

The Archival Spirit

July 2025



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

From the Chair

Dear ARCS members,

As I step down my term as Chair this summer, I wanted to thank each and every member of the section. I'm grateful for those who read our newsletter to engaging on our listserv by posting questions and opportunities. A huge thank you to the Models and Resources committee who continues to put in so much time to create excellent and well-attended events. And lastly, thank you to our active 2024-2025 steering committee who come together to strategize ways of sustainability, engaging with the community, and widen our efforts to highlight and collaborate with all faith groups.

The past several months has precipitated deep reflection on what direction our field should take when so many of us face uncertainty with the loss of grants, projects, and other resources as well as the ambiguity of what's next or how to move forward in our work. We all carry a heavy load with professional lives along with our personal lives, yet so many of you continue to put time into the section is meaningful and I hope we continue to take care of ourselves and each other.

With that said, I hope you join me for our annual general meeting is July 21, 2025 at 3 PM PST/ 6 PM EST. I look forward to announcing our election results, updates on the section, and an open forum to hear from all of you.

All the best,

Beaudry Rae Allen
2024–2025 ARCS Chair
Preservation and Digital Archivist
Villanova University

Inside this Issue

Page 2

Religious Archives
in the News

Page 3

Models and Resources
(MRC) News

Page 4

Legacy, Mission: Anthony J.
Dougherty OSFS Archives

Page 5

ARCS Elections / AGM
(2025)



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Religious Archives in the News

Recent news stories compiled by Thomas J. McCullough, ARCS Newsletter Editor/Web Liaison

Views and opinions expressed in publications featured in this section do not necessarily reflect those of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section (ARCS) of the Society of American Archivists (SAA). Inclusion of these articles is intended for informational purposes only and does not imply endorsement by ARCS or SAA.

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- ⇒ Joyce Duriga, "Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records: Keeper of the history of Catholic Church in Chicago, 2 October 2024, *Chicago Catholic*, <https://www.chicagocatholic.com/chicagoland/-/article/2024/10/02/joseph-cardinal-berardin-archives-and-records-keeper-of-the-history-of-catholic-church-in-chica-1>
- ⇒ Olivia Krall, "New Archives collection highlights CPT's work in Palestine," 22 October 2024, *Mennonite Church USA*, <https://www.mennoniteusa.org/archives/archives-cpt/>
- ⇒ John W. Coleman, "New LGBTQ+ Heritage Center helps church remember," 30 October 2024, *UM News*, <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/new-lgbtq-heritage-center-helps-church-remember>
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- ⇒ Eric Ames, "Baylor University Awarded \$2.48 Million Grant for Black Gospel Archive," 7 January 2025, <https://news.web.baylor.edu/news/story/2025/baylor-university-awarded-248-million-grant-black-gospel-archive>
- ⇒ Jim Bass, "Columbia Theological Seminary introduces new educational archiving collection," 6 February 2025, *Decaturish*, https://www.decatrish.com/news/decatr/columbia-theological-seminary-introduces-new-educational-archiving-collection/article_f5411ec9-0528-5d0a-b029-95727e8f1ace.html
- ⇒ "Archives collection celebrates Manitoba's Ukrainian church history," 13 February 2025, *University of Manitoba*, <https://news.umanitoba.ca/archives-collection-celebrates-manitobas-ukrainian-church-history/>
- ⇒ David Staniunas, "Passages from the Black Presbyterian archives," 14 February 2025, *Presbyterian News Service*, <https://pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/2025/2/14/passages-black-archives>
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- ⇒ Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, "First Friday Club of Cleveland hears plans for Women Religious Archives Collaborative," 15 April 2025, <https://www.dioceseofcleveland.org/news/2025/04/15/first-friday-club-of-cleveland-hears-plans-for-women-religious-archives-collaborative>
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- ⇒ Kendall Crawford, "Ohio archive will take Catholic sisters' faith out of the footnotes," 27 May 2025, *The Ohio Newsroom*, <https://www.stateneews.org/section/the-ohio-newsroom/2025-05-27/ohio-archive-will-take-catholic-sisters-faith-out-of-the-footnotes>
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- ⇒ David Paulsen, "Executive Council backs plan to move Episcopal Church Archives to Diocese of Atlanta," *Episcopal News Service*, 25 June 2025, <https://episcopalnewsservice.org/2025/06/25/executive-council-backs-plan-to-move-episcopal-church-archives-to-diocese-of-atlanta/>

Report of Models and Resources Committee Chair (2025)

Submitted by Mary Grace Kosta, ARCS MRC Chair

Last year, the Models and Resources Committee organized and delivered 13 *Lunch and Learn* webinars which are all available on our YouTube channel. The Committee has also organized and delivered seven Archival Chat sessions which, while not recorded were summarized in the Archival Spirit newsletter.

This year, the Committee discontinued the *Archival Chat* sessions. It also decided to deliver fewer Lunch and Learn webinars. To date (18 June 2025), the following sessions have been presented:

- Introduction to Deaccessioning
- Introduction to ArchivesSpace
- Archival Description for Beginners (USA)

The following webinars are scheduled for delivery:

- Archival Description for Beginners (Canada)
- Email Preservation
- Introduction to Digital Preservation and Two Tools

To date (18 June 2025), 15 *Lunch and Learn* webinars have been approved by Academy of Certified Archivists for recertification credits. The Committee has 13 members representing a variety of faith groups and is not seeking more members.

ARCS webinars now approved for ACA recertification credits!

As mentioned in the larger MRC report, the SAA ARCS Models and Resources Committee is happy to announce that fifteen of its webinars are now approved for recertification credits through the Academy of Certified Archivists. Please visit <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/archivists-of-religious-collections-section/arcs-webinars-now-approved-for-aca-recertification> to see which webinars are included and for instructions on how to obtain ACA recertification credits.

Recap of an Archival Chat with Jeff Anderson

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Archives, 23 May 2024

Presentation by Jeff Anderson, Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

Many of us know of the genealogical arm of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Days Saints. That work comes under the umbrella of its Family History Library. The Church History Library is separate, documenting the Church itself. Presenter Jeff Anderson is the cataloging auditor and buyer of historical records in the Church History Department of the Latter-day Saints. Besides managing the library, the department oversees publications, historic sites, and a museum.

Jeff provided an overview of the repository in Salt Lake City, which was established in 1856 as the Historian's Office. Today, the Church History Library operates in a five-floor, 230,000-square-foot facility that was dedicated in 2009. Last year (i.e. 2023), it welcomed more than 11,000 visitors. The scope is massive: 292 employees and 543 volunteers working at the headquarters alone; 10 vaults and 21 miles of shelves; 270,000 books, pamphlets, magazines, and manuals; 13,000 collections of photographs; 240,000 collections of unpublished records (journals, diaries, correspondence, minutes); and 70,000 audiovisual items. There is also a state-of-the-art conservation lab. The department digitizes approximately 81,000 records per week (the current total stands at 33 million). Roughly 5,500 archival collections are added yearly. There are several digitized collections and resources available on its website at <https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org>.

The department is also focused on gathering records of members outside the United States. Starting in 1991, the Church sent employees to conduct oral histories in other countries. Jeff spoke about the work to decentralize records and digitize them for access. There are currently 27 Records Preservation Centers throughout the world. During the chat, attendees asked questions about the coordination of the large global volunteer force: 530 volunteers working in 60 different countries. There was also a discussion about challenges related to international laws that limit the shipping of manuscripts, art, and artifacts out of the country in question.

Summary provided by Julia Armstrong, Volunteer Archivist, St. Thomas's Anglican Church, Toronto

Recordings of Lunch and Learn sessions are available!

If you would like to watch or re-watch a Lunch and Learn session hosted by the ARCS MRC, now you can do so by consulting the ARCS microsite at <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/archivists-of-religious-collections-section/events> or our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpWzzChIhR-8O7CrKmiL2rw>.

Legacy, Mission: Anthony J. Dougherty OSFS Archive

M. Francis Plaushin, OSFS, PhD, Fr. Dougherty Archive, North American Oblates of St. Francis de Sales

Passing my one-year mark as Archivist, I celebrate small accomplishments, like painting the place, cleaning the floor, buying furniture, putting books on the shelves, de-trashing the place, and getting 200 or so cubic feet of unassessed material into one place ... things most archivists may not worry about.

To say the least, this archive needed work. It was on again off again for decades. Now I am here making a go of it! I'd like to tell you about it.

The Fr. Dougherty Archive, a name I just came up with this year, is the archival library for the North American Oblates of St. Francis de Sales (*not* Francis Assisi!). It houses the Wilmington-Philadelphia and Toledo-Detroit Province repositories. We collect, preserve, conserve, curate, and provide qualified access to physical and virtual assets.



Of Fr. Dougherty (left, 1911-1981), while Provincial, Fr. Daniel Gambet OSFS (1929-2022), wrote in 1973, "Father Dougherty has gone about his work [as an] archivist in the same serious fashion he did and is doing with the history of the Province." He completed his two-volume history of the American Province in 1972 and was lauded for "his thorough and methodical research" spanning several years.

Father Dougherty: religious, priest, educator, administrator, chaplain, confessor, author, historian and archivist, was a Northeast Catholic High School (Philadelphia) graduate and entered the Oblates in 1929. His exemplary research, attention to detail, and his spirit of service inspired the Archive's mission and motto, *L'héritage au service de la mission!* ... which is translated: "Legacy in the service of mission!"

Thus, the Archive preserves the legacy of the North American Oblates of St. Francis de Sales and serves the larger Church with a focus on... Helping disciples access our Salesian spirituality's legacy for resources which can aid their spiritual growth and to engage critical social issues.

While the Archive is small (me and one college student genius associate) I organized it around five areas of responsibility to provide each its sense of place and direction:

- ⇒ **Power Graden OSFS Library & Repository:** (at right) non-lending library, providing qualified access to published and non-published assets.
- ⇒ **Paul Marie Fournier OSFS Library & Repository:** this online library is our primary interface with the public for the dissemination of Salesian materials.
- ⇒ **A.R. McGilvray OSFS Artifact Repository:** preserves relics and other artifacts, curates displays and engineers kits for the classroom.
- ⇒ **Tony Ceresko OSFS Archival Laboratory:** experiments with disseminating Salesian content via social media and traditional forums.
- ⇒ **Oblates of Saint Francis de Sales Cemetery:** final resting place for most Wilmington-Philadelphia Province Oblates since 1954.



I feel good about sharing our progress, *especially* because I can now share with you our first website: <https://www.fatherdoughertyarchive.com/>. I am grateful to the SAA for many learning opportunities and thank you for letting me share a bit of our story!

Announcements

Last chance to vote for ARCS Steering Committee members!

Please cast your ballot now for the Archivists of Religious Collections Steering Committee. This year we are voting for two new steering committee members: a new co-chair/chair-elect, and two Members-at-Large.

Ballots will remain open until Tuesday, July 15.

Ballot Page: <https://mysaa.archivists.org/myballots>

Users must be logged in to access the page. Once they submit one ballot, users will be redirected back to the main page to complete their next ballot.

Join us for the ARCS AGM on July 21, 2025!

Please register for the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section, which will take place on July 21, 2025 3pm-4:30pm (PDT)/ 6pm-7:30pm (EDT). Registration is available at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeckTAReNWw1ordBi5P45D8XRE2R7ZVE63ttngDIhozLgAjSw/viewform?fbzx=-1127570946363292537>.

The steering committee will recap our section's work over this year, call for submissions for the newsletter, archival field-at-large changes, and hear updates from Models and Resource group. And there will be time for attendees to share any new projects you are working as well.

All the best,

Beaudry Allen, on behalf of the ARCS Steering Committee

Register for August 2025 webinar: Description (RAD)

Join the ARCS Models and Resources Committee for a free webinar on August 7, 2025, to learn more about the Rules for Archival Description (RAD), the Canadian content standard. The webinar will be led by Jannah Toms (Public Archives & Records Office of PEI) and Mary Grace Kosta (retired archivist). Register here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/hXiP8orpTd-6mXKRQxh1qQ#/registration>.

Register for October 2025 webinar: Email Preservation

Join the ARCS Models and Resources Committee for a free webinar on October 9, 2025, to learn more about email preservation. The webinar will be led by Jonathan Ennis, digital archivist (Moravian Church in America, Northern Province). Register here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/register/iuwVrjmbQdeljZqvE03XGA>.

News about the 89th Annual Meeting of the SAA (August 2025)

To learn more about "ARCHIVES * RECORDS 2025: Making it Count," scheduled for August 24 to 27, 2025, in Anaheim, CA, visit <https://www2.archivists.org/am2025>.

Interested in sharing news from your work with religious collections?

We would like to hear from you and share your stories! Those interested in contributing to *Archival Spirit* are encouraged to reach out to Thomas McCullough, newsletter editor, at tom@moravianchurcharchives.org.