

# Guadalupe Center Collection (SC20)

## *Introduction*

Established in 1919, the Guadalupe Center originally served as a settlement house and gathering place for the growing community of Mexican immigrants residing on the West Side of Kansas City. The center offered a variety of programs, including medical clinics, classes, music and dance groups, sports teams, and social clubs. The Guadalupe Center Collection contains scrapbooks, photographs, programs, histories, and records that document an early period of the organization's activities.

## *Descriptive Summary*

Creator: Dorothy Gallagher and Guadalupe Centers, Inc.  
Title: Guadalupe Center Collection  
Dates: 1918-1977  
Size: 2.5 linear feet, 5 boxes  
Collection Number: SC20

## *Donor Information*

Gift, 1977, Dorothy Gallagher. Additional materials donated by the organization's Board of Directors in 1983.

## *Citation Note*

Guadalupe Center Collection (SC20), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

## *Administrative Information*

Additional Forms Available: Use copies are available for the scrapbooks and photograph albums. Images from the photograph albums have also been digitized and are available on [www.kchistory.org](http://www.kchistory.org).

Related Collections: Additional information about the Guadalupe Center may be found in the following: Vertical File: Guadalupe Center; SC61-1 Hispanic Oral History Collection; SC73 Agnes Ward Amber Club Collection; Manuscript File: Gallagher, Dorothy; and *Guadalupe Center: 50 Years of Service* by John T. Duncan and Severiano Alonzo [MV-BROWSE ART&SOC 331.85 D91G]. Further information on immigrant communities and charitable organizations may be found by searching the Missouri Valley Special Collection local history collections and the main Library Catalog.

### *Historical Sketch*

The Guadalupe Center was established by the Agnes Ward Amberg Club in 1919 to assist the growing community of Mexican immigrants residing on the West Side of the city. Working closely with members of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph and Our Lady of Guadalupe parish, the center provided health clinics, adult and youth educational programs, translator services, scouting, sports teams, social and musical clubs, and a dedicated meeting space.

First located in the rectory of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church (now a shrine) at 907 W 23<sup>rd</sup> St., the Guadalupe Center moved down the street in the 1930s to a group of three small, white houses at what is currently 1015 Avenida Cesar E. Chavez. These houses would eventually all be torn down to make room for the center's Mexican hacienda-inspired headquarters, opened in 1936. A dispute in 1974 with the Catholic Diocese, which had owned the building since 1944, caused the center to relocate to 2641 Belleview for a time. But the Guadalupe Center returned to the building in 1991 and completed an extensive renovation and expansion project in 2003. Now known as Guadalupe Centers, Inc., it is considered one of the oldest – if not the oldest – active Latino organizations in the U.S.

The majority of this collection was created by the center's long-time resident director, Dorothy Gallagher. A teacher and social worker, Miss Gallagher joined the Amberg Club in 1925. She moved to the West Side shortly thereafter, immersing herself in assisting the community. The daughter of a prominent druggist, Miss Gallagher and her family donated the land and financed the construction of the Guadalupe Center's headquarters. She lived and worked at the center without pay until retiring in 1944. Miss Gallagher died in 1982 at the age of 88.

### *Scope and Content Note*

This collection contains materials relating to the activities, programs, and history of the Guadalupe Center. The scrapbooks and photograph albums were created and donated by Dorothy Gallagher, and largely document the events during her tenure from 1926 through 1944. The operational records, historical accounts, and additional items were donated a few years later by the center's Board of Directors via John T. Duncan. The collection is arranged by item type, subject, and chronologically where possible.

#### [Series 1: Scrapbooks, 1918-1944, 1968, 1972, 1974](#)

The four scrapbooks in this series contain newspaper clippings, programs, brochures, and other ephemera relating to the Guadalupe Center. Former director Dorothy Gallagher included a detailed description of the scrapbooks at the time of her donation, which provides insight into the events and subjects that are and are not depicted. The series also contains a brief history of the center written by Board Member John T. Duncan. Use copies of these scrapbooks are available.

**Series 2: Photograph albums, ca. 1920s-ca. 1940s**

This series consists of three photograph albums containing images of activities and people associated with the Guadalupe Center, including clinics, classes, festivals, camping, families, clubs, sports, parades, and trips. The photos are black and white, various sizes, and most are unidentified. A set of 43 photos at the end of Album 3 were likely taken during the year Dorothy Gallagher spent as a relief worker in France shortly after the end of World War II. The photos have been removed from the black scrapbook paper they were originally glued to for preservation reasons. Use copies of the photo albums, showing the photos' original arrangement on the pages, are available, and digitized photos may be found on [www.kchistory.org](http://www.kchistory.org).

**Series 3: Operational records, histories, and assorted materials, 1919-1977 and n.d.**

Items in this series include reports, minutes, organizational records, historical accounts and promotional materials written by and for individuals associated with the Guadalupe Center.

***Collection Inventory*****Series 1: Scrapbooks, 1918-1944, 1968, 1972, 1974**

- f. 1 "Guadalupe Center, 1922-1972" by John T. Duncan, 1972
- f. 2 "Introduction to Scrapbooks of Guadalupe Center, 1936-1944" by Dorothy Gallagher, 9/1979
- f. 3-5 Scrapbook #1, 1918-1930
- f. 6-8 Scrapbook #2, 1931-1934 and 1974
- f. 9-11 Scrapbook #3, 1931-1938
- f. 12-19 Scrapbook #4, 1938-1944 and 1968

**Series 2: Photograph albums, ca. 1920s-ca. 1940s**

- f. 20-23 Photograph album #1, ca. 1920s-1930s
- f. 24-27 Photograph album #2, ca. 1930s
- f. 28-30 Photograph album #3, ca. 1940s

**Series 3: Operational records, histories, and assorted materials, 1919-1977 and n.d.**

- f. 31 Annual reports, 1925-1973
- f. 32 Board member lists and meeting minutes, 1973-1977 and n.d.
- f. 33 Guadalupe Center articles of incorporation and constitution, and Amberg Club organization information, 1940, 1946, and n.d.
- f. 34 Office correspondence, 1965-1974
- f. 35 Program scripts for "Your Church and Mine" and "The People Act," and assorted music, 1965 and n.d.
- f. 36 Assorted histories remembrances, and descriptions of center activities, n.d.

- f. 37 Thesis, incomplete history, and objectives of the Guadalupe Center, n.d.  
**NOTE:** These materials are believed to have been written by Sister Rodriguez.
- f. 38 “History of the Guadalupe Area” and detailed overview of services and operations, n.d.
- f. 39 “A History of Guadalupe Center, Kansas City, Missouri” by Sister Michaela, 12/18/1959
- f. 40 “Origin, History and Purpose of Guadalupe Center” by Thomas E. Purcell, n.d.
- f. 41 “History of Guadalupe Center” by John T. Duncan and Severiano Alanzo, ca. 1972
- f. 42 Histories of Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 1944 and n.d.
- f. 43 Agnes Ward Amberg Club yearbook, newspaper clippings, and brochures, 1919, 1938, 1957, and n.d.
- f. 44 Invitation, pamphlets, and newsletters, 1957-1972
- f. 45 Reports on Christmas assistance programs, 1969-1972
- f. 46 Correspondence and receipts regarding Christmas assistance programs, 1965-1966

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