

*This exhibit of the Sisters of Notre Dame was highly commended and at the close of the Fair, which lasted six months, a diploma and medal were awarded to fifteen of our houses in Massachusetts, Lowell's parish and day schools being among the favored ones. See XIII., Columbus, Queen Isabella, and*

## Annals from the Archives

# Dorothy Godfrey Wayman and the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur



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Dorothy Godfrey Wayman during her tenure as Reference Librarian for the Friedsam Memorial Library [1955-1962] at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, NY

Image from archives.sbu.edu

—The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur recorded a variety of events in their convents annals. These included school activities, transfers of sisters to other communities, as well as local events that often had national significance. The Annalist for the Convent at the Academy of Notre Dame in Tyngsboro, MA kept rather detailed accounts, which offer insight into the lives of the students and sisters.

In May of 1950, the Annalist in Tyngsboro wrote with some excitement about the lecture to be given by Dorothy Wayman on Journalism and Catholic authors. Though her name is not familiar now, Dorothy Godfrey Wayman was well known, not only in the Boston area, but also in the Catholic community. Born Dorothy Godfrey in San Bernardino, California in 1883, she was sent by her Episcopalian parents to school at Mount Saint Mary's Convent in Hookset, New Hampshire. It was there she first learned of the Catholic faith. After graduation, she attended Bryn Mawr and then transferred to the Simmon's School of Social Workers in Boston, where she completed her Bachelor's Degree in 1914. In 1915, she married Charles Wayman and they had three sons. In 1918, the family traveled to Japan, where they lived until 1923. Around this time, Charles left Dorothy and their sons, though several biographies state that he died in the 1923 earthquake in Japan. No doubt that was done to protect Dorothy from gossip regarding their relationship. Dorothy eventually divorced Charles in 1929. Left on her own with three small sons, Dorothy had to find a way to support her family. She turned to writing.

Using her years in Japan as inspiration, she wrote two books, *An Immigrant in Japan* and *Powdered Ashes: A Story of Modern Japan* which the Houghton Mifflin Company in Boston published in 1926 under the pen name Theodate Geoffrey. In between her work on those books, she was also a reporter and managing editor for the *Falmouth Enterprise*. And from 1924 on, she was the Cape Cod correspondent for the *Boston Globe*. Unlike many women journalists of her time, her articles covered more than recipes and interviews of politician's wives. She reported on trials, crimes and other social issues facing the day. She didn't just wait for stories to come to her, she hunted for them as well. In 1929, upon learning that Charles Lindbergh had moored his yacht off of Woods Hole on Cape Cod, she hurried there hoping for a chance to interview him. She waited in the dark until the lights turned on in his ship before rowing her small boat out to interview him. The article was published in *The Boston Globe* on June 4, 1929.

In addition for her work for the *Globe*, she also sold articles to the *Saturday Evening Post*, *American Heritage*, *Quaker History*, *Franciscan Studies*, *Catholic Historical Review* and others. In 1933, she became part of the editorial staff of the *Boston Globe*. Because of her years in Japan and her fluency with the language, she wrote often of her travels and experiences in that land as tensions between the U.S. and Japan increased. About a year before the Pearl Harbor attack, she visited Hong Kong and wrote of her impressions of the people and situation. During those years, she began working on a biography of Edward

Sylvester Morse, an American archaeologist and zoologist who had died in 1925. It was published by Harvard University Press in 1942. Among her twelve published books were also biographies of Cardinal William O'Connell of Boston and David Walsh, a former governor of Massachusetts.

Around this time she began receiving instructions from Fr. Francis, the archdeacon of the Jesuits at Boston College. And in 1949, not long before her talk at the Academy in Tyngsboro, she was baptized at St. Mary's Church at Boston College. She also became a member of the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, which was formed to assist prisoners, parolees and ex-convicts.

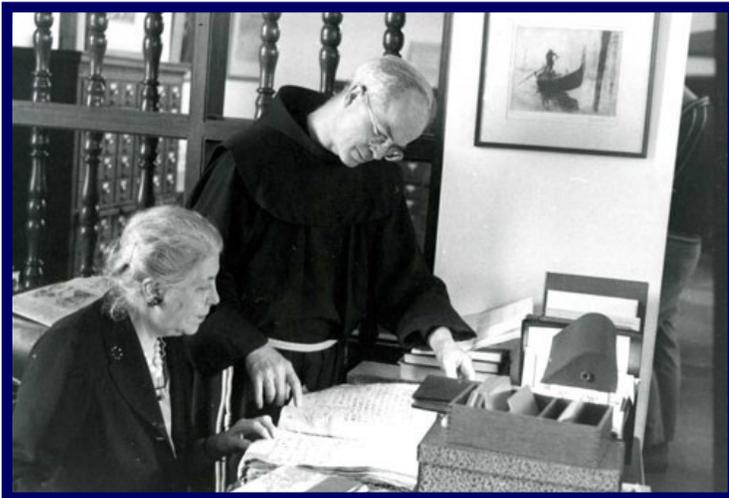
In 1950, the students of the Academy in Tyngsboro invited her to speak. The *Annalist* wrote of the student's meeting Wayman at the Lowell Depot. "*Two of the graduates formed the reception committee at the Lowell depot and rode to Tyngsboro with Mrs. Wayman. . . The subject of her talk was 'Journalism and Opportunities for Catholic Writers. . . Mrs. Wayman had originally planned to speak about her coming into the Church, but because of the recent troubles at Boston College over doctrinal points, she wrote that she 'would keep to her own field.'*"

The doctrinal troubles the *Annalist* referred to was the recent controversy regarding the Jesuit priest, Fr. Leonard Feeney, who helped form St. Benedict's Center in Boston. He published many anti-Semitic articles, while preaching there was no salvation outside the Catholic Church. He eventually came into conflict with Cardinal Cushing. Several priests at Boston College were dismissed from their teaching staff when it was learned they supported Feeney and the St. Benedict Center. Feeney was eventually ex-communicated from the Church. But because Wayman had close ties to Boston College and had been instructed by a priest at Boston College, she felt the controversy was too close to discuss her recent baptism held there.

The *Annalist* wrote that, "*It was an inspiring talk and instructive, too. . . The girls were invited to ask questions and this they did—some asking some very good questions which brought forth still further lights on the field of Journalism. . . We hope to have the pleasure of hearing Mrs. Wayman again.*"

That opportunity doesn't seem to have come. In 1955, Wayman accepted a position as the reference librarian for the Friedsam Memorial Library at St. Bonaventure College in St. Bonaventure, New York. But she did more than act as the reference librarian. She delved into the history of the collection as well as translated many articles for the library. She continued her writing by submitting articles to the local newspaper, the *Olean Times Herald*.

Interestingly enough, before her death, all three of her sons changed their last names from Wayman—their father's name—to her maiden name of Godfrey. They wanted to honor all the sacrifices she made on their behalf. Dorothy Godfrey Wayman died at her home in Olean, New York on October 30, 1975.



Dorothy Godfrey Wayman with the  
Library Director of Friedsam Memorial  
Library at St. Bonaventure University,  
Fr. Irenaeus Herscher, OFM

Image from [archives.sbu.edu](http://archives.sbu.edu)

### Sources consulted for this article

- ◆ Academy of Notre Dame, Tyngsboro, Massachusetts Convent Annals, 1932-1972.
- ◆ *Boston Globe* Archives 1872-2022.
- ◆ Dorothy G. Wayman Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.
- ◆ College of the Holy Cross Archives and Special Collections, Dorothy Wayman Papers, 1890-1969.
- ◆ Archives, St. Bonaventure University, [archives.sbu.edu](http://archives.sbu.edu)