



**An Archivist's Tips to Historic Directories**  
**Mark G. Thiel, CA (Certified Archivist), Archivist**

Researching the histories of people and organizations requires knowing about their past whereabouts and principal activities as well as the whereabouts of the documentation about them.

For a variety of purposes, research companies regularly produce directories of cities and alumni, educational, ethnic, fraternal, professional, special interest and religious groups and organizations for current reference purposes. Once non-current, these same directories have historical value as documentation of past activities. While notable details may be cross-listed within a number of related directories, specialty minutiae may be limited to only one source. Due to limitations in information gathering and printing technology, 19th century editors of substantial annual directories were known to arrange entries in the order received and to first report changes of minutiae whenever they received them, which might be up to five to ten years late.

State and local public libraries and historical societies maintain back holdings of city directories and some major specialty directories whereas directories of small groups may be available only at the repository that archives the records of that group.



*Above*

*Left: Some notable details, such as religiously affiliated hospitals, may be cross-listed in the directories of hospital associations and those of their affiliated religious organizations. Shown here is the Keshena (Wisconsin) Hospital on the Menominee Indian Reservation, 1936.*

*Right: Small rural chapels, like this one at New Knock Hock, Alaska in 1950, represents a type of local minutiae included in the diocesan entries of the Official Catholic Directory.*

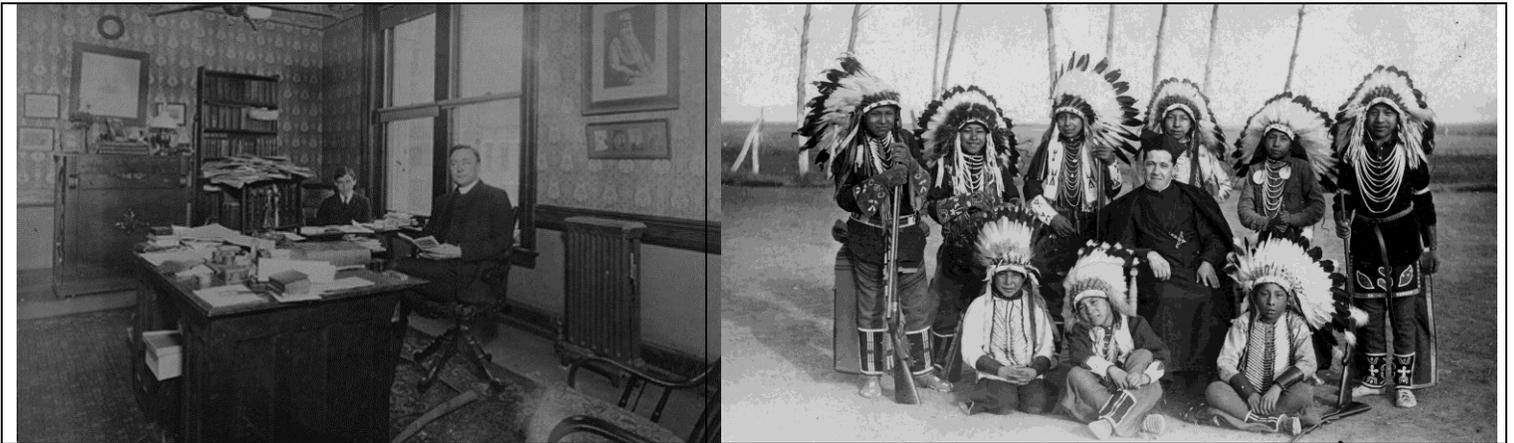
*Marquette Archives, Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions Digital Image Collection: 07474b (left) and 10961 (right).*

*Below*

*Left: The Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions is not affiliated with any one U.S. Catholic diocese and was the first national Catholic agency to represent the Catholic Church in the United States. Today, The Official Catholic Directory lists the Catholic Bureau under Missionary Activities, one of the special categories within the directory. This view shows the director's office with Monsignor William Henry Ketcham who served from 1901 to 1920.*

*Right: Directories typically note key individuals throughout the entries and then provide access with an index. Rev. Augustine Dinand was a Jesuit Catholic priest of the Oregon Jesuit Province. During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century he served in Montana on the Crow Indian Reservation under the auspices of the Diocese of Helena. While serving there, he was listed annually in the catalog of the Oregon Jesuit Province and the Official Catholic Directory under the Helena Diocese.*

*Marquette Archives, Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions Digital Image Collection: 01746 (left) and 00181 (right).*



National church directories, e.g. *Official Catholic Directory*, include listings of clergy, local and regional (diocesan or archdiocesan) offices, local churches or parishes and affiliated chapels, offices and institutions of allied religious organizations including affiliated hospitals, missions and schools. For more information on how to navigate Catholic directories, see the [Index to the Catholic Directories for the United States with Appended Countries, 1817, 1822, 1833-](#). Besides identifying records about Native Americans, Marquette's [Guides to Catholic-Related Records about Native Americans in the United States](#) provides contact information on over 1,000 Catholic organizations throughout the United States and beyond.

## **The Archivist**

Since 1986, Mark G. Thiel, CA (Certified Archivist) has administered the Catholic Native American special collections in the Marquette Archives, which include the records of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions (U.S.) and over 50 other collections, the bulk of which date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and comprise over 800 cubic feet of records with thousands of historical photographs.

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