

Introduction: What Kind of History is this History?

When one reviews what Francis of Assisi wrote, one is struck by how “unoriginal” most of his compositions were. Most were a pastiche of scripture and historical documents of the Church. Such an approach to composition reflected his humility, suggesting that there was nothing higher or truer than Scripture, so he would “write” with the words and phrases of this highest and truest language rather than the paltry inventions of his own creation.

This is a humble Franciscan history of Franciscans, and is thus, following the composition methods of our founder, a pastiche of a 100 years of voices in the Province of the Americas. Rather than comment upon papers or articles, the papers or articles are presented whole; so, in one fashion, this history is an **anthology** by many authors. Many gifted people over the last 100 years wrestled with many topics in the life of a tertiary, and the greatest acknowledgement we can pay to them is to read what they wrote. As 21st century Internet-experienced “readers”, we are accustomed to a more visual presentation of information. Thus you will find these pages filled with the pictures, diagrams, and tables so that this history is also a **scrapbook** of what we looked like and who we were over the past 100 years. This history also has more **flesh and blood stories** written by those who experienced them rather than a comprehensive collection of facts.

We begin by looking at the big picture of the Province and its development over the last 100 years primarily using the most basic data in the annual directories, names and addresses. These directories were published sporadically in 1926, 1935, and 1948 until becoming regularized in the 1950s. One reason to look at such a “big picture” is because the specifics of the first 50 years of the Province are missing. Only the London Custodia (“Custodia” meant what we experience as “regional gatherings”) and the New York Custodia left any kind of record of their work and life prior to 1950. In fact for the first 50 years of this Third Order Province, recorded notice of any kind only appeared in the First Order’s *Little Chronicle* newsletter.

The American Province’s epoch year was 1968 when the independent Third Order Secular Order of Franciscans, American Congregation of Franciscans (TSF) joined with the British Third Order, Society of St. Francis (TSSF). Simultaneously with this union was the beginning of the independent existence of the Province of the Americas. Such a self-conscious existence required governance (e.g. the creation of a Corporation and a Standing Committee with membership primarily drawn from tertiaries), record keeping in Chapter minutes, and the establishment of communication networks, notably the *Franciscan Newsletter/Times* and the *Information Sheet*. Much of the content of this book is drawn from these sources.

The first eight chapters of the book use the leaders of various eras to organize the historical information:

- Fr. Joseph was the leader of the Third Order Secular of Franciscans, American Congregation of Franciscans (TSF) from 1917 to 1966;
- Fr. Paul was his successor from 1966 to 1968, and he along with the *Third Order Committee* took TSF into TSSF;
- John Scott was the first tertiary Guardian from 1973-80;
- Kale King, 1980-81;
- Dee Dobson, 1981-90;
- Alden Whitney, 1990-96; and
- Anita Catron, from 1997 to 2002.

Then events of the Province became less easy to organize around single individuals, and so the next four chapters look at themes, projects, discussions or events that overlap the terms of individual Guardians or Ministers Provincial:

- the integration of Brazil’s Order of St. Francis (OSF) and the Province of the Americas;
- the creation of the Safe Community and Conflict Resolution;
- our final act of independence from the First Order, the choosing of our own Bishop Protector;
- the evolution of the Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation network (JPIC); and
- The Canadian story in our Province.

The next four chapters again organize events using the terms of the Ministers Provincial:

- Masud Ibn Syedullah, 2002-05;
- Ken Norian, 2005-11;
- John Brockmann, 2011-4; and
- Tom Johnson, 2014-

The final chapter finally returns to work that transcends any individual’s term of office for it celebrates the work of the many authors of our Province. From Desmond Lionel Morse-Boycott’s 1929 book, *Ten Years in a London Slum*, to Susan Pitchford’s 2014 book, *The Sacred Gaze*; from Emmett Jarrett and Hugo Muller’s poetry to works of spiritual anthropology in Stuart Schlegel’s 1987 book, *Wisdom from a Rainforest*, to considerations of health care in William F. Haynes’s 2010 book, *Is There a God in Health Care?*, tertiaries in the Province of the Americas have written many important books over a very long period of time.

For almost a 100 years this Province’s tertiaries have worked to fulfill the Principle of Day 18: *In particular some of us accept the*

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duty of contributing, through research and writing, to a better understanding of the church's mission in the world: the application of Christian principles to the use and distribution of wealth; questions concerning justice and peace; and of all other questions concerning the life of faith.

Chapter 1: First the Forest—How the Province of the Americas Evolved

1926

Though founded in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1917, a directory of the Province was not created until a reorganization of the Third Order in 1926. In 1918, Father Joseph was invited by the Bishop of Fond du Lac Wisconsin to move from Cincinnati, Ohio to Merrill, Wisconsin where he established the First Order Brothers of the Province in 1919, the Second Order, the Poor Clares, in 1922, and professed the first tertiary, Mrs. Mary Humphrey, on June 8, 1923. Thus it should not come as a surprise that the first center of tertiary activity of the 37 professed members and novices was centered in Wisconsin and Illinois (the “biretta belt”^{*}). Other groups of Tertiaries gathered in New York/New Jersey/Pennsylvania. In his June 1925 letter (posted on the TSSF website in *Historical Documents*), Father Joseph lamented that “a good many people apply to join the Order, enroll themselves as postulants and after a month or two cease reporting, and even some who have been clothed [a.k.a. “noviced”] cease reporting and so have to be dropped.... Apparently the monthly report

is the hardest rule to keep, but it is by all means the most important, for few people will go on keeping the Rule without such constant spur, and, for most, the only contact the tertiary has with the Order is the monthly report.”

Distribution of TSF 1926



** Expression for dioceses in the vicinity of the Great Lakes that were once considered to be characterized by Anglo-catholic practices. The term is derived from the fondness of some Anglo-catholic clergy for wearing biretta hats.*

1935

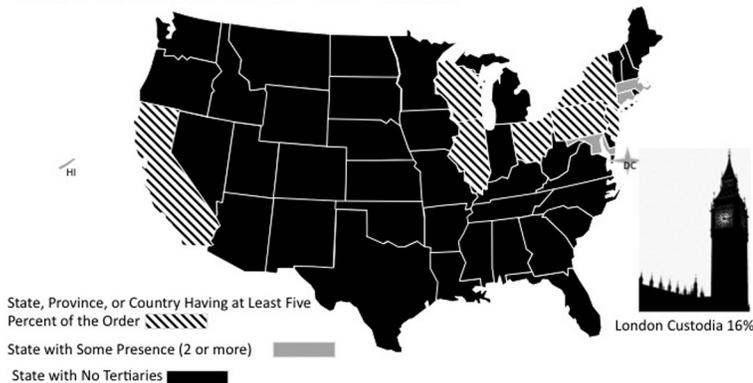
Nine years later in 1935, the Province doubled in its membership to 75, and moved its center of activity beyond Wisconsin, Illinois, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania to California and London.

In 1928, Father Joseph had moved the headquarters of the First Order to Mount Sinai, Long Island, in New York from Merrill Wisconsin, and the Second Order Poor Clares also relocated to Maryhill in Mount Sinai. (This land was bequeathed by Fr. Stephen’s family.)

By 1935 the membership had matured with nearly 80% of the members professed and only 10% novices and 10% postulants.

With the 1935 Directory one can begin to look at the longevity of those professed or in formation. For example, in the picture of a 1926 novicing (“clothing”) with Father Joseph in the photo on page 19, one does not find the newly “clothed” Paul Everest’s name on the roll of the next Directory in 1935. In fact, that Directory indicated that only 15% of those professed or noviced in 1926 continued in the Order (or had died while in the Order).

Distribution of of TSF 1935

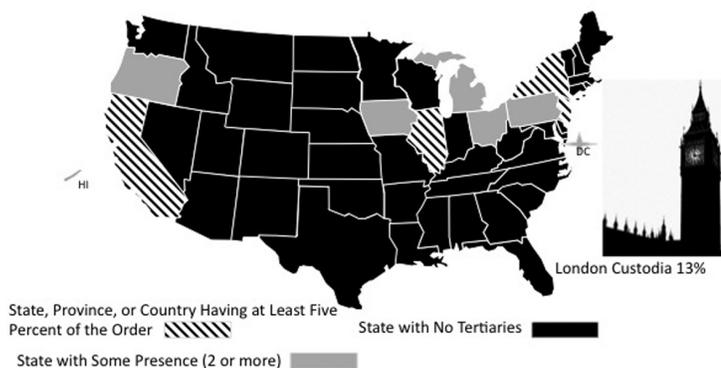


1948

Overall membership after WW II dropped 16% to 63. The distribution of the membership moved from concentrations in a few states and London now to a wider dispersion of members in six new states (indicated in gray): Iowa, Michigan, Indiana, Washington DC, Ohio, and Oregon. Also, for the first time, a place that was once a center of tertiary activity, Wisconsin, ceases to be a center of tertiary activity. The fact that the First and Second Orders had left Wisconsin in 1928 strongly suggests the reason for the diminished Third Order activity in Wisconsin.

Longevity of those professed or noviced was increasing with nearly 43% remaining from the 1926 directory—or 20 years in the Order—and from the 1935 directory—or at least 13 years in the the Order. So as of 1948, longevity of the members of the Order had dramatically increased.

Distribution of of TSF 1948



Distribution of of TSF 1955

State, Province, or Country Having at Least Five Percent of the Order 

State with Some Presence (2 or more) 

State with No Tertiaries 



London Custodia 19%

Distribution of of TSF 1960

State, Province, or Country Having at Least Five Percent of the Order 

State with Some Presence (2 or more) 

State with No Tertiaries 



London Custodia 16%

Distribution of of TSSF 1972

State or Country Having at Least Five Percent of the Order 

State with Some Presence (2 or more) 

State with No Tertiaries 

English Fellowship Removed from Province



Distribution of of TSSF 1982

State, Province, or Country Having at Least Five Percent of the Order 

State with Some Presence (2 or more) 

State with No Tertiaries 



1955

Seven years later, the Order had grown by 120% to 148 professed and novices. The percentage of the Province's membership composed by the London Custodia had grown, and now tertiaries were gathering numbers in three provinces of Canada. Additionally, numbers of tertiaries were gathering in Colorado, Minnesota and Florida, while diminishing in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Only New York and Illinois continue as populous centers of TSF from 1926 Directory, and California remains from the 1935 Directory. The Order was also becoming younger with a larger percentage of the Province being in formation as postulants and novices.

Longevity of those professed or noviced diminishes to 31% remaining: from the 1926 directory (nearly 30 years in the Order); from the 1935 directory (at least 20 years in the Order) and from the 1948 directory (at least 7 years in the Order).

1960

Five years later, the Order basically remained steady at 146 professed and novices. No new centers of tertiary activity appear, but tertiaries vocations popped up in new states, especially in the South: Texas, New Mexico, and Georgia mark something new. The percentage of the Province composed by the London Custodia remained steady, as do the tertiaries gathering in three provinces of Canada. The Order continued the trend begun in 1955 of becoming younger with larger percentages of the Province being in formation as postulants and novices.

Longevity of those professed or noviced decreased to 17% remaining: from the 1926 directory (nearly 34 years in the Order); from the 1935 directory (at least 25 years in the Order); from the 1948 directory (at least 12 years in the Order).

1972

The Directory for 1968 has yet to be found, but it would have shown a tectonic shift in the Order that will be discussed at length in Chapter 2. In 1967 the Third Order Secular of Franciscans, American Congregation of Franciscans, merged with The Third Order, Society of St. Francis, headquartered in England. One immediate consequence was the disappearance of the London Custodia of the American Congregation of Franciscans; 16% of the whole Third Order Secular of Franciscans, American Congregation of Franciscans disappeared. There is no indication of where they went.

Also by 1972, the Third Order in the Americas had begun to lead a much more independent existence in relation to the First and Second Orders. There was a Third Order Chapter and a Third Order Guardian. The Order increased by 50% to 219 professed members and novices. Such a dramatic increase continued for the next twenty years to the mid-1990s. No new centers of tertiary activity appear, but the spread of tertiaries to new states, especially again in the South: Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and North Carolina; in the West: Arizona and Washington State, as well as the re-emergence in the Midwest: Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana mark something new. The Order quite dramatically reversed the trend begun in 1955 of becoming younger. In 1972 there seemed to be a dramatic fall in the numbers in formation to only 16% of all members and 84% of all members professed.

(Because the 1972 Directory—as well as '73, '74' and '75—did not include profession dates I have had to use the 1976 Directory to determine longevity. With this in mind, 19% of the Order was professed or noviced for at least 16 years.)

1982

The Order increased by 40% to 309 professed members and novices. A new center of tertiary activity appeared in Arizona, and the appearance of tertiary vocations to new states becomes widespread now with only 10 states without any members. In 1982 the general trend in numbers in formation returns back to its earlier percentages with 51% of all members and 49% of all members professed. Including the recently deceased, 11% of the Order had been professed or noviced for at least 22 years.

Distribution of TSSF 1995

State or Country Having at Least Five Percent of the Order 
 State with Some Presence (2 or more) 
 State with No Territories 
 Not on Map: Part of Top Five as of 1995: Trinidad & Tobago



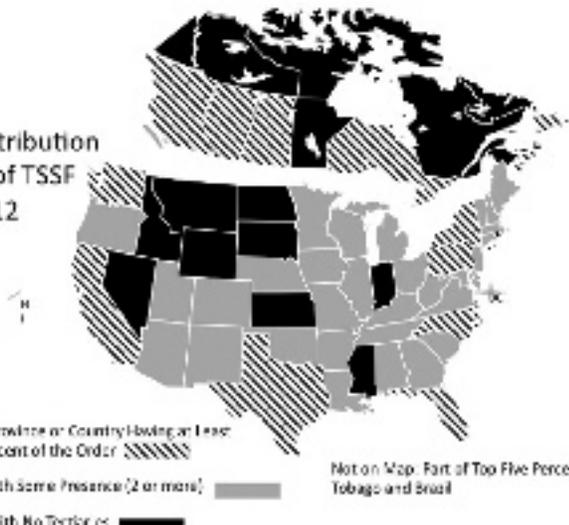
Distribution of TSSF 2002

State, Province, or Country Having at Least Five Percent of the Order 
 State with Some Presence (2 or more) 
 State with No Territories 
 Not on Map: Part of Top Five as of 1995: Trinidad & Tobago

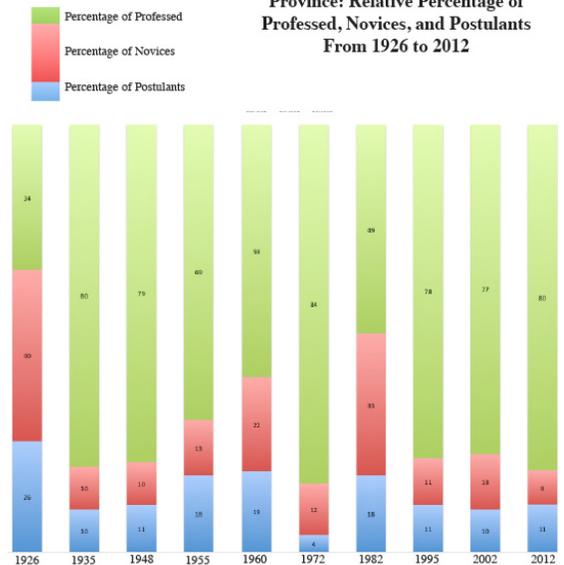


Distribution of TSSF 2012

State, Province or Country Having at Least Five Percent of the Order 
 State with Some Presence (2 or more) 
 State with No Territories 
 Not on Map: Part of Top Five Percent: Trinidad & Tobago and Brazil



Changing Makeup of the American Province: Relative Percentage of Professed, Novices, and Postulants From 1926 to 2012



1995

The Order experienced its largest increase of 117% to 672 professed members and novices. Since 1968 and the disappearance of the English Custodia at the time of Third Order consolidation, there had not been centers of Tertiary activity outside the US border except in Canada. However, with this Directory we find that there are new centers of tertiary activity where the 1st Order Brothers had traveled in Trinidad and Tobago.

Texas also became a center of Tertiary activity for the first time.

In 1995 there was a dramatic fall in the numbers in formation to only 22% of all members with 78% of all members professed. These numbers and percentages remain fairly constant for the next couple of decades.

2002

The 2002 Directory indicates that the Order experienced the second decrease of its numbers since 1948—a drop of about 20% to 548 professed members and novices.

The 2002 Directory continued to show centers of tertiary activity outside the US borders in four provinces in Canada, as well as in Trinidad and Tobago. North Carolina also became a center of Tertiary activity for the first time.

In 2002 there seems to be steady state numbers in formation to 22% of all members and 78% of all members professed.

2012

The Order remained somewhat at a steady state, although there was a drop of 10 members to 538 professed members and novices.

The 2012 Directory continued to show centers of tertiary activity outside the US borders in now five different provinces in Canada, in Trinidad and Tobago, and now for the first time in Brazil. Washington State also became a center of Tertiary activity for the first time.

In 2012 there was to be steady state of the proportion of membership in formation at 19% with 80% members of all members professed.

Overall Description of the Macro-movements of the Province of the Americas

The Province changes. It changes from a core center of activity in the Midwest to a general distribution across the Province, across national boundaries, and with new centers of activity spread from East to West, North to South. The Third Order in this Province escapes from being an artifact of the “biretta belt” to crossing into other expressions and experiences of the Anglican communion.

Like a stone thrown into a pond, there is initially much activity in the center, but then it passes out further and further into new parts of the pond.

New York (from 1926) and California (from 1935) surely benefit in their persistence of tertiary activity from the presence of the 1st Order brothers and sisters. Just as Wisconsin and Illinois see diminished activity as the 1st and 2nd Orders move elsewhere.

The Province continues its existence as an older Order in that the percentage of those professed grows larger whereas those in Formation decreases.

	1926	1935	1948	1955	1960	1972	1982	1995	2002	2012	
New York	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	1
Illinois	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	2
California		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	3
Wisconsin	■	■	○	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	4
Pennsylvania		■	□	○	□	■	■	■	■	■	5
London Custodia		■	■	■	■						6
Ohio	■	■	□	□	○	○	□	□	□	□	7
New Jersey	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	8
Florida				■	■	■	■	■	□	■	11
Colorado				■	■	□	□	□	□	□	9
Minnesota				■	□	□	■	□	□	□	10
British Columbia				□	□	□	□	■	■	■	13
Ontario				□	□	□	□	■	■	■	14
Alberta				□	□	○	○	○	■	■	15
Texas					□	□	□	■	□	■	16
Arizona						□	■	□	□	□	12
Trinidad/Tobago								■	■	■	18
North Carolina						□	□	□	■	■	20
Saskatchewan/Manitoba									■	■	17
Washington State						□	□	□	□	■	19
Brazil										■	21

■ 5% of all Members of the Order with □ 2 or more Members of the Order ○ Absence of Any Members of the Order