Sisters of the Holy Family at the Stewart Indian School and Corpus Christi Chapel Collection: Carson City and Summer Vacation Schools in Western Nevada

Sisters of the Holy Family Archives
P.O. Box 3248
Fremont, California 94539
shfarchives@holyfamilysisters.org
Title: Sisters of the Holy Family at the Stewart Indian School and Corpus Christi Chapel Collection: Carson City and Summer Vacation Schools in Western Nevada

Date (inclusive): 1930-1990

Collection number: SHF-004

Creator: Sisters of the Holy Family

Extent: 3 Linear Feet

Contributing Institution: Sisters of the Holy Family Archives

Abstract: Hand-written annals manuscripts documenting life and work of Sisters, and photographs and digitized films of students at the Stewart Indian School and the Corpus Christi Chapel. 3 linear feet of materials and 9 digitized films, predominantly from 1933 to 1971.

Languages: English

Access
Collection is open for research

Publication Rights
Please contact the Sisters of the Holy Family Archives for permission to publish

Preferred Citation
Sisters of the Holy Family Core Collection. SHF-004. Sisters of the Holy Family Archives, Fremont, California

Acquisition Information
Collection materials created by the Sisters of the Holy Family

Arrangement
The materials are divided into three series: materials from the Sister’s residences (annals, correspondence, ephemera, and articles), vacation schools photographs and digital versions of short films.

Series 1. Materials from Houses. The materials from the Sister’s residences include the materials they gathered from their work at the Stewart Indian School just outside of Carson City. The houses materials are organized by year. Bound, hand-written manuscripts such as the annals journals and sacrament books recording children in parishes at various stages of Catholic religious status are located at the beginning of the series, 1933-1990.

Series 2. Vacation Schools Photographs. Materials from vacation schools are organized by vacation school location alphabetically, 1940s-1960s.

Series 3. Digitized Short Films from Stewart Indian School and Carson City. Nine digital files are organized on archival gold DVD by name of MP4 file. The original films are through to have been created as “home movies” circa the 1950s and 1960s in Carson City, Nevada. Many of the films can be identified as located at the Corpus Christ Chapel at the Stewart Indian School, 1950s-1960s.

Biographical / Historical Note
The Sisters of the Holy Family were established in San Francisco in 1872 by a young woman named Elizabeth “Lizzie” Armer. Born in 1850 in Sydney, Australia, Lizzie moved with her family to San Francisco while still a young child and was eventually adopted by the wealthy San Francisco banker Richard Tobin and his family.

In 1872, at the age of twenty-two, Lizzie Armer approached a local priest named Father Prendergast and expressed her desire to join a community of women religious. Prendergast, with the support of Bishop Joseph Sadoc Alemany, urged Lizzie to form a new community of Sisters with a focus on charitable work for families in need: the Sisters of the Holy Family of San Francisco (SHF). Between 1872 and 1878, Lizzie, now Mother Dolores Armer, and the second woman to join the new community, Sister Teresa O’Connor, worked to establish the Holy Family Sisters as a small order under the San Francisco Archdiocese.

By the first decades of the 20th century, membership in SHF had expanded significantly and the Sisters began to spread out their operations further afield in California. Residential houses that served as sub-convents were established in San Jose, Oakland and Los Angeles; soon SHF also moved into Nevada and the Hawaiian Islands. From their new houses, SHF Sisters continued their ministries, including child care and Catholic summer schools for working class families, and for low-income and often marginalized communities such as migrant agricultural workers.

The first Holy Family Sisters arrived in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 1932. The population in Las Vegas was expanding rapidly in the early 1930s as workers came into the area to work on the Hoover Dam. In 1940, the Sisters based out of the SHF residence in Reno began to do missionary work at the Corpus Christ Chapel at Stewart Indian School, also known as the Stewart Institute, Carson Institute, and the Carson Indian School.

The Stewart Indian School was established by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1890 as a boarding school for Native American
students from a variety of Western tribes. Tribes with students at the school likely included the Washoe and Paiute of Nevada, as well as Hopi, Navajo, Apache, Pima, Mohave, Walapai, Ute, Pipage, Coropah and Tewa communities. The Stewart School had a reputation among Native American communities for strict, and sometimes harsh, treatment of students and for enforcement of a policy banning native languages.
In June of 1950, a small Catholic church was constructed out of local Nevada stone at the Stewart School and named the Corpus Christi Chapel. Stewart closed as a school in 1980, and now is under the operation of the State of Nevada as a location for state agencies including the Nevada Indian Commission. Many of the characteristic stone-work buildings were created by students from the school’s masonry program using stone from a Carson City quarry and the structures are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Scope and Contents
The collection is comprised of hand-written annals manuscripts documenting the daily life of the community, as well as correspondence, copies of articles, ephemera and a significant quantity of photographic prints.
There are also nine digital MP4 video files that were created when short motion picture films were digitized. The SHF Archives does not have the technology necessary to play the original motion picture film from which the MP4 video files were created.
Sisters of the Holy Family (San Francisco, Calif.)
Off-reservation Boarding Schools
Indian High School Students
Religious Education
Carson City (Nev.)
Carson Indian School (Carson City, Nev.)