

VANISHED WORLDS: SEARCHING FOR THE RECORDS OF CLOSED CATHOLIC WOMEN'S COLLEGES

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ABSTRACT: This article presents the results of a survey of the archives of 36 Roman Catholic women's colleges that have closed or merged with other institutions since 1967. The majority of these archives are held by the women's religious communities that originally sponsored the colleges, although about one third are held by universities. These archives are rich resources on the history of women, education, religion, and culture that to some degree have been neglected by scholars who have focused on the history of colleges that are still open. As well as suggesting avenues for future research, this article contributes to the literature on how archives can cope with the voluminous records of twentieth-century institutions, and to emerging scholarship on the relationship of archives and memory. The survey upon which it is based revealed certain limitations on preservation, access, and use of these archives, so the article concludes with recommendations on how to make them more visible.

Introduction

For the rest of the year, the uncertainty of the future was always with the sisters either consciously or unconsciously. No one seemed worried about the future, except perhaps at the need to break up the local community. As time went on, they did become more aware of the difficulty that some of them would have to find a place where their years of professional education and work could be used most profitably—especially as it became more and more evident that openings for college teachers were very rare.¹

In this quotation, M. Ann Elizabeth Waters, a Sister of the Holy Cross, describes the uncertainty and dislocation among the members of her religious community when they learned that Dunbarton, the small Roman Catholic women's college in Washington, D.C., where they lived and worked, would close in spring 1973. Ann Elizabeth

Waters and her community² were not alone. From the late 1960s until today, dozens of small Catholic women's colleges throughout the United States have closed. These colleges are among the many once-vibrant institutions to have disappeared in the late twentieth century: dozens of private schools, hospitals, and small liberal arts colleges have shut their doors.

The closing of colleges is poignant for alumnae,³ who see an institutional culture that they shared disappear. When a college's physical space has been demolished or transformed, the institutional archives become the sum total of what remains. It follows that alumnae, staff, and supporters have sought to use archives to preserve the legacy of these institutions. In recent years, the relationship between archives, physical spaces, and memory has been debated by historians, social scientists, and archivists. As Barbara Craig writes in a 2002 *American Archivist* article, "The idea that archives are a physical space for memory and a site in which it is recalled or 'made' in the social-construction sense, has the potential to profoundly affect our services to users."⁴ The literature on memory is extensive, and many of the issues of the meaning of public space, the contested nature of the archival record, and the implications for users, are well beyond the scope of this article.⁵ Exploring how the records of former Catholic women's colleges have been preserved, however, suggests that archives have the potential to become the loci of the collective memory of closed institutions.

Archivists have been grappling with the large bodies of records generated by closed or merged institutions for many years. Originally more of an issue in the business archives community, college archivists and archivists of religious collections are increasingly dealing with mergers as well.⁶ Religious denominations that face a declining membership base and rising costs have been forced to close or merge archival facilities. As early as 1984, James O'Toole asked, "[A]s the economic base of religious organizations shrinks with declining membership, will there not be increased competition for scarce funds, with the archives losing out to activities, such as social welfare programs for the benefit of the poor, that are deemed a more central part of these organizations' missions?"⁷ At a recent program at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, Margery Sly, of the Presbyterian Historical Society, discussed the ramifications of consolidating the denomination's two archival facilities.⁸ In this time of retrenchment, the Presbyterian Historical Society is also coping with an influx of records from several historically black church-affiliated colleges that are now defunct.⁹

The archives of Roman Catholic congregations, particularly in the smaller communities, are facing similar challenges. Although many women's religious congregations currently have thriving archival programs, the number of sisters in the United States is decreasing. From a peak of 185,000 in 1965, numbers have dropped by more than half, to 69,963 in 2005, 60 percent of whom are over 70. Though a few hundred applicants enter religious life every year, many leave before taking final vows.¹⁰ Caring for their elderly members has financially strained religious orders. Because of declining numbers, many congregations have restructured, consolidating regional communities. This practice raises questions about where to place archives, and where to find professional staff to manage them.¹¹ Alternatively, some religious orders have looked into depositing their archives at outside repositories.¹²

Like the Catholic women's colleges discussed in this study, many small nonsectarian and church-affiliated colleges have been forced to close or merged with other institutions. In cases of mergers, college records naturally find a home in the archives of the merged body. For instance, in 1996, Mount Vernon, a women's college in Washington, D.C., merged with George Washington University, where its records are now part of the university archives. When a college closes outright, it can be more difficult to find an institution willing to take such a large set of records. Upsala, a small coeducational college in East Orange, New Jersey, was founded in 1893 to give Swedish Lutherans on the East Coast an opportunity for higher education. After years of financial difficulty, Upsala closed in 1995. Fortunately, the Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center at another Lutheran college, Augustana, in Rock Island, Illinois, was able to accommodate Upsala's records, which allowed them to remain within an academic setting.¹³

The records of closed institutions are often voluminous, posing an additional challenge at a time when the archival profession is struggling to deal with an explosion of paper. The value of these archives for historical research has to be balanced against the very real costs of housing, preserving, and making them accessible. Because of these practical concerns, we must ask ourselves why this material is important. Why should researchers study these failed institutions? Why should archivists preserve their records? What is the significance of Catholic women's colleges in particular? I argue that these archives are rich resources on the history of education, religion, and culture. Their most important contribution is to the history of women's higher education, which these colleges provided at a time when opportunities were limited. They help develop a more nuanced perspective on the breadth of Catholic higher education, while existing studies tend, not surprisingly, to focus on institutions that are still open.¹⁴ Understanding why these colleges failed gives insights into the economic, social, and cultural pressures on higher education in the late twentieth century, the relationship between religious orders and higher education, and changes in American Catholic culture. In the archival context, the search for the records of these colleges illustrates the challenges of dealing with the archives of closed institutions, raising many issues regarding hidden collections, divided collections, and access to the archives of religious orders. Finally, the sheer numbers indicate the significance of this topic. Of 120 Catholic women's colleges that existed in 1967, 36 have closed or merged with other institutions.

Historical Background

Higher education for Catholic women began in the late nineteenth century as part of the general trend toward improved educational and professional opportunities for women. Although conservative clerics and critics initially opposed higher education for Catholic women, the increasing number of women who enrolled in non-Catholic universities and sought professional qualifications, primarily as teachers, alarmed them. The establishment of Catholic women's colleges proved to be a good compromise

between women's desire for education and the church's belief that young women required a protected, religious, single-sex environment. A tradition of girls' schools run by congregations of women religious already existed to provide an infrastructure. Indeed, apart from Trinity College in Washington, D.C., the first five Catholic women's colleges in the country were all extensions of girls' academies.¹⁵ From a handful at the turn of the twentieth century, the number of Catholic women's colleges grew rapidly, from 10 in 1918 to 79 in 1941. By one estimate, between 1947 and 1968, the number of four-year lay colleges founded by women's religious congregations grew from 97 educating nearly 38,000 students to 142 educating 101,000 students.¹⁶ In comparison, in 1968, there were about 60 Protestant and independent women's colleges.¹⁷

By the late 1960s, Catholic women's colleges were already facing a crisis, however, as were many other small private institutions with limited endowments. In 1970, private colleges in the United States owed a total debt of three billion dollars, mainly caused by their rapid physical expansion of the previous decade. Nearly 20 percent of all private colleges with fewer than 500 students, including many Catholic women's colleges, were running annual deficits of eight percent or more of their operating budgets.¹⁸ By the early 1970s, an economic downturn and spiraling inflation pushed many institutions toward financial disaster. At a time when small women's colleges required increasing income from tuition to survive, enrollment began to drop. Small private colleges faced competition from public colleges and universities, particularly from community colleges, which were founded throughout the country during this period. At the same time, single-sex education was declining in popularity. Men's colleges, including some of the oldest and most prestigious in the United States, began to admit women as a way to bolster their enrollment and attract good students. Numerous Catholic institutions, including Boston College, Georgetown, and Notre Dame, followed this trend. In the wake of the Civil Rights movement, the exclusion of certain categories of people from opportunities seemed undemocratic. Students themselves, in the changing social climate of the 1960s, favored coeducation.¹⁹ Indeed, one scholar calculated that between June and October 1968, 64 women's colleges became coeducational or closed their doors.²⁰

The growth of coeducation was part of the social and cultural turmoil of the late 1960s, which had a profound impact on religious life. Most Catholic women's colleges were run and staffed by members of religious orders. Sister faculty members contributed part of their salaries back to such institutions, while congregations often gave the colleges additional financial support. Religious orders flourished in the United States after the Second World War, reaching a high watermark in 1958–1962, when 32,000 women entered religious life. The years 1963–1965 saw a reversal, however, with 18,316 entering, a downward trend that would continue.²¹ Attempts to renew religious life following the Second Vatican Council did not result in an increase in vocations. Indeed, numbers of women leaving religious life tripled between 1965 and 1970.²² Influenced by Vatican II's emphasis on returning to the spirit of the gospels, some communities shifted their focus from education to social justice work. Although both men and women left religious life or turned to other apostolates during this period, the departures had a particular impact on Catholic women's colleges. Unlike men's colleges, these institutions relied heavily on the contributed services of women religious,

whose low-cost labor shored up the colleges' finances.²³ Of the colleges in my survey, more than one third closed in the early 1970s.

Many of the colleges that came through this difficult period survived and prospered.²⁴ In the early 1980s, new justifications emerged for women's colleges, as research showed that these institutions boosted the academic performance and confidence of their students and produced numbers of women leaders disproportionate to their size.²⁵ Enrollment increased at many Catholic women's colleges as they inaugurated new programs for part-time and older students, created new vocationally based majors, or introduced graduate programs open to both men and women. In subsequent decades, however, Catholic women's colleges, as well as most small private colleges, faced continuing challenges. With the end of the post-war baby boom, the number of high school graduates declined, causing intense competition for students.²⁶ Private colleges were forced repeatedly to raise tuition to keep pace with inflation, while plowing revenues back into student aid in order to attract candidates. As the market became increasingly national in scope, ties to regions and to religious denominations became less important.²⁷ According to a 2002 study, at least 27 percent of the nation's 1,600 private colleges had announced plans to close since January 1997.²⁸ Women's colleges were particularly vulnerable. Although the better known, better endowed continued to thrive, many others faced—and still face—stiff competition from public and coeducational private institutions. Estimates vary, but one historian calculated that there were nearly 90 women's colleges in the United States in 1986;²⁹ according to the Women's College Coalition, 56 remain in 2007.³⁰

Contributions of Closed Colleges

A simple example of the importance of studying closed Catholic women's colleges concerns the identification of the earliest Catholic women's colleges in the United States. The first Catholic women's college in the country, the College of Notre Dame in Baltimore, originally established as a girls' academy in 1863, was chartered as a college in 1896.³¹ Other early Catholic women's colleges include the College of Saint Elizabeth in Morristown, New Jersey, founded in 1899; Trinity College in Washington, D.C., founded in 1900; and the College of New Rochelle in New York, founded in 1905. St. Joseph College in Emmitsburg, Maryland, which was chartered in 1902, is rarely mentioned in historical overviews, while Mount Saint Agnes College in Baltimore does not appear at all.³² Mount Saint Agnes was opened by the Sisters of Mercy as a girls' academy in 1867, was incorporated in 1890 as the Collegiate Institute for Young Ladies and Preparatory School for Little Girls, and given power to "confer degrees such as are now by law conferred by the colleges of this state on females." The first baccalaureate degree was conferred in 1899, the same year as that at the College of Notre Dame.³³ Even though St. Joseph College and Mount Saint Agnes did not endure beyond the early 1970s, they were important in the context of their time, and are worthy of greater study.

Many of these colleges, because of their small size and flexibility, pioneered experimental curricula that became a model for other institutions. Loretto Heights College

in Denver, Colorado, introduced an innovative baccalaureate program in nursing in the early 1950s, a time when most nursing programs were based in hospitals.³⁴ The Division of Nursing and the college's University Without Walls continuing education program were ultimately moved to Regis University when it took over Loretto Heights in 1988. Partly as an effort to attract more students, Mundelein College in Chicago, sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM), inaugurated a residential weekend college for nontraditional students in 1974—the first of its kind in the country—which was copied by many other institutions.³⁵ Yet another example is Edgecliff College in Cincinnati, which became known for its programs in fine arts, music, and drama, as well as its strong liberal arts curriculum. The Edgecliff Academy of the Fine Arts, inaugurated in 1961, sponsored the Cincinnati Shakespeare Festival, which became an integral part of the Cincinnati cultural scene of the 1960s.³⁶ After Edgecliff's merger with Xavier University in 1980, Xavier retained the departments of art, music, and theater arts, as well as nursing and social work.³⁷ Those colleges that merged with all-male institutions were able to contribute their successful programs in historically "female" fields to strengthen the new entity.³⁸ Catholic women's colleges were also leaders in establishing programs for underserved populations. In the 1980s, nursing students from Nazareth College in Kalamazoo, Michigan, served as school nurses in inner-city districts that could not afford to hire graduate nurses.³⁹ Fort Wright College in Spokane, Washington, provided extension courses for Native American women in the Yakima Valley; when the college closed in 1982, this outreach program was taken over and expanded by its successor institution, Heritage University.⁴⁰

Methodology

I derived the list of closed colleges used in this study from the *Catholic School Guide*, published by *Catholic News* in 1967.⁴¹ This guide listed all Catholic colleges and universities in the United States, as well as Catholic grammar schools, secondary schools, trade schools, and religious orders. Many of the seemingly robust institutions listed at this pivotal period in Catholic history would soon vanish. My initial challenge was to determine which of the 120 women's colleges in the guide actually *had* closed. By 1967, some Catholic women's colleges, such as Mercy College in Detroit and Saint Mary of the Plains in Kansas, were being advertised as coeducational, so I did not include them in the survey. Using printed secondary and Internet sources, I sought to distinguish which colleges had closed or merged with other institutions, and which had simply changed their names. For instance, I initially assumed that Our Lady of Angels College in Glen Riddle, Pennsylvania, which had two hundred students in 1967, had closed. In fact, however, it had changed its name to Neumann College and continues to thrive. To add to the confusion, the town of Glen Riddle is now known as Aston. Because the focus of my study is archives, I did not consider as "closed" those colleges that have become coeducational or no longer identify themselves as Catholic, such as Webster College in St. Louis and Rosary Hill (now Daemen College) near Buffalo. These colleges maintain the records of their single-sex Catholic past, which can be retrieved easily by researchers at the institution.

Once I compiled a working list of closed colleges, the next task was to locate their archives. Where a merger had occurred, I wrote to the archivist of the merged institution, although in some cases I was referred back to the religious community that had sponsored the college. Where an institution had closed outright, I tried to contact the archivist of the sponsoring religious community, using the Internet and such sources as the directories of the Society of American Archivists and the Archivists of Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR), the national professional organization for archivists of religious communities. In several instances, I was referred to the provincial archives of the order, because the local community near the site of the college no longer maintained the records. My research produced a list of 36 institutions and a corresponding list of "primary" archival repositories. (See table 1.) In the summer of 2006, I sent these repositories a questionnaire inquiring about the size of their college archives, the type of records held, conditions of access, and other issues. (See appendix.) I accompanied the questionnaire with a letter explaining my project and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. I later sent a reminder letter and offered the recipients the option of filling out the questionnaire electronically. I ultimately received completed questionnaires or information from 33 repositories, an astonishing 92 percent rate of return, which suggests that the issues were of interest to archivists. I received additional information from other repositories that held documentation of particular colleges, but were not the primary location of their records.

Since some of the data received were sketchy, I made follow-up visits to several repositories, trying to choose a cross-section of institutions from different parts of the United States. I visited several universities that had merged with or taken over Catholic women's colleges and were maintaining their archives. These included St. John's University in Jamaica, New York, which acquired Notre Dame College of Staten Island in 1971; and Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, which was formed from the merger of Marymount College and Loyola University in 1973. I also visited Xavier University in Cincinnati and Loyola University Chicago because of the unique ways in which they had accommodated the archives of the Catholic women's colleges that had merged with them.

Of the many religious communities that hold college archives, I visited those of two congregations that have centralized archival facilities: the Religious of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province, in St. Louis, and the Congregation of the Holy Cross in Notre Dame, Indiana, both of which hold the records of several former colleges sponsored by the order. I also visited the archives of three regional communities: the Mercy Archives in Baltimore, where I consulted the records of Mount Saint Agnes College; the archives of the Immaculate Heart Community in Los Angeles, which holds the records of Immaculate Heart College; and those of the Ursuline Sisters of Louisville, Kentucky, whose college merged with Bellarmine University in 1968. The Immaculate Heart Community endured a notorious schism in the late 1960s, when James Cardinal McIntyre, Archbishop of Los Angeles, refused to accept the way the community was implementing reform after the Second Vatican Council. In 1970, the majority of the sisters left the order to form the noncanonical, ecumenical Immaculate Heart Community, which continued to sponsor the college and Immaculate Heart High School.⁴² In the course of my travels, I spoke to alumnae, former faculty, and administrators

Table 1: Closed Roman Catholic Women's Colleges and Their Archives

College	Sponsoring Community	Dates	Primary Location of Archives	Secondary Locations	Approximate Volume (Primary Location)	Conditions of Access
San Diego College for Women, San Diego, CA	Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	Established 1949. Merged with University of San Diego 1972.	Copley Library, University of San Diego, San Diego, CA	Archives, Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province, St. Louis, MO	32 linear feet	By appointment with permission of the archivist
Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles, CA	Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary	Established 1916. Closed 1980.	Archives, Immaculate Heart Community, Los Angeles, CA		25 legal-size file cabinets	By appointment with permission of the archivist
Marymount College, Los Angeles, CA	Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary	Established 1932. Merged with Loyola 1973.	Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, CA	Marymount High School, Bel Air, RSHM Prov. Archives, Montebello, CA	10 to 15 linear feet	Open by appointment
San Francisco College for Women/Lone Mountain College, San Francisco, CA	Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	Established 1921. Merged with University of San Francisco 1978.	Archives, Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province, St. Louis, MO	University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA	27 manuscript boxes, 9 oversize boxes	By appointment with permission of the archivist

Table 1: Closed Roman Catholic Women's Colleges and Their Archives – Continued

College	Sponsoring Community	Dates	Primary Location of Archives	Secondary Locations	Approximate Volume (Primary Location)	Conditions of Access
Loretto Heights College, Denver, CO	Sisters of Loretto	Established 1918. Merged with Regis University 1988.	Regis University, Denver, CO	Loretto Archives, Nerinx, KY	122 cubic feet	Open by appointment
Annhurst College, South Woodstock, CT	Daughters of the Holy Spirit	Established 1941. Closed 1980.	Holy Spirit Provincial House, Putnam, CT	Connecticut State Dept. of Higher Education	One small room	Archivist will answer inquiries by mail
Dunbarton College of the Holy Cross, Washington, DC	Sisters of the Holy Cross	Established 1935. Closed 1973.	Sisters of the Holy Cross Archives, Notre Dame, IN		21 manuscript boxes, 2 file drawers of employee records, 11 file drawers student records	By appointment with permission of the archivist
Barat College, Lake Forest, IL	Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	Founded 1918. Merged with DePaul University 2001. Closed 2005.	DePaul University, Chicago, IL	Archives, Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province, St. Louis, MO	47 cubic feet, 2 inches	Open during office hours

Table 1: Closed Roman Catholic Women's Colleges and Their Archives – Continued

College	Sponsoring Community	Dates	Primary Location of Archives	Secondary Locations	Approximate Volume (Primary Location)	Conditions of Access
Mundelein College, Chicago, IL	Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM)	Established 1930. Merged with Loyola University 1991.	Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University, Chicago, IL	Archdiocesan Archives of Chicago, IL; Archives, BVM, Dubuque, IA	500 linear feet	Open by appointment
Marycrest College, Davenport, IA	Congregation of the Humility of Mary	Established 1939. Closed 2002.	Humility of Mary Center, Davenport, IA	University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA (transcripts only)	500 linear feet	Open by appointment
Marymount Kansas College, Salina, KS	Sisters of St. Joseph of Concordia, KS	Established 1922. Closed 1989.	Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, Concordia, KS	Diocese of Salina; Fort Hays State College, Hays, KS (transcripts)	Could not estimate	Archivist will answer inquiries by mail
Mount St. Scholastica College, Atchison, KS	Benedictine Sisters of Atchison	Established 1924. Merged with Benedictine College 1971.	Archives, Mount St. Scholastica Monastery, Atchison, KS	Benedictine College, Atchison, KS	43 (cubic?) feet	By appointment with permission of the archivist

Table 1: Closed Roman Catholic Women's Colleges and Their Archives – Continued

College	Sponsoring Community	Dates	Primary Location of Archives	Secondary Locations	Approximate Volume (Primary Location)	Conditions of Access
Nazareth College of Kentucky, Nazareth, KY	Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, KY	Established 1921. Closed 1971.	Archival Center, Sisters of Charity, Nazareth, KY	Spalding University, Louisville, KY	Could not estimate, probably a few boxes	Open by appointment
Ursuline College, Louisville, KY	Ursuline Sisters of Louisville	Established 1938. Merged with Bellarmine College 1968.	Ursuline Sisters Archives, Louisville, KY	Bellarmino University, Louisville, KY	25 manuscript boxes, 20 2-inch binders, literary magazine from 1947 to 1968	By appointment with permission of the archivist
St. Mary's Dominican College, New Orleans, LA	Dominican Sisters, Congregation of St. Mary	Established 1910. Closed 1985.	Dominican Sisters, Congregation of St. Mary, New Orleans, LA		2 rooms, approx. 16' x 18', 3 rows of 5 shelves, 1 row of 6 shelves, 12' each	Open by appointment
Mount Saint Agnes College, Baltimore, MD	Sisters of Mercy of Baltimore	Established 1890. Merged with Loyola College 1971.	Mercy Center, Baltimore, MD	Loyola College, Baltimore, MD	22 linear feet	Open by appointment
St. Joseph College Emmitsburg, MD	Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul	Established 1902. Closed 1973.	Archives, St. Joseph's Provincial House, Emmitsburg, MD	Maryland Dept. of Higher Education, Baltimore, MD (transcripts)	20-plus legal-size manuscript boxes	Open by appointment

Table 1: Closed Roman Catholic Women's Colleges and Their Archives – Continued

College	Sponsoring Community	Dates	Primary Location of Archives	Secondary Locations	Approximate Volume (Primary Location)	Conditions of Access
Cardinal Cushing College, Brookline, MA	Sisters of the Holy Cross	Established 1952. Closed 1972.	Sisters of the Holy Cross Archives, Notre Dame, IN		27 manuscript boxes; 4 drawers of student records; slides and memorabilia	By appointment with permission of the archivist
Newton College of the Sacred Heart, Newton, MA	Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	Established 1946. Merged with Boston College 1975.	Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA	Archives, Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province, St. Louis, MO	110 linear feet	Open by appointment
Nazareth College, Kalamazoo, MI	Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth, MI	Established 1924. Closed 1992.	Sisters of St. Joseph, Nazareth, MI	Davenport University, Kalamazoo, MI (transcripts)	Could not estimate	Not accessible for research
College of St. Teresa, Winona, MN	Sisters of St. Francis of the Congregation of Lourdes	Established 1907. Closed 1989.	Congregational Center, Sisters of St. Francis, Rochester, MN		1,352 document boxes, also bankers boxes, 4-drawer file cabinets, cupboards, slide cabinets	By appointment with permission of the archivist

Table 1: Closed Roman Catholic Women's Colleges and Their Archives – Continued

College	Sponsoring Community	Dates	Primary Location of Archives	Secondary Locations	Approximate Volume (Primary Location)	Conditions of Access
Duchesne College, Omaha, NE	Religious of the Sacred Heart of Jesus	Established 1915. Closed 1968.	Archives, Society of the Sacred Heart, U.S. Province, St. Louis, MO	Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart, Omaha, NE	24 linear feet	By appointment with permission of the archivist
Mount St. Mary College, Hooksett, NH	Sisters of Mercy	Established 1934. Closed 1978.	No information	New Hampshire Postsecondary Education, Concord, NH (transcripts)	No information	No information.
Notre Dame College, Manchester, NH	Sisters of Holy Cross	Established 1950. Closed 2002.	Nashua, NH (temporary location)	New Hampshire Postsecondary Education, Concord, NH (transcripts)	400 cubic feet	Collection still being organized. Will be made available in future.
Good Counsel/College of White Plains, White Plains, NY	Sisters of Divine Compassion	Established 1923. Merged with Pace University 1975.	Good Counsel Convent, White Plains, NY	Pace University, New York, NY	No information	No information

Table 1: Closed Roman Catholic Women's Colleges and Their Archives – Continued

College	Sponsoring Community	Dates	Primary Location of Archives	Secondary Locations	Approximate Volume (Primary Location)	Conditions of Access
Ladycliff College, Highland Falls, NY	Missionary Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Francis	Established 1933. Closed 1980–1981.	Mount Saint Francis, Peekskill, NY	Highland Falls Historical Society, NY	27 file cabinets, 2 boxes photographs	Archivist will answer inquiries by mail
Marymount College, Tarrytown, NY	Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary	Established 1907. Affiliated with Fordham 2002. Closed 2007.	Fordham University, Bronx, NY		130 linear feet	Open during office hours
Notre College of Staten Island, Staten Island, NY	Religious of the Congregation of Notre Dame	Established 1931. Merged with St. John's University in 1971.	St. John's University, Jamaica, NY	Archives, Congregation de Notre Dame, Montreal, PQ	10 manuscript boxes	Open, appointments recommended
Mary Manse College, Toledo, OH	Ursuline Sisters of the Sacred Heart	Established 1922. Closed 1975.	Bowling Green State University, OH		86 cubic feet	Open during office hours
Our Lady of Cincinnati/Edgecliff College, Cincinnati, OH	Sisters of Mercy	Established 1935. Merged with Xavier University 1981.	Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH	Regional Archives of the Sisters of Mercy, Cincinnati, OH	7 6-foot file cabinets	By appointment with permission of the archivist

Table 1: Closed Roman Catholic Women's Colleges and Their Archives – Continued

College	Sponsoring Community	Dates	Primary Location of Archives	Secondary Locations	Approximate Volume (Primary Location)	Conditions of Access
St. John College of Cleveland, Cleveland, OH	Diocese of Cleveland	Established 1928. Closed and partially merged with Ursuline College 1975.	Diocese of Cleveland Archives, Cleveland, OH	Ursuline College, Pepper Pike, OH	Could not estimate, probably a few boxes	Archivist will answer inquiries by mail
Villa Maria College, Erie, PA	Sisters of St. Joseph of Northwestern Pennsylvania	Established 1925. Merged with Gannon University in 1989.	Archives, Sisters of St. Joseph, Erie, PA	Gannon University, Erie, PA	Could not estimate	Not accessible for research
Siena College, Memphis, TN	Dominican Sisters of St. Catharine of Siena	Established 1922. Closed 1972.	Archives, Dominican Sisters of St. Catharine of Siena, St. Catharine, KY		15 letter-size manuscript boxes; transcripts stored separately	By appointment with permission of the archivist
Sacred Heart Dominican College, Houston, TX	Dominican Sisters of Houston	Established 1945. Closed 1975.	Dominican Sisters of Houston, TX		7 file cabinets, 4 drawers each	Not accessible for research
Trinity College, Burlington, VT	Sisters of Mercy	Founded 1925. Closed 2002.	No information	St. Michael's College, Colchester, VT (transcripts)	No information	No information

Table 1: Closed Roman Catholic Women's Colleges and Their Archives – Continued

College	Sponsoring Community	Dates	Primary Location of Archives	Secondary Locations	Approximate Volume (Primary Location)	Conditions of Access
Holy Names/Fort Wright College, Spokane, WA	Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary	Established 1907. Closed 1982.	Archives, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Spokane, WA	Heritage University, Toppenish, WA (transcripts)	Small, could not estimate	Archivist will answer inquiries by mail

of the colleges in my survey, and when possible, visited the physical sites of the institutions. These visits provided valuable context for my study, suggested avenues for further research into topics such as why individual colleges closed, and illustrated how the memory of these institutions has been preserved through physical spaces, scholarships, and programs.

Results

Location of Records

The archives of closed Catholic women's colleges are overwhelmingly found in two locations: university archives or religious archives, as can be seen in table 1. By religious archives, I refer primarily to the archives of religious communities. A diocese sponsored only one college of the group, St. John College of Cleveland. The St. John College archives are divided between the Diocese of Cleveland and Ursuline College in Pepper Pike, Ohio, which took over the St. John's divisions of nursing and education.⁴³ Of the 36 colleges in the survey, 20 closed outright and 16 merged with other universities. Mergers sometimes consisted of consolidations, or "true mergers," where two institutions combined administration and programs to form a new entity. In other institutions, they really constituted takeovers, where a stronger institution purchased or absorbed a weaker one, perhaps retaining a few faculty members, utilizing the physical plant, and incorporating alumnae. The extent of cooperation varied among the 16 merged institutions. The true mergers include the establishment of Loyola Marymount University mentioned above, and the 1972 consolidation of San Diego College for Women and San Diego College for Men to form the University of San Diego.⁴⁴

The unique way that Catholic women's colleges developed and the circumstances of their demise have influenced the disposition of their archives, leading to some dispersal of records. In the case of six of the merged institutions, the defunct college archives were returned to the religious order. Of the 36 colleges in the survey, the archives of 26 were returned to the sponsoring religious congregation or diocese, and 9 are at the merged institution, while one, the archives of Mary Manse College in Toledo, Ohio, is at another university. Though Bowling Green State University administers the transcripts from Mary Manse College, the two institutions did not merge, and Mary Manse has an independent alumnae association. The Mary Manse archives are housed in the Center for Archival Collections at Bowling Green University, which focuses on documenting the cultural, political, social and economic growth of northwest Ohio.

As can be seen in table 1, the archives of 27 of 36 colleges have one or more secondary locations, creating challenges for both archivists and researchers. For many years, Catholic women's colleges were essentially extensions of religious communities, so the archives of college and community were closely intertwined. Thus, even when the primary location of a college's archives is a merged institution, the religious congregation's archives remain an important repository of documentation of that college. Other locations include diocesan archives, the archives of girls' schools originally connected with the college, state departments of education, and neighboring universities. Local historical societies and public libraries also hold information about these institutions,

attesting to the important role they played in their regions. For instance, the Highland Falls Historical Society in Orange County, New York, has mounted a permanent historical display on Ladycliff College, which was located in this tiny town next to West Point from 1933 to 1980. The historical society also possesses fragmentary records of the college, the archives of which are held by the sponsoring community, the Franciscan Sisters of Peekskill.

Types of Records

According to this survey, the most likely types of documents to be preserved are administrative and legal records, college publications, photographs, and student records. As can be seen in table 2, 91 percent of the archives for which a questionnaire was returned contain administrative records, 85 percent possess legal records, 94 percent hold college publications, and 85 percent have photographs. Among college publications, those most likely to be retained were yearbooks and catalogs, as well as commencement programs, student newspapers and literary magazines, handbooks, directories, and brochures. Catalogs were particularly important in that archivists are occasionally asked to furnish photocopies of course descriptions for alumnae needing to verify the content of a course taken. Though yearbooks provide key information about students and college activities, one archivist noted that a previous colleague had disposed of many of the yearbooks upon the college’s closing.⁴⁵ Forty-five percent of

Table 2: Types of Records Held at Primary Location

Record Type	Number of Institutions	Percentage of Institutions
Administrative	30	91
Legal	28	85
Student Records	15	45
College Publications	31	94
Photographs	28	85
Audiovisual Materials	16	48
Oral Histories	12	36
Faculty Papers	6	18

Total institutions: 33

All percentages are rounded up to the nearest whole number.

the archives surveyed contain student records, including registers, admission files, photographs, student employment files, and transcripts. Indeed transcripts are held in some location for all 36 colleges in the survey, although not necessarily as part of an archives. For colleges that have merged, the current institution usually retains transcripts as part of the consolidation agreement. The registrar of the merged institution fills student requests for transcripts. Where colleges closed outright, transcripts are accessed either through the religious community, through another university in the

region, or through the state where the college was incorporated. Transcripts, of course, fall under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which restricts access to student records. Although FERPA does not specify a time when these records can be made public, many universities and colleges restrict transcripts for 75 years.⁴⁶ Transcripts and other student records have the potential to become resources for educational or demographic studies by future generations of researchers.

A smaller number of repositories hold audiovisual material, oral histories, and faculty papers. Oral histories, though they are not records generated by the institution as such, provide valuable testimony from faculty members, administrators, and students. For instance, the archives of the Congregation of the Humility of Mary contain videotapes of six sisters recalling the founding and first 50 years of Marycrest, the order's college in Davenport, Iowa.⁴⁷ I originally did not include a question about faculty papers in my survey because these, like the oral histories, are not official records generated in the course of the college's existence. Most repositories treat them as collections of personal papers, although they often contain documents related to the life of the college.⁴⁸ Because the surveyed colleges closed, lay faculty members have rarely donated their papers to the college archives. In contrast, the archives of religious congregations often hold the papers of members who served on the faculty of colleges sponsored by the community. All women's religious congregations keep records of their members, past and present, although these may not become open for research until many years after the death of the sister. At least five archivists of religious communities reported that their repositories held some papers of former sister faculty members, and others undoubtedly do so as well. Most notable are the papers of Corita Kent, which are part of the Corita Art Center at the Immaculate Heart Community. Corita Kent (1918–1986) was an acclaimed graphic artist and esteemed teacher at Immaculate Heart College. Although she left the religious community and her teaching position in 1968 to devote herself full-time to studio work, upon her death, she left her papers, artwork, and her estate to the Immaculate Heart Community.⁴⁹

Extent and Depth

Substantial archival material remains to document closed Catholic women's colleges, although the turmoil of closings and subsequent moves of archives have caused some loss or displacement of records. The size of the archives in this survey varies from a few boxes to hundreds of cubic feet. Because some estimates were vague—for example, numbers of file cabinets were given without the size and number of drawers, making it difficult to translate them into common units of measurement—I quoted the estimates of collection size recorded in the questionnaires verbatim. (See table 1.) These figures do not reflect among how many repositories the archives are divided, whether or not student records are included, if the archives is appraised or processed, and the size, age, and closing date of the college. Colleges that closed before the era of photocopiers and laser printers generated far less paper. I estimate that, of the 33 institutions from which questionnaires were received, 23 possess substantial documentation of a former college, 5 hold some documentation, 1 has minimal documentation, and 4 cannot be determined.

Access

For the most part, the archives of closed Catholic women's colleges are accessible to researchers. Access has two aspects: access to the archival facility itself and access to the collections within the repository. Thirteen are "open," meaning no permission is necessary to use the archival facility, although appointments are usually recommended because of the small size of the staff. Eleven are open to researchers with permission of the archivist, and at five others the archivist will answer questions by mail. Another four are not open to researchers at all, although one of these will be open once the archives is processed. In three instances, no information was available. (See table 1.) Two of these, Trinity College in Vermont and Mount Saint Joseph College in New Hampshire, were affected by the consolidation of several Sisters of Mercy communities in New England, which led to the merging and relocating of archival facilities.⁵⁰ All of the university archives that I surveyed are freely open to researchers, with the exception of the Edgecliff College archives, which are located in the basement of an Xavier University administration building and maintained by two alumnae archivists. Of the archives not accessible to researchers, all are archives of religious orders, as are those I could not reach at all. Of the archives that only provide reference service by mail, four are religious orders and one is a diocesan archives. Of those open without restriction, five are archives of religious orders, and eight are university archives.

Access to the archives of religious congregations is a complicated issue. Religious orders are private institutions of which the archives are kept primarily for administrative purposes. The trend among archivists of religious institutions, however, has been toward trying to make their repositories accessible for historical research. This trend can be traced as far back as the decision to open the Vatican Secret Archives in 1881, or more recently to the 1974 National Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Document on Ecclesiastical Archives*, which urged bishops to "grant access to the diocesan archives without undue limitations when properly accredited ecclesiastical historians request it."⁵¹ Religious order archivists have followed the example of the diocesan archivists. The ACWR states that its members will "collaborate actively and effectively with ... all historians who conduct research in the field of women's studies and church history."⁵²

Almost all of the religious archivists whom I contacted were accommodating and helpful, although they did want to know the nature of my research project and its purpose. I suspect that those who did restrict access to their collections did so because of limited staff time and lack of appropriate work space. Several archives appeared to be in a state of transition after the illness or death of the congregation's archivist. This perspective is born out by research and writing in the field of religious archives. As Grace Donovan, SUSC, Congregation Archivist of the Holy Union Sisters, writes: "We are certainly conscious of the rights of privacy, the actuality that access to our archives is somewhat limited, often by the lack of full time staff, the realization that some documents include sections that could be available, others that need to be restricted in order to respect the rights of sisters still living."⁵³

All except one or two of the religious archivists in my survey were members of the religious congregation. Most were working full time in the archives after retiring from other careers such as teaching or librarianship. Although I did not include a question

about training in my survey, several archivists mentioned having taken workshops offered by the Society of American Archivists, the National Archives and Records Administration Modern Archives Institute, or the Catholic University of America Religious Archives Institute. The majority of religious archivists surveyed were members of ACWR and other professional organizations.

Assuming that a collection is available for research, the next issue pertains to how easy it is to access material within the archives. I did not find any unusual access restrictions. Both at university archives and at the archives of religious congregations, restrictions were typical: student records, personnel records, and legal cases (sometimes involving suits by faculty members who were terminated as a result of the college's merger) were closed to researchers. None of the archivists reported restrictions on particular types of researchers. Sixty-seven percent of the archives surveyed possess some kind of finding aid to the closed-college material within their repositories. Most of the university archives have standard archival finding aids structured by record group, series, and container list. The archives of a merged college form another record group or subgroup within the university archives. In religious order archives, the closed institution is usually filed as one of the various ministries conducted by the congregation. Many of the religious order archivists use commercial collection-management software such as FileMaker Pro and PastPerfect Museum to organize their holdings. Using these programs, they create databases that generate box and folder information, rather than using the more contextual approach provided by scope and content notes and series descriptions. In cases where no finding aids were available—generally the smaller university archives and religious orders—the archivists were very helpful in assisting me. Many archivists reported that they were in the process of improving access to their repositories through arrangement and description, the creation of finding aids, and the automation of card files.

Only a few repositories have put archival finding aids for closed-college archives on the Web. As well as the guide to the records of Mary Manse College at Bowling Green University, I discovered a finding aid for the records of Barat College, a former Sacred Heart institution that merged with De Paul University in 2002 and later closed. Other university archives and special collections, such as those at Boston College and Fordham University, have strong Web presences, listing record groups that include the files of closed institutions. Many religious orders have excellent Web sites, which describe the origin, history, and past ministries of the congregation. With a few exceptions, most of these Web sites have limited information about archival resources, again reflecting the private nature of the archives and the limitations on access.

Neither are the archives of most religious congregations part of national union catalogs like OCLC WorldCat or the ArchiveGrid database of bibliographic records and full-text finding aids.⁵⁴ In 1992, Peter Wosh and Elizabeth Yakel noted that virtually none of the religious archives in their survey cataloged records in USMARC (MACHINE-Readable Cataloging) Archives and Manuscripts Control (AMC) or contributed records to the National Union Catalog of Archives and Manuscripts (NUCMC), now part of OCLC.⁵⁵ I found individual entries in WorldCat for the records of Mary Manse, Loyola-Marymount, and Newton College of the Sacred Heart, which merged with Boston College in 1975. All of these were submitted through university library

on-line catalogs. I did find repository description records in WorldCat for the archives of a few of the religious congregation archives in my survey, but they did not reflect the holdings pertaining to the order's former colleges. Few specialized catalogs or directories of religious collections are available. The work of M. Evangeline Thomas, CSJ, in her *Women Religious History Sources: A Guide to Repositories in the United States* (New York and London: R. R. Bowker, 1983), was a pioneering effort to survey the archives of women's religious congregations. While a few of her short repository descriptions include records of colleges, this source is far from up-to-date. Other efforts are underway to improve access to Catholic historical records, such as the Catholic Research Resources Alliance's Catholic Research Portal. This project, established by a consortium of Catholic university research libraries, has the ultimate goal of providing on-line access to collections at smaller repositories, but is still in an early phase.⁵⁶

Users

The primary patrons of the records of closed colleges are internal users and alumnae. (See table 3.) Of the collections surveyed, 79 percent had internal users, and 61 percent were used by alumnae. Examples of internal users include archives staff, members of religious congregations, and university and congregational administrators. Archivists of religious orders holding transcripts indicated that many of their users were students or employers seeking verification of academic records. Alumnae associations use the records of their alma maters to create displays and programs for class reunions. Similarly, religious congregations feature images and documents from former colleges as part of congregational history displays. The next most common patrons are bona fide researchers/scholars (at 61 percent of institutions) and genealogists (at 30 percent). Scholars have used the archives of closed institutions to study the history of higher education, women's history, Catholic education, religious orders, and urban history, as well as the development of specific dioceses. Several archivists of religious congregations mentioned that they received inquiries about particular individuals from genealogists, which they endeavored to answer by mail using student and congregational records. Most archivists indicated that they would welcome other types of patrons, but had little opportunity to do outreach.

Table 3: Users of Records Held at Primary Location

Type of User	Number of Institutions	Percentage of Institutions
Alumnae/i	20	61
Genealogists	10	30
Internal Users	26	79
Bona Fide Researchers/Scholars	20	61
General Public	7	21

Total institutions: 33

All percentages are rounded up to the nearest whole number.

Notably, alumnae groups and successor institutions have used the archives of closed colleges to memorialize and extend their legacy into the future, often in the form of scholarships or fellowships in the name of the college. At Boston College, the Newton College alumnae have endowed the Professorship in Western Culture in honor of the two-year comprehensive western civilization course that was part of the core curriculum for Newton undergraduates.⁵⁷ As well as raising money for scholarships, the alumnae of the College of Saint Teresa in Winona, Minnesota, have established the Saint Teresa Leadership and Service Institute at Saint Mary's University, which acquired the college's campus after it closed in 1989. The Saint Teresa Leadership and Service Institute is an all-women's living and learning community in the midst of a coeducational university. The alumnae Web site claims that it is the only women's leadership program in the country with a focus on service.⁵⁸ Archives are particularly useful in creating physical spaces to commemorate former colleges. As well as plaques and markers, memorials include exhibitions, a garden, a park, and even a building. In 2000, one of the oldest buildings at Xavier University was renamed Edgecliff Hall, and renovated to reflect architectural elements of Edgecliff's now-demolished main building. The interior features a two-story permanent exhibition on the history of the college, using reproductions of material from the college archives, and a room containing furniture and memorabilia for use by the alumnae, who raised money for the renovation.

While archives are key sources for creating these memorials, they can be used in a still more powerful way, as has been done through the foundation of the Gannon Center for Women and Leadership at Loyola University Chicago. Mundelein College, once the largest Catholic women's college in the country, merged with Loyola in 1991 after years of rising costs and declining enrollment.⁵⁹ The Gannon Center, named after Ann Ida Gannon, BVM, an esteemed Mundelein president, was established in 1994 as a way to continue the college's legacy of educating women for leadership. The center comprises the Institute for Women and Leadership, the Loyola Women's Studies Program, and the Women and Leadership Archives. The mission of the Women and Leadership Archives is to document the contributions of individual women and women's organizations to society, as well as to maintain the Mundelein College archives and collect papers of faculty members and alumnae.⁶⁰ The Mundelein College alumnae, the BVM congregation, friends, and supporters raised money to endow the center and to renovate Piper Hall, the lakeside mansion that housed Mundelein's library and religious studies department.⁶¹ The building contains exhibitions, furniture, and artifacts from Mundelein College. The Women and Leadership Archives follows in the tradition of the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Harvard, and the Newcomb College Center for Research on Women at Tulane, which commemorate the former coordinate women's colleges at these universities. As Barbara Craig writes, "While it is a commonplace truth that 'you can't turn back the clock,' an archives brings together a physical space with documents that, in a mimetic way, gives us the potential to do just that—to turn back the clock."⁶² The creation of women's archives is a way of carrying forth the important contribution of these colleges to women's education.

Summary

Of 36 Catholic women's colleges that have closed or merged with other institutions since 1967, I located the archives of most of them either at the merged institution or within the archives of the religious congregation that sponsored the college. In some instances, the archives were divided between a religious congregation and a successor institution, with additional material in other locations. The amount of material preserved varied from a few boxes to hundreds of cubic feet. Although some records have undoubtedly been lost, enough remains to constitute an important source of documentation. With some exceptions, this material is accessible to researchers. Those repositories that could not provide access were primarily small religious congregations that had no archivists or were in a state of transition. College and university archives did a slightly better job of making this material accessible through bibliographic databases and Web sites. Probably because much of the material is hidden, the primary patrons of these collections are internal users and alumnae, often for projects designed to preserve the legacy of the institution. Overall, considering the rich documentation contained in these collections, there is potential for further use by scholars, students, and local historians.

Recommendations

Below are a few recommendations on how best to preserve and make accessible the archives of closed Catholic women's colleges.

- **Recognize the significance of the archives.** Even though the institutions no longer exist, the archives of closed Catholic women's colleges have value for research in the history of women, education, and religion. Many of these colleges were pioneers in women's higher education at their time, or introduced innovative programs that would influence other institutions. The archives of these colleges also contain a wealth of material documenting the social history of the region. From an administrative perspective, these archives contain material that can be used to interest alumnae or generate support for programs at successor institutions.
- **Enhance visibility.** Archivists need to make researchers aware of the existence of these archives and make them easier to find. Following the lead of some religious archives, archivists of small institutions can contribute repository description records to OCLC WorldCat through the Library of Congress National Union of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC). These records are submitted free of charge via data sheets, and institutions are eligible to participate if they are located within the United States or its territories, are open to researchers on a regular basis, and are unable to contribute national-level cataloging to OCLC WorldCat.⁶³ It is important to make the descriptions as full as possible, including the names of specific ministries whose records are included in the archives. In a similar vein, mentioning the names of closed institutions on congregational or university Web sites will enable researchers to easily find the location of their records through Internet search engines.

- **Consider a “documentation strategy” approach.** As has been seen, the archives of Catholic women’s colleges are often dispersed among several institutions, such as university archives, religious communities, diocesan archives, and local history collections. Archivists can assist researchers, add value to their own holdings, and perhaps open the door to collaboration through being aware and alerting users to these additional resources.⁶⁴
- **Establish a central congregational archives facility.** Congregations with many small, dispersed community archives have already begun to establish consolidated archival centers, often following restructuring and amalgamation within the religious congregation itself. Although centralization has its problems, the merging of resources can allow for better-staffed, more-accessible facilities, which places them in a stronger position to apply for funding.
- **Consider donating the college archives to established archival institutions such as university or diocesan archives.** As a last resort, small communities struggling to provide any kind of access to their archives might want to consider establishing a relationship with a regional or subject-based archives. Several large diocesan archives centers, such as the Archdiocese of Chicago Joseph Cardinal Bernardin Archives and Records Center, the Philadelphia Archdiocesan and Historical Research Center, and the Catholic Archives of Texas, collect the papers of individuals and institutions in their region. Several religious congregations have deposited their records at universities such as Notre Dame and Fordham, although this is not ideal because of the need to regularly access records for administrative purposes and to impose restrictions. Another option is that followed by the Ursuline Sisters of Toledo, who donated the records of Mary Manse College to Bowling Green State University. In moving to a new location, however, the Mary Manse archives lost the physical context of the city of Toledo, where the college’s main building is now an arts center,⁶⁵ as well as the religious context and institutional memory of the Ursuline Sisters. On the other hand, the archives gained the advantage of becoming part of a large repository, with resources to make the collection available to researchers through an on-line finding aid, as well as a team of reference archivists knowledgeable about the history of the region.⁶⁶
- **Continue to enhance collaborative efforts.** Religious archives are already collaborating in training programs and sharing information through professional organizations such as the ACWR and the SAA Archivists of Religious Collections Section, as well as regional bodies like the Archivists of Religious Institutions (ARI) in the metropolitan New York area, and the New England Archivists of Religious Institutions (NEARI). Recently, in a new preservation initiative, the Catholic Library Association is sponsoring a series of workshops for religious community archivists. It is important to continue the current dialogue on collaborative preservation planning to safeguard the archives of religious congregations for the future.

Conclusion

The fate of the records of closed Roman Catholic women's colleges has important implications for archivists and historians. As this survey has shown, numerous college archives continue to be maintained by smaller repositories not represented in major bibliographic databases or Web sites. Archivists need to be aware that historians may require assistance to find and access this material. University archives have perhaps done the best job in making visible the records of colleges that have become part of their holdings. If current trends persist, more educational institutions will close or merge, so university archives should expect a continuing deluge of paper and other media. The records of most former Catholic women's colleges, however, are found in the archives of religious congregations. While archival programs in many religious communities are thriving, the diminishing numbers and increasing age of sisters raise questions about the future of these institutions. The high attrition among archivists of religious orders impedes the ability to staff and provide access to these archives, and also diminishes the knowledge base of the history of the community. The records of closed Catholic women's colleges are an undiscovered resource within the archives of religious congregations and universities. As well as valuable sources of historical documentation, they preserve the archival memory of institutions close to the hearts of thousands of alumnae. The desire of alumnae groups and religious communities to continue the legacy of these colleges has the potential to enhance archival programs, as well as to fulfill the needs of successor institutions.

Appendix

Closed Roman Catholic Women's Colleges Archives Survey

Questionnaire

1. Name of your current institution:
2. What type of records do you hold of the college mentioned in my letter?

Administrative Files

Legal Records

Student Records

College Publications

Photographs

Audio-Visual Materials

Oral Histories

Faculty Papers

Other

3. Roughly how large are the archives of the college?
4. Are finding aids or other collection guides to this material available?
5. Where is this collection stored?
6. Is the collection open to outside researchers?
7. If yes, what types of researchers use the collection?

Alumnae

Genealogists

Internal users (faculty, staff, students, or members of religious order)

Bona Fide Researchers/Scholars

General Public

8. Is access by appointment, or are office hours kept?
9. Who arranges access to the collection?
10. Is any material restricted? If so, what type of material?
11. How do you manage requests for student transcripts?

Course descriptions?

12. Are you aware of other locations where documentation of the college can be found?

Please feel free to use extra pages or attach print-outs. Thank you so much for filling out my survey. For more information, please contact:

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NOTES

1. Archives, Dunbarton College of Holy Cross Convent, October 1, 1972, Box 451, Sisters of the Holy Cross Archives, Notre Dame, Indiana.
2. Although they have technically different meanings, in this article, I use the terms sisters and women religious, as well as order, congregation, and community, interchangeably.
3. Even though some colleges admitted male students before closing, I have used alumnae rather than alumni since women represent the vast majority of graduates.
4. Barbara L. Craig, "Selected Themes in the Literature on Memory and Their Pertinence to Archives," *American Archivist* 65:2 (2002): 287.
5. It would be impossible to summarize the literature on archives and memory here. See, for example, Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, ed., *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006). I found the following were most helpful in linking archives, memory, and place: Jeannette Allis Bastian, "In a 'House of Memory': Discovering the Provenance of Place," *Archival Issues* 28:1 (2003-2004): 9–19; and Laura Millar, "Touchstones: Considering the Relationship between Memory and Archives," *Archivaria* 61 (2006): 105–126.
6. See for example, James E. Fogerty, "Archival Brinkmanship: Downsizing, Outsourcing, and the Records of Corporate America," *American Archivist* 60:1 (1997): 44–55.
7. James M. O'Toole, "What's Different about Religious Archives?" *Midwestern Archivist* 9:2 (1984): 97.
8. Margery N. Sly, "PHS and Consolidation: A Tactful and Diplomatic Case Study" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section, Society of American Archivists, Boston, Massachusetts, August 2004).
9. Evan Silverstein, "It's Official: Mary Holmes Is Closed: Historic Presbyterian College Comes to an Inglorious End," *Presbyterian News Service* (March 7, 2005) <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2005/05127.htm> (14 January 2008).
10. Kenneth A. Briggs, *Double Crossed: Uncovering the Catholic Church's Betrayal of American Nuns* (New York: Doubleday, 2006): 1–2.
11. Rita Beaudoin, SUSC, "Merging the Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Union," *Catholic Library World* 72:1 (2001): 24–26. The Sisters of the Holy Union appointed coarchivists from two merged congregations.
12. The Sisters of Our Lady of Christian Doctrine, a congregation dedicated to social welfare and religious education, recently deposited its archives at Fordham University. The Notre Dame University Archives also hold the records of several religious congregations. Patrice Kane, E-mail message to the author, 26 November 2007.
13. Robert Pearson and Christina Johansson, "Upsala College Records, 1893–1995" (January 2007) <http://www.augustana.edu/swenson/Archives/Upsala%20College/Upsala%20College%20Record%20Finding%20Aid.htm> (7 November 2007).

14. Tracy Schier and Cynthia Russett, ed., *Catholic Women's Colleges in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002) is an example of this focus on existing institutions, although it does contain Thomas M. Landy's appendices listing all colleges founded by women religious. Studies that incorporate the history of closed institutions are Patricia Byrne, CSJ, "A Tradition of Educating Women: The Religious of the Sacred Heart and Higher Education," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 13:4 (1995): 49–79; and Mary Jeremy Daigler, *Through the Windows: A History of the Work of Higher Education among the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas* (Scranton, Pennsylvania: University of Scranton Press, 2001).
15. Kathleen Mahoney, "American Catholic Colleges for Women," in Schier and Russett, 25–54.
16. Thomas M. Landy, "The Colleges in Context," in Schier and Russett, 66. My figures in the previous paragraph differ from Landy's here because he included all colleges founded by women religious, including coeducational colleges and colleges no longer affiliated with the Catholic Church.
17. Landy, 63.
18. Gary Bonvillian and Robert Murphy, *The Liberal Arts College Adapting to Change: The Survival of Small Schools* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996): 212.
19. Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan L. Poulson, ed., *Going Coed: Women's Experiences in Formerly Men's Colleges and Universities, 1950–2000* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004): 33–34.
20. Irene Harwarth, Mindi Maline, and Elizabeth DeBra, *Women's Colleges in the United States: History, Issues, and Challenges* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning, 1997): 28.
21. Melanie M. Morey and John J. Piderit, *Catholic Higher Education: A Culture in Crisis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006): 263.
22. Morey and Piderit, 264.
23. Philip Gleason, "A Half-Century of Change in Catholic Higher Education," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 19:1 (2001): 12–13.
24. Dorothy M. Brown and Carol Hurd Green discuss strategies employed by successful colleges in "Making It: Stories of Persistence and Success," in Schier and Russett, 235–276.
25. Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan L. Poulson, ed., *Challenged by Coeducation: Women's Colleges since the 1960s* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006): 9.
26. The number of high school graduates declined 21 percent, from 3.2 million in 1976 to 2.5 million in 1993. See Michael S. McPherson and Morton Owen Schapiro, "The Future Economic Challenges for the Liberal Arts Colleges," *Daedalus* 128:1 (1999): 47.
27. McPherson and Schapiro, 48–56.
28. Yilu Zhao, "More Small Colleges Dropping Out," *New York Times*, 7 May 2002, sec. A28.
29. Harwarth, Maline, and DeBra, 28–29.
30. The Women's College Coalition, <http://www.womenscolleges.org/colleges/default.htm> (8 October 2007). Definitions vary as to what a women's college is. Some of those listed here are part of larger institutions or have a small number of males enrolled.
31. Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 1995): 89.
32. See, for example, Mary Oates, "The Development of Catholic Colleges for Women, 1895–1960," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 7:4 (1988): 413–414; Mahoney, 25–26; and Edward J. Power, *Catholic Higher Education in America: A History* (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1972): 304.
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34. Mary Ida Reed, "A Descriptive Study of the Development of the Loretto Heights College Division of Nursing from 1948 to 1956" (Master of Science thesis, University of Colorado, 1956), Regis University Archives, Denver, Colorado. I am indebted to Elizabeth Cook, Archivist of Regis University, for this reference.
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41. *The Catholic School Guide, 1967–1968*, 32nd Metropolitan New York Edition (New York: Catholic News Publishing Company, 1967). I chose to use the *Catholic School Guide* rather than P. K. Kennedy's *Official Catholic Directory*, the standard annually published directory to the Catholic Church in the United States, because the *Catholic School Guide* provided more information about individual colleges. The *Catholic Directory* corroborates the list of colleges I created.
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45. Bernice Hollenhorst, CSC, interview with the author, 27 August 2007, notes in the possession of the author.
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62. Craig, 287.
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