

# Women Religious Archives Collaborative



May 2023

## Newsletter

### We have a home!



The future location of Women Religious Archives Collaborative.

The WRAC Board of Directors is pleased to announce we have purchased property for the Women Religious Archives Collaborative. It is adjacent to the Saint Vincent Health Campus at 2412 Community College Avenue, an area of downtown Cleveland, where the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine have had a ministry presence since 1865.

WRAC will be located within a 12-mile radius of six colleges and universities, The Cleveland Public Library and their state-of-the-art digitization program, the Western Reserve Historical Society, and University Circle, home to several cultural facilities including the world-renowned Cleveland Museum of Art. Our next-door neighbor, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Archives, is located on the Tri-C Metro campus. The location, directly off a freeway exit and close to the airport, will provide easy access to visitors from near and far.

### Planning Team



Planning Team Members with Bostwick Design.

The WRAC pre-construction and construction planning team has been hard at work. We have contracted with Bostwick Design Partnership for Phase 1 of our project, which includes all programming, design work and pricing for the construction. Bostwick has a design team with experience in this type of construction, specifically expertise with library and digitization experience.

WRAC's planning team is led by Tom Chema and Tari Rivera. An attorney by training, Tom is founder and principal in The Gateway Group, a consulting firm that develops collaborations. Tom has over 40 years' experience in public/private partnerships and project development. Tari Rivera is the founder and President of Regency Construction, a woman-owned business enterprise. Tari has over 30 years in the construction business. Tari has been a trusted advisor on many projects for women religious for several years. Both Tari and Tom keep the mission of those they serve as their anchor. With their attention to detail, skill sets, and experience, they are tremendous assets to our team.

### 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 Precious Blood with a submission from their archivist, Sarah Aisenbrey.

### Sisters of the Precious Blood



In 1834, a deeply faithful Catholic widow, mother of six, and beloved godmother of 20 began what would become a Congregation of over 800 Sisters at its peak with three young women in a castle in Switzerland. After a lifetime of service to her children and people experiencing poverty in her village, Mother Maria Anna Brunner discovered the Society of the Precious Blood in Rome (founded in 1815 by St. Gaspar del Bufalo). She was inspired to spread this devotion through adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

During her twilight years, she lived with her son, Precious Blood Father Francis de Sales Brunner, who ran a seminary in Castle Loewenberg in Switzerland. Her room faced a small chapel in which she prayed before the Blessed Sacrament as often as possible. Inspired by her humility and prayerful life, three young women who worked at the Castle joined her in adoration. Although Mother Brunner died in 1836, her Congregation had taken root and began to thrive.

This small group was the beginning of the Society of the Precious Blood, a Congregation that moved to northern Ohio 10 years later in 1844 to minister to the German Catholic immigrants of the area. During their pioneer days at their 10 original convents, the Sisters taught, cared for orphans, farmed, gardened, kept bees, and gave music lessons. They also made shoes, hats, altar linens, and altar bread. They did all this while keeping night hours of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament in the tradition of Mother Brunner.

By the turn of the 20th century, the Sisters began to explore additional ministries and grew substantially. Maria Stein, the Motherhouse since 1846, was no longer large enough for the Sisters' needs. So, over several years, the Congregation purchased land northwest of Dayton. This location would provide access to better facilities and educational opportunities and, most importantly, would be more accessible to people who wished to adore the Blessed Sacrament. By 1921, the building of a new Motherhouse was begun. It was dedicated on September 8, 1923, under the name Salem Heights.

In October 2023, the Sisters of the Precious Blood will mark the 100th anniversary of the dedication of Salem Heights by celebrating the Sisters' enduring legacy in Dayton. Today, the Sisters maintain active ministry and volunteer roles in education, health care, chaplaincy, and numerous other fields — serving wherever they are needed to fulfill their mission of being a "life-giving, reconciling presence in our fractured world."



— Sarah Aisenbrey, Archivist

*Sisters of the Precious Blood*

### 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 Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament
- Sisters of Loretto-Loretto Community of Nerinx, Kentucky
- Sisters of the Precious Blood
- Ursuline Sisters of Cincinnati
- Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland
- Ursuline Sisters of Louisville
- Ursuline Sisters of Toledo