



February 2023

## Newsletter



### Did you know?

**Hollinger Boxes** - A Hollinger box, also known as a "document box" or "archives box," is a specifically constructed cardboard box used in archives for preservation of documents and photographs. The term "Hollinger" refers to the manufacturer, Hollinger Metal Edge, a company founded in 1945 in Arlington, VA.

### Committee Spotlight:

Archivists have been essential to building the foundation for WRAC and their input critical in moving us forward. Having worked so closely and so long with the materials – in some instances, as long as two decades – Archivists understand their collections, provide highly competent oversight, and will surely provide great insight into the design and operation of our new facility. In a very real sense, these individuals hold the institutional memory of their congregations.

Archivists are often unsung heroes in their congregations, with most of us having little knowledge of the nature of their work. We have no idea of the time required to process a file for preservation or the organizational skills needed to create and grow finding aids. And what about keeping up-to-date with content management systems or with requests for documentation from within and beyond the congregation? All of these tasks take time and skill ... and a passion for the work.

Each congregation identified an archivist to serve on the WRAC Archivist Committee chaired by Ellen Pierce (WRAC Lead Archivist). Ellen and the archivists meet monthly via zoom to share support and advice, and to plan for the ultimate transfer of materials. Archivists will provide valuable knowledge to our architectural team during the programming exercise to design our building. In the spring, Ellen and Sue Durkin, Executive Director, will visit each congregation to meet each archivist and engage leadership in the next phases of planning.

### New Member:

We are pleased to announce a 13<sup>th</sup> congregation has joined the Women Religious Archives! The Franciscan Sisters of Clinton, Iowa, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding and are now officially members of WRAC. Before moving to Clinton, the congregation was located in Gethsemane, KY! We are so grateful for their membership into the group.



### Affiliations:

Though not a 'depositing' member congregation of the collaborative, the Congregation of St. Joseph has been integral to our process. The congregation recently merged the archives from several of their locations into a central space. This gives the congregation and the archival staff first-hand experience with a collaborative and the steps to bring varied collections under one roof.

The CSJ leadership team has generously shared Archival Staff members Lisa Gibbon and Sarah Lubelski for service on the Archival Response Teams, which involved travel and time from their congregational ministry. In addition to this in-kind donation of support and expertise, the congregation has also made a financial gift to the project. We are so grateful for their participation in this important collaboration.



### Archive Moment

This monthly feature will highlight something about a member congregation's archive, providing some insight into the uniqueness of the congregation. Thanks to the archivists for preparing their submissions.

This month we highlight the Sisters of the Humility of Mary, Villa Maria, Pennsylvania, with a submission from their archivist, Sister Joanne Gardner.

### Mother Anna and the Missing Mare

In the summer of 1864, the entire religious community of the Sisters of the Humility of Mary arrived in America. The nine vowed sisters and two novices came as missionaries from France. Arriving with them were three orphaned girls in their care. Father John Joseph Begel, their chaplain and co-founder, was in communication with Bishop Amadeus Rappe of Cleveland who graciously welcomed the entire community of sisters to his diocese to serve any and all needs.

Due to their limited finances, the sisters established themselves on an abandoned farm that had previously belonged to the Cleveland diocese. It was just across the state line from Youngstown, Ohio, in Pulaski Township, Lawrence County; New Bedford, Pennsylvania, now called Villa Maria.

Mother Anna Tabourat's leadership and foresight in those early days in New Bedford was critical. She was a trained and gifted musician and church organist prior to joining several other sisters as the founding members of the new community. Her violin and bow, music she composed, and fancy lacework made for altar linens are precious relics of this dedicated woman that are now treasures in the community's archives.

Still another item tells a story of its own. By 1870, the community was growing, with new members and with additional orphans. The entire community relied on farming and tending animals for survival. So one can only imagine the worry generated by the disappearance of Mother Anna's sorrel mare.

The printed poster (shown here), demonstrating the community's desperation to recover the animal, would have been distributed throughout New Bedford to be seen by all in the area.

Unfortunately, the story's ending remains unknown; there is no record of the mare's return.



~~ Sister Joanne Gardner, HM  
Director of Archives and Records Management  
Sisters of the Humility of Mary  
Villa Maria PA

### Participating Congregations to Date:

- Carmel of the Holy Family
- Sisters of Charity of Saint Augustine
- Sisters of St. Francis of Tiffin, OH
- Sisters of St. Francis, Clinton, Iowa
- Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis
- Sisters of the Holy Spirit
- Sisters of the Humility of Mary
- Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament
- Sisters of the Precious Blood
- Ursuline Sisters of Cincinnati
- Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland
- Ursuline Sisters of Louisville
- Ursuline Sisters of Toledo