

**Title:** Index to Materials on Loretto's History of Enslavement

**Dates:** 1812-2023

**Creator:** Sisters of Loretto

**Abstract:** This index is a compilation of sources in the Loretto Heritage Center related to the congregation's participation in the enslavement of African Americans, 1812-1865.

**Language(s):** Eng.

**Preferred Citation:** Sisters of Loretto Heritage Center, LHC[#]: [series & sub-series titles], [folder title].

**Related Material:**

Publications:

- *Loretto: An Early American Congregation in the Antebellum South*, Sr. Joan Campbell, SL (Bluebird Press, 2015)
- "The Role of Father Badin's Slaves in Frontier Kentucky," C. Walker Gollar (*American Catholic Studies* 115:1, 2004)
- "Catholic Slaves and Slaveholders in Central Kentucky: Reconstructing a Relationship," C. Walker Gollar, in *Slavery and the Catholic Church in the United States: Historical Studies*, ed. David J. Endres (The Catholic University of America Press, 2023)
- *The Life of Rev. Charles Nerinckx*, Rev. Camillus P. Maes (Robert Clarke & Co., 1880)
- *Southern Veils: The Sisters of Loretto in Early National Kentucky*, Hannah O'Daniel [McCallon] (MA thesis, University of Louisville, 2017)
- "Federal Census Evidence for Loretto Slaveholding, 1820-1860," Susanna Pyatt (*LOREtto Blog*, 2020)  
<https://www.lorettocommunity.org/federal-census-evidence-for-loretto-slaveholding-1820-1860/>
- "The Pervasive Institution: Slavery and Its Legacies in U.S. Catholicism," Kelly Schmidt (*American Catholic Studies Newsletter* 49:1, 2022)
- *Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle*, Shannen Dee Williams (Duke University Press, 2022)

Images:

- LHC21\_B\_a\_Our Lady of Sorrows Cemetery 150-200: photos of Slave Memorial Dedication at Loretto Motherhouse, 2000  
(viewable at <https://lorettocommunity.canto.com/v/Archives/landing?viewIndex=0>)

Related Collections *not* in the Archives:

- Sacramental records from Catholic churches in Kentucky, available through *The Reckoning: Facing the Legacy of Slavery in Kentucky* (<https://reckoningradio.org/enslaved-church-records-database/>)
- Federal census records & slave schedules for the following locations:

Bethlehem, Perry County, MO (1830)  
Bethlehem Academy, Hardin County, KY (1830-1860)  
Calvary Academy, Marion County, KY (1830-1860)  
Cedar Grove/St. Benedict's Academy, Jefferson County, KY (1850-1860)  
Gethsemani, Nelson County, KY (1830-1840)  
Loretto Academy, Florissant, MO (1850-1860)  
Loretto Motherhouse, Marion County, KY (1820-1860)  
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Ste. Genevieve, MO (1850)  
St. Mary, Pine Bluff, AR (1840)  
St. Vincent's Academy, Cape Girardeau, MO (1840-1860)

**Artifacts:**

- #0014b, engraving print, 1816. Intaglio engraving print depicting Little Loretto, the original home of the Sisters of Loretto. This print was commissioned by Courtois of Malines (Mechelen, Belgium) by Fr. Charles Nerinckx during Nerinckx's trip to Europe in 1816. Notably, the log buildings identified on the print include a "House of Servant & Meat," assumed to have housed enslaved people.

**Index Created by:** Susanna Pyatt, 2024

**Historical Note:** The Sisters of Loretto were active participants in the enslavement of African and African American people from the foundation of the order in 1812 until the full emancipation of enslaved people in the United States in 1865. An unknown number of women joining the congregation brought inherited slaves with them. Records in the Loretto Heritage Center also attest that individual members and the congregation as a whole took part in the sale, purchase, and hiring out of enslaved people. Sisters of Loretto transported slaves with them as they moved from Little Loretto to the present-day Loretto Motherhouse and as they founded schools across Kentucky and Missouri. Enslaved people may also have been brought by Sisters of Loretto to Louisiana, Arkansas, and Kansas to labor at the Sisters' missions in these states.

Additionally, three young black women joined the congregation in spring 1824. As of March 2024, nothing further is known about the identities, status, or lives of these women. The assumption of Loretto historians has been that their time as members of the Loretto community ended when Rev. Guy Ignatius Chabrat became the ecclesiastical superior of Loretto later in 1824.

A full record of Loretto's history of enslavement is incomplete. Many of the papers of founder Fr. Charles Nerinckx were burned in 1824, and a fire destroyed much of the Loretto Motherhouse in 1858. Surviving records about enslaved people have been located only occasionally as researchers and Loretto Heritage Center staff read or digitize antebellum materials. Therefore, this index – intended to be updated as new information is discovered – serves as a reference point for gathering dispersed documents in the Loretto archives that provide mentions of enslaved people "owned" or hired out to Loretto.

Since the 1990s, individual members of the Loretto Community have researched Loretto's history of enslavement. Sr. Joan Campbell investigated the backgrounds of individual Sisters and

the possibility of abolitionist activities, culminating in drafts of the book *Loretto: An Early American Congregation in the Antebellum South*. This work was posthumously edited and published in 2015. While many of Campbell's claims about the racial identities of early Sisters of Loretto have been cited in later works, these claims are unsubstantiated by existing primary sources. Dr. Annie Stevens, CoL picked up research into enslavement for the Loretto Roots Project in 2021, producing a 2023 report on the names, stories, and descendants of those enslaved by Loretto.

Guided by calls for racial justice, the Community has addressed their history of enslavement through the dedication of the Slave Memorial in the Loretto Motherhouse Cemetery in 2000, the *I Was Here* project in 2021, participation in the Catholic Religious Organizations Studying Slavery (CROSS) Conference, and efforts to learn about and investigate avenues for land justice as a form of reparations and racial justice.

**Restrictions on Use and Access:** no restrictions

### Collection Inventory

<u>Identifier</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
LHC03.A.a.01 .001	Administration file of Mother Ann Rhodes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citation of Ann Rhodes giving an enslaved person to Fr. Stephen Badin in 1807</li> <li>• 1812 bill of sale between Mother Ann Rhodes &amp; Fr. Charles Nerinckx, including enslaved man named Tom</li> </ul>	
LHC03.A.a.01 .002	Rhodes Family of Maryland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy of Abraham Rhodes' 1797 will giving George and Anna to Mary Rhodes, and Tom and Sarah to Ann Rhodes</li> </ul>	
LHC04.A.a.18 .005	Personnel file of Sr. Laurentia or Humbeline Buckman <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1838 transfer of property, including enslaved people, to the Sisters of Loretto</li> </ul>	
LHC04.A.a.30 .014	Personnel file of Srs. Angelica & Barbara Clements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transcription of Sr. Angelica Clements' 1822 sale of "Nancy and her [5] children" to Fr. Charles Nerinckx</li> <li>• Transcription of Sr. Barbara Clements' 1820 will giving enslaved people "Jake and his sister Jane" to Bishop Benedict Joseph Flaget</li> </ul>	
LHC04.A.a.48 .001	Personnel file of Mother Berlindes Downs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story of Mother Berlindes growing up with George, enslaved son of Nancy Clements</li> </ul>	
LHC04.A.a.11 4.009	Personnel file of Srs. Celeste & Virginia McAtee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note about Sr. Virginia McAtee bringing two enslaved people to Florissant, MO</li> </ul>	
LHC04.A.a.14	Personnel file of Sr. Mary Ann Rhodes	

1.008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mention of her bringing enslaved people with her upon entering Loretto [note: Sr. Mary Ann joined the congregation in 1866]</li> </ul>	
LHC06.C.a	<p>Ledger Book for St. Mary's, Pine Bluff, AR, &amp; St. Ambrose, Post Arkansas, AR [digitized]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numerous records of student tuition and fees paid for through the labor of enslaved persons</li> </ul>	1838-1842
LHC06.H.b.0 1.005	<p>Holy Mary's Church Catechism Class [digitized]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lists enslaved catechism students by first name &amp; owner</li> </ul>	1850
LHC06.H.b	<p>Ledger Book for Calvary, Holy Mary's on the Rolling Fork, KY [digitized]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One mention of school account paid by enslaved labor</li> </ul>	1833-1855
LHC06.H.b	<p>Ledger Book for Calvary, Holy Mary's on the Rolling Fork, KY [digitized]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undated "Statement of the Slaves belonging to Calvary Convent and Academy Marion County," which lists numbers, ages, and illnesses of enslaved people</li> <li>• 13 documents dated 1830s-1850s related to sales of enslaved people, especially to or by Rev. David A. DeParcq</li> <li>• Reference to "hire of Negro Girl, of Jno. Miles" in 1848 by either Calvary Academy or St. Mary's College</li> <li>• Reference to "George of Loretto"</li> <li>• References to hiring of enslaved persons</li> <li>• Document relating the sale of Charlotte by John Dant to Mother Isabella Clarke</li> </ul>	1849-1890
LHC06.H.b	<p>Account Book for Hired Hands, Calvary, Holy Mary's on the Rolling Fork, KY [digitized]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lists of payments to and expenses owed by African American hired men at Calvary (Taylor Turner, Leo Eglund, Elic Clements [fiddler], John Cushing, Pat Walls, Joseph Drury, William Turner, Phil Spalding, Armstrong Turner, Charley Fry, Henry Porter)</li> </ul>	1875-1887
LHC06.H	<p>Account Book for Gethsemane Academy, Nelson County, KY [digitized]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entries for several accounts paid partially by use of servant (likely enslaved) labor</li> </ul>	1841-1848
LHC06.J Box 1 F1	<p>Perry County Heritage 12:3-4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article on Bethlehem Convent (Perry County, MO) includes details of tax records documenting number of people enslaved at this Loretto house in the 1830s</li> </ul>	1994
LHC17.B	<p>Personal Mission Materials of Sr. Joan Campbell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence &amp; research notes related to <i>Loretto: An Early American Congregation in the Antebellum South</i> and the creation of Loretto's Slave Memorial</li> </ul>	1970-2008

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafts of <i>Loretto: An Early American Congregation in the Antebellum South</i></li> </ul>	
LHC27 Box 1 F6	Personal papers of Rev. David A. DeParcq [digitized] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax receipts listing numbers of enslaved people</li> <li>• 1851 will naming enslaved people</li> <li>• 1863 will naming enslaved people [digital copy only]</li> </ul>	1815-1868
RG Special 1 Box 1 F6	Father Charles Nerinckx Letters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original copy of Sr. Barbara Clements' 1820 will giving enslaved people "Jake and his sister Jane" to Bishop Benedict Joseph Flaget</li> </ul>	1804-1824
RG Special 1 Box 1 F7	Father Charles Nerinckx Notes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original copy of Sr. Angelica Clements' 1822 sale of "Nancy and her [5] children" to Fr. Charles Nerinckx</li> </ul>	
2024-001	"Bound for the Promised Land" by Dr. Annie Stevens, CoL [digital copy only] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55-page report for Loretto Roots Project detailing the names and descendants of people enslaved by the Sisters of Loretto</li> </ul>	2023
"I Was Here a ritual of remembrance and sanctification"	<i>I Was Here</i> Loretto Motherhouse Project [digital copy only] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video of 2021 art-based program recognizing &amp; beginning to heal from Loretto's history of enslavement</li> </ul>	2021
Research Files 4-10	Black History and S.L.s research file <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1835 marriage agreement signed by Eliza Calhoun for Leo to marry a woman enslaved by Edward Kirks</li> <li>• 1837 payment agreement signed by Mother Scholastica Thompson for hire of enslaved man James from a Mrs. Greenwell</li> <li>• 1850 bill of sale for Bartley to James Thornbury [signature illegible]</li> <li>• 2 documents recording sale of enslaved people to Rev. David A. DeParcq</li> <li>• Copies of archival materials related to Loretto's history of enslavement, incl. transcriptions of sales or transfers</li> <li>• Copy of 1899 letter from former slave Jerome Boone</li> <li>• Copy of 1941 letter from granddaughter of former slave Leo Clements Nerinckx</li> <li>• Copies of newspaper articles about death of former slave Leo Clements Nerinckx</li> <li>• Typed story "Our Little Black Brother's Last Farewell"</li> <li>• Notes on Loretto's history of enslavement</li> <li>• Copy of "The Role of Father Badin's Slaves in Frontier Kentucky" by C. Walker Gollar</li> <li>• Copies of articles, notes, &amp; correspondence about</li> </ul>	1835-2016

	<p>Loretto's 1824 black Sisterhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notes on the Loretto schools for African American children</li> <li>• Programs, brochures, &amp; articles related to black history in Marion County, KY</li> <li>• Correspondence &amp; articles related to Fr. John Tolton</li> <li>• Correspondence from former Loretto student who joined the Oblate Sisters of Providence</li> <li>• Correspondence with Br. Cyprian Davis, OSB</li> <li>• Copies of newspaper articles about the Oblate Sisters of Providence &amp; influential black Catholic Sisters</li> <li>• Copies of newspaper articles on the 3 Kentucky orders asking forgiveness for slavery in 2000</li> <li>• Paper "Father Charles Nerinckx and Kentucky Abolitionists" by Annie Stevens, CoL</li> <li>• 2013 paper "Busted Again: The Sisters of Loretto and the Underground Railroad" by Annie Stevens, CoL</li> </ul>	
Research Files 4-12	<p>Joan Campbell Research – Slave Memorial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correspondence &amp; research notes about the 2000 Slave Memorial created for the Loretto Motherhouse Cemetery</li> </ul>	1997-2016
Could not locate original	<p>Letter from Fr. Charles Nerinckx to Mother Bibiana</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief account of 3 black women joining the Sisters of Loretto [cited by Camillus Maes, p. 510]</li> </ul>	1824
Check KY state archives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1831 deed granting land &amp; two enslaved men to the Sisters of Loretto by Rev. Guy Ignatius Chabrat</li> </ul>	