

# History Of Women Religious

## News and Notes

Volume 10 - Number 2

June 1997

### CONFERENCE '98

A Call for Papers for the fourth triennial Conference on the History of Women Religious is inserted with this issue. The theme, "Through Multiple Lenses: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the History of Women Religious," invites creative collaboration on the topic. Members' assistance with publicity by posting the Call or sending copies to friends for that purpose will be appreciated.

Further information regarding the Conference business meeting agenda will be given in the February, 1998, issue of News and Notes. The agenda will include the report submitted by the Ad hoc Government Committee which met last summer to draw up recommendations for the future structure of the History of Women Religious.

### PUBLICATIONS

Elizabeth Makowski, Canon Law and Cloistered Women: Periculoso and its Commentator 1298-1545 (Catholic University of America Press, 1997), provides an in-depth examination of the watershed legislation that led to the cloistering of nuns. Makowski, currently assistant professor of history at Southwest Texas State University, completed her doctoral dissertation by the same title at Columbia University in 1993.

Heath Dillard has a translation, "Letters to Two Medieval Nuns," and introduction to Olivia Constable's Sourcebook for Medieval Spanish History (in press, University of Pennsylvania).

Francine Shaw, Companion to the Diary of Sister Mary Ignatious of Jesus, Elizabeth Hayes 1823-1894 (Brisbane Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the

Immaculate Conception, 1996), provides an interesting alternative to the usual biographical treatment. The world reflected in this nineteenth-century woman's diary spanned membership in religious orders in two religions—Anglican and Roman Catholic; and missionary ventures in such disparate places as Jamaica, France, Minnesota, and, through the community she founded, Brisbane.

Anne Henderson, Mary MacKillop's Sisters: A Life Unveiled (Sydney: Harper Collins, 1997) provides a corrective to the rigidly clerical focus of prior church historians in Australia by examining the role of Mary MacKillop's Josephite Sisters in Australia and New Zealand. The methodology makes extensive use of oral history.

Anne McLay's Women on the Move: Mercy's Triple Spiral: Ireland to Argentina 1856-1880 to South Australia 1880 (Adelaide Sisters of Mercy, 1996) complements the author's earlier work on the same congregation in Western Australia. Both Irish and Argentinian-born Sisters are shown in this broadly based social history to have influenced the culture as successful and innovative educators. For further information or purchase, contact Sisters of Mercy, 34 Angas Street, Adelaide, S.A. 5000.

Building Sisterhood, a feminist history of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, was due out in May from Syracuse University Press. HWR Conference participants have watched this book, a collection of essays by 15 IHM sisters and an introduction by Margaret Thompson, grow from an idea in the late 1980s to the published reality. The methodology is that of a collective effort by members of the congregation with the consultative help of Thompson whose introduction provides historical context and background on the life of religious women.

Geraldine Anthony, SC, A Vision of Service: Celebrating the Sisters and Daughters of Charity (Sheed and Ward, due late June, 1997), is a history of the 13-congregation Federation of Sisters and Daughters of Charity in the U.S. and Canada.

Mary Elizabeth Earley, SC, has completed the fourth and fifth volumes of The History of the Sisters of Charity of New York (The Sisters of Charity of New York Press, 1997). These volumes trace developments from 1960 to 1996. To purchase, write Doris Smith, SC, at Mount. St. Vincent, 6301 Riverdale Avenue, Bronx, NY 10471.

Watch for the first installment of an annotated catalogue of the writings of Elizabeth Bayley Seton, to appear in a forthcoming issue of Vincentian Heritage. Judith Metz, SC, of Cincinnati, Dr. Ellin Kelly, and Regina Bechtle, SC, of New York, are involved in this extensive project which aims to catalog Seton writings held in 15 separate archives. For further information, contact Bechtle at the College of Mount St. Vincent, Center for Leadership and Spirituality, 6301 Riverdale Ave., Bronx, NY 10471.

Mara Faulkner, OSB, and Annette Brophy, OSB, Born of Common Hungers: Benedictine Women in Search of Connections (University of Notre Dame Press, due August, 1997)), uses essays and photographs to link contemporary Benedictine women from six communities worldwide.

Nancy Hynes, OSB, has just completed a new edition, with introduction, of essays by Mariella Gable, OSB, The Literature of Spiritual Values and Catholic Fiction (University Press of America, Inc., 1996). A respected literary critic and anthologist, Gable's essays helped shape standards for Catholic fiction in the U.S. from the 1940s on into the 1960s.

Joy Clough, RSM, First in Chicago: A History of Saint Xavier University (privately printed, 1997), is the first comprehensive history of the institution which was the first Catholic academy and then the first Catholic college for women in Chicago. It can be purchased from Bookstore, Saint Xavier University, 3700 W. 103<sup>rd</sup> St., Chicago IL 60655.

Mary S. Donovan, Hunter College, has an article on "Episcopal Women Workers in Utah," in the June, 1997, issue of Anglican and Episcopal History.

Suellen Hoy's article on Chicago's Sisters of the Good Shepherd (News and Notes October, 1996) appears in the March issue of the Journal of Urban History.

The Quality of Mercy volume, noted in News and Notes February, 1997, may be ordered through Maureen Hewitt at (773) 779-6011, Fax (773) 779-6094, or by writing Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, 10024 South Central Park Ave., Chicago, IL 60655.

### **RESEARCH IN PROGRESS**

Gretchen Starr-LeBeau, recently appointed assistant professor of history at the University of Kentucky, does research in the general period of late medieval and early modern Spain. A specific current interest is the history of the Order of St. Jerome.

The Institute of Religious Studies in Australia has been commissioned to write the history of the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia, founded from Dublin in 1867. Rosa MacGinley, PBVM, is coordinating the project and will be principal writer.

Patricia Barrett, a student at the Episcopal Divinity School in Massachusetts, is exploring the effect of the ordination of women on women's religious orders. Her initial focus is on the Episcopal tradition where women's ordination has been permitted for some years.

Therese Rooney, IBVM, is currently writing the history of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary in North America, 1847-1970.

Kevina Keating, CCVI, from Houston, is residing at St. Benedict Monastery under the Studium program this year, preparing a co-authored account of teacher preparation of religious women from twelve congregations.

Patricia Wittberg, SC, hopes to use her research on religious orders and schools in the Indianapolis archdiocese (*News and Notes* October, 1996) as the springboard to a more extensive study of the impact which changes in Catholic schools and hospitals have had on the orders which once sponsored and derived much of their identity from such sponsored institutions.

Marie Louise Martinez, RSCJ, is preparing a history of the Society of the Sacred Heart in the nineteenth-century trans-Mississippi west, with expansions into New Zealand, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Mexico by means of missionary bands of Sisters from Missouri and Louisiana.

Tracy Fessenden from the department of religious studies at Arizona State University in Tempe, is interested in corresponding with others who have information about the Sisters of the Holy Family in New Orleans, or concerning foundress, Henriette Delille, whose canonization process is underway.

Gordon Dahm, OSF, is extending an older history of the Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque, Iowa, to include the years from 1975 to 2000.

## MEMBERS

The American Catholic Historical Association's 1997 annual meeting (January, New York) included a number of sessions featuring research on women religious. HWR subscribers who either chaired panels, served as commentators, or presented papers, were Florence Deacon, OSF; Grace Donovan, SUSC; Regina Bechtle, SC; Bernadette McCauley; Elizabeth Milliken; Jessica Sheetz; and Judith Metz, SC.

JoAnn McNamara chaired the Committee on Program for this year's Catholic Historical Association sessions, held concurrently with the American Historical Association meeting.

Mary Oates, CSJ, has received a grant for \$8,000 from the Louisville Institute, to support her continuing research this summer on the College of Notre Dame, Maryland.

We regret to inform readers of the death of Jean Renfro. She brought the Hungarian origins of her congregation vividly alive for Tarrytown conference participants in 1992 with her illustrated presentation, "Women Making a Difference: Edith Farkas, Margaret Slachta and the Sisters of Social Service." She will be missed.

## BOOK REVIEW

*Swatow: The Ursulines in China* by Irene Mahoney, OSU (Privately printed, 1996), 265 pp. (Direct requests for purchase to Ursuline Provincialate, 328 East 198th Street, Bronx, N.Y. 10458)

*Swatow: The Ursulines in China* chronicles the thirty-year presence of the Ursulines in China extending from 1923 to 1952. In a gracefully written, absorbing account, Irene Mahoney, OSU, captures the dedication and heroism of the women who served in the Vicariate of Swatow, an international seaport city in southern China, 170 miles from Hong Kong. Although this study emphasizes the daily struggles of missionary life, the "ordinary acts within the context of an ordinary day," (p. 48) the power of Mahoney's book arises from her skill in situating the Ursuline experience in the context of the international conflict and the national upheaval that has shaped China's twentieth-century history. She describes the impact on the Ursuline missions of the 1920s struggle for Chinese unification, the civil war between the Nationalists and the newly formed Chinese Communist Party from 1927-1929, the Japanese invasion and occupation, 1938-1945, and ultimately, the events leading to the victory of the Chinese Communists in 1949. In elaborating this context she also indicates the extent to which virtually all missionaries in China, Protestant and Catholic alike, failed to recognize the causes of this social and political unrest swirling about them, much less even begin to glimmer its long term consequences.

Initially sponsored by the independent Ursuline convent at Stanstead in the Province of Quebec, Canada, the three Ursulines who began the China mission affiliated with the Ursulines of the Roman Union once they arrived in China. This affiliation established the international character of the mission and ensured staffing from Europe, North America,

and, in time, China. Within four years of the original foundation at Swatow, the sisters had established two additional centers: in 1924 at Chao-Chou-Fu, two hours north of Swatow, and in 1926, at Hopo, a three-day river's journey west of Swatow. At Swatow and Chao-Chou-Fu they conducted dispensaries, primary schools, and homes for abandoned children. At Chao-Chou-Fu they also conducted a workshop for needlework. In 1940, despite the Japanese occupation, they opened a secondary school at Swatow for paying pupils. At Hopo, too, they conducted a dispensary and primary school, but here their major work centered on the preparation of Chinese catechists and the formation of Chinese religious.

Mahoney's account is enlivened by her gift for presenting a collective portrait of women which is intimate but not sentimentalized. She acknowledges the sisters' fears, highlights their struggles and records the little joys that gave them the hope to continue. She captures, in particular, the terror of war and the insecurity and profound loneliness they experienced during their final years in China.

Unlike religious communities dominated by United States citizens, the Ursulines were not interned during World War II, a function at the time of the internationality of their predominantly French mission. Even the one American on the mission was only briefly interned and then allowed to return to Swatow. Although they were spared the suffering of internment, and the three missions remained open, all communication was cut off from 1941 to 1945, and the three houses remained isolated from each other for the duration of the war.

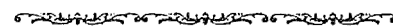
But the end of the war failed to bring peace, and for the next seven years the Ursulines experienced the disassembling of the Church in China. Some of Mahoney's most powerful writing describes the systematic process through which the Communists discredited the Church. One thrust in this process included the government's goal to end all missionary work, in part by transforming mission schools into Communist schools. Mahoney captures the poignancy of this shift as the Communists used "thought reform" to turn pupils against their Ursuline and Chinese teachers and virtually removed them from the administration of their schools.

Propaganda leading to hate campaigns thus became a more effective weapon than guns and bullets and even outright expulsion. Singly and by twos the Ursulines began to leave in 1950; by July 1952 corporate Ursuline presence in China came to an end.

Mahoney wrote this history from research in Ursuline archives in Rome, France, Quebec and Taiwan. In addition to Ursuline records, she also used the annual reports from the bishops of Swatow Vicariate to the Society of Foreign Missions in Paris. She does not use citations but unobtrusively links the material in the text to her archival sources so that researchers should be able to pursue any leads suggested in the narrative. One archival depository of which she may have been unaware is State Department documents in the National Archives. No doubt unknown to the missionaries themselves, the United States consulates in China (and presumably also the French and British) filed voluminous reports on the activities of all United States citizens in China, including missionaries. These reports are easily available in the National Archives.

Like the Ursulines, numerous other religious Congregations went to China in the 1920s and remained there until the Communist takeover. (According to the historian, John Fairbanks, in 1929 there were 3,400 Roman Catholic missionaries in China). The strength of Mahoney's narrative is that she places the Ursuline story in a global context, illuminates the impact of national conflicts on local issues, and demonstrates the progressive incorporation of the sisters into the lives of the people whom they served. She thus provides a model for the way in which mission history should be written.

Mary Hayes  
Trinity College  
Washington, D.C.



## NOTICES

Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious will convene at the historic Dominican motherhouse in Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, August 21-24. Registrations for the second national conference of ACWR, with the theme of "To the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Service and Savvy," are due by August 1. For further information write ACWR Sinsinawa Conference, Sinsinawa Dominican Archives, General Delivery, Sinsinawa, WI 53824-9999.

The 1997 Religious Archives Institute in Washington will convene June 30-July 11 for a two-week course centering on the theme "Ensuring the Religious Heritage for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The institute is designed for persons responsible for work with religious records, manuscripts, and objects, with visits to collections at the National Archives, The CUA Archives, and the Library of Congress. For further information, contact Dr. Timothy Meagher, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. 20064.

The Association for Religious and Intellectual Life sponsors a fellowship program called Studium for scholars who wish to combine research with participation in the life of a religious community. For further information, contact ARIL at the College of New Rochelle, New Rochelle, NY 10805 (e-mail aril@ecunet.org), or Dolores Super, OSB, who notes that Studium at St. Benedict's Monastery (St. Joseph, MN 56374) currently has four women taking advantage of the opportunity.

The Episcopal Women's History Project will award its first triennial Frank Sugeno Research Award in 1998. The award of \$1,000 will be made for a current research project on the history of Episcopal women. Application deadline is December 1, 1997. For applications, contact EWHP, 175 Ninth Ave., New York, NY 10011. Travel grants of up to \$500 are awarded from the same group to support archival research on the history of Episcopal women. Applications are available from the same source.

The Coordinating Council for Women in History and the Berkshire Conference on Women Historians

announce the eighth annual competition for two \$500 Graduate Student awards to assist in dissertation work. Applicants must be women graduate students in U.S. institutions, but may be in any field of history. September 15, 1997, deadline. For applications, contact Janice M. Leone, Award Committee, Dept. of History, Middle Tennessee State University, Box 23, Murfreesboro, TN 37132.

Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies invites submissions for a special issue, "Women's Oral History." This journal's 1977 and 1983 issues pioneered the use of oral history in feminist scholarship; the forthcoming special issue welcomes articles by old and new practitioners from all disciplines. Article, fiction, and poetry submission should be sent blind, in triplicate, with a cover letter. One set of art and photographs may be sent (duplicate slides or black and white prints only) for photographic essay submissions. Submissions will be returned only if SAE with proper postage is included. Send submissions to Sue Armitage, ed., Frontiers, Wilson 12, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164. Telephone, (509) 335-7268, or e-mail frontier@wsu.edu

A limited number of copies are still available of Pioneer Healers: The History of Women Religious in American Health Care, eds. Ursula Stepsis, CSA, and Dolores Liptak, RSM (Crossroad, 1989), for \$15 inclu. shipping; contact Mary Denis Maher, CSA, 5232 Broadview Road, Richfield, OH 44286. Make checks payable to Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine.



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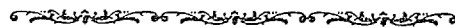
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## CALL FOR PAPERS

### Through Multiple Lenses: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on the History of Women Religious

Sponsored by the  
Conference on the History of Women Religious  
Loyola University Chicago  
June 21 - 24, 1998

*"Through Multiple Lenses..."* is a conference intended to extend our knowledge of the history of Women Religious by drawing on the wisdom and methodology of various disciplines. Interdisciplinary panels may include papers dealing with the same topic from different disciplines or perspectives, or they may be made up of specific papers which incorporate the theories or methods of more than one discipline. For example, artists and historians might collaborate on how the idealized woman reflected in the Renaissance Madonnas and female saints influenced or shaped how women lived religious life. Leadership theories drawn from sociology and psychology might provide new insights into the ministry of women religious in a particular time period. Complete panels are encouraged, but individual papers will also be considered.

Please submit five copies of the proposal by November 15, 1997, to Florence Deacon, OSF at the address shown below. Include the panel title, title and one page abstract of each paper, and a one-page vita for each participant, including current address, e-mail, and phone number. Enclose a stamped self-addressed postcard which will be returned to you on receipt of your packet.

Persons desiring program and registration information should contact Ann M. Harrington, BVM at the address shown below.

Florence Deacon, OSF  
HWR Program Committee Chair  
Cardinal Stritch College  
6801 North Yates Road  
Milwaukee, WI 53217  
Phone: 414-410-4188

Ann M. Harrington, BVM  
HWR Local Arrangements Chair  
Loyola University Chicago  
Gannon Center for Women and  
Leadership  
6525 N. Sheridan Road  
Chicago, IL 60626  
Phone: 773-508-8430

PLEASE POST

## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Please have copy for the **October 1997** issue to the editor by **September 1, 1997**.

### THE HWR NEWSLETTER

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Book Review editor: Mary Hayes, SND  
Ad hoc Conference Committee:  
Kaye Ashe, OP; Florence Deacon, OSF;  
Mary Ewens, OP; JoAnn McNamara;  
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