

**The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,  
Union Theological Seminary, New York**

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 10

Finding Aid for

**Bertha Mary Magdalen Mugrauer Papers, 1950**



Photo of Bertha Mugrauer from *Clarion Herald* Archives. Credit to: Claire Favrot Killeen, *Eardrums of the Heart: Empowering the Disadvantaged: Dr. Bertha Mugrauer and the Caritas Way* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000), xii.

Finding Aid prepared by: Leanora Lange, March 2012  
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**Summary Information**

Creator: Bertha Mary Magdalen Mugrauer, 1907 – 1968  
Title: Bertha Mary Magdalen Mugrauer Papers  
Inclusive dates: 1950  
Abstract: Bertha Mary Magdalen Mugrauer was professor at Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana; founded a chapter of Caritas, a women's religious organization including women of all races dedicated to working and living among the poor. Collection includes six microcards of Mugrauer's dissertation "A Cultural Study of Ten Negro Girls in an Alley" (Catholic University of America, 1950).  
Size: 1 box, 0.25 linear feet  
Storage: Onsite storage  
Repository: The Burke Library  
Union Theological Seminary  
3041 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
Email: [burkearchives@library.columbia.edu](mailto:burkearchives@library.columbia.edu)

### Administrative Information

- Provenance: Originally part of the independent Missionary Research Library, these records were moved with the MRL to the Brown Memorial Tower of Union Theological Seminary in 1929. In 1976 the records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- Access: Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to [burkearchives@library.columbia.edu](mailto:burkearchives@library.columbia.edu), or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible  
Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions: The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation: Item description, MRL 10: Bertha Mary Magdalen Mugrauer Papers, box #, folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

### Biography

Bertha Mary Magdalen Mugrauer was a professor of sociology at Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana, a member of the Commission on Human Rights (now Human Rights Commission), and the founder of Caritas, an interracial women's organization dedicated to serving the poor. Mugrauer's life work was largely devoted to fighting segregation and poverty.

Born in 1907, Mugrauer grew up in Philadelphia in a relatively poor Catholic family as the daughter of a streetcar conductor. She joined but then was asked to leave the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament as a young woman. Mugrauer earned a Bachelor's degree from Loyola University in 1945 and studied at the graduate level at the Catholic University of America, earning her Master's degree in 1947 and a doctorate in 1949. Her dissertation, entitled "A Cultural Study of Ten Negro Girls in an Alley," focuses upon the social conditions of African Americans in the United States. According to the microcards in the collection, Mugrauer's dissertation was published in 1950.

Mugrauer founded Caritas in New Orleans shortly after earning her doctorate. Through this women's organization, she dedicated herself to living and working among the poor regardless of race. As part of Caritas missions, Mugrauer lived and worked in New Orleans, Mexico, and Guatemala.

### Sources:

- Anderson, Bentley R. "Interracial Activism: Belief in Practice 1948-1949." *Black, White, and Catholic: New Orleans Interracialism, 1947-1956*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005.
- Killeen, Claire Favrot. *Eardrums of the Heart: Empowering the Disadvantaged: Dr. Bertha Mugrauer and the Caritas Way*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2000.

**Collection Scope and Content Note**

The collection consists of six 3-inch by 5-inch microcards that contain Mugrauer's entire 239 page dissertation, "A Cultural Study of Ten Negro Girls in an Alley." Bibliographic information is included at the top of each card.

**Processing**

Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes.

**Further resources**

The University Archives and Special Collections at Xavier University of Louisiana contain further materials on Mugrauer, as cited by Anderson in *Black, White, and Catholic: New Orleans Interracialism, 1947-1956*. These archives can be found at [www.xula.edu/library/archives](http://www.xula.edu/library/archives).

**Contents list**

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	"A Cultural Study of Ten Negro Girls in an Alley" (six microcards)