



The Archival Spirit, July 2003 (Summer Issue)

Newsletter of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section, Society of American Archivists

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From the Chair:

There will be a lot on the agenda at the ARCS meeting in Los Angeles this year. We have an election this year for new leadership. I will be stepping down and Diane Wells will be your new chair. It has been a pleasure working with this group. Bob Shuster, who has been the “publisher” of our newsletter will be leaving that post. Bob has given us stellar work over the past two years. He has been responsible for getting the newsletter in shape. Some times that involves just placing the articles in appropriate places. More often it has required some creative editing on his part. No matter how you look at it, it is a time-consuming task. Bob has done it well. Thank you for your dedication to the Section, Bob and your hard work. Wes Wilson will now take on the responsibility of being both editor and ‘publisher’ of our newsletter. He will be looking for articles and news from the section and he will be sending the finished product to SAA so that it can be sent out to you. Support Wes, and the Section, in the task of keeping us all informed. Involvement with any organization is time-consuming, but it is rewarding. Giving of oneself is a lot like hospitality; the willingness to be with others is something that never entirely goes away. I encourage all of you to think of ways that you can become involved with the section.

As we look at our election this year, ask yourself if you are ready to become more actively involved. But it doesn't have to be a big step to begin your involvement. Just coming to the meeting is a good beginning, and taking an active part in the meeting is even better. This year, as in the recent past, all those attending will have a chance to share and reflect. This

year the Section meeting will get to hear some reports from those who attended a conference last Fall in Rome. The conference focused on encouraging church archives in developing countries. We will hear about needs and concerns of church and religious archivists from around the world. I hope you can come.

This session will give us all a chance to think and reflect about our situation in relationship to the rest of the world. What type of histories and expertise do we have that we can share with others? What can we learn from others about our own archival task? So take a few minutes this Summer and make a some notes for the ARCS meeting this year. Be prepared to have your horizons expanded. Become a little more involved. I looking forward to seeing you in Los Angeles and to hearing your ideas. Have a great Summer!

Works by Mount Saint Mary's Alumnus to be Featured in Exhibit



John LaFarge, The Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi, pen and ink study for a mural in the Church of the Incarnation, New York, c.1885. From the collection of Mt. St. Mary's College and Seminary, Archives and Department of Special Collections, Emmitsburg, MD.

Three works of art from the collection of Mount Saint Mary's College and Seminary have been loaned for an exhibition, "The Women of the Cornish Colony, Part II," at the Cornish Colony Gallery and Museum in Cornish, NH. The works are by renowned artist and Mount alumnus John LaFarge, who graduated from the college in 1853 and went on to a distinguished and influential career as a painter, watercolorist, and muralist, and whose landscapes, figures, and stained glass windows still adorn churches, colleges, museums, and private collections. LaFarge had a significant influence on the artists' colony in Cornish and taught some of its residents.

John LaFarge was born in 1835 in New York. When he was 15, his father sent him and his three younger brothers to what he felt was the more vigorous environment of a country school, Mt. St. Mary's. Upon graduation, LaFarge desultorily practiced law even after an 1856 trip to France and Germany, where he began to paint and draw in earnest. By 1860 he had abandoned the practice of law and devoted himself completely to art. He rocketed to fame in 1876 after his murals for Trinity Church in Boston were unveiled, and the next years were filled with commissions from individuals and institutions, including the Vanderbilts, William Whitney, James J. Hill, Henry Clay Frick, the United Congregational Church in Newport, Harvard University, Bowdoin College, and the Union League Club, St. Thomas Church, the Church of the Incarnation, and the Brick Presbyterian Church, all in New York. His collaborators included Augustus and Louis Saint-Gaudens, Henry Comfort Tiffany, and Stanford White. This was the great age of decorative arts, and LaFarge embodied its spirit, as he seamlessly blended art, architecture, and stained glass to create soaringly beautiful and inspiring spaces. LaFarge was the first to exploit the nuances and range of expression provided by opalescent glass, which was picked up and exploited commercially by Louis Comfort Tiffany. At his death in 1910, he was acknowledged as a Renaissance man and as America's only old master of still lifes, landscapes in watercolor and oil, stained glass, and decorative arts.



John LaFarge, Mother and Child, watercolor and gouache on paper, commissioned by Dr. Charles Carroll Lee, 1888. From the collection of Mt. St. Mary's College and Seminary, Archives and Department of Special Collections, Emmitsburg, MD.

A former schoolmate and friend of LaFarge, Dr. Charles Carroll Lee, who graduated from the Mount in 1856 and practiced medicine in New York, compiled a collection of European and American artwork. In 1947, Dr. Lee's son, Washington cardiologist Dr. Thomas Sim Lee, donated his portion of his father's art collection to Mt. St. Mary's in his father's memory. The American works donated by Dr. Thomas Lee included two paintings and several drawings by John LaFarge. Three of these drawings will be part of the exhibit at the Cornish Colony Museum. The Nativity is a pen and ink study for two large murals flanking the altar in the Church of the Incarnation in New York, and consists of two panels framed in gold. LaFarge also painted a large mural of the Ascension of Christ for the altarpiece of the Church of the Ascension in New York, and a study for that work will also be on view. The museum will also be exhibiting a delicate watercolor of a mother and child, commissioned by Dr. Charles Carroll Lee in 1888.

The founding of the Cornish Colony dates to 1885, with the arrival of Augustus Saint-Gaudens. In the next few years, nearly 100 noted artists, writers, and thinkers joined him, drawn by the beautiful countryside and inspired by the idyllic views of the Connecticut River valley. These residents and visitors included Thomas and Maria Dewing, Stephen and Maxfield Parrish, Henry and Edith Prellwitz, Helen Farnsworth

Mears, Frederic Remington, Isadora Duncan, John Singer Sargent, and future first ladies Ellen Axon Wilson and Edith Galt Wilson.

The exhibit will run from May 24 to October 26, 2003. The Cornish Colony Museum is located at "The Mastlands," about one-half mile south of the Plainfield/Cornish boundary on Route 12A, Maxfield Parrish Highway. The Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site is about two miles further south. During the exhibit, the museum will be open Tuesdays through Saturdays 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and on Sundays from noon to 5:00 PM. There is a fee for admission. For more information, call 603/675-6000.



John La Farge, The Ascension of Christ, pen and ink study for a mural in the Church of the Ascension, New York, c.1886. From the collection of Mt. St. Mary's College and Seminary, Archives and Department of Special Collections. Emmitsburg, MD.

Diocese of Sioux City Centennial

On December 31, 2002, the Diocese of Sioux City climaxed its centennial year of celebration. Some of the events of the year can be found on the website of the diocesan newspaper, The Globe, at <http://www.CatholicGlobe.org>

Sr. Kevin Cummings, PBVM, who has been archivist of the Diocese of Sioux City, Iowa since the summer of 1884, will retire July 1, 2003. Sister Kevin will be returning to her motherhouse at 2360 Carter Road, Dubuque, Iowa sometime in August. Sister expects to be kept busy, not only with prayer, but with many of the ministries in which the retired sisters are involved in Dubuque.

Daniel Burns will become the second archivist for the diocese, as it continues toward its bicentennial in 2102.

Sr. Kevin Cummings, Archivist, Diocese of Sioux City

Divine Word Archives Receives Grant

The National Film Preservation Foundation (NFPF) awarded a cash grant of \$7,050 to the Chicago Province Archives for the preservation of New Guinea Worships its Dead and New Guinea Fun. Rev. Louis Luzbetak, SVD, a professional cultural anthropologist, filmed these movies on location in Banz, New Guinea during 1954-1956. The films record the preparation for and the ceremony of the Big Festival, which takes place only once each generation or about every 20 years. Luzbetak was able to record the children at play, a way of learning the customs of their culture, and important aspects of the ceremony. The color film captures the ceremonial decorations and art of the "Banz People."

This is the second grant award from the NFPP to Chicago Province Archives. In 2002 the archives received a grant for the preservation of the Thirty Year Man, produced by Rev. Charles Erb, SVD about the work of Rev. William Ross, SVD in Papua New Guinea.

The U.S. Congress created the National Film Preservation Foundation to preserve America's film heritage. The NFPP has been funding film preservation grants for four years. A list of the films preserved by the foundation is available on their web site at www.filmpreservation.org.

Marcia Stein, Archivist

Chicago Province Archives

Announcing a New Exhibition: John Paul II - A Passion for Peace

NEW HAVEN: The Knights of Columbus Museum announces a new temporary exhibition as part of its on-going series of unique, one-of-a-kind shows. Open to the public on Friday, April 11, the multi-media presentation runs through October 1, 2003.

The exhibition features Pope John Paul II's quest for peace and freedom for all mankind, especially during the first 25 years of his pontificate. Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev called the resolute pope "...the highest moral authority on earth."

Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson of the Knights of Columbus invites "...all persons, all families, regardless of faith, to experience the exhibition's memorable journey through history, and in the process...lift your spirits." He noted that "Pope John Paul II's single greatest accomplishment was his significant role in the bloodless ending of the Cold War and the collapse of communism across Eastern Europe."

Priceless artifacts on loan from the Vatican are included in the presentation. From war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina, a large commemorative peace lamp is part of the remarkable story. It was a gift from the pope to the Archbishop of Sarajevo during John Paul II's fearless visit to that city, despite an attempt on his life. Rare photographs and quotes are dramatically projected simultaneously from five projectors, supplemented by a historical chronology. Destined to be displayed at the John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, DC, a sculpture of young Karol Wojtyla with his mother and father was unveiled as a part of the Knights' "A Passion for Peace" exhibition.

The exhibition includes the 118-minute long "Witness to Hope" feature, shown in the museum's main theatre. It profiles the pope's extraordinary life and his fearless efforts to secure God-given human rights for all.

Courtesy of the Knights of Columbus as a public service, admissions and parking in the museum garage are free.

In addition to the permanent displays, the temporary exhibitions include: "Attack on the World Trade Center" and "St. Mary's among the Mansions of Hillhouse Avenue." For additional information and schedules, please call (203) 865-0400. Advance reservations for groups are requested.

New Religious Archives Websites of Interest

- Gateway to Missionary Collections in the United Kingdom
<http://www.mundus.ac.uk/>
- Basel Mission Picture Archives
<http://www.bmpix.org/>
- Archdiocese of Glasgow, Scotland Archives
<http://www.rcag.org.uk/Archives/A1.htm>
- Rescuing the Memory of Our Peoples/Project for Documentation and Oral History
<http://www.missionstudies.org/rescue/>

- Rescuing the Memories of Our Peoples Archives Manual
<http://www.library.yale.edu/div/RTMmanuallinks.html>
- The Digital Jewish Missions History Project
<http://www.jewsforjesus.org/jmh/index.htm>
- Ouachita Baptist University Special Collections
<http://www.obu.edu/library/specialcoll.htm>
- Religious Collections in Libraries and Archives: A Guide to Resources in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia
<http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/main/religion/contents.html>
- Christian and Missionary Alliance National Archives (US)
<http://www.cmalliance.org/archives/index.php>

Editor's Notes

The Editor would like to include in future issues news items about what American religious archives are doing and would be especially interested in hearing about new projects, notable acquisitions, and opinion pieces. Let us help you connect with others in the field. Send news and notes to Wesley W. Wilson wwwilson@depauw.edu.

Publisher: Bob Shuster

Archival Spirit is published three times a year by the Archivists of Religious Collections Section of the Society of American Archivists. Feature pieces as well as announcements of acquisitions and projects are welcome. For membership information, contact SAA at: 527 South Wells, 5th Floor, Chicago, IL 60607; (312) 922-0140; FAX: (312) 347_1452; e-mail: info@archivists.org.

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