years to follow. The Ursuline Sisters of Maine joined the Ursulines of the Roman Union in 1939.

Today, Mount Merici School is the only remaining Ursuline school in Maine. The Ursuline Sisters in Maine now fall under the jurisdiction of the Northeast Province, based out of Dedham, Massachusetts. The Ursuline Sisters Care Center for ill and aging sisters is located at the former Mount Merici motherhouse.

Sister Martha Helen Thibodeau is the Ursuline sister who assembled these documents. She grew up in Sanford, Maine, before joining the Ursulines. She taught and was the subprimary at St. John's School in Brunswick, Maine. She was known as Mother Helena at that time, and changed her name after Vatican II to Sister Martha Helen. She currently resides at the Mount Merici Ursuline Sisters Care Center in Waterville, Maine.

Scope and Contents

Many of the documents contain handwritten notes by Sister Martha Helen Thibodeau, O.S.U., who assembled the collection. They include her identifications of individuals, further details of events described in the documents, and explanations of materials included in the collection and their significance.

The first series includes documents related to the Ursulines of Maine. It includes photographs, mass programs, and the personal papers of Thibodeau. The folders of "prayer and mass materials" include essays, prayers, hymns, and guides for reflection. The folder of "miscellaneous" papers includes various papers related to Ursulines in Maine, including a St. John's School alumni directory, a national gathering program, vocation brochures, correspondence, and other papers.

The second series includes documents related to the general history of the Ursuline order, including historical narratives of the order, with an especial focus on the story of Esther Wheelwright, the eighteenth century Puritan who was taken captive by Native Americans as a child, was rescued by a

French Jesuit, converted to Catholicism and then joined the Ursuline order. There are also publications and ephemera related to the Ursulines de Trois-Rivieres (Three Rivers) in Quebec, including their tercentennial celebration, and various materials relating to other Ursulines around the world.

Statement of Arrangement

The collection arrived in multiple accessions with no discernable order. Materials were arranged in series based on their subject, with separate series for the Mount Merici sisters, the general Ursuline population, and Maine religious life.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

U.S. Catholic Special Collection, Roesch Library, 2011-03-21

Restrictions on Access

This collection is open and available to the public for research in the U.S. Catholic Special Collections reading room. The materials are non-circulating.

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Acquisition Information

Donated to the U.S. Catholic Special Collection by Sister Martha Helen Thibodeau, O.S.U. in multiple accessions.

Search Terms

Corporate Name(s)

- Ursulines de Trois-Rivieres
- Ursulines

Genre(s)

- Church bulletins
- Devotional literature
- Holy cards

Geographic Name(s)

- Maine
- Waterville (Me.)

Occupation(s)

- Nuns

Subject(s)

- Catholic Church--Canada
- Catholic Church--Maine
- Catholic Church--Prayers and devotions
- Catholic Church--United States--History
- Church schools--Maine

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Ursulines of Maine, 1937-2010, n.d.

Folder	
1	Photographs, 1967-1987, n.d.
2	Programs from memorial masses, 1990-2003
3	Programs from jubilee masses, 1999
4	Programs from other masses and events, 1997-2002, n.d.
5	Prayer and mass materials, 1989-2008
6	Prayer and mass materials, n.d.
7	Miscellaneous papers, 1990-1999, n.d.
8	Sr. Martha Helen Thibodeau's notes on homilies/lectures, 1994-1998, n.d.
9	Prayer cards collected by Thibodeau, 1937-1998, n.d.
10	Newspaper clippings about Maine Ursulines, 1980-2007, n.d.
11	Correspondence from Thibodeau, 2010

Series 2: General Ursuline history, 1980-2002, n.d.

Folder	
12	Historical information on Ursulines, 1980-1999, n.d.
13	Biographical information and photographs of paintings of Esther Wheelwright, 1980-1999, n.d.
14	Ursulines de Trois-Rivieres (Quebec), including tercentennial, 1980-2002, n.d.
15	Postcards, photographs, and publications of other Ursulines, 1989-1996, n.d.

Series 3: Maine religious life and other documents, 1970-1999, n.d.

Folder	
16	Maine parish bulletins, directories, and mass programs, 1970-1999, n.d.
17	<i>Church World</i> (Maine), 1994-1998
18	Sr. Marie Alma Cyr, O.S.U.'s program from Religious Life Institute, 1986
19	Thibodeau's clipping collection, 1978-1998, n.d.
20	Parish bulletins and mass programs from Thibodeau's travels, 1995-1999
21	Publications from other religious orders and organizations, 1981-1998, n.d.