

Archives Priority

Call January 6, 2021

Update March 9, 2021

Participants: Agnes Fischer, Mary Jo Stoffel, Rose Jochmann, Pam Hodgson, Jenny Lukomski, Mary Ann Gschwind, Rebekah McFarland, Celia Struck, Nelda Hernandez, Theresa Sandok, Dee Gallo

Absent: Beth Komisarek

THEMES AND ACTIONS

1. Long-term, physical storage
 - Rebekah will send contact information for HARC (SENT MARCH 2021)
 - Participants will connect with HARC as needed
 - Lyn will research other regional opportunities (leading with Marquette University)
2. What will be accepted and how will it be accepted
 - Rebekah will send draft guidelines (good, better, best models) for HARC as example (SENT MARCH 2021)
 - Participants will begin to evaluate their archives against these guidelines
3. Hands-on help to manage and prepare archives
 - Lyn will reach out universities and regional historical societies to ascertain intern potential then forward viable connections to Therese Sandok and Nelda Hernandez, maintaining a contact list for others as they may need it in future.
 - LYN MADE CONTACTS WITH HISTORIAL SOCIETY, MEETING WITH ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION POINTS
 - THERESE AND NELDA CONNECTED WITH UW, PURSUING FALL 2021 INTERNSHIPS. LYN PURUSING ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITIES.

TIMELINE

Lyn and Rebekah will execute on the immediate action plan. The Committee will meet as needed in February. We will regroup with all participants in March to assess progress and confirm roadmap.

BACKGROUND NOTES:

One community is heading toward completion and wonders what do we do, where do we go with our archives? This community (and others) is not enthusiastic about turning archives over to the diocese. Beyond where, the question of what emerges. How do we decide what are the most important things to put into the archives for the future? How do we prepare for the transition? Another community reiterates the question of what to send—specifically, how much to send.

HARC is Heritage and Resource Center at St. Mary's, near Notre Dame in Indiana, a corporation of the Holy Cross Sisters at St. Mary's in South Bend, Indiana. Therese Sandok and Rebekah McFarland are active members in the HARC project. This group is open to communities throughout the Midwest. This project is not yet live and accepting archives as the search for building/location is still under way. The timeline is a loose two years to start accepting archives and four to five years to have everything in place.

Wisconsin State Historical Society was recommended as a potential resource of interest, rather than focusing solely on religious contacts.

All participants expressed a preference for a more regional or local central archive specific to the Wisconsin area rather than the entire Midwest. All agreed that pursuing a regional central archive should be a priority for WRC.

All participants were reminded to value their archival materials. Communities were encouraged to look at their collections more aggressively. How will researchers come to look at this material? It will exceed each individual community and move into women's history. It includes critical and important figures and movements in history. Look at the bigger scope of your history; what did you do beyond the wall of the convent? What affected the broader community, region, field, world? Make sure what you are going to send is what you want to get out about the mark your community made in history. These archives have significant historical value. When looking for long-term storage solutions, do not devalue your content but consider what value you will be adding. In short, you have the opportunity to control your narrative.

Another consideration is to consider your policies with leadership. Be purposeful in decisions on what is included and what is not. An example of this is former members. How much do you want to release in your community archives about members who have moved on?

WRC Advisory Committee Members Dee Gallo and Rebekah McFarland offered to take a cursory look at your community overviews to offer an outside view on what might be valuable.