



The following is the finding aid for the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Milwaukee 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.
[Genealogists should consult our genealogical resources guide.](#)
[Researchers must make an appointment with an archivist to view the material.](#)

**St. Thomas Aquinas Congregation (Milwaukee, Wis.)
Records, 1901-1994
MC 74**

Volume
19.75 cubic feet

Access
Open/unrestricted except for Attendance and School records, prenuptial files, financial records, and student transcripts

Administrative Note

St. Thomas Aquinas Church was founded in 1901 after Father Edward J. Blackwell received Archbishop Frederick X. Katzer's authorization to build a church for over one hundred English-speaking families in the northwest portion of the city. The land was purchased in February 1901 between Vliet and Brown streets, and the cornerstone of the new church was laid that June. The parish school was established in August of the following year and had an immediate enrollment of 120 pupils.

In 1913 parishioners decided to build a new church, convent, and rectory. These structures, which constitute the present buildings, were completed in 1914, and were dedicated on the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas (March 1915) before more than a thousand people. In November 1957 a fire of unknown origin started in the basement auditorium, causing an estimated \$65,000 worth of smoke damage to the church. Parishioners performed much of the work to restore the church. In 1976 the church's brick walls and statues were refurbished and the entire floor carpeted.

Due to the dwindling parishioner numbers and the resulting income shortage, St. Thomas Aquinas Church officially closed October 31, 1994.

Scope and Content *a brief description of the types of materials in the collection.*

Parish and school records of a Milwaukee Roman Catholic church created in the northwest section of the city in 1901. The parish records largely consist of articles of incorporation, meeting minutes, correspondence of parish priests and Archbishops of Milwaukee, financial records, parish council records, parishioner statistics, weekly bulletins, marriage case files, and jubilee histories and photographs. Records of the parish school mainly document enrollment, attendance, and student performance. Some class and graduation photographs of the 1950s-1980s are also included.

The most notable contents of the Administrative files are an oversize book of meeting minutes regarding the activities of church founders; thirty years of Father Blackwell's personal files (1901-1931); letters from various Archbishops of Milwaukee; Parish Council files (1972-1993) that document members' activities regarding such issues as church-related gatherings and declining parishioner numbers; and

jubilee histories that document the parish's Silver (1926), Golden (1951), and Diamond (1976) anniversaries.

The photograph files contain grade school class photos from 1949, 1962-1964, 1967-1968, 1970-1977 and 1980-1984. In most of these group shots, those pictured are not identified. Many photographs of graduating classes (sporadically spanning 1954-1987), the Parish Youth council (1959-1965), and the Golden and Diamond Jubilee celebrations are also included.

The School files extensively document enrollment, attendance, and the performance of parish school children from 1903-1944. This information is restricted.

The Marriage Case files contain records for thousands of couples who were married at St. Thomas Aquinas Church. This information is restricted.

The Financial files sporadically span 1903-1986 and regard parish finance, disbursements, investments, and tax and payroll information. This information is restricted.

The Banner series contains three 4 foot hangings dedicated to parish-related societies.

Student transcripts were added to the collection later. These transcripts also include the time period from when St. Thomas Aquinas Middle school was part of the Central City Catholic School System.

Box and Folder List *This is a list of folders names within the collection. The folders are listed alphabetically by series. "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
<i>Series 1: Administrative Files</i>		
B 1	F 1	Ante-Nuptial Agreements, 1937-1941
B 1	F 2	Archbishop of Milwaukee, Correspondence, 1913, 1938, 1944, 1947, 1949-1950
B 1	F 3	Articles of Incorporation and By-laws, 1935
B 1	F 4	Awards presented to Parish, 1986, 1990, 1992
B 16	F 1	Bequests, 1989-1994
B 1	F 5	Blackwell, Rev. E., Correspondence, 1901-1931
B 1	F 6	Blackwell, Rev. E., Golden Jubilee, 1937
B 9		Board of Directors, Meeting Minutes, 1901-1942
B 1	F 7	Bulletins, 1909-1911
B 1	F 8	Bulletins, 1926
B 1	F 9	Bulletins, 1931
B 1	F 10-11	Bulletins, 1960, 1962-1964
B 2	F 1-3	Bulletins, 1965, 1967-1971
B 2		Bulletins, June 1977-December 1977
B 3		Bulletins, 1981-1985
B 4		Bulletins, 1986-1990
B 5		Bulletins, 1991 (See also Box 38 & St Anne Church, MC 27, Box 42, Folder 3)
B 16		Bulletins, 1993
B 5	F 1	Diamond Jubilee (75 th), Committee Minutes, 1975-1976
B 9		Home and School Association, Meeting Minutes, 1934-1963
B 5	F 2	Insurance Policies for Parish and School, c.1965

Box	Folder	Folder Title
B 5	F 3	Insurance Receipts for staff, 1979-1984
B 5	F 4	Insurance Surveys of Congregation, 1932-1973
B 5	F 5	Kern, Fr. Jack, Farewell booklet, 1975
B 5	F 6	Last Wills and Testaments of Parish Priests and Donations of Parishioners, 1984-1987
B 5	F 7	McGarry, Rev. Francis J., Correspondence to, 1967-1969
B 5	F 8	News and Newsletters of Parish, 1987-1991
B 5	F 9	Organizational affiliations with parish, 1915-1937
B 5	F 10	Parish Council Records, 1972-1974
B 5	F 11	Parish Council Records, 1975-1976
B 6	F 1-8	Parish Council Records, 1977-1978-1993
B 6	F 9	Parish Statistics, 1965-1971
B 6	F 10	Parish Survey Summary, 1993
B 7	F 1	Parishioner Lists, 1991
B 7	F 2-5	Parishioner Registration Cards, n.d.
B 7	F 6	Pension Plans and Life Insurance Policies, 1977-1984
B 7	F 7	Proxies and Waivers, 1957-1969
B 7	F 8	Real Estate, 1911-1935
B 8	F 1	Receipts for "Stations of the Cross" Carvings, 1919-1920
B 8	F 2	Resolution on Borrowing Money, 1968-1969
B 8	F 3	St. Anne/St. Thomas Aquinas Collaboration, 1992
B 9		School, Address Lists, 1903-1918
B 8	F 4	Shanahan, Rev. John J., Correspondence, 1954-1955
B 9		Sick Calls, 1948-1963
B 8	F 5	Social Groups and Activities, Event Schedules, 1901-1937
B 8	F 6	Teacher's Manual, 1964
<i>Series 2: Photographs</i>		
B 10	F 1	Class Photographs, 1949
B 10	F 2	Class Photographs, 1962-1964
B 10	F 3	Class Photographs, 1967-1968
B 10	F 4	Class Photographs, 1970-1972
B 10	F 5	Class Photographs, 1972-1977
B 10	F 6	Class Photographs, 1980-1984
B 10	F 7	Diamond Jubilee, Text and Photos, 1976
B 10	F 8	Golden Jubilee, Pageant Text and Photos, 1951
B 10	F 9	Class Photographs, c. 1990
B 11	F 1	Parish Youth Council, 1959-1965
B 11	F 2	Parish Youth Council, Photos, 1959-1965
B 11	F 3	Parish Youth Council, Photos, 1959-1965
B 12		Class Photographs, 1954-1994 (not a full run)
<i>Series 5: Banners</i>		
		Holy Name Society, n.d.
		St. Thomas Aquinas Altar Society and Confraternity of Christian Mothers, n.d.
		Third Order of St. Francis, n.d.