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The following is the finding aid for the St. Thomas Literary and Debating Society collection located at the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Archives. A finding aid is a catalog tool used in archives that briefly describes the material found in a collection. These records are not available digitally unless otherwise noted. [Researchers must make an appointment with an archivist to view the material.](#)

**St. Thomas Literary and Debating Society (St. Francis Seminary)
Records, 1873-1965
AS 23**

Volume

1.4 cubic feet

Access

Open/unrestricted.

Historical Note

The St. Thomas Debating Society was organized in 1873. Its purpose was to enable its members to become proficient in the art of public speaking. A further history of this student organization is unclear; the last available records for the St. Thomas Debating Society are from November 1875. This society appears to have disappeared, possibly to re-emerge as the St. Thomas Literary and Debating Society. There is conflicting information as to the date of this society's appearance. St. Francis Seminary catalogues from the years 1898-1907 indicate that this society was organized in 1875; the St. Francis Seminary catalogue published in 1908 and catalogues thereafter, state that the St. Thomas Literary and Debating Society was organized in 1884. In any case, this society's purpose was to give students practice in English composition, public speaking, and debating. One important feature of the society's work was the study and rendition of classical plays, including Shakespeare's dramas.

Scope and Content

Constitution and by-laws, minute books, and programs. Programs, photographs, and newspaper clippings are also bound or taped into the minute books. Membership lists are contained in the minute books.

Box and Folder List *This is a list of folders names within the collection. The folders have been arranged alphabetically. "B" is an abbreviation for box and "F" is an abbreviation for folder. This list will help the researcher narrow down exactly what folder they want to look at.*

Box	Folder	Folder Title
B 1	F 1	Constitution and By-Laws, 1912-1913
B 1	F 2	History of the St. Thomas Literary and Debating Society, 1932?, 1933?
B 1	F 3	Minutes, Constitution, and By-Laws, 1873-1875
B 1	F 4	Minute Book, 1888-1892
B 1	F 5	Minute Book, 1892-1896
B 1	F 6	Minute Book, 1896-1900
B 1	F 7	Minute Book, 1900-1906
B 1	F 8	Minute Book, 1912-1922
B 2	F 1	Minute Book, 1923-1933
B 2	F 2	Minutes, November-December 1933

Box	Folder	Folder Title
B 2	F 3	Minute Book, 1934-1938
B 3	F 1	Minute Book, 1938-1945
B 3	F 2	Minute Book, 1945-1948
B 3	F 3	Minute Book, 1948-1954
B 3	F 4	Minute Book, 1955-1962
B 4	F 1	Minute Book, 1962-1965
B 4	F 2	Papers read before the St. Thomas Literary and Debating Society by McEvoy, 1898-1902
B 4	F 3	Program Schedule for the second semester, 1931
B 4	F 4	Programs, n.d., 1900-1964
B 4	F 5	<u>Salesianum Revisited: A Centennial Volume of Verse</u> , 1956
B 4	F 6	Speech honoring Peter Leo Johnson, by Rev. Gordon Weber, 1937