

Life in a Casquette: Trials and Tribulations of the Ursuline Sisterhood

by

Sabrina Krause

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the

History Program

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

August, 2024

Life in a Casquette: Trials and Tribulations of the Ursuline Sisterhood
By Sabrina Krause

I hereby release this thesis to the public. I understand that this thesis will be made available from the OhioLINK ETD Center and the Maag Library Circulation Desk for public access. I also authorize the University or other individuals to make copies of this thesis as needed for scholarly research.

Signature:

Sabrina Krause, Student Date

Approvals:

Amy L Fluker, Ph.D. Thesis Advisor Date

Brian Bonhomme, Ph.D. Committee Member Date

David A Simonelli, Ph.D. Committee Member Date

Salvatore A. Sanders, PhD, Dean, College of Graduate Studies Date

ABSTRACT

Many books and articles have been published illuminating the male perspective on events surrounding colonial expansion in North America. Less is known about the women behind expansion. These women were vital, sent over with promises of a better life, and they faced a harsh reality whether those promises proved true or false. At their root the Ursulines are Catholic, but their religious order was just a starting point to their long and storied history that has left a lasting impact on the world. The Ursulines hold a significant place in the history of women's education and religious development that made them stand out in a crowd of traditional missionaries. Yet, if these women were not writing their own history, little would be known about them.

Despite facing numerous challenges over the centuries including wars, persecution, and social upheaval, the Ursuline Sisterhood have remained dedicated to their mission of education, service, and spiritual guidance, remaining a strong presence in the Catholic Church and the communities they continue to serve.

This thesis is a valuable contribution to the field of History as it offers a collective analysis of the Ursuline Sisterhood's history from its humble beginnings all the way up to its current endeavors which, previously, had not been accomplished. Each section of Ursulines spanning from Italy to the United States discussed in this paper have only maintained their own personal local history, none have attempted a start to current narrative of their events in a semi-global perspective.

I have explored the profound influence of the Ursuline Sisterhood on women's education and spiritual development, focusing on their mission, history, educational institutions, and the enduring legacy they have left behind.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Martha Pallante for challenging me during my undergraduate program about making this obscure topic my capstone and Dr. Brian Bonhomme for going down this rabbit hole with me writing about this topic in the first place knowing full well that I do not speak or read French.

Secondly, I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Amy Fluker and the rest of my committee for putting up with my writing nonsense in order to get me here to the longest research and writing process of my life. I think this took a bit of my soul with it, but it was fully a labor of love.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to my friends and family who supported me through the challenging times that go along with completing a thesis. I am sincerely grateful to have such an amazing support system who believed in me and encouraged me to keep going when I was having a crisis of faith that this project would ever be completed.

I want to thank the Ursulines for opening up to a stranger on a mission and sharing their stories as well as their archives with me. Without all of these branches this paper would not have been remotely possible.

I would lastly like to extend my sincere gratitude to my husband who encouraged me to go through the MA Program to begin with but has stuck by me through the entire process. He continuously supported me and listened to me rant about how stressed I was. He was so patient with me and never once complained. I cannot thank him enough for giving me the support and encouragement I so desperately needed. He even brought me snacks when I was so preoccupied with my thesis that I forgot to eat.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Mission and Early History	10
<i>Ursulines and French Expansion, 1534 -1690</i>	12
<i>Esther Wheelwright</i>	19
<i>Ursulines and the Louisiana Territories, 1697-1751</i>	21
<i>Riots in France, 1719</i>	27
<i>Haunted History of Filles a la Casette</i>	28
<i>War and Change late 17th -18th Centuries</i>	30
Chapter 2: Ursulines of the 19th century	35
<i>Burning of the Convent in Massachusetts</i>	35
<i>Ursulines of Cincinnati, 1845</i>	40
<i>Ursulines of Cleveland, 1850</i>	44
<i>Ursulines of Youngstown, 1874</i>	45
Chapter 3: Ursulines of the 20th century	50
<i>Fire at St. Columba</i>	57
<i>Renewal of Faith</i>	59
<i>The Great Decline</i>	63
Conclusion	65
Bibliography	68

Introduction

The Ursuline Sisterhood has played a significant role in women's education and religious development throughout history. Founded in Brescia, Italy in 1535 by St. Angela Merici, the Ursuline Order sought to educate women and promote their spiritual growth. The establishment of the Ursuline Sisterhood coincided with a period of significant social and religious change in Europe. During the Renaissance, women's education was limited, and religious life experienced a significant shift with the Protestant Reformation. Against this backdrop, the Ursulines emerged as a trailblazing order that sought to address these challenges and empower women through education.

Due to language barriers and the passage of time itself translations of primary sources on the foundation for the Ursulines is limited, however, *Compagnia Di Sant' Orsola Istituto secolare di Sant' Angela Merici* has digitally published English/Italian copies of her rules, councils, testaments, and constitutions as she wrote them. More modern translations have been conducted and published based on her writings along with commentaries from her pupils.¹ This is an important distinction from other documents written after her time because Angela Merici laid the groundwork for the foundation of the Ursulines to alter her rules and constitutions to remain relevant to the times. It was not always by Ursuline choice, however, that alterations were made to these original beliefs.

¹ Marie-Benedicte Rio, *Angela Merici: The Scribe and the Witnesses* (Rome: Roman Order of Saint Ursula, 2020), 103.

The Ursulines' commitment to educating women was truly groundbreaking. They established schools and academies, ensuring that women had access to education regardless of their social or racial backgrounds. In these institutions, women received instruction in subjects such as literature, science, arithmetic, and the arts, fostering their intellectual and creative development. Angela Merici created the Ursulines in a time before science and religion came into conflict, but when conflicts arose between the two, the Ursulines did not shy away from one over the other. They continually updated their curriculums to have the most modern subjects. With their dedication to the education of women regardless of background came many difficulties from a world perspective.

In *Masterless Mistresses*, Emily Clark discusses some of these worldly issues the Ursulines had to face when they traveled to colonial Louisiana. Back in France the Ursulines created such a reputation for themselves and their work that created a sense of authority but when they were sent to Louisiana, their welcome was not warm. They were known for their education of women and in colonial Louisiana the hierarchy did not believe in such matters. Their goal was to bring in women who would marry and repopulate the colony. While Louisiana's hierarchy thought nuns would be the best option to run hospitals and aide the poor, the education of women was the furthest scenario from their minds. There was an overwhelming concern for being too educated leading to being too independent to be acceptable wives. Clark also discusses the Ursulines when it came to slavery. It was known that the Ursulines did not discriminate

on which woman would receive an education. They taught them all, which included the enslaved women of the colony.²

Sister Madeleine Hachard wrote letters mostly to her father during her travels with eleven other Ursuline nuns that were eventually translated and edited by Emily Clark wherein Hachard discusses the fact that per contractual obligation the company that sent the twelve nuns over also gave them slaves. This was a touchy subject for Sister Hachard because of the Ursulines' belief system, which opposed slavery. Yet rather than fight the situation and be sent back to France, the nuns decided to keep the slaves they were given and educate them in the privacy of their convent in Louisiana safe from harm. Those slaves helped the Ursulines by working side by side with them to stabilize the economy by growing food supplies as well as creating markets and performing other odd jobs the Ursulines put together to make ends meet.³

Furthermore, the Ursulines recognized the importance of freedom of religious thought and religious education in shaping women's spiritual lives. Sisters underwent rigorous theological training, equipping them to impart their knowledge to their pupils. By combining secular and religious education, the Ursulines aimed to create well-rounded individuals who were intellectually and spiritually enriched.

Through their commitment to a life of prayer and contemplation, the Ursulines served as role models for aspiring nuns. Women who joined the Ursulines gained a supportive community that nurtured their spirituality while allowing for personal and

² Emily Clark, *Masterless Mistresses: The New Orleans Ursulines and the Development of a New World Society 1727-1834* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 41.

³ Marie-Madeleine Hachard, and Emily Clark, *Voices from an Early American Convent: Marie Madeleine Hachard and the New Orleans Ursulines, 1727-1760* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 20.

intellectual growth. The spiritual guidance provided by the Ursulines empowered women to explore their own religious experiences instead of those pressed upon them, so they could deepen their relationship with God in their own way. The Ursulines emphasized the importance of individual discernment and personal connection with the divine, encouraging each member to find her own unique path within religious life. According to Querciolo Mazzonis' *A Female Idea of Religious Perfection: Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula 1535-1540*, it was a common belief that Angela Merici questioned not only the lack of education in women but also the idea that women grew up in a familial tradition of religion. Historically speaking, the idea of familial tradition when it came to religious beliefs was heavily present during Angela Merici's time as well as being evident well into the colonization of the Ursulines to North America. Angela Merici established a religious community that allowed women to explore religious freedom their own way instead of simply believing their religious path was the same as their families'. This offered a unique opportunity for women to find their own path within the religious community without having to be forced into traditional methods of prayer, clothing, or being cloistered.⁴ As pointed out in this article others have been written about Angela Merici and the Ursulines discussing female religiosity and Catholic Reformation but has up until this point never had a full modern study done from a perspective of the events surrounding the Ursulines. The goal of this article is to examine the characteristics

⁴ Querciolo Mazzonis, "A Female Idea of Religious Perfection: Angela Merici and the Company of St Ursula (1535–1540)," *Renaissance Studies* 18, no. 3 (2004): 391–411.

of Angela Merici's religious model from the perspective of a historical overview of some of the events that Angela Merici and the Ursulines were in the middle of.

The impact of the Ursuline Sisterhood on women's education cannot be overstated. By establishing schools and academies, the Ursulines enabled countless women to access education and attain knowledge that was previously only reserved for men. Through their commitment to learning, the Ursulines challenged societal norms, paving the way for increased educational opportunities for women in subsequent centuries. James Daybell's article "Gender, Obedience, and Authority in Sixteenth-Century Women's Letters" examines obedience and authority through the lens of sixteenth-century women's correspondence, taking special interest in women's status and place within the household, familial relationships, and political and religious allegiances.⁵ Understanding the place women had in society is vital to understanding what made the Ursulines so impactful wherever they went. One of the key factors pointed out in *Gender, Obedience, and Authority* is that more attention has been focused on the resistance of authority throughout the published community rather than the exploration of the nature of conformity especially within the female population. Studying how individual women wrote to a range of people demonstrates the types of relationships the women had and what type of role they maintained within their orders. The obedience found in the sentence structures of letters demonstrates an overall spectrum of what life was like for women. To be obedient was to honor familial ties; to honor those ties meant not to

⁵ James Daybell, "Gender, Obedience, and Authority in Sixteenth-Century Women's Letters," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 41, no. 1 (2010): 49–67.

question. Therefore, if the family had a specific religious or political standing the entire family was expected to have that same viewpoint. To do otherwise would be considered disrespectful. Women were supposed to be moral, religious, and passive and that broad overview did not change much over the centuries.

Moreover, the Ursuline Sisterhood's emphasis on intellectual, spiritual, and creative development empowered women to contribute to society beyond traditional gender roles. The education provided by the Ursulines fostered critical thinking, creativity, and a sense of independence among their students, equipping them to participate in endeavors beyond the convent walls. In places such as colonial Louisiana when women were needed to help stabilize a failing colony, women were first sent over as wives. The Ursulines came over with them to be a guiding force in their lives. Coming from a Catholic background, the Ursulines held tight to their faith and practices. When situations arose from those marriages, however, such as abuse, the Ursulines sheltered the women until formal separation could happen. This was unheard of at the time. The Catholic Church was adamantly opposed to separation and divorce for any reason. Separation became common practice and the Ursulines helped where they could. They taught women how to run a household with or without a male presence and made a safe place for women to stay until their separations were finalized. The use of Daybell's article as a study into the female mind through personal letters allows for the idea that the Ursulines were indeed giving women a choice beyond what they originally thought was possible for themselves.

A thesis paper written in 1997 by Ellen Margaret Fitzgibbons called "'The Need for that Certain Article of Furniture': Women's Experiences in French Colonial

Louisiana” discusses three groups of women who were involved with creating and maintaining Colonial Louisiana. Native, African, and European women were all discussed for their required roles and difficulties within the colony. At the end of the paper, Fitzgibbons discusses the impact the Ursulines had on not only these groups of women but also the colony itself.⁶ John Law, an economist who distinguished money as means of exchange from national wealth dependent on trade. He served as Controller General of Finances under the Duke of Orleans, who was regent for the juvenile Louis XV of France. Law’s leadership led to a chaotic and unstable colony, letting anyone, regardless of background establish a place in the colony. The Ursulines brought some semblance of order to the chaos by running the hospital, creating a school, and taking care of the overpopulation of “orphaned” children.

Throughout their history the Ursulines have supported the economies of their communities by caring for the sick, creating shelters for the homeless and the abused, fighting the war on HIV/AIDS in underprivileged communities, and creating community outreach programs that are more inclusive of the physically or mentally disabled.

The Ursulines’ legacy extends far beyond the time of its founding. The educational institutions established by the Sisterhood continue to thrive worldwide, perpetuating their mission of empowering women through education. These institutions have adapted to modern educational standards, while preserving the original Ursuline values of intellectual curiosity, compassion, and spiritual growth.

⁶ Ellen Margaret Fitzgibbons, “The Need for that Certain Article of Furniture”: Women’s Experiences in French Colonial Louisiana (Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects. William & Mary) 1997, 11.

Furthermore, the Ursulines' pioneering approach influenced other religious orders and institutions inspiring them to prioritize women's education. The ripple effect of the Ursulines' dedication to women's intellectual and spiritual development still influences society today, contributing to a more equitable and inclusive educational environment.

With many locations celebrating anniversaries of their arrival, there is a newfound excitement in the field of history surrounding the stories of not only the Ursulines but also the women they traveled with. In 2024, new books are being published about the history of the Ursulines, celebrating their 150th anniversary of coming to Youngstown, Ohio, and earlier this year a historical fiction novel has been written about the Louisiana Territories' "Pelican Girls" who had previously been lost in time. These references to the Ursulines speak volumes about the situations they have encountered, yet most of these references treat the Ursulines as a secondary subject. Authors tend to write about some other primary topic with a mere mention of something the Ursulines have done throughout their many locations. Nothing to date has put them first for their endeavors in history.

This research is broken into three major chapters, beginning with the 16th century, and building a world view of the Ursuline Sisterhood from conception to present, making them the primary focus and the events that impacted them secondary.

Chapter 1 focuses on Angela Merici's mission and the early history of the Ursuline nuns. This chapter is broken up into six sub-sections in order to transition through time and history smoothly. The opening section discusses Angela Merici and her life prior to her establishing the Company of St. Ursula, the first version of Ursulines in Italy up to Angela Merici's death in 1540. The second section discusses the French

expansion of the Ursulines between 1534 and 1690. This covers French interests in North American expansion and conflict with the Protestant Reformation sweeping across Europe as the Ursulines gained traction in different regions. It also mentions histories of specific members of the Ursulines who stood out for their service. Chapter 1 progresses through Ursuline early history up to the late 18th century.

Chapter 2 focuses on the Ursulines in the 19th century. It is also broken up into six sub-sections, each section focusing on different locations for the Ursulines. It covers the Louisiana Territories switching hands between the French, Spanish, and American leaders, and the Ursulines moving up north to Massachusetts which led to one of the most difficult times in Ursuline history, the burning of the convent on the hill. The last three sub sections focus on the arrival of the Ursulines in Cincinnati (1845), Cleveland (1850), and Youngstown (1874).

Chapter 3 focuses on the 20th century. The Ursulines had a large impact and a renewal of faith; however, with the decline of the economy of the local areas they lived in, the Ursulines suffered as well. This was especially the case in Youngstown when the steel industry fell. The great decline caused many closures of Catholic schools, churches, and community related events that the Ursulines had created.

Chapter 1: Mission and Early History

Born in 1474, Angela Merici was an Italian educator from Desenzano, Italy. When she was ten, she and her sister went to live with their uncle after they became orphaned. After her sister unexpectedly died without the opportunity to receive her last sacraments, Angela Merici became more devout. She joined the Order of St. Francis where she vowed to remain a consecrated virgin. After her uncle died, she returned home at the age of twenty where she found girls and young women were vastly underserved in terms of education. Distressed by the fact that their parents found these prospects acceptable, Angela opened her home, making it an impromptu classroom, and began educating them herself. She found success in her endeavors and began to expand her efforts with the help of other consecrated virgins like herself. Word of her success spread and in 1535 she was invited to establish a tangible school in Brescia, a small neighboring town.⁷

The Company of Saint Ursula, named after the patron saint of women's education, was the first installment of the Ursuline Sisterhood. Instead of cloistering, they would remain in their homes and stay at their workplaces while they still dedicated their lives to God and service to the Church and by serving others.

After Angela Merici died in 1540, the Company of St. Ursula encountered its first difficulty. The Roman Catholic patriarchy refused to accept a religious order inspiring and creating independence in the female population and in 1545, the Ursulines were disbanded. In 1565, the first foundation outside of Brescia was created in Cremona,

⁷ Michael Ott, "St. Angela Merici," *Catholic Encyclopedia* 1 (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1907) <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01481a.htm> [accessed June 2, 2024].

Italy.⁸ In 1566, the Ursulines spread to Milan at the request of Archbishop and Cardinal St. Charles Borromeo, who was one of the leading figures in the Counter Reformation against the Protestant Reformation in Milan, Italy. And by 1600, foundations for the Ursulines were widespread.⁹

Documentation left by Angela directed the company to continue in the traditional practices and publicize their mission. Among these documents were written instructions for future Ursulines called “The Last Legacy” which stated: “If, with change of times and circumstances, it becomes necessary to make fresh rules, or alter anything, then do it with prudence, after taking good advice. Let your first refuge always be to have recourse to Jesus Christ.”¹⁰ The rules were first modified for their entry to Milan and from there were adapted by Frances de Bermond, who created the first community at L’Isle in France. From there, orders and convents Aix in 1600, Marseille in 1603, Avignon in 1605, and Bordeaux in 1606 were created. In 1610, Madame de Sainte Beauve arranged for the Ursulines along with Mother Frances de Bermond to start a community in Paris.¹¹

Ursuline communities were established in multiple countries spanning six continents. Countries included France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Canada, and the United States.¹² Angela Merici was beatified in 1768 by Pope Clement XIII and canonized by Pope Pius VII in 1807.

⁸ Mother Mary Fidelis, “The Ursulines,” *Catholic Encyclopedia* 15 (New York: Robert Appleton Co.,1912) <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15228b.htm> [accessed June 2, 2024].

⁹ Querciolo Mazzonis, “A Female Idea of Religious Perfection: Angela Merici and the Company of St Ursula 1535-1540” *Renaissance Studies* 18, no. 3 (2004): 391-411.

¹⁰ Sister Anne Lynch, *Where We’ve Been...Where We’re Going: A History of the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown* (Youngstown, Ohio Catholic Diocese of Youngstown, 1996-1998), 1-2.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Heidi Keller-Lapp, “Floating Cloisters and Heroic Women: French Ursuline Missionaries, 1639-1744,” *World History Connected* 4 no.3 (2007) <http://worldhistoryconnected.press.uiillinois.edu/4.3/lapp.html> [accessed June 2, 2024].

Ursulines and French Expansion 1534 -1690

In 1534 King Francis I shipped the explorer Jacques Cartier out to the northwest in the Atlantic in search of a new trade route to East Asia. Cartier made several trips along the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes. On his third visit in 1541-42, having an interest in the expansion of the French fur trade, he attempted and failed to establish a colony in the New World. Yet by 1608, with the establishment of Quebec, France got a firm foothold in North America which they called New France. With colonies now established in North America, the French needed to send soldiers and builders along with provisions. But in order for the colonies to thrive they needed to be able to grow.¹³ New France was founded on the premise that many of the indigenous people of New France would marry French soldiers, convert to the Catholic faith, and become French citizens. The problem was that many of the French men were leaving their posts to marry into and live with the Native Americans. Soon, desertion had become a major issue, but the solution seemed to be simple: they needed wives.

During this time the Protestant Reformation was spreading like wildfire in Europe. France became religiously and politically unstable, and in 1562 the Wars of Religion began between the Protestant and Catholic faiths. Between 1562 and 1598, it is estimated that between two and four million people died in France due to violence, famine, or disease and the power of the French monarchy began to dwindle. The

¹³ Mathe Allain, *Not Worth a Straw: French Colonial Policy and the Early Years of Louisiana*, PhD dissertation (Lafayette, LA: Center for Louisiana Studies, Univ of Southwestern Louisiana), 1988.

Ursulines maintained their faith and continued to care for the sick, wounded, and dying to the best of their ability during this time.

The final portion of the War of Religion was the War of the Three Henrys which consisted of King Henry III, Roman Catholic Henry Duc de Guise, and Protestant Henry of Navarre who were all vying for the throne. The war ended with Henry of Navarre becoming King of France and converting to Catholicism in the name of bringing peace back to France.¹⁴ While the War of Religion technically ended in the 1600s and there was religious tolerance of the Protestants declared in the Edict of Nantes, there was still an uneasiness throughout the country. By this time, the Ursuline Sisterhood had already established multiple girls' schools throughout France that provided an education which rivaled that in schools designed for boys. Continuing with their original mission, they taught upper-class girls as boarding students and created regular day classes for underprivileged girls, making sure each of them received a well-rounded education.

Meanwhile, the Ursuline institutes had raised education and more specifically literacy levels in young girls of all classes to unexpected heights, to the point where Ursuline- educated women were considered "over educated" which was not viewed as socially or religiously acceptable. In 1610, following the ruling of the Council of Trent, the Catholic Church in France began insisting that all women's religious orders be cloistered. This forced the Ursuline Sisterhood to make a choice: to take formal vows making them monastic or to become fully secular communities which were dedicated to charity work but not a part of the Roman Catholic Church. It was at this time the fourth

¹⁴ Edmund Wright, *A Dictionary of World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 705.

vow was added, the vow to educate young girls. With these modifications, convents at Amiens and Abbeville were founded in Pais. From these communities came the convent at Boulogne sur Mer. The Boulogne se Mer became a pillar of strength in the community, overcoming Catholic persecution during the French Revolution where the convent was confiscated from the Ursulines', strictly ordered to not live in community, and allow no others to take vows. Punishments for such actions were harsh and swift, usually leading to burnings or beheadings for such crimes.

While most of the Ursuline Sisterhood welcomed the chance to cloister, there were sections that did not. Those who stayed in France became known as the Order of St. Ursula.¹⁵ With so many restrictions being placed, those who did not want to cloister found an alternative solution to continue the path Angela Merici had set for them and became the first missionaries to travel to North America.¹⁶

In 1631, Marie Guyart joined the Ursuline congregation in Tours, France, taking the name Marie de l'Incarnation. Her entrance to the order was a unique one. While she was considered to have had the spiritual calling from a young age, her family encouraged her to marry rather than take spiritual vows. At the age of fourteen she married a master silk worker and while she had been dedicated to her husband, her dedication to her faith was a higher priority, which made her marriage difficult.¹⁷ After being married for two years, her husband died, leaving her with an infant son. Her family insisted she remarry

¹⁵ Mother Marie Helene, "Society of the Sisters of St. Ursula of the Blessed Virgin," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 15 (New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1912) <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15228a.htm> [accessed June 2, 2024].

¹⁶ Keller-Lapp, "Floating Cloisters and Heroic Women."

¹⁷ Pierre Auguste Fournet, "Ven. Marie de l'Incarnation." *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 9 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910) <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09668a.htm> [accessed June 2, 2024].

but instead she took to her studies until her son turned eleven. In 1631, Marie Guyart joined the convent in Tours, France taking the name Marie I' Incarnation. Part of the stipulations for becoming part of the order was that she was required to give up ties to her previous life, which meant leaving her son in the care of her sister. She took her vows in 1633 and taught in France for six years before receiving the calling to go to New France.

Marie and two other nuns traveled to New France where they opened a school for girls, French Canadian and indigenous alike. With the original idea that indigenous girls would convert to the "French" way of life, Marie taught the girls French customs, giving some leeway when it came to things such as language or dietary choices. Meanwhile, Marie learned different dialects from the natives. In 1668, she deemed the conversion of native girls to the French way a failure and from then on, the Ursulines focused solely on the daughters of the colonists, believing they would make better wives.

Marie I' Incarnation wrote several religious and theological articles and treatises along with a catechism and dictionary in Iroquois as well as a dictionary in Algonquin. Her most important work was the Ursuline constitution, written in 1646. It documented the focus of their mission, teaching, and the beliefs of the Ursulines of France and how they adapted to the realities of what they were facing in North America. As a writer, her work makes one of the largest collections of documents from early French colonization. Amongst her works are over thirty years of personal letters to her son who also took the spiritual path by becoming a Benedictine monk. In her letters, Marie described how New France had changed over the course of her years there.¹⁸

¹⁸Mary Dunn, *From mother to son: The selected letters of Marie de l'Incarnation to Claude Martin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 41.

In 1650, a fire destroyed the convent. There were no casualties, but the structure was totaled with nothing but the barns remaining. The Ursulines took this misfortune as a sign to expand while planning the rebuild. Marie died in Quebec at seventy-two years of age. The Ursulines continued her work by creating new monasteries and schools, including venturing down to the south in Louisiana and establishing a school there in 1727. The schools built there were established with Marie l' Incarnation's educational principles in mind.¹⁹

Soon after Marie's death, Louis XIV and his finance minister Jean- Baptiste Colbert set about the recolonization of New France. At this time New France was just a portion of French expansion interests. After the defeat of the Iroquois during the Beaver Wars, it became possible to develop and populate New France from Quebec down to New Orleans. In addition to creating a royal colony in what is today the Canadian province of Quebec, the king sent a military commander, Alexander de Prouville, the Marquis de Tracy, and a regiment of soldiers.

More than three thousand settlers, including girls of marriageable age, were sent along with the Ursulines who had previously refused to cloister. In order to establish a safe place for the women to stay and be maintained the Ursulines created a community to house the women until the marriage process was complete. By natural increase the population progressed, but not quickly.

With the colonies of New France successfully established and thriving, King Louis XIV appointed John Talon as the first intendant of New France and his minister,

¹⁹Françoise Deroy-Pineau, *Marie de l'Incarnation: Femme d'Affaires, Mystique et Mère de La Nouvelle-France: Tours, 1599-Québec, 1672* (Montréal: Bibliothèque québécoise 2008), 64.

Jean Baptiste Colbert to serve as intendent of justice, public order, and finance. Talon tried to change the economic base of the colony from fur trading to agriculture but found it difficult to accomplish without a larger population. He arranged for settlers to come to New France in waves. Talon encouraged population growth through marriage grants and bonuses of financial compensation given to a couple when they married and then when they had children.

The first to be sent over starting in 1663 were the *Filles du Roi*, otherwise known as the King's Daughters. They were given the name because every aspect of their journey was controlled by the French crown. French authorities under the King's orders managed the recruitment and immigration of the women and the King would pay for their transportation to the colonies. The *Filles du Roi* were chosen with great care. They were made up of middle- and upper-class women and girls, with the majority being between the ages twelve and twenty-five.²⁰ Youth and health were the most important criteria when they were chosen. Each of these girls were to show proof of marriageability as well as a certificate from their pastor or local judge. Many of these women came with contracts, some of which were signed to ensure that the wife retained some of her property after marriage. Although great care was taken in France with their preparation for life in the colonies the same could not be said for when they arrived. Men would look them over and make their selection, and then their entire lives were governed by their husbands.²¹

²⁰ Carl Boyer III, ed. *Ship Passenger Lists: The South, 1538-1825*. (Boyer: Newhall, CA, 1979), 242.

²¹ Martha Elizabeth Hodes, *Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 46.

As singles, the *Filles du Roi* were housed with the Ursulines, who maintained their safety and stability. The Ursulines continued their education and trained them to run a household until their marriages were arranged. When they married, the crown would pay their dowry; more than eighty percent were married within six months of their arrival.²² With most of these women being Ursuline students previously, the Ursulines continued with their original mission.

Jean Talon was pleased with the first women sent and the work of the Ursulines. He wrote to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, “All the King’s daughters sent last year are married, and almost all are pregnant or have had children.”²³ At Colbert’s request more ships were sent over with more potential brides. Between 1662 and 1673 the French authorities sent over eight hundred women to New France. Modern French-Canadian studies have revealed that the *Filles du Roi* and their husbands were responsible for two-thirds of the genetic make-up of over six million people in modern Canada.²⁴

With the second generation of French settlers in New France, the Ursulines of New France changed their focus, with a new generation of partially French heritage to work with. They moved away from missionary work to simply focus on the education of the girls. This switch in focus also allowed for the expansion of the Ursuline Sisterhood.

In 1690, the newly rebuilt monastery survived the first siege of Quebec by the English Massachusetts Bay Colony, led by William Phips after he had sacked Port Royal

²² Marcia A. Zug, *Buying a Bride: An Engaging History of Mail-Order Matches* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 30-36.

²³ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁴ Hodes, *Sex, Love, Race*, 46.

as part of the Nine Years' War.²⁵ With military defense of New France looking promising and the colonies prospering, the colonies of New France began to trickle down the Gulf Coast.

Esther Wheelwright

Esther Wheelwright came from a prominent religious family in Wells, Massachusetts (now Maine), in a time of division between the tribes that sided with the French and those who sided with the British. To understand Esther's unique life, it must be understood that there was a timeline for events within her hometown that led to her kidnapping. The beginning of her life was a time of constant uneasiness between English colonists and Native American tribes that lasted until the United States was formed as an independent entity. This period from 1636-1783 is known as the Wars of the Northeastern Borderlands. The conflicts resulted in many captures and deaths throughout the years, most captures resulting in trades. In 1703, the beginning of Queen Anne's War, there was a Wabanaki raid in Wells which resulted in the kidnapping of Esther who was seven years old at the time. Instead of returning her to her family, the Wabanaki took her into their tribe where she was raised by a Native family. For five years she was taught how to live as a Native. She learned the language, how to survive and thrive in their tribe, and converted to their religious practices which ended up being Catholicism. Coming from a Puritan lifestyle, it was considered easy for her to convert her way of life to that of the tribes because many of the duties she had while with her family were the same as

²⁵ Rene Chartrand, *French Fortresses in North America 1535-1763: Quebec, Montreal, Louisburg, and New Orleans* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2005), 28.

those of the tribes. She washed, cooked, cleaned, and helped in typically womanly ways. At the age of twelve she was sent to boarding school at the request of the governor of New France who viewed boarding school with the Ursulines in Quebec the safer option than attempting to send her back home to Wells where tensions were still high.

While in the care of the Ursulines she was taught much more than she would have been allowed to, had she stayed with her family. By this point she was fluent in Abenaki, she learned French, knew English, and had the ability to learn languages such as Latin as part of her Catholic training which was one of the languages that was off limits to women in Wells. While none of her life was by choice to this point, when her family asked for her return, she refused to go back.

Esther remained with the Ursulines, continuing her training until she had decided to become a nun herself. This decision created some form of stability in her whirlwind life of change or at least that was what was believed. Before she could formally take her vows, the siege of Quebec occurred and the Ursulines saw a power struggle between France and Britain. Through the British conquest of Canada, the Ursulines remained steadfast in their missions and the British did not argue, they saw the Ursulines as being socially useful and were weary of what removing them could mean on a larger scale for religion.

Esther adopted the religious name of Sister Marie-Joseph de L'Enfant Jésus. Between 1759 and 1760 she witnessed the power shift in Canada from French to British rule and she was named assistant superior. Sister Marie-Joseph aided the British troops to the best of Ursuline capability in order to maintain a decent relationship between the Ursulines and the British. She was elected as Superior in December 1760. She governed

her community from 1760 to 1766 and from 1769 to 1772 as mother superior; she served as assistant superior from 1772 to 1778 and served as zelatrice from 1778 until her death in 1780. In that time, she managed to establish and maintain a good working relationship with British authorities, re-establish a relationship with the French and aid her country in twenty of the most difficult years of its history.²⁶

Ursulines and the Louisiana Territories 1697-1751

Jean Baptiste LeMoyne de Bienville and Pierre LeMoyne D'Iberville were brothers from Montreal, New France. In 1697, when Jean Baptiste was just seventeen years old, he and his elder brother set out on an expedition south to establish what would become the Louisiana territories. Bienville explored the Gulf of Mexico coastline before moving westward to sail up the Mississippi River, to what is now Baton Rouge. Both Bienville and Iberville co-founded the colonies of Biloxi, Mississippi, Mobile, Alabama, and New Orleans, Louisiana.²⁷

The population of the colonies fluctuated over the next few years due in part to the soldiers intermarrying with indigenous women and in part because the territory was difficult to manage. To create a successful colony down south, officials needed a way to keep the soldiers from leaving their posts as they did in New France. With the men of the colony significantly outnumbering the women, the number of mixed marriages with the

²⁶ Ann M Little, *The Many Captivities of Esther Wheelwright*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018), 226.

²⁷ Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams, ed., and trans. *Iberville's Gulf Journals* (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1981), 106.

natives was increasing as it did all those years ago in New France. This resulted in a direct threat to the establishment of a French colony in Louisiana.

After several letters to King Louis XIV sent by Bienville in an attempt to re-create New France ships began to arrive in the Louisiana territories. Ursuline nuns were sent from France with the orders to establish a hospital for the poor and a school for the wealthy girls. Ursulines from New France also came to aid in the transition along with builders and soldiers in order to guarantee a smoother process. However, as well-intentioned as it was to send those who had experience in the colonization process, the problems that occurred in the Louisiana territories were beyond comparison. France's expansion into Canada came with its fair share of problems. The majority of the expansion, however, was comparable to conditions already found in France. The Louisiana territories came with swampy terrain, humid weather, and being below sea level made agriculture a difficult situation to contend with.

The first of the women sent over to the Louisiana territories were, as in New France, chosen for their virtue and their piety. In 1704, Bienville arranged for the arrival of twenty-four young women. These women were supposedly chosen from convents which would have made them more than likely Ursuline students but were not of the higher classes as the originals were. More likely they were from poor families with no better prospects for their daughters. These women were sent over on the ship *Le Pelican*, thus giving them the moniker of the *Pelican Girls*. Though their history remains a

mystery as most of their fates remain unknown, some did marry French soldiers as intended, with the first recorded white/French birth in Louisiana in 1705.²⁸

In 1717, Bienville discovered a crescent bend in the Mississippi River. On those shores is where they built the colony of New Orleans, often referred to as the Crescent City. With flooding being a general concern, the first levees were built there. And in 1723, New Orleans became the official capital of French Louisiana. Unlike other women who had some knowledge of the difficulties awaiting them, the *Pelican Girls* were enticed with lies. Though the *Filles du Roi* were well provided for, the girls who arrived in Louisiana were not prepared for the vast differences they faced. They struggled with the heat, swamps, and starvation. Upon their arrival, three of the twenty girls immediately died from disease. And despite the promises of finding rich husbands, only three married well, the rest accepted inferior marriage prospects.²⁹ More requests brought more women, but Bienville was not always pleased with those who arrived on the company ships and would occasionally send them back to France. After some time had passed women from the colonies would send letters back to France and word was spreading about the horrible conditions and the volunteers for “better lives” had ended.

In 1717, France began rounding up women from orphanages, poor houses, and prisons to be sent over as brides for the colonists. Immigration picked up between 1718 and 1721 with shipments of women coming in regular intervals until 1858.³⁰ Though letters were sent to France to ensure the brides’ virtue, not all the girls who arrived fit that

²⁸ Ghislaine Pleasonton and Alice Daly Forsyth, comp, *Louisiana Marriage Contracts: A Compilation of Abstracts from the Records of the Superior Council During the French Regime, 1725-1758* (New Orleans: Polythanos, 1980): 159.

²⁹ Zug, *Buying a Bride*, 51-52.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

category. Many did not come voluntarily, and in 1719, ninety-five women arrived aboard the *Mutine* sent by the King. Vallette de Laudun, the captain of the *Toulouse* also transported some of these women. As a result of poor health as well as illnesses they contracted at sea, he believed some of these women sterile. The Marichaldi Villiers arrived in 1719 along with the girls who arrived in 1721 were all ages fourteen and fifteen years of age. These girls were chaperoned by Sister Gertrude and the Ursuline Nuns.

Although a royal edict had been issued prohibiting transportation of women with “bad” moral character to Louisiana, in March of 1721, eighty-eight girls who were inmates of La Salpêtrier, a house of correction in Paris were imported. These girls were under the care of three Ursuline nuns and a midwife, Madame Doville. Bienville wrote to Paris on April 25, 1721, “Since the fourth of March, nineteen have been married off. From those who came by the ships *Le Chameau* and the *Mutine*, ten have died. With that, fifty-nine girls are still to be provided for. Whatever vigilance exercised upon them; they could not be restrained. These girls were not well selected.”³¹

In Louisiana, when these girls are mentioned at all they are carefully distinguished from the *Filles a la Casette*. The Ship *Gironde* transported twelve more Ursuline Nuns along with nine boarders in 1727. Sister Madeline Hachard arrived in early August 1727 along with eleven Ursuline Nuns. She was twenty-three at the time; the colony of New Orleans was only nine. She and the nuns spent a five-month journey from France to the colony. Through a journey of bad weather and pirates the nuns sang

³¹ Emily Clark, *Masterless Mistresses: The New Orleans Ursulines and the Development of a New World Society 1727-1834* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 39.

and prayed to keep their spirits up. They were glad to reach the shore, even though the city itself did not live up to what the promotional brochures depicted. To the dismay of Jacques de la Chaise, the nuns who arrived were not the “sisters of charity” who attended the sick, but rather the teachers of education and the Catholic Faith. He deemed them too independent and feared they would create an independence in women that was not necessarily wanted at the time. It was because of these nuns that the colony of New Orleans had a higher-than-average level of female property ownership and literacy. At one point in the eighteenth century, more women than men were able to read and write. In addition, girls in Louisiana were better educated at that time than the ones coming in from France. It was the Ursulines’ mission that no girl should be left behind; therefore, they taught white, African, free, and enslaved in the colony focusing more on education than on religion. They worked to lay a stable foundation of health and education for the growing city.³²

Sister Madeline Hachard arrived under contract made with the Mississippi Company. She and the Ursulines were given land, a house, and eight slaves in return for six of the nuns serving as nurses in the hospital. Though the Ursulines did not agree with all aspects of the contract given to them, they believed that without them in Louisiana their people would suffer. The slaves they were given became well-educated and integrated into the Ursulines’ household. They helped the Ursulines maintain the Louisiana economy by working side by side with the Ursulines to grow a big enough food supply to offset some of the financial burden the government of Louisiana was

³² Hachard and Clark, *Voices from and Early American Convent*, 120.

always facing. They also helped the Ursulines with markets, selling goods and other trinkets to make money for the community. Others were to teach and care for the girls until husbands were found. The nuns were also to reform the “loose women” and girls of bad conduct, who were punished in horrendous ways. One of the punishments inflicted on these women as described by Sister Madeline was “by putting them upon wooden horses and having them whipped by the regiment of soldiers that guard the town.”³³ This was a common punishment technique mostly used on women during the time.³⁴

Only a few of these women married well; the rest had inferior prospects. Angered by France’s deception, some of the women instigated a protest, calling it the “petticoat insurrection”. Some of the girls boarded boats to try to force their way back to France. They demanded the life they were promised. The government, despite the appalling treatment these women received, viewed their complaints as “frivolous” and ignored the issue. Bienville wrote to France stating that “the women are unhappy with the provisions, and that Parisian women just have an aversion to corn,” the main staple of the colony.³⁵ After being promised a better and easier life, the women were effectively trapped.

According to Louisiana legends they took their pots and pans and stormed Bienville’s residence in an uprising. It is also a legend that Bienville’s indigenous housekeeper, in an effort to appease the women, taught the women various methods of cooking and spicing dishes, supposedly the origin of Creole cooking.³⁶ Though it is a

³³ Hachard and Clark, *Voices from and Early American Convent*, 120.

³⁴ Mathe Allain, “Manon Lescaut et ses Consoeurs: Women in the Early French Period, 1700-1731,” in *Proceedings of the Fifth Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society*, March 29 -April 1, 1979 (Washington, D. C.: University Press of America, 1980), 19-20.

³⁵ Zug, *Buying a Bride*, 54-55.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

good story, it is more likely that the women simply resigned themselves to their fate and made the best of their situation in the colonies.

Riots in France

With colonization a priority, supporters of Louisiana's revised immigration plan decided that the male colonists did not care about the women's past conduct while choosing a wife. Soon, female prisoners from Paris penitentiaries were among those sent over to Louisiana. The majority were taken from Hospital General du Paris and Le Salpêtrier. Others were taken from hospitals, poor houses, and prisons. Many of these women did not want to leave France for the colonies. Some of these "new" recruits were criminals and prostitutes, most were sickly and suffered from malnutrition, or were infected with venereal diseases.

One of the women had supposedly murdered fifteen people; however, in some instances the women's only crime was angering the wrong person. Some of the women were married to male prisoners bound for the colony. Others were bound in chains and marched across France as a warning to potential criminals. Hundreds of these prisoners died on these treks. In 1719, one hundred of these prisoners rioted to avoid the march and forced immigration to Louisiana. Six of them were shot and killed, a dozen more were wounded, and the rest spent the winter starving, ill clothed, and housed in freezing conditions.

In the spring the survivors were shipped to the colony. In total about seven thousand women were deported, but most never made it to the colony. Only 1300 actually arrived. The majority died on the forced marches or the voyage over from

France. Of those only 178 remained according to the census of 1721. Many of the women who arrived after 1715 had basically been kidnapped and most of them were abused. Some chose to seek sanctuary at the convent, but the majority chose to return to France as soon as it was made possible. A large number refused to marry; one of these claimed it was because she was of noble birth. Those who chose to stay in the colony resumed their criminal ways. Prostitution, murder, and theft plagued the colony as these girls settled into the community. Though large numbers of women were entering the colony, the population was not growing as expected. The question was raised as to what the reason for these lack luster results in the population could be. Due to superstitions surrounding the arrival of these women, mythology was created for their presence in the colonies.³⁷

Haunted History of Filles a la Casette

Filles a la Casette, otherwise known as the Casket Girls, were given this name because of the small casket-shaped chests that held their belongings. Before the girls left France, they were each given a chest, “Cassettes,” provided by the Mississippi Company. These chests were said to contain various articles of clothing, shoes, shirts, dresses, and others supposedly contained wedding dresses and aprons.”³⁸ Each of these girls were carefully selected from good middle-class families for their skills in housewifely duties and their excellent characters. The first of the casket girls reached New Orleans in 1727 and continued to arrive in intervals until 1751. They came under the care of the Ursulines

³⁷ Troy Taylor, *Haunted New Orleans: History & Hauntings of the Crescent City* (Alton, IL: Whitechapel Press, 2000), 9-14.

³⁸ Marita Woywod Crandle, *New Orleans Vampires: History and Legend* (Charlestown, SC: History Press, 2017), 45.

and lodged together in the convent, attending classes daily. In the afternoons they would fill the courtyard so that the men of the colony could see them and make their choice. When night fell, they were secluded in the convent and guarded by soldiers until marriage.

Because New Orleans does not fit into the traditional “melting pot” of America, it exists in a space between the local and the exotic. Occupying a hybrid space of myth and illusion, the city is a diversity of culture. Catholicism is deeply rooted in its inhabitants, but there are also practices such as voodoo and witchcraft. The people of New Orleans were just as diverse, between the French, Cajun, Creole, and vampires.

There are several versions surrounding the arrival and existence of these women. One of them suggests that the ship carrying the girls arrived in port, with the girls and their caskets. The girls got off the ship and went into the convent while deckhands carried their possessions, the large caskets that housed vampires that had been smuggled to the new world. And while the girls were safe in the convent the vampires went out into society where they started new lives and lived off the transient population. Yet another version tells of the girls never reaching New Orleans. Allegedly they got word of what was waiting for them in the developed port and decided it would be better to leave the ship in Baton Rouge. Since word was not sent to New Orleans when the ship was docked, the men of the city just assumed that the caskets that were unloaded contained the bodies of the young women who were too delicate to survive the long journey.

In each of these cases there is one thing that remains, that the caskets were taken into the convent and that some remain there to this day. The Ursulines did not dissuade these superstitions. In fact, they unknowingly reinforced the rumors. When the girls came

over, they were housed on the third floor of the convent. When the rumors began to spread the Ursulines had the third floor blessed and the shutters closed and nailed shut with blessed nails. Stories of the Casket Girls have perpetuated throughout New Orleans history and has created a market for dark tourism that continues to thrive.³⁹

War and Change late 17th-18th Centuries

Considered the first global war, the Seven Years' War was fought from 1756 to 1763 primarily between France and Britain along with their allies. While France and its allies were successful at the beginning of the war, by the end France had experienced a heavy defeat which resulted in the surrender of New France as well as other North American territories to the British in 1762.⁴⁰ Seeing the cost of war, France began offloading some of the territories that gave them problems.

When France established the Louisiana Territory it created a section of French territory between the English to the east and the Spanish to the west. While the French territories in Canada were deemed successes, Louisiana's major downfall had always been its population how did he get back up as my question according to the French monarchy there were never enough people for that area to remain a success. In 1762, the Treaty of Fontainebleau was ratified between France and its ally Spain giving most of the

³⁹Marita Woywod Crandle, "Part One: The Casket Girls," *New Orleans Vampires: History and Legend*, (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2018), 24-48.

⁴⁰ "French and Indian War/Seven Years' War, 1754-1763," *Milestones: 1750-1775*, Office of the Historian, United States Department of State <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1750-1775/french-indian-war> [accessed January 23, 2024].

French Louisiana territory over to the Spanish. This treaty was created in secret and remained that way even during negotiations in 1763 of the Treaty of Paris.

In the terms of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, Britain gained control of Canada, the Great Lakes basin, and the east bank of the Mississippi River. Keeping with the previous agreements the British allowed French-Canadian citizens to have a limited freedom of worship which hindered the Ursuline institutions established in those areas by restricting potential recruitment of staff and students alike and by limiting access to French language textbooks.⁴¹ The British also moved into some of the Ursuline institutions making room for British personnel. French Canadian citizens were also given an eighteen-month grace period where if they did not want to stay under British rule, they could emigrate to any of the remaining French colonies and any previously French government archives were preserved instead of destroyed. Spain also took this opportunity to trade Florida to Britain in exchange for the rest of the Louisiana Territory.

By the end of the 18th century, the Ursuline institutions in Canada had overcome the issues and limitations set upon them by the British and the number of students and sisters was back on the rise. Those who stayed in British Canada adapted to their surroundings and those who chose to leave ventured out to places such as Texas, Massachusetts, Montana, and some went down to Louisiana.

The Louisiana Territories had a much more difficult time with the transition with the treaties established and the people not knowing about the territorial exchange they did not know that they were falling under Spanish rule for roughly two years after the treaties

⁴¹ Michael Wilcox, "Ursulines in Canada," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, (November 24, 2009), <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ursulines> [accessed June 2, 2024].

were signed. The first Spanish governor to Louisiana was Antonio de Ulloa, who arrived in 1767.

Ulloa was an explorer, astronomer, and administrator. He was sent over to Louisiana to govern the once French territory now ruled under Spain. His governorship was highly contended when he arrived being that the French did not warn the colonists of the changes that were occurring. A series of unfortunate events led to him only serving as governor of Louisiana for two years before he was forced out by the people in an uprising known as the Insurrection of 1768. Ulloa's arrival to Louisiana, as well as some of his choices not only confused but irritated an already difficult situation taking place amongst the colonists. His choice to remain in Belize and govern from there instead of presenting his credentials to the French council and running Louisiana through a French proxy caused major confusion as to who the ruling party was when there had already been a power struggle going on between the governor (who was responsible for the military), the commissaire-Ordonnateur (responsible for the fiscal matters on the colony), and the Superior Council.⁴²

His choice to let the French flag remain flying in the Place de Armes demonstrated a position of weakness for Spain and the tipping point was when Ulloa tried to enact Spanish trade regulations onto the colonists. When the superior council sided with the prominent Creole merchants, Ulloa thought it best to remain at the Belize post and run Louisiana through a French proxy. This move did not ease tensions between the

⁴²Arthur P Whitaker, "Antonio de Ulloa" *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 15, no. 2 (1935): 155–94.

French factions vying for power and, while Louisiana continued to suffer from economic failures due to Spanish trade regulations and infighting the French oligarchy began to spread rumors of planned oppression of the colonists by the Spanish. The immediate expulsion of Ulloa and the Spanish quickly occurred. Riots broke out in New Orleans and Ulloa along with his wife were forced out. Thinking the rebellion a success, French Louisiana went on fighting amongst themselves until a year later when another Spanish governor was sent.

Alejandro O'Reilly, the second Spanish governor arrived in 1769 with the backing of the Spanish and the French King. He swiftly dealt with the rebellion of the previous year. He established Spanish power over Louisiana with a strong military presence without bloodshed. He arrested, deported, or executed the coconspirators from the rebellion as well as seizing property and funds from those executed all in the name of the Spanish King. The families of the executed took shelter with the Ursulines at this time.

Under Governor O'Reilly, Louisiana underwent many changes, starting with governmental reform such as the dissolution of the superior council and installing a Spanish City Council in its place. Spanish colonial authorities invited Native American leaders to New Orleans in order to initiate trade and military relationships. They also oversaw the inspection and subdivision of the colony of Louisiana outside of New Orleans, which resulted in the recognition of eleven new posts that went from present day Assumption Parish to St. Louis, Missouri. Finally, changes were made to the Ursuline institutions in the area.

Governor O'Reilly removed the nuns from the hospital which made the Ursulines fully dedicated to their work in education. It was then requested that the governor have the property originally given to the Ursulines by the French sold and all proceeds sent to the crown. O'Reilly disagreed with such maneuvers, stating that the king had no intention of removing the Ursulines from Louisiana, their work was important to the colony and would continue to be in the future.⁴³

43 Frances Kolb, "The New Orleans Revolt of 1768: Uniting against Real and Perceived Threats of Empire," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 59, no 1 (2018): 5–39.

Chapter 2: Ursulines of the 19th century

By the 19th century Ursuline institutions were established all over what would be the United States. Under British control the Ursuline institutions in Canada had created new curriculums for girls in order to keep them well educated. They added subjects including astronomy, physics, history of the ancient, modern, and sacred varieties, botany, and chemistry. In the late 19th century, they added subjects such as telegraphy and stenography to the curriculum. They also began establishing schools overseas in places such as China, Peru, and Japan.

The Spanish period in Louisiana's history came to an end in 1803 when the colony passed from Spain to France to the United States within two years. The transfer encompassed the Diocese of Louisiana and the Floridas west of the Mississippi River. Eleven of the nuns who arrived in 1786 chose to stay in New Orleans. Concerned about the outcome of the transfer regarding the convent, the nuns wrote a letter to President Thomas Jefferson concerning the rumors and on May 15, 1804, President Jefferson personally responded assuring the nuns that their convent and the work would not be disturbed in any way but rather supported by the American government.⁴⁴

Burning of the Ursuline Convent in Massachusetts

Throughout their history the Ursulines experienced a hefty amount of religious conflict in their various locations mainly between the Catholic and Protestant faiths. One

⁴⁴ The Historic New Orleans Collection, <https://catalog.hnoc.org/web/arena/search#/entity/thnoc-archive/2018.0242.37/photographic-copies-of-letters>. Historic New Orleans Collection, (accessed January 2023).

of the most severe cases of conflict happened in Charlestown, Massachusetts. As a colony, Massachusetts continuously had religious turmoil. Puritan leadership was not accepting of anything that potentially conflicted with their beliefs. When the Province of Massachusetts Bay was established part of its charter was to protect the freedom to worship for Protestants, but it excluded “Papists” or Roman Catholics.⁴⁵

After American Independence and the idea of religious acceptance spread, Massachusetts did not fully accept the change. Rising immigration, especially from Irish communities who were predominantly Catholic, fueled tensions among the Protestant community and in the early 19th century the Second Great Awakening occurred. A key player during the Second Great Awakening was Lyman Beecher, a Presbyterian clergyman who became an important figure during the second phase of the Great Awakening. He ministered to the congregational churches of New England by spreading the Christian faith and denouncing Catholicism -especially convents- by delivering a series of lectures about the devil and the Pope of Rome. He especially condemned the supposed depravity that happened behind the closed doors of a convent.⁴⁶ Amidst all of the religious upheaval, an Ursuline Institution was opened in Boston in 1827, located on Mt. Benedict. The institution quickly became a prominent boarding school for girls in New England.

The idea for the institution came from Reverend John Thayer who converted to Catholicism and served as a Priest in Boston. He spent years raising the money to get the

⁴⁵ “The Charter of Massachusetts Bay- 1691,” *The Avalon Project*, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School (2008) https://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mass07.asp [accessed March 2023].

⁴⁶ Earl J Thompson, “Lyman Beecher’s Long Road to Conservative Abolitionism,” *Church History* 42, no 1 (1973): 89–109.

Ursuline institution built in the area. The school was staffed by Irish nuns educated in French convents in preparation for teaching girls of all backgrounds, including Protestants. The school's primary focus was to educate girls from the ages six to fourteen and thus began to enroll the girls of prominent families of the area later, the school became such a beacon of the community that girls were sent from various locations such as Canada and New Orleans as well as from all around the New England area to attend the school.

In 1832, a Charlestown native, Rebecca Reed had interest in becoming an Ursuline nun even though she was raised Protestant. While she was there, by 1834, forty-seven girls were enrolled at the Ursuline school and only six of those girls were Catholic.

At the age of 21, Rebecca entered the convent, but she was only at the convent for roughly six months before she decided to leave. Instead, Rebecca released a "tell all" book called *Six Months in a Convent* where she discussed her escape from the convent along with suggestions of neglect, torture, planned kidnapping, and secret dungeons within the convent's walls. Within the same timeframe, around July 1834, one of the Ursuline nuns at Mount Benedict, Sister Mary John had experienced what was called at the time "fever of the brain" which resulted in a separation from reality and complete mental breakdown. She escaped the convent and found herself at a home at the bottom of the hill. She told the family living there that the Ursulines could not be trusted, that they had secret dungeons that they had placed her in where she was being starved and tortured on a daily basis.

When the Ursulines realized Sister Mary had gone, Catholic Bishop Benedict Fenwick was sent out to collect Sister Mary. He calmed her enough to get her to return to

the convent where she could be treated for her ongoing illness. By this point, however, religious tensions were already running high from Rebecca Reeds recounting of her time there. Because of the fact that the convent was closed to outsiders, people of the town had begun insisting that they investigate the convent in order to check for any wrongdoing by the nuns. Mother Superior at this time had refused any outside contact with Sister Mary in fear of making matters worse, for fear of Sister Mary potentially exposing other people to her illness. As a result, rumors had begun to spread about the Ursulines holding Sister Mary against her will.

By August 1834, the community had two Charlestown Selectmen request to see Sister Mary while also checking the grounds for any strange behaviors happening at the convent. While the Mother Superior again denied the request originally, she agreed to them coming in only a couple of days later. On August 11th, the two men came to the convent to speak with Sister Mary and gather information about the innerworkings of the convent. Afterwards, they told Mother Superior that they were satisfied with the care that Sister Mary was receiving and could not find any suggestion of any type of secret dungeons on the property. They stated they would inform the community that there was indeed nothing going on at the convent that would be deemed disgraceful.

Yet by this point it was too late. On the night of August 11, 1834, a group of men from around the community went to the convent with the demand that the Ursulines release Sister Mary. The Mother Superior refused stating that Sister Mary was gravely ill and under the best care that she could be. The men, not taking no for an answer, took it upon themselves to break in, loot, and burn the convent to the ground.

In December 1834, a trial was held for those involved in the destruction of the convent. It was considered a major trial for that time because arson carried a death sentence and the penalty for burglary had just changed prior to this case. According to the public record of the trial, John R. Buzzell and eleven others were accused of breaking into the convent, destroying Ursuline property, and then purposely setting fire to the convent itself all while the nuns and boarders were still inside. The residents of the convent were able to successfully escape making the human casualties nonexistent with only minor scrapes and bruises created while they were fleeing to safety.

The trial proved that John R. Buzzell was the leader of the mob who incited the other men to the destruction of the convent. The trial documentation goes on to discuss how it was believed that eyewitness intimidation occurred and Rebecca Reed's testimony during the trial along with the character witness testimony from Reed's religious leaders swayed the jury to a verdict of not guilty after twenty-one hours of deliberation.⁴⁷ The reeling from all of the damage done at the convent as well as to the Ursulines' reputation was extensive. The Ursulines decided to fight back with the release of their own book titled *An Answer to Six months in a Convent, exposing its falsehoods and manifold absurdities*. Published by Mother Superior Maria St. George, the book contests Reed's interpretation of events as well as the events of the trial calling into question the real reason for the anti-Catholic movement that had led to the overall destruction of Mount Benedict's Ursuline convent.

⁴⁷ Lemuel Shaw LL.D., "Trial of John Buzzell, The Leader of the Convent Rioters for Arson and Burglary; Committed on the night of 11 August 1831. By the Destruction of the Convent on Mount Benedict in Charlestown, Massachusetts. Containing the Arguments of Counsel, Judges, Charges &c." (Boston: Lemuel Gulliver, 1834): 1, Providence College Digital Commons. <https://digitalcommons.providence.edu/trialbuzzell/1> [accessed June 2, 2024].

After the convent burned and the trial was completed the nuns who resided at the convent relocated to Roxbury and then eventually went back to Quebec. The diocese of Boston sold the property in the 1870s and between the 1870s and 1890s the area was raised to make room for more housing developments. Some of the bricks from the Ursuline convent were saved and went into the creation of the Holy Cross Cathedral in Boston. There is a small monument located at what is now the East Branch of the Somerville Public Library dedicated to the event that reads:

“Ploughed Hill”
fortified and bombarded in 1775-76
site of Ursuline Convent founded in 1820 and opened in 1826.
Burned in 1834
Hill dug down 1875-1897
Erected by
Mt. Benedict council No. 75.⁴⁸

Ursulines of Cincinnati

In 1845, Archbishop John Purcell invited eleven Ursuline nuns under the leadership of Mother Julia Chatfield from France to open a school in the town of St. Martin in Brown County, Ohio. Receiving their first boarder in October of that year they were quickly up and running with young women coming from all over America to join their school. In true Ursuline fashion, they had boarders as well as day classes for the locals. Within two years they had outgrown their small facility and had to expand. There was a four-story structure built on the property donated to the archdiocese, strategically located close to the seminary buildings as well as the small parish church until the church

⁴⁸ Vlado, “Site of the Destroyed Ursuline Convent: Somerville, Massachusetts,” *Atlas Obscura* <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/site-of-destroyed-ursuline-convent> [accessed July 2023].

was moved to the center of the town. For years new nuns would enter the school and others would spread outwards, establishing schools in other places.

In 1861, Cincinnati was a port city on the Ohio River which became an essential part of the American Civil War. Cincinnati was at a strategic location due to the fact that at the time it was the sixth largest city as well as being in Ohio. Significantly, Ohio was a free state located just across the river from two slave states, Kentucky and Virginia. This made Cincinnati a prime migration point for escaping slaves as well as a prime point for the anti-slavery movement. The Ursulines were never picky when it came to who was to be educated at their establishments. This meant that during this time girls from the north and the south were all housed as boarders. They limited war talk amongst the girls as much as possible and attempted to maintain their distance from wartime difficulties.

The Ursulines typically transitioned from one location to another, rotating out for new nuns to come in. During the Civil War this was no different. Sister Baptista, originally from the Ursuline Academy in Charleston, South Carolina transferred to Cincinnati as a novitiate in 1848. In 1850, she made her profession as Baptista Aloysius right before the Ursuline Convent of the Assumption disbanded. She was then transferred to St. Martin's in Fayetteville, Ohio. In 1858, Bishop Lynch invited the Ursulines to South Carolina, where Mother Baptista led a group to take over the Immaculate Conception Academy and Convent in Columbia, South Carolina.⁴⁹ This put the Ursulines directly in the path of the Union army.

⁴⁹ Madame Baptiste Lynch, "Madame Baptiste to Bp Patrick Lynch -- December 21, 1863," https://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/Lowcountry_Digital_Library, Catholic Diocese of Charleston Archives, 1863-12-21 [accessed June 20, 2024].

The Ursuline Convent school housed two-hundred students in what was once a seventy-room hotel. On February 17th, 1865, Mother Superior Batista wrote a letter to General Sherman, commanding the Union Army in the area, to secure sanctuary for her and her students when the army came through. In order to give him proper motivation to do so, she added the fact that she had personally taught his daughter as well as a number of his men's daughters while she was at the convent in Ohio. She knew this because his daughter would always write him letters talking about Sister Batista as her favorite teacher. General Sherman, in response to this letter, sent Inspector General Charles Ewing, who also had a daughter in the care of the Ursulines in Ohio. Ewing personally guaranteed that the Ursuline property would remain undisturbed when the Union Army came through Columbia. That promise was short lived however, as a Union soldier had informed Sister Batista that Columbia was considered a doomed city according to the army and that she would need to gather her students and leave the convent as soon as possible. Cotton bales had been set on fire and the fire was quickly spreading throughout the city. That night, as the soldier suggested, Mother Superior Batista had her girls dress in warm clothing and only take belongings that they could reasonably carry when the army came through and began pillaging the convent.

Mother Superior, the small group of Ursulines, and the students escaped the convent with the help of two Irish Catholic soldiers. They found sanctuary at St. Peter's Catholic Church only a few blocks away from the convent. A group of soldiers had followed the nuns and were threatening to burn down St. Peter's which forced the group

to find sanctuary in the cemetery until morning.⁵⁰ After a terrifying night for the students, General Sherman found Mother Superior Baptista and began explaining himself about how the fires got out of his control and thus some of the structures could not be saved. Sherman told her that any of the remaining houses could be given to her as a gift for all of the inconvenience she and her students had faced.

As a response to his plea, Mother Superior Baptista said “General Sherman, I do not think the houses left are yours to give, but when I do make arrangements for my community and pupils, I will thank you to move us and provide food for the large numbers it will be hard to feed.”⁵¹ The Hampton-Preston house built in 1818 was constructed in the federal style and boasted a three story townhouse with expansive gardens. In 1865, General John Logan established the house as Union headquarters but as the Union moved on had the intention of destroying the property.

When word was received that the house was going to be destroyed, Mother Superior Baptista and her students decided to take up residence and turn the house into a makeshift convent until they could safely leave the city. In its long history, the Hampton-Preston house has housed Ursulines twice and remains standing today as one of South Carolina’s oldest historic house museums.⁵² Mother Superior Baptista’s story was only just recently rediscovered in the form of a children’s book. The author used primary documents given to her by the church in order to write *Fire and Forgiveness: A Nun’s*

⁵⁰Ettie Madeline Vogel, “The Ursuline Nuns in America” *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia I* (1884): 214-43.

⁵¹ Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston <https://directory.charlestdiocese.org/diocesan-office/archives-and-records-management/> [accessed May 27, 2024].

⁵² John M Sherrer III, “A Comprehensive History of the Hampton-Preston Mansion in Columbia, South Carolina,” master’s thesis, University of South Carolina (1998).

Truce with General Sherman which demonstrates the kind of importance of these stories to not only the church but also to the continuance of the Ursuline history.⁵³

⁵³ Martha Dunskey, *Fire and Forgiveness: A Nun's Truce with General Sherman* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2019).

Ursulines of Cleveland

In the 1830s, Father Amadeus Rappe served as chaplain to the Ursulines of Boulogne-sur Mer in France but was inspired by the Ursulines to become a missionary in America. Bishop John Purcell recruited Rappe to be incardinated and sent to the Diocese of Cincinnati. At the time, Rappe could not speak English so once he came to Ohio in 1840, he was sent to Chillicothe for six months to learn English from scholar William Anderson. After completing his language studies, Rappe was appointed pastor of St. Francis de Sales Parish which was located in Toledo, Ohio. While there, Rappe ministered to the Catholic laborers on the Miami and Erie Canal and settlements along the Maumee River. He noticed that many men among his congregation were deep into alcohol dependency and Rappe would frequently preach about temperance.⁵⁴

In 1847, Rappe was appointed as the first bishop to the newly created Diocese of Cleveland. His first request as bishop was to bring in a group of Ursuline Sisters to share a rich spiritual and cultural life with the people of Cleveland. From there the Ursulines arrived in 1850 to open a school.⁵⁵ While Rappe was beloved by his congregations from Toledo and Cleveland, trouble began to surround him. Between the years 1850 to 1870 the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland had three prominent groups of immigrant populations- Germans, French, and Irish. The Germans complained that Rappe would not allow German children to receive catechism instruction and the Irish complained that he showed favoritism to the German and the French priests, giving them the more

⁵⁴ "Rappe, Louis Amadeus," *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, Case Western Reserve University <https://case.edu/ech/articles/r/rappe-louis-amadeus> Encyclopedia of Cleveland History [accessed February 2023].

⁵⁵ Lynch, *Where We've Been... Where We're Going*, 35.

prosperous parishes in the area. Push back began to happen when a seminary tax arose because many of the priests refused to support a German seminary.

By 1869, dissatisfied priests approached the Vatican Council about Rappe. When Rappe arrived in Rome he faced denunciation from clergymen of his own diocese. Not prepared to defend himself against these accusations, Rappe returned to Cleveland and resigned from his post. In 1870, he left Cleveland for Vermont where he continued to serve as a missionary. Even with his removal from the diocese, tensions between those who supported Rappe and those who opposed him were still high and the Ursulines who Rappe had brought to Cleveland suffered distrust and malice because of it. Rappe died in 1877, his body was returned to Cleveland and buried with honor in the cathedral he had built.⁵⁶

Ursulines of Youngstown

In 1874, Father Henry Brown of St. Columba Church in Youngstown asked the Cleveland Ursulines to send sisters to staff the St. Columba school. Father Brown was an anti-Rappe clergyman and the sisters that were sent had some connection with the people who opposed Bishop Rappe. They sent his sister, Sister Angela Brown along with four other nuns to run the school. Mother Theresa Foley, who they had sent as Superior, only remained in Youngstown a year. She was replaced with Mother Louis Molin, who was accompanied by Mother St. Joseph Steiner and Sister Anne of Jesus Madden. The issues that befell Rappe in Cleveland repeated themselves in Youngstown, the three major

⁵⁶ Lynch, *Where We've Been...Where We're Going*, 35.

groups that came to the city were the Irish, German, and French. Sister Leila Mahoney described the situation:

The Taint of nationalism unfortunately affected the first group of Ursulines to take up residence in Youngstown. That same evil which brought about the resignation of Bishop Rappe. Northern Ohio at the time was peopled by French, German, and Irish immigrants, all of whom kept the manners, customs, and language of their respective countries. Each group was inclined to protest the real or imaginary attempts of the others to control, with the result that ill-feeling developed among the clergy, the people, and the nuns.⁵⁷

Because of this, Mother Theresa asked to be replaced and once Mother Louis came to Youngstown and St. Columba, the situation seemed to be solved.

The solution was short lived however, and dissension among the people and the clergy persisted. Seeing no possible solution to appease everyone involved Bishop Gilmour was sent from the Cleveland diocese to close the convent in Youngstown. During Bishop Gilmour's visit one of the original nuns, Sister Felix Polion asked him to reconsider the closing of the convent stating, "even God himself changed his mind."⁵⁸ After she thoroughly defended her choice to try to save the convent, he asked how he could help her with this process. Her suggestion was to bring in a Superior from Toledo. Gilmour had never previously thought of that as a potential solution. Toledo having never dealt with the controversy over ethnic supremacy made getting nuns from there the perfect choice for an "outside" source to adjudicate the ethnic disputes amongst the congregation. Gilmour approached the convent with a proposition. He suggested that

⁵⁷ Sister Leloa Mahoney, *A Tree in the Valley: The Highlights of the Annals, 1854-1979* (Toledo, OH: Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart), 45.

⁵⁸ Lynch, *Where We've Been...Where We're Going*, 146.

those who wished to return to Cleveland should do so as soon as it was possible and those who chose to stay, would stay permanently.

Those who remained were Sisters Ursula Croxton, Angela Brown, St. John Radnor, Felix Polion, and St. James Sullivan. In answer to Bishop Gilmour's request, Mother Amadeus sent Sisters Lawrence McCaffrey, St. Joseph Waters, Francis de Sales Barron, and Gertrude Welsh from Toledo. It was on July 22, 1878, that the Toledo Community assumed the government of the Youngstown Convent in the care of Mother Lawrence, who spent the remainder of her years serving multiple terms as Superior.

In time, the community came to know and respect the Ursulines, and the convent began to add new members. Some of the original sisters who had come to the aid of the Youngstown convent returned to Toledo to continue their work there.⁵⁹ Stories of Mother Lawrence's kindness and vision circulated among the Ursulines of Youngstown and although she was first appointed as Superior, she was later elected for four different terms which was proof of her commitment to the community and the love the community had for her. She was Superior for a total of thirty-one years. She died on September 14, 1924, and is buried in the Ursuline cemetery plot in Calvary Cemetery.⁶⁰

On September 22, only four days after their arrival to Youngstown the sisters opened classes at St. Columba for sixty girls which was true to the Ursulines' mission of education. Yet the times were changing, and Youngstown was changing with them. Sister Marguerite, a Toledo Annalist, discussed in a letter how Father Carroll, assistant pastor of St. Columba reported to Bishop Gilmour that there was no use in opening the second

⁵⁹ Mahoney, *A Tree in the Valley*, 50.

⁶⁰ Lynch, *Where We've Been...Where We're Going*, 128.

highest school for boys and had spoken about the idea of the boys being so demoralized they had to release them from the school year a month early because they simply could not keep them in the building any longer.

With the opening of classes for girls, Sister Marguerite was the first Ursuline nun to teach boys in Youngstown. Two other “firsts” happened that day: Sister Felix opened a private school for twenty-five students in the largest room of the convent and Sister Angela enrolled ten music students in the parlor of the convent.

Only six days after their arrival, the sisters decided on an immediate expansion to the building they were occupying. This included two large classrooms that were completed on November 18, 1874, despite the depression occurring in 1873 that crippled the Youngstown steel mills for nearly six years. While the school was originally funded by the church, the continued running of the school relied heavily on congregation dues. With most of the jobs in the area relying on the mills, families were moving away from the idea of Catholic schools due to affordability.

In 1878, Father Joseph Eiler, pastor of St. Joseph’s (a German parish) asked Bishop Gilmour to send Ursuline nuns to his school which had been operating with lay teachers since 1870. Although Bishop Gilmour sent sisters who had been of German descent, the problem of fully imparting German heritage was not sufficiently met, and Father Eiler had to go in a different direction for his students. Father Eiler sent for the Notre Dame Sisters to teach the children of their congregation. The Notre Dame Sisters had recently come to the United States after being dispelled from their convent. The Notre Dame Sisters taught at St. Joseph School until it closed in 1966 to make room for the Newman Club of Youngstown State University. St. Columba Parish bought the

convent and for several years it served as the home for the Ursuline Sisters who staffed the St. Columba School.

With the expansion of Catholic education came new opportunities for the Ursulines. In 1883, four sisters opened Immaculate Conception School while another sister was added to the St. Joseph faculty. In 1888, three Ursulines began teaching at the newly opened St. Ann school and two more staffed a subsidiary school of St. Columba, called Kilkenny that was located on Franklin Street.

Chapter 3: Ursulines of the 20th Century

SS. Cyril and Methodius School opened in 1904, SS. Peter and Paul in 1912, and St. Rose in 1914. In 1921, Holy Name opened in the Steelton district on the westside of Youngstown and in 1925, the first “mission” school was accepted by the Ursulines: St. Patrick of Leetonia. In 1926 and 1927 they opened St. John in Campbell, St. Charles in Boardman which closed in 1937 and reopened in 1952, and then, in 1928 St. Nicholas School in Struthers opened.⁶¹

In 1884, the Youngstown Ursulines were able to repay the Ursulines of Toledo by aiding them with a missionary project in Montana. Mother Amadeus, the Toledo Superior who helped establish the Youngstown Ursulines was made Superior of a mission to Montana that had been established in St. Labre. Two Youngstown Ursulines, Sister Blessed Sacrament Whelen and Sister Francis X Rudge joined the mission and remained there until 1897.

The Toledo Ursulines described the nuns living there in their history:

In summary, the story of the Montana Missions is one of love. It is difficult to conjecture the succession of perils and hardships which these women underwent. No labor in the primitive convent was too humble or too difficult for them to undertake, from “banking” the rude huts against the rude storms and fearful cold of the winter, to caring for the vermin-infested heads of Indian girls and dressing self-inflicted wounds with which, the grief-stricken squaws lacerated their hands and feet after the death of their warrior husbands. And these were the nuns who just a few months before had come from a canonically established cloister.⁶²

In 1896, the Ursuline community of Youngstown had 38 members. After a request was made about building a new convent ground was broken for the new Rayen

⁶¹ Lynch, *Where We've Been...Where We're Going*, 164.

⁶² Ibid.

Avenue convent on May 18, 1896. The sisters moved into the four-story brick structure in February 1897, which they occupied until 1963.⁶³ The private school Sister Felix Polion opened in the classroom of St. Columba moved to the renovated carriage house on the Wick Avenue campus until it closed in 1942 to make space for Ursuline High School as an annex to the High School the carriage house building became known as the arts building. In the fall of 1905, Ursuline High School opened as Ursuline Academy. Enrollment for the following year was twenty-five students with classes being held at the Rayen Avenue convent.

To maintain the extremely high standards that the Ursulines had placed on themselves to make the Academy as successful as it could be, the faculty's education was outstanding. The sisters would begin their education in the Ursuline Normal School and Sisters' colleges in Cleveland. To get to the pedagogical specialties they needed in order to instruct students on a particular subject, they then went to other colleges, which required special permission, being that they were cloistered at the time. This was an important distinction between the lay teachers that were common in Youngstown and the degree-driven education the Ursulines were providing in the area. As enrollment grew, a new building was requested and in 1925, the new Ursuline Academy school was built on Wick Avenue.

The project was a large fundraising effort and allowed the entire community to get involved in what would become the new school. In 1930, at the recommendation of Bishop Schrembs, who had become concerned that there was no official Catholic high

⁶³ *The Youngstown Daily Vindicator*, January 31, 1896.

school education being offered for boys in the area, the Ursuline Academy officially became co-ed, and they changed the name to Ursuline High School. By 1930, enrollment was 315 students with 180 freshmen. There were 38 boys and 45 girls in the class, among them seven future Ursuline Sisters. Sister Jerome Corcoran, Anne Lynch, Mary Catherine Doran, Mary Conaboy, Marie Hughes, Victoria Pascarella, and Marie Denise Barnes. In 1975, Dr. Donna DeBlasio set out to do a project titled “The Ursuline Sisters Project” where she sat down with a number of Ursuline nuns for an oral history interview. Among these interviews were those of Sisters Marie Hughes and Jerome Corcoran who discussed the Ursuline experience.

In 1938, Father Joseph Gallagher succeeded Father Conry as principal of Ursuline High School, On January 10, 1946, at the intersection of Rayen Avenue and Elm Street, a car ran a red light and crashed into Father Gallagher’s car, killing him instantly. He had been on his way to early morning mass for the sisters. Sister Rosemary Deibel was selected as interim principal until Father Glen Holdbrook finished with his administration degree in preparation for becoming principal in 1948.⁶⁴ In 1955, Ursuline High School’s enrollment was at an all-time high, and Bishop Emmet M. Walsh decided the school would need to be enlarged as well as adding a new school to the roster.

Bishop Walsh asked the Ursuline Sisters to cede Ursuline High School and the Wick Avenue property over to the Diocese of Youngstown as a joint fundraising venture to update the high school and build the new one. In exchange, he would aid the Ursulines

⁶⁴Sister Rosemary Deibel, interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, “The Ursuline High School Project”, Youngstown State University Oral History Program, OH 40 (December 5, 1974). <https://digital.maag.yzu.edu:8443/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1989/5618/OH40.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y> [accessed June 3, 2024].

in raising the money for a new Motherhouse. The Ursulines were also promised that they would continue to staff Ursuline High School. The enlarged Ursuline and the newly built Cardinal Mooney High Schools opened in 1956.

Cardinal Mooney High School opened with Msgr. William Hughes as principal. As a sister school it has often been seen as a competitor to Ursuline. The opening of Cardinal Mooney was significant to the area due to the fact that it created a school district boundary within the city, the boundary line ran parallel with Woodland Avenue and students who were north of that line which included Hubbard, Austintown, Campbell, and Girard went to Ursuline High School, south of that boundary went to Mooney.⁶⁵ When it opened the Diocese of Youngstown requested nuns from several different religious communities to become faculty Ursulines from Youngstown, Notre Dames from Cleveland, Dominicans from Akron, Vincentians from Pittsburgh, and Humility of Mary Sisters all came to staff the school. The Ursulines brought in Sister Mary Conroy who taught journalism and began the newspaper *The Red Hat*, and the yearbook *The Eminence*.⁶⁶

Sister Anne Lynch returned to the area in 1960 from Boston College under a National Science Foundation Scholarship where she introduced a modern math program. Sister Margaret Ann Klempay returned to the area from Pius X Institute in Italy to develop an Art program. Sister Barbara Turk was assigned to teaching Biology courses and continued a very successful science fair program which she began at Ursuline High

⁶⁵ Lynch, *Where We've Been...Where We're Going*, A-29.

⁶⁶ Sister Mary Conroy, interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, "The Ursuline High School Project", Youngstown State University Oral History Program, OH 100 (February 28, 1975). <https://digital.maag.yosu.edu:8443/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1989/6015/OH100.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y> [accessed June 3, 2024].

School. Sisters Elizabeth Kerrigan and Jude Yablonsky established the speech and drama departments.⁶⁷ With a well-rounded educational program enacted by all of the sisters, Cardinal Mooney High School had quickly become a number one school in the area.

To fully understand what makes the Ursulines different from other religious communities now, we must first understand what early life looked like for them. In the early history of the Ursulines between 1874 and 1950, the rules and constitutions that governed the community were those brought with them to Cleveland in 1850. These rules originated at the convent at Boulogne-sur-Mer but traced all the way back to the Congregation of Paris. Introduced by Charles Borromeo in Milan in 1572, this tradition emphasized cloister and the fourth vow. Listening to the oral histories from the Ursulines the typical morning schedule was:

Rising: 5:00 am

Morning Prayer: 5:25 am

Meditation: Points of meditation were read aloud, one point at a time

Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Latin- recited

Mass

Breakfast in silence

In the 1920s and 1930s the Junior Sisters who lived in the Chauncey Andrews mansion on Wick Avenue would walk every morning rain or shine to the Rayen Avenue convent for Mass. Once a week they would carry their laundry with them to be done at the Motherhouse. Those who were teaching walked to the school with a partner, which was an early requirement after their morning services unless they taught further out. In that

⁶⁷ Sister Elizabeth Kerrigan, interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, "The Ursuline Sisters Project", Youngstown State University Oral History Program, OH 286 (March 19, 1975). <https://digital.maag.ysu.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1989/5765/OH286.pdf?sequence=5&isAllowed=y> [accessed June 3, 2024].

case, they were allowed to take the trolley, also with a partner. The schedule for their evenings were also very strict:

Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary was recited in choir at 5 pm
Supper: 5:30 pm
Communal recreation
Group Study
Night Prayers in the chapel

Silence was a vital part of the Ursulines' everyday lives. They would take part in multiple silences throughout their day, including a silent breakfast followed by a lesser silence during the mornings and again from 4:00 pm until supper time. After recreation, they enacted the grand silence which was from around 8:00 pm until after breakfast the next morning. There was a spiritual reading at breakfast and supper and from Thursday to Sunday every week the Rule of St. Augustine was read during the evening meal. The fourth Sunday of every month was visiting day, which allowed the families of the nuns to visit them between the hours of 2:00-4:30 pm.

An oral history interview with multiple sisters discusses their memories of caring for the sick. Sister Marie Antoinette remembered taking care of Sisters Eugene, Evangelista, Francis, and Columba, describing how she made their beds, took care of their clothes, and put them to bed. Sister Mary Alma served the convent as infirmarian, and Sister Roberta Petrose took care of trays. Sister Rose Streigel also served as infirmarian for several years and is remembered fondly.⁶⁸ While not being directly involved in the events of World War I, the Ursulines did get involved during the flu and

⁶⁸ Sister Patricia McNicholas, "Preparing the Laity to Minister to the Economically Poor in Association with the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown, OH, a Roman Catholic Community of Women Religious," (PhD diss., Dayton University, 1992).

pneumonia epidemics that swept across the country. According to the Centennial booklet created by the Ursulines:

Youngstown schools were closed; all public assemblies were forbidden; emergency hospitals were set up in schools and other public buildings. A call went out for volunteer nurses-trained or untrained. Many of the sisters responded, and, throughout the epidemic, nursed the sick in emergency hospitals and private homes. Among our sisters there were a few light cases of the flu, but we lost no one- Thanks be to God.”⁶⁹

The Youngstown Ursulines had lay sisters from the beginning when Sister James Sullivan came to do “housework,” between 1896 and 1914 several other sisters were received.

The Broad Highway describes a situation that the American Ursulines had found problematic, the status of “lay sisters.” The concept of lay sisters was created by the constitutions of the Congregation of Paris in 1612 which distinguished between two classes of religious communities the choir nuns and lay sisters. The former engaged in teaching, the latter in attending to the domestic affairs of the community. The book states:

The distinction was in conformity with social conditions prevailing in Europe during the early 17th century and was retained in all the monasteries originating from the Paris house. Non-democratic in principle, it was not in keeping with American customs and in time led to dissatisfaction. Lay sisters had no voice in Chapter. Their habit differed in some respects from that worn by choir nuns. Bishop Schrembs obtained a rescript dated December 16, 1922, decreeing that lay sisters laving perpetual vows could renew their profession as choir sisters. Thus, in 1924, the distinction between lay sisters and choir sisters was abolished and the lay sisters were allowed to assume their rank as determined by their first profession.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Ursulines Centennial booklet, Ursuline Motherhouse Archives, Youngstown.

⁷⁰ Michael Francis, *The Broad Highway: A History of the Ursuline Nuns in the Diocese of Cleveland, 1850-1950* (Cleveland, OH: The Ursuline Nuns, 1951), 239.

Fire at St. Columba

On September 2, 1954, after the cathedral was closed for the evening a bolt of lightning struck St. Columba. The fire started in the balcony and was not noticed quickly. By the time the fire was reported, and the fire department came, the fire was too hard to control, and the building could not be saved. Officials said that the damage caused by the fire was estimated to be around \$1.25 million. A new St. Columba opened in 1958.⁷¹

When the Ursulines ceded their high school to the Diocese of Youngstown in 1955, they were promised a fund-raising drive for a new motherhouse. In 1960, when Mother Edna Marie Brindle was elected the General Superior, she almost immediately made plans for the new structure. The previous convents such as the ones located on Rayen, Logan, and Wick were vastly overcrowded and began having structural issues such as leaks and electrical problems. The Rayen Avenue convent built in 1897 was showing its age and became a serious fire hazard.

The first step that Mother Brindle took was to find the land this larger motherhouse would have to be built on. The site they settled on was 130 acres bordered by Shields Road, Messerly, and Route 62. The administration believed that buying the property should be separate from the fund-raiser promised by the Diocese for the new cathedral and selected an advisory committee of businessmen to help the Ursulines with this process, Charles Cushwa was among those selected to the committee.⁷²

⁷¹ "History," Columba Cathedral <https://www.stcolumbacadrenal.org/history> [accessed March 2023].

⁷² Sister Edna Marie Brindle, interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, "Ursuline Sisters: Life in the Ursuline Community", Youngstown State University Oral History Program, OH 47 (June 3, 1975). <https://digital.maag.yosu.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1989/5822/OH47.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y> [accessed June 3, 2024].

The committee raised about \$115,000 for the property and prepared it for construction of the new building. The Ursulines then participated in the fund-raising process from March 20th to June 30th with the money being divided up between the schools and the motherhouse. The Ursuline motherhouse's share was roughly \$282,000. Construction began in 1962 and ended in December 1963. In 1963, the Rayen and Logan Avenue convents were sold. After calculating everything the Ursulines had accrued between the committee, fund-raising, and the selling of the other properties, the new motherhouse project still had a debt of \$578,000. This money was obtained through a loan with the plan that it would be paid back by 1974, the 100th anniversary of the Ursulines' coming to the Mahoning Valley.⁷³

In the Spring of 1964, the Ursulines opened up the motherhouse to all of those in the community that participated in helping with construction. They opened the house to Protestant Ministers, Jewish Rabbis and their wives, Century Club members, Sisters of the Mahoning Valley, and the general public from May 9th through May 24th. May 24th was the Solemn Dedication Mass offered by Bishop Emmett Walsh. With ongoing donations, fund-raising, and help from the committee the debt was retired in 1972, the last year of Mother Edna Marie's term in office.⁷⁴

⁷³ Lynch, *Where We've Been...Where We're Going*, 29.

⁷⁴ Brindle interview.

Renewal of Faith

Mother Edna Brindle not only saw the change in location for the Ursulines, she experienced shifts in every level of the Ursulines' daily lives. The constitutions that the Cleveland Ursulines brought with them from France were becoming more and more impractical for the Ursulines of America. Cleveland, Toledo, and Youngstown Ursulines found it difficult to continue the way of life they were accustomed to from all those years ago. Letters written by different nuns state their growing concern about being so far removed from the community they are trying to serve. Sister Patricia McNicholas based her Ph.D. dissertation on this very situation stating:

This model of religious life served the church well in its time. Many women chose life with the Ursuline Sisters between 1874 and 1965. The growth of the community was gradual, yet consistent until the late 1950s when large groups of young women began choosing religious life. By 1962 over 60 young women were in the novitiate, preparing for full membership, and the community had grown to over 200 members. This same pattern could be found in all the communities in the United States. This was the golden age of vocations', a time when convents, monasteries, and Seminaries flourished.⁷⁵

This did not remain the case. Between 1965 and 1975 roughly eighty sisters left the Ursuline community and that was true in communities all over the country. Religious communities chose to look for a cause which led Sister Patricia to state:

The reasons need to be sought through the examination of the culture of the sixties and today. For Catholics the 1960s and 1970s were characterized by a change in world view. The division of the world into sacred and profane, and the withdrawal from the world to a religious life was no longer seen as viable. The role of women in society was also changing. Educational and business opportunities opened the way for women to be prominent in new leadership positions in every aspect of modern life. In addition, there were new attitudes

⁷⁵ McNicholas, "Preparing the Laity to Minister to the Economically Poor in Association with the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown, OH," 40.

toward freedom, authority, obedience, affectivity, intimacy, sexuality, and permanent commitment.⁷⁶

Perhaps the biggest change however was the introduction of the Second Vatican Council or more commonly known as Vatican II which proposed that the entirety of the Catholic Church needed to be updated in order to stay relevant for the changing world. Vatican II focused on changes within:

- *Lumen gentium*, the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* on "the universal call to holiness"
- *Apostolicam actuositatem*, a decree on *The Apostolate of the Laity*
- *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, a decree *On Eastern Catholic Churches*
- *Dei verbum*, the *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* emphasized the study of scripture as "the soul of theology."
- *Sacrosanctum concilium*, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* to restore "the full and active participation by all the people."
- *Gaudium et spes*, the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* concerned the promotion of peace, the gift of self, and the Churches mission to non-Catholics.
- *Dignitatis humanae*, a declaration on religious freedom
- *Unitatis redintegratio*, a decree on Christian ecumenism
- *Nostra aetate*, a declaration about non-Christian religions

Vatican II also made changes on how the church conducted mass and other ceremonies, tradition dictated that all mass and formal ceremonies be conducted in Latin however, Vatican II stated that vernacular languages could also be authorized. With all of these changes including the changes occurring around the Ursulines a special study was created, Mother Edna Marie enrolled all of the sisters into a study in which a set of questions was prepared about every aspect of their lives.

⁷⁶ ⁷⁶ McNicholas, "Preparing the Laity to Minister to the Economically Poor in Association with the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown, OH," 40..

After the questions were answered the sisters then created a committee where they would sit over a series of weeks and discuss what the future would look like for religious communities in America. After careful deliberation, the council concluded that special chapters should be created in which they were to go back to their roots and re-evaluate their constitutions considering the Vatican II directives. The process of this idea was elaborate and entailed a complete re-write of all their constitutions. The completed work was then sent to Rome for approval. The Youngstown Ursulines' document was fully approved in 1989.⁷⁷

The renewal chapter was created in 1968 after the Sacred Congregation of the Religious approved Mother Edna Marie's request. The chapter was composed of thirty perpetually professed elected sisters, the general superior, and the four-member general council. The Chapter met from June 24th to July 19th, 1968. Archive documents summarize its purpose: "The Ecumenical Council called for the renewal of religious life, which means a return to the original inspiration and the first fervor of each religious institute. The council also called for suitable adaptation, which means realistic adjustments to the demands of life in the contemporary church, in the modern world."⁷⁸

This was done in three simultaneous phases:

1. The renewal of religious commitment on the part of each individual
2. The commitment of the religious community itself to the perpetual renewal of itself
3. The thorough re-examination of those structures of law, precept and custom which can ultimately be accomplished only by agents of government themselves, superiors, councils, and chapters.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Brindle interview.

⁷⁸ McNicholas, "Preparing the Laity to Minister to the Economically Poor in Association with the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown, OH," 46-47.

⁷⁹ Brindle interview.

Remove extra space

Everything was written down in the chapter meetings and then published for the entire community to read in August 1968. The changes included the removal of the matriarchal role from the Superior's title of Mother to Sister Superior. To foster personal responsibility and freedom of choice, the Ursulines allowed for the options of visiting outside the convent, of attending family vacations, and of the wearing of habits or other religious garb, and the choice of returning to the sisters' baptismal names. Sister Patrica states:

The Changes were massive, the hierarchical view of the church that saw the religious as in a higher state of life was replaced by greater emphasis on the people of God and on the role of the laity. Religious life had to eliminate any remnant of elitism from their self-image. The council called for a new attitude toward the world, it affirmed the universal call to holiness, and it emphasized the social dimension of the Gospel and the role of laity.⁸⁰

With all of the changes that occurred the Ursulines returned to their roots and instead of seeing themselves as a cloistered, monastic community they began to think of themselves as an apostolic religious community. They re-dedicated themselves to the schools and to the community that they served.

⁸⁰ McNicholas, "Preparing the Laity to Minister to the Economically Poor in Association with the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown, OH," 43.

The Great Decline

There were several factors that allowed the Ursulines of Youngstown to become a great success not only for the Catholic community, but as educational giants for a number of decades.

To begin with, Youngstown went from a small town to being an industrial giant when the steel mills and collaborative companies were created. With industry came the need to fill those jobs and thousands of people immigrated from all over the world for a chance to better themselves and their families. The Ursulines served the community by giving those people a chance to continue their faith in a safe space. Another factor came after World War II when the baby boom happened. With more students, the need for more teachers arose. The third factor was the exodus of the sisters in the 1960s. However, those events were essentially fleeting when the unthinkable happened to Youngstown. As Sister McNicholas states: “As late as 1979, 79% of the sisters were engaged in school-related ministries. By 1989, that percentage had dropped to 31%.”⁸¹

In September 1977, the steel industry fell, jobs were lost, and people could no longer afford Catholic school for their children. Families moved away from the area in search of new prospects and without a growing population there was no need for so many schools. The Ursulines pulled out of Cardinal Mooney High School to fill the needs at other locations. After The Sisters of Notre Dame pulled out of Christ Our King School in Warren, the Ursulines staffed the school for a transitional year during 1971-72 but the school closed in 1972 due to low enrollment.

⁸¹ McNicholas, “Preparing the Laity to Minister to the Economically Poor in Association with the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown, OH,” 43.

Holy Name in Youngstown was opened in 1920 with a larger school built in 1927 located in the Steelton district on the westside of Youngstown was home to mostly Slovak immigrants wanting to maintain their customs. The Ursulines taught the children Slovak traditions and language. The school closed in 1990 due to low enrollment. Holy Name Church continued to serve the community up until November 2022⁸². This was the trend for many of their schools. They chose to consolidate locations mostly due to low enrollment, to make it easier on staff and students alike.

⁸² “Holy Name Church Closing Mass,” YouTube https://www.youtube.com/live/_zprbJqKtrg?si=V-ivDd__JRgPPSa [accessed July 31, 2023].

Conclusion

Today, the Ursulines still remain dedicated to their fourth vow of education locally as well as globally. While there are less schools in multiple locations, they have found ways to continue to teach as they have always done. Their focus is now the underserved populations, especially the elderly, poor, homeless, and incarcerated.

They have created new programs to fight climate change and to overcome language barriers faced by immigrants. Instead of being fully cloistered, they have entered the communities and homes of individuals to tutor, visit the elderly, aid with food pantries, and work with young people trying to find a path in life whether that is job preparation or religious orders. They still visit hospitals and nursing homes, caring for the sick. This year marks 150 years of the Ursulines being in Youngstown and they have celebrated this endeavor by writing a new book on their history. They have also displayed an exhibit at Mahoning Valley Historical Society's Tyler History Center to mark the occasion. On display are multiple artifacts from the sisters' many years of art and past lives.

In 2024, the Ursulines were awarded two grants totaling \$128,500 to aid the funding of their Motherhouse Healthcare Renovation project. When completed, the Motherhouse will be more handicap friendly for those who are wheelchair bound or use walkers.⁸³ It was also announced that Notre Dame College located in Cleveland, Ohio, would be ending in-person instruction after the Spring semester concludes. The Ursulines

⁸³ "Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown awarded \$128,500 for renovation project", WFMJ.com <https://www.wfmj.com/story/29520596/ursuline-sisters-of-youngstown-awarded-128500-in-grants-for-renovation-project> [accessed January 2024].

who have a deep and long-standing relationship with the Sisters of Notre Dame, have stepped in to help their students by welcoming them to their Pepper Pike location as well as adding new programs in order to accommodate their new teach out plan.⁸⁴

Despite facing numerous challenges over the centuries including wars, persecution, and social upheaval, the Ursuline Sisterhood have remained dedicated to their mission of education, service, and spiritual guidance, remaining a strong presence in the Catholic Church and the communities they continue to serve. The profound influence of the Ursuline Sisterhood on women's education and spiritual development in the beginning has altered their way of life in accordance with the changing world around them. When it would have been easier to give into pressures to give up, they chose to endure, setting them apart from other religious organizations and answering the question of what made them so unique.

⁸⁴ "Ursuline College to assist students impacted by Notre Dame College closure", Ursuline College <https://www.ursuline.edu/news/2024/02/29/ursuline-college-to-assist-students-impacted-by-notre-dame-college-closure> [accessed February 29, 2024].

Bibliography

- Brindle, Sister Edna Marie. interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, *Ursuline Sisters Project*, Youngstown State University. June 3, 1975.
- Carfagna, Rosemarie. "Angela Merici and the Education of Women." *Initiatives* 56, no. 3 (1994), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ej497352>.
- Casey, Sister Martina. interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, *The Ursuline Sisters Project*, Youngstown State University. March 12, 1975.
- Conroy, Sister Mary. interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, *The Ursuline Project*, Youngstown State University. February 28, 1975.
- Crandle, Marita Woywod. *New Orleans Vampires: History and Legend* (Charlestown, SC: The History Press, 2017).
- Dawson, Joyce Ann Taylor, "Ursuline Nuns, pensionnaires and needlework : elite women and social and cultural convergence in British Colonial Quebec City, 1760-1867", *Material History Bulletin*, no. 24, fall 1986.
<https://ethos.bl.uk/orderdetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.509511>.
- Deibel, Sister Rosemary. interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, *The Ursuline Project*, Youngstown State University. December 5, 1975.
- Dozois, Liliane C. "Constitutions of the Company of Saint Ursula".
www.istitutosecolareangelamerici.org. Last modified March 2019.
<https://www.istitutosecolareangelamerici.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Counsels-inglese.pdf>.
- Dunn, Marilyn. Review of *Spirituality, Gender, and the Self in Renaissance Italy: Angela Merici and the Company of St. Ursula (1474-1540)*, by Saint Angela Merici, *Catholic Historical Review* 94, no.3 (2008): 576-577.
<https://questia.com/library/journal/1p3-1509214901/spirituality-gender-and-the-self-in-renaissance>.
- Eberhart, Kathryn. interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, *The Ursuline High School Project*, Youngstown State University. November 17, 1975.
- Erdley, Debra. "Nuns who stood up to bishop at former Ursuline Academy to be honored with plaque". *Warren Tribune*, n.d. <http://triblive.com/news/2806910-74/slack-students-pittsburgh-register-historic-mansion-nuns-ursuline-2008-academy#axzz2mwa9mJVr>.

- Fickers, Bernadine. interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, *Experiences as an Ursuline Sister*, Youngstown State University. April 19, 1975.
- Hughes, Sister Marie. interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, *The Ursuline Nuns Project*, Youngstown State Unniversity. April 10, 1975.
- Jurcisin, Tina. *Ursuline College to assist students impacted by Notre Dame College closure*. Notre Dame College, February 29, 2024.
<https://www.ursuline.edu/news/2024/02/29/ursuline-college-to-assist-students-impacted-by-notre-dame-college-closure>.
- Keller-Lapp, Heidi. "Floating Cloisters and Heroic Women: French Ursuline Missionaries, 1639-1744" (Ph.D. diss., University of California San Diego, 2007", n.p. worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu.
<http://worldhistoryconnected.press.uillinois.edu/4.3/lapp.html>.
- Kerrigan, Sister Elizabeth. interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, *The Ursuline Project*, Youngstown State University. March 19, 1975.
- Koval, Sister Mary Alyce. interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, *Ursuline Sisters Project*, Youngstown State University. May 14, 1975.
- Lux-Sterritt, Laurence. "Nuns on the Move: Ursuline Nuns in France and English Ladies in the Early 17th Century." *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* no. 4: 7-23. 2005, https:// Cairn-int.info/article-e_rhmc_524_0007--nuns-on-the-move-ursuline-nuns-in-france.htm.
- Lynch, Anne Sister. *Where We've Been...Where We're Going: A History of the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown*. Youngstown, Ohio: Catholic Diocese of Youngstown, 1999.
- Mahoney, Sister Leila. *A Tree in the Valley*. (Toledo Ohio: The Ursuline Convent of the Sacred Heart, 1994).
- Mali, Anya. *Mystic in the new world : Marie de l'Incarnation 1599-1672* (Leiden: E.J. Brill.1996).
- McNicholas, Sister Patricia. "Preparing the Laity to Minister to the Economically Poor in Association with the Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown, Ohio a Roman Catholic Community of Women Religious." Ph.D diss.,Dayton University,1992.
- Nolan, Charles E. *The Old Ursuline Convent*. (New Orleans: Editions Du Signe.2011).
- Replier, Agnes. *Mère Marie of the Ursulines, a study in adventure*. (New York, NY: The Literary Guild of America, 1931).

Rogers, Regina. interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, *Life in the Ursuline community*, Youngstown State University. March 24, 1975.

"St. Angela Merici." *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 15, s.v.
<https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01481a.htm>.

Taylor, Troy. *Haunted New Orleans: History & Hauntings of the Crescent City*. (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010.)

Thomas, Trudelle. "Heed Not the Fall: Elegy as Myth Among the Ursuline Nuns." *The Journal of American Culture* 11 (2): 47-55 1988.
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1542-734x.1988.1102_47.x/abstract.

"The Ursulines." *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 15, s.v.
<https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01481a.htm>.

"Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown Awarded \$128,500 for renovation project". WFMJ News, last modified January 2024.
<https://www.wfmj.com/story/29520596/ursuline-sisters-of-youngstown-awarded-128500-in-grants-for-renovation-project>.

Vogel, Ettie Madeline. "The Ursuline Nuns in America: Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia." 214-43 n.d.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/44207426?seq=1>.

Vogelsang, Sister Darla Jean. *A Climate for Worship: Re-Imagining the Worship Space of a Religious Community*. (Chicago, IL: Loyola University of Chicago, 1988).

Weinheimer, Sister Laverne. interview by Dr. Donna DeBlasio, *The Ursuline Sisters Project* Youngstown State University. March 18, 1975.

Welsh, Thomas. *The Ursuline Sisters of Youngstown*. (Charlestown, NC: The History Press, 2024).