



Title	St. Stephen Parish (22nd Place) Parish Collection
Classification	History Records - Finding Aid
Owner	St. Stephen Parish (22nd Place)
Begin Date	01/01/1905
End Date	06/30/2002
Bulk Dates (YYYY-YYYY)	1940-1980
Processor	Maya Cazares
Accession Number	0
Date Created	01/02/2024
Number of Boxes	19
Security	Staff Access, Archives
Collection Language(s)	English and Slovenian

Biographical/Administrative History

St. Stephen's Parish (22nd and Wolcott) was the first Slovenian parish established in Chicago. In the late 1800s, a wave of Slovenes migrated to the Calumet region to work at the steel mills. In January 1898, the bishop granted permission for these families to form a parish. By May 1898, they were able to buy a defunct Swedish church where mass could be held. However, in 1904, this building was condemned by the city for safety hazards and was torn down. The parishioners spent the next few years raising money to build a new church on the lot. In 1909, the construction was completed and parishioners celebrated their first mass.

St. Stephen's first pastor was Father John Plevnik, who had come from Slovenia. After five years of establishing the parish, he returned to his home country and the parish was served by a variety of pastors, and sometimes having no pastor at all. When they were without a physical parish, they practiced mass at St. Procopius and St. Pius. Eventually George Cardinal Mundelein placed it into the care of the Slovene Franciscan Fathers who operated the church from 1919-1998.

St. Stephen's School started in 1919 as two rented classrooms at the nearby St. Paul's Catholic Church. Two sisters of Notre Dame taught four elementary grades for St. Stephen's. Classes grew so big in the following years that they had to construct their own school building. 276 students were transferred to the new school in November 1922. During this transition, the Slovenian School Sisters of St. Francis of Christ the King began operating the school. In the summer of 1924, a second floor of the school was added to create more classrooms and a large parish hall. By 1980, changing neighborhood demographics meant that one third of the 185 students that attended the school were Hispanic. The school closed in 1996 due to decreasing enrollment and a lack of adequate funds.

After World War II the parish thrived. In 1951, the parish built a new parish center with a gym and a hall. In 1953, the parish bought the structure directly south of the church. Previously a Methodist church, the basement was converted to a roller rink for members of the parish. A new, larger roller rink annex was built in 1957, subsequently allowing the parish to tear down the Methodist church to create a playground/parking lot.

During this time, many younger members of the parish moved away, however, there was also a balancing influx of new Slovenian immigrants to the area due to political unrest in Yugoslavia. To accommodate these new families, the parish opened a Slovenian school for children to learn Slovenian language, history, culture, and more.

The parish closed in 2002. In 1998, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School leased the school building, convent, gym, and roller rink. As of 2023, Cristo Rey uses the school building for classes and the church is a chapel for the

school. The rectory next door to the church, in addition to the other structures that had been built south across the street from the church (roller rink, parish center, parking lot), have been redeveloped into buildings for Cristo Rey.

Provenance

The material from this collection was acquired from St. Stephen's parish over one accession in 2002. The materials were owned and organized by the parish until its closure, upon which, the Archives and Records Center assumed custody of its historical records.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of 19 total boxes. 6 full letter boxes, 4 half letter boxes, 6 full legal boxes, 2 half legal boxes, and 1 oversize box, with a total of 7.5 linear feet.

Most of this collection pertains to organizations that operate within the church, the most prominent of which is our Lady's Guild (3 boxes), Altar Society, the Blessed Virgin Sodality, the Holy Name Society, the senior men's society. Some items for these organizations include minutes, registers, programs/commemorative books, and other historical materials.

While the primary language of this collection is in English, there are a lot of materials in Slovenian as well. The oldest documents in the collection such as bulletins/newsletters and announcements are in Slovenian, but there are also Slovenian documents that date well into the 1960s and 1970s, such as meeting minutes. While primarily in English from 1946 onward, the bulletins often included up to half of the text in Slovenian. The amount of Slovenian dwindled in the 1980s and 1990s, however a few paragraphs would still appear in Slovenian in most issues. There was at least a small amount of Slovenian text until around 1998, 4 years before the parish closed.

A few interesting items in this collection include several written histories about the parish, the school, and the organizations within the parish. There are also written biographies about six of the parish's priests. Additionally, there is a mini scrapbook that contains select Slovenian newspaper clippings glued to a playbill. The exact theme, if any, is uncertain. It is also worth noting that there is not an extensive amount of photos for this collection. There is one loose photo of the exterior of the church from 1982, as well as two boxes of Holy Name Society scrapbooks which do contain photos, but only about Holy Name Society functions (mostly from 1992, but there are also some photos that are from as early as the 1960s). Finally, there are some cassette tapes of the parish's Slovenian choir.

Series Description

Series 1: Bulletins (1906-2002) (4 boxes, 1 separated boxes, 1 separated OS folder) – The oversized folder contains bound Porocila/Glasilo newsletters (Slovenian) from 1906-1918. In the next 4 boxes, the newsletters called St. Stephen's Chimes started as a monthly publication in 1946 until 1955, when it became weekly (mostly in English, some Slovenian). After this, there are mostly complete, weekly bulletins that ran until 2002. The separated box contains pulpit announcement books from 1978 to 1996. Series 2: Minutes (1930-2001) (2 boxes, 3 separated boxes) – Contains meeting minutes for the Altar Society, Church Board/Council, Senior Men's Club, and the Blessed Virgin Sodality. 2 of the separated boxes contain meeting minutes for Our Lady's Guild. 1 separated box contains Holy Name Society meeting minutes.

Series 3: History (1905-2001) (1 box, 1 separated box, 2 separated folders) – Includes society pins, commemorative books, written histories of the parish, school, and pastors, Holy Name Society historical materials, a newspaper clipping scrapbook (Slovenian), roller rink flyer, exterior photo, correspondence, relic documents, and documents relating to church organization and transition to Cristo Rey Jesuit High School. The separated box contains Our Lady's Guild historical records. The separated folders contain records/ceremonial protocol of the Blessed Virgin Sodality and documents about the Senior Men's Club.

Series 4: Scrapbooks (1960s-1990s) (2 boxes) – Contains 4 scrapbooks about the Holy Name Society at St. Stephen's Parish. Compiled around 1992, but contains photos from as early as the 1960s. The first book appears to be cut outs of a souvenir or commemorative book with additional photos, while the remaining books turn into photo albums.

Series 5: Financial (1918-1984) (1 box, 2 separated folders) – Contains the annual financial report booklets from 1918-1984, internal annual reports from 1946-1962, a book of parishioner contribution records, and the Holy Name Society financial ledger.

Series 6: Registers (1930-1972) (1 box) – Contains registers for the Altar Society, the school 50th anniversary guest list, Society of Christian Women and Mothers, Blessed Virgin Sodality, and the Holy Name Society.

Series 7: Audio/Visual Records (1974-1985) (2 boxes) – Cassette tapes of the Slovenian choir and an annual meeting, a VHS tape of a midnight mass, and large audio tapes of a Slovenian show at the Museum of Science and Industry Christmas and the folk group performance. Includes an oversized box of framed photographs from the Holy Name Society, including a papal blessing and early members of the organization. Additionally contains a composite photograph of pastors from the church's 20th anniversary and a group photo of parishioners at Bishop Baraga Shrine.

Box List

Box	Record Number	ADMN/M3300/1224	Classification	Administrative Records - Minutes
Title (Free Text Part)	St. Stephen Parish (22nd Place)			
Begin Date	01/01/1930	End Date	12/31/1978	DB Box Number 32734.07
Box	Record Number	ADMN/M3300/1225	Classification	Administrative Records - Minutes
Title (Free Text Part)	Blessed Virgin Sodality Meeting Minutes			
Begin Date	01/01/1934	End Date	12/31/1966	DB Box Number 32734.08
Box	Record Number	ADMN/M3300/433	Classification	Administrative Records - Minutes
Title (Free Text Part)	Holy Name Society Minutes			
Begin Date	12/01/1954	End Date	12/08/1985	DB Box Number 32503.04
Box	Record Number	ADMN/P0170/243	Classification	Administrative Records - Parish Annual Reports
Title (Free Text Part)	Parish Financial Report Booklets			
Begin Date	01/01/1918	End Date	12/31/1979	DB Box Number 32735.03
Box	Record Number	HIST/A8100/45	Classification	History Records - Audio Recordings
Title (Free Text Part)	St. Stephen Parish (22nd Place)			
Begin Date	01/01/1974	End Date	12/31/1985	DB Box Number 32735.05

Box	Record Number	HIST/H3300/405	Classification	History Records - Historical Records
Title (Free Text Part)	Photos and Newsletters			
Begin Date	01/01/1906	End Date	06/30/2002	DB Box Number 32526.02

Box	Record Number	HIST/H3300/528	Classification	History Records - Historical Records
Title (Free Text Part)	Parish Historical Records			
Begin Date	01/01/1905	End Date	12/31/1999	DB Box Number 32734.09

Box	Record Number	HIST/H3300/529	Classification	History Records - Historical Records
Title (Free Text Part)	Parish Organizations Registers			
Begin Date	01/01/1930	End Date	12/31/1972	DB Box Number 32735.04

Box	Record Number	HIST/H3300/530	Classification	History Records - Historical Records
Title (Free Text Part)	Oversize Records			
Begin Date	01/01/1930	End Date	12/31/1974	DB Box Number 32735.06

Box	Record Number	HIST/H3300/69	Classification	History Records - Historical Records
Title (Free Text Part)	Our Lady's Guild Historical Records			
Begin Date	01/01/1968	End Date	12/31/2001	DB Box Number 32432.05

Box	Record Number	HIST/H3300/70	Classification	Administrative Records - Minutes
Title (Free Text Part)	Our Lady's Guild Meeting Minutes			
Begin Date	01/01/1939	End Date	05/31/1980	DB Box Number 32432.06

Box	Record Number	HIST/H3300/71	Classification	Administrative Records - Minutes
Title (Free Text Part)	Our Lady's Guild Meeting Minutes			
Begin Date	06/01/1980	End Date	11/30/2001	DB Box Number 32432.07

Box	Record Number	HIST/P2900/614	Classification	History Records - Scrapbook
Title (Free Text Part)	Holy Name Society Scrapbook 1			
Begin Date	01/01/1917	End Date	12/31/1992	DB Box Number 32735.01

Box	Record Number	HIST/P2900/874	Classification	History Records - Scrapbook
Title (Free Text Part)	Holy Name Society Scrapbooks 2-4			
Begin Date	01/01/1917	End Date	12/31/1992	DB Box Number 32735.02

Box	Record Number	HIST/P8100/8	Classification	History Records - Pulpit Announcement Books
Title (Free Text Part)	St. Stephen Parish (22nd Place)			
Begin Date	01/01/1978	End Date	12/31/1996	DB Box Number 32507.04

Box	Record Number	PRSH/P0120/602	Classification	Parish Records - Bulletins
Title (Free Text Part)	St. Stephen Parish (22nd Place)			
Begin Date	12/01/1946	End Date	12/31/1957	DB Box Number 32734.03

Box	Record Number	PRSH/P0120/603	Classification	Parish Records - Bulletins
Title (Free Text Part)	St. Stephen Parish (22nd Place)			
Begin Date	01/01/1958	End Date	12/31/1971	DB Box Number 32734.04

Box	Record Number	PRSH/P0120/604	Classification	Parish Records - Bulletins
Title (Free Text Part)	St. Stephen Parish (22nd Place)			
Begin Date	01/01/1972	End Date	12/31/1986	DB Box Number 32734.05

Box	Record Number	PRSH/P0120/605	Classification	Parish Records - Bulletins
Title (Free Text Part)	St. Stephen Parish (22nd Place)			
Begin Date	01/01/1987	End Date	12/31/2002	DB Box Number 32734.06