

June 2023

The Jesuit Archives and Research Center: Your Next Research Destination?

Ann Knake

Jesuit Archives and Research Center, jarreference@jesuits.org

Follow this and additional works at: <https://epublications.regis.edu/jhe>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Knake, Ann (2023) "The Jesuit Archives and Research Center: Your Next Research Destination?," *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal*: Vol. 12: No. 1, Article 12.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.53309/2164-7666.1424>

Available at: <https://epublications.regis.edu/jhe/vol12/iss1/12>

This Resource is brought to you for free and open access by the Scholarly and Peer-Reviewed Journals at ePublications at Regis University. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal* by an authorized administrator of ePublications at Regis University. For more information, please contact epublications@regis.edu.

The Jesuit Archives & Research Center: Your Next Research Destination?

Ann Knake
Reference Archivist
Jesuit Archives & Research Center
jarreference@jesuits.org

Abstract

This article provides background information on the Jesuit Archives & Research Center (JARC), describes types of materials at JARC related to the history of education, and explains how to use the resources housed at JARC. As the Reference Archivist at JARC, Ann Knake facilitates the use of these archival collections by fielding reference inquiries and coordinating research visits.

The Society of Jesus formally mandates and supports record keeping and the maintenance of archives to provide a window into the origins, development, spirit, and charism of the Society and its members throughout the world. For the Society of Jesus in the United States, the Jesuit Archives & Research Center (JARC) in St. Louis, Missouri plays a significant role in housing these records.

Each province of the Society generates its own records to be maintained and historically, these records were housed within a facility in the province which created them. In 1997, the provinces of Chicago, Detroit, Missouri, and Wisconsin combined their separate archives in order to establish the Midwest Jesuit Archives in St. Louis. As additional collections were relocated to this facility, the Midwest Jesuit Archives became the Jesuit Archives: Central United States.

In October 2014, other province leaders approached the Director of the Jesuit Archives: Central United States regarding the possibility of housing additional archival collections in St. Louis. Seeing the value of having a centralized repository, the provincials of the United States eventually agreed to relocate their archival materials to a shared archives facility. The Central and Southern Province, headquartered in St. Louis, moved forward with the purchase of property in August 2015, and archival collections from additional provinces started to arrive in September 2015. Construction began on the new facility in January 2017, and the Jesuit Archives & Research Center opened for research in April 2018. Further

shipments of archival collections have taken place subsequent to our opening for research.

JARC now houses the collective memory of sixteen past and current administrative provinces of the Society of Jesus in the United States. These sixteen include Buffalo, California, Central and Southern, Chicago, Chicago-Detroit, Detroit, East, Midwest, Missouri, New England, New Orleans, New York, Northeast, Oregon, West, and Wisconsin. JARC also houses the records of the governing body of the Society of Jesus in the US, the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States.

Thousands of primary sources found in these consolidated archives not only speak to the history of Jesuit education but testify to the history of the immigrant and native communities, wars, art, business, industry, economics, politics, law, government, religion, science, and technology. We like to say that the collections are as varied as the interests of the Jesuits themselves. The types of sources are also varied, including materials such as biographical records, correspondence, diaries, films, glass slides, musical scores, photographs, reports, and even ventriloquy dummies.

Jesuit Educational History

As someone reading a journal dedicated to Jesuit higher education, you may be wondering about the materials at JARC which can speak to Jesuit educational history. You are likely familiar with the fact that most Jesuit educational institutions maintain their own archives. What information

might JARC have regarding education that is not already contained in the archives of Jesuit universities and high schools across the country?

To begin, JARC has collections from closed Jesuit institutions, or institutions no longer under Jesuit operation. To name just a few examples, we house records from Baghdad College in Iraq (a mission of the New England Province); Campion High School, formerly the College of the Sacred Heart, in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin; St. Charles College in Grand Coteau, Louisiana; St. Joseph's College in Bardstown, Kentucky; and St. Philip Neri School for Delayed Vocations in Boston, Massachusetts.

We house records from the Provincial Assistants for Higher Education and Secondary Education, as well as precursors to these offices. These records include reports by these delegates regarding the schools within their provinces, and documentation of their participation in associations and conferences on educational matters.

JARC also houses records related to individual Jesuits. We have personnel files for deceased Jesuits, which are kept by the province office during the man's life, and we often have manuscript material from Jesuits, such as academic writings, personal correspondence, photos, and other items they collected throughout their lives. Additionally, we house records on the education of Jesuits—materials from seminaries, theologates, and summer schools to prepare Jesuits to teach, or brush up their skills in certain areas.

Perhaps most importantly, at JARC the types of materials listed above can be studied alongside each other, as well as in conjunction with secondary sources, to make comparisons and draw conclusions regarding education across time and geographic areas.

Using the Archives

The first half of our name identifies our existence as a repository for records of the Society of Jesus; the second half highlights that we want the records we house to be used. We are open to all researchers regardless of academic affiliation or status, and we seek to provide equitable access to historical records for research purposes. Certain categories of records may be restricted from general use or subject to limited access. At all times, accessibility to records for research is balanced against a protection of privacy and confidentiality.

It is the responsibility of the researcher to examine the unrestricted materials in the collections, but we are sensitive to the challenges of travel involved in historical research. JARC staff can provide up to one hour of research on behalf of a patron. Within this hour, we might be able to provide the answer to a specific question, or scan of selection of relevant sources, depending on the amount and condition of the materials. As we balance answering remote inquiries with hosting researchers on-site, it may take us up to three weeks to respond to requests—sometimes with an answer, and sometimes with questions to further guide our search.

For more in-depth research projects, a visit to our facility is often necessary. At present, we are available for research visits by appointment only. We ask interested parties to reach out to schedule a visit at least a week in advance. Researchers may submit inquiries and request visits through our website: <https://jesuitarchives.org/archives-request-form/>.

If you are diving into a project related to the history of Jesuit education—whether it be the education of Jesuits in the United States or education by American Jesuits at home or abroad—we encourage you to reach out to determine if JARC can be of assistance! HJE