

Loretto Heritage Center Archives and Museum

Finding Aid: Schools, Oklahoma

Collection Code: LHC06.N

Date Range: 1915-2008

Creator: Sisters of Loretto, Oklahoma Mission

Extent: 1 box

Language: English

Access Restrictions: Materials which provide blood quantum of Osage students or connect names of Osage students with their likeness (i.e., labeled photographs) are restricted indefinitely for research. Permission to view these materials (including photographs) must be granted by the Osage Nation Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO). Materials should be requested from the Loretto Heritage Center, and Heritage Center staff will seek approval from the Osage Nation THPO.

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Citation: LHC06.N. Schools, Oklahoma. Box [#], Folder [#] Sisters of Loretto Heritage Center and Archives

Creator of Material Biography: At the request of the Osage people, the Jesuits and the Sisters of Loretto Catholic orders began schools for children of the Osage and other Indigenous tribes at Osage Mission, KS, in the 1840s. However, President Grant's 1870 Indian Peace Policy prohibited the Jesuits and Loretto from following the Osage to Oklahoma. Under that policy, 34 of the 41 Indian missions the Catholic Church had established in the United States were reallocated to Protestant denominations, and Catholic missionaries were prohibited. With the emergence of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, government policy changed. The Bureau, with the assistance of Mother Katharine Drexel of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, was able to found St. Louis Indian Boarding School for Girls in Pawhuska, OK, in 1907. This school was first staffed by Franciscan Sisters. When the Franciscans left St. Louis School, the Osage Tribal Council petitioned the government for the return of the Sisters of Loretto. Lorettoines returned to teach the Osage in 1915. The oil boom (most productive from 1906 to 1928) created changes both opportunistic and violent, causing many Osage families to disfavor the boarding school. This was due in part to the building's age and maintenance deficiencies and in part because parents wanted to provide their daughters more advantageous education on the coasts.

During the same time, a new parish church was under construction in town. By 1918, in the midst of declining Osage enrollment and financial uncertainty about the funding of the boarding school, the Sisters of Loretto added a teaching ministry in the form of a day school in Pawhuska at Immaculate Conception Parish. Both Osage and white families contributed financially there. The parochial school, originally named St. Joseph's School, was first taught by Franciscans but had been closed for several years when the Loretto Sisters took over in 1918. In 1925, upon completion of the convent and dedication of a new parish church building, the school's name was changed to Immaculate Conception to correspond with the name of the church and parish.

From 1918 to 1931, most students at the boarding school were not Osage, but rather from the Cherokee, Potawatomi, Kaw, and other school-less tribes for whom Mother Katharine Drexel provided funding. After the stock market crash in 1929, Osage students returned to the boarding school. The Sisters of Loretto withdrew from both schools in 1942, when the Blessed Sacrament Sisters became available to take over.

Description: This sub-series consists primarily of research materials, correspondence, accounting records, annals, and newspaper clippings related to St. Louis School and Immaculate Conception Parochial School in Pawhuska, OK.

Related Materials:

Publications: *Annals of Osage Mission*, W.W. Graves (Graves, 1935); *Getting Sense: The Osages & Their Missionaries*, James D. White (Sarto Press, 1997); *Beacon on the Plains*, Mary Paul Fitzgerald (St. Mary College, 1939); *Osage Mission Sesquicentennial, 1847-1997: Celebrating 150 Years*, Mary Frances VanLeeuwen Casey (Jostens, 1997); *History of the Osage Nation: Its People, Resources, and Prospects*, Phillip Dickerson (Dickerson, n.d.); *Killers of the Flower Moon*, David Grann (Doubleday, 2017)

Photos: Our school photograph collection can be found online at <https://lorettocommunity.canto.com/v/archives> and includes images from St. Louis School and Immaculate Conception Parochial School.

Archival Collections: Personnel file (LHC04) of Sr. Eugeniana Koenig; Administrative files (LHC02) of Mo. Praxedes Carty, 1896-1922; Mo. Clarasine Walsh, 1922-1928; Mo. Olivette Norton, 1928-1940; and Mo. Edwarda Ashe, 1940-1952; Published Resources (LHC13) especially the manuscript "One Hundred and Fifty Years" by Sr. Matilda Barrett; The Sisters of Loretto and the Indian Boarding Schools Century, Libby Comeaux, CoL (December 2023), along with papers, books, and digital records gathered for purposes of this research. Some materials from this collection are restricted.

Related Collections not in the Archives: Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions Collection, Marquette University, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Milwaukee, WI; National Archives and Records Administration, Denver, Ft Worth, and DC; Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (available online); Archives of the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, in custody of the Catholic Historical Research Center of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia; Resource List from the U.S. Catholic Indigenous Boarding School Accountability and Healing Project. <https://ahprojectusa.org/resources>.

Artifacts: Objects related to Loretto's schools in Oklahoma can be found here: <https://lorettoheritagecenter.omeka.net/items/browse?tags=schools+-+Oklahoma>

Arrangement

This series is arranged into a single sub-series. This collection was originally processed in the 1970s or 1980s, and materials were regularly added to the collection. Original order was not maintained. In 2023, the materials were reprocessed and the order of the original processing was maintained, except in folders where materials from both schools were mixed together. In those cases, the folder materials were split by school. Handwritten annals were moved from another collection into this one. A crosswalk showing the relationship between the original folders and the new folders was created and is available upon request.

Subseries 1: Pawhuska LHC06.N.a

Box 1: LHC06.N.a.01

Folder 1: Research File
Folder 2: Newspaper Clippings
Folder 3: Correspondence
Folder 4: Immaculate Conception Parish Newsletters and Event Invitations
Folder 5: Immaculate Conception Parochial School Manuscript for Proposed Book by Sr.
Matilda Barrett, SL
Folder 6: Immaculate Conception Parochial School Annals and Memoirs
Folder 7: Immaculate Conception Parochial School Finance Reports and Cash Books