

Margery Frisbie Papers ***1945-2008***

Creator: Margery Frisbie (1923-2021)
Extent: 1.25 linear foot (3 boxes)
Language: English
Repository: Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago

Administration Information

Access Restrictions: None.

Original Usage Restrictions: Copyright was not transferred to the Women and Leadership Archives.

Preferred Citation: Identification of item, date, box #, folder #, Margery Frisbie Papers, Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University Chicago.

Provenance: Margery Frisbie donated her papers to the Women and Leadership Archives on September 14, 1994 and June 30, 1997 (WLA1994.09 and WLA1997.10). Additional materials were delivered to Carolyn Farrell's office and picked up for the archives on September 14, 1994 by Valerie Brown (WLA2008.21).

Processor: Elizabeth A. Myers, October 17, 2002. Kristin Emery, February 2011.

Processing Information: Finding aid revised by Caroline Lynd, December 16, 2014. Addendum incorporated and finding aid updated by Laura Berfield, January 2025.

Separations: 0.25 linear feet of extraneous material was removed.

See Also: The Monsignor John J. Egan Papers (CJEG) held at the University of Notre Dame Archives and the Mundelein College Alumnae Folders.

Biographical History

Margery A. Rowbottom was born June 2, 1923 in Geneva, IL to Walter B. Rowbottom and Evelyn M. (Flood) Rowbottom. Margery graduated from Mundelein College in 1944 with a degree in Biology. After graduation, she worked as a chemist until 1948 when she became the Public Relations Director at Mundelein College. While she held this position in 1949, Mundelein hired Elizabeth Bentley (1908-1963), a spy for the Communist Party and the Soviet Union. Referred to as the "Red Spy Queen" in newspapers, Bentley had recently defected and converted to Catholicism. When Bishop Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979) sent word to Catholic schools requesting a job for Bentley, Mundelein offered her a teaching position. As Public Relations Director, Frisbie held a press conference at Mundelein in response to media interest in the school's new teacher. Here, she met a reporter for the *Chicago Daily News* named Richard Frisbie (1926-2018). The two were engaged four months later and married in June of 1950. The couple had eight children.

Margery, while raising her children, also worked as a columnist for *The New World* and as a children's book review editor for the *National Catholic Reporter*. Her interest in writing manifested in other ventures as well. She and her husband co-authored two works: *The Do-It-Yourself Parent* and *The Cana Couplet*, the newsletter for the Cana Conference. On her own, Margery wrote several works including histories of St. James Catholic Church, Arlington Heights Library, the First United Methodist Church, a collection of poetry about Arlington Heights, and most prominently, *An Alley in Chicago: The Ministry of a Parish Priest*, a history of the life and work of Monsignor John J. Egan. Margery Frisbie passed away on August 8, 2021.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of two boxes, spanning the years 1945-1997, with the bulk of materials from 1960 to 1990. The collection is divided into two sections: professional and research. The professional records contain copies of two of Margery Frisbie's publications, limited correspondence, and two audiotapes concerning her published work, *An Alley in Chicago*. The research records pertain almost exclusively to the life of Monsignor John J. Egan (1916-2001), including speeches, interviews, anecdotes about his life from others, and written remembrances of his own history within the ministry. Other records include comprehensive press, and conference notes, from Egan's activities as part of the CCUM and CANA. When correspondence is present, it is predominately between Egan's longtime assistant, Peggy Roach and Margery Frisbie. These papers are divided into two series, arranged alphabetically by subject and original order was maintained whenever possible.

Series 1: Professional, 1991-1997, undated, Box 1

Contains information related to Margery Frisbie's publishing activities, including copies of the published works, *An Alley in Chicago* and *Old-Timers Reunion: Reflecting on the Early Days of Arlington Heights*, a collection of poetry by Frisbie. Also present are two audiocassette tapes. Tape 1 is a recording of an Association of Chicago Priests meeting at Niles College in which *Alley in Chicago* is discussed, Tape 2 is an interview with Margery Frisbie concerning the same work, which took place at Northeastern Illinois University on the program *Vantage Point*.

Series 2: Research, 1945-1997, undated, Boxes 1-2

Includes detailed information of Monsignor John J. Egan's life and Ministry that served as the central topic of her book, *An Alley in Chicago*. The records include reminisces of his activities as a minister in Chicago, written by himself, as well as (requested) reminisces of others who knew him. Other papers include notes and conference materials from both CCUM and CANA, photocopies of press materials related to Egan's urban renewal programs, articles (published and non-published) written by Egan which also related to urban renewal/growth. Additional papers relate to Presentation Parish and School, the Hyde Park-Kenwood Area Program, and the Center for Pastoral and Social Ministry.

Series 3: Addendum 1, 1980-2005, Box 3

This series contains Addendum 1, an accrual of materials that were processed but not incorporated with the series above. Similar and/or related materials listed above may also be found here. Folders are arranged alphabetically by subject. Original order was maintained when possible, including two notebooks that had materials inserted in between pages. Materials consist of personal

correspondence, interview notes from the Mundelein College Oral History Project, two notebooks of research notes, a folder of miscellaneous handwritten notes, several drafts of “The Nun Who Stopped Traffic,” and a folder of writings on miscellaneous topics including: Mundelein College memories, Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (including individual members), and nuns in general. All material consists only of paper documents. Due to preservation concerns, the notebook covers have been removed and some of the original notebook pages were photocopied, and the originals were removed.

Subjects:

Arlington Heights
 Association of Chicago Priests
 CANA Conference
 Catholic Committee on Urban Ministry
 Center for Pastoral and Social Ministry
 Egan, John J. (1916-2001)
 Frisbie, Margery
 Greater Chicago Food Depository
 Hyde Park
 Kenwood
 National Conference of Catholic Bishops
 Presentation Parish
 Snodgrass, Gertrude
 Urban Renewal

Box	Folder	Title	Dates
		<i>Margery Frisbie Papers, 1945-1997, undated</i>	
		Series 1: Professional, 1991-1997, undated	
1	1	<i>An Alley in Chicago: The Ministry of a Parish Priest, First Edition</i>	1991
1	2	Correspondence	1997
1	3	<i>Old-Timers Reunion: Reflecting on the Early Days of Arlington Heights</i>	1997
		Series 2: Research, 1945-1997, undated	
1	4	Anecdotes of John J. Egan’s Life, by Egan	undated
1	5	Articles Written by Egan	1958
1	6	Association of Chicago Priests	1967
1	7	CANA Conference	1971
1	8	Center for Pastoral & Social Ministry	1978-1982
1	9	CCUM Conference, Press	1973-1982
1	10	CCUM Conference, Notes	1976-1979
1	11	Correspondence, Egan, Limited	undated
1	12	Correspondence, Egan, Limited	1988-1989
1	13	Honorary Degrees & Awards	1981-1989

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1	14	Hyde Park-Kenwood Urban Renewal Plan	1956-1983
1	15	National Conference of Catholic Bishops	1975
1	16	Notre Dame Archival Holding: John J. Egan, Donation List	1970
1	17	Audiocassette Tape 1: Association of Chicago Priests Meeting, including discussion of <i>An Ally in Chicago</i>	undated
1	18	Audiocassette Tape 2: <i>Vantage Point</i> Interview with Margery Frisbie, concerning <i>An Alley in Chicago</i>	undated
2	1	Presentation Parish & School	1945-1972
2	2	Press-John J. Egan	1958-1990
2	3	Reflections by Others of Egan and his Ministry	undated
2	4	“The Roman Catholic Church and Industrial Area Foundation,” Paper by Donna Myers	1966
2	5	Speeches, Egan	1961-1967
2	6	Speeches, Egan	1978-1990
2	7	SRI Report: Human Resources for Ministry Institute	1979-1982
		Series 3: Addendum 1, 1980-2005, undated	
3	1	Correspondence	1992-2005, undated
3	2	Mundelein College Oral History Project	1980-1988, undated
3	3	Notebook	1988
3	4	Notebook	1988
3	5	Notes	1988, 1992, undated
3	6	Writings: Miscellaneous	1993, undated
3	7	Writings: “The Nun Who Stopped Traffic...and Built a Skyscraper College”	1994