

Casey Linsey

Undergraduate Research Award

27 February 2009

### Essay

Last semester, I had the opportunity to take Dr. Rosenthal's History seminar course, Hist 550: The Rise of Los Angeles. Taking the class was a unique chance for me as a sophomore, non-History major.. When Dr. Rosenthal first mentioned the fact that the course would require a twenty-page research paper using materials from archives, I took a deep breath. I had written a primary-source paper once before, but I focused on a single source. Moreover, the professor in that class had guided us in choosing our topics. The source came from a published book in the main section of the library and I used many of the materials from the class to add to my analysis. For this class, I would have to choose my own topic, the bulk of my research would need to come from archives, and I would most likely not rely upon course materials for analysis. To add to my worries, Dr. Rosenthal mentioned that the research paper would be an original contribution to the study of Los Angeles. Nevertheless, I welcomed the challenge.

Before I could begin to do any research, I needed to decide what to write about. I had to figure out which topic not only dealt with an aspect of Los Angeles history between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, but also deeply interested me. If the subject matter did not have any significance to me, I knew I would not be excited to go to the archives and find research materials, let alone write a twenty-page paper. On a Saturday afternoon when I was walking around campus, I saw a wedding at Sacred Heart Chapel. As a wedding fanatic, I could not help but thinking about my own wedding (which I hope is at Sacred Heart Chapel). This train

of thought finally connected to my seminar class, and lo and behold, Sacred Heart Chapel became the starting point for my research.

Topic at hand, I did my background research online and I found that the chapel had been built decades after Loyola University had established itself on the bluff. Discovering the date of construction in the 1950s, I thought about a possible connection to the Second Red Scare because I was also taking a History course about the politics and culture of the Cold War. Theory in hand, I made my appointment to visit to the University Archives for preliminary research. Helped by the archivists, I perused the entire box concerning documents about Sacred Heart Chapel and saw photographs of the university before, during, and after the construction of the chapel. Then, I made another appointment to look at the archived school newspapers and yearbooks to see if I could find more information. Taking notes on the possible materials for my research turned out to be much too time-consuming, and thus, I asked the archivists to photocopy the relevant documents for my research. Attaining as much knowledge about Sacred Heart Chapel as I could, I turned to Father Michael Engh to see if he had any more information for me. After explaining my project, he directed me to look at Mary's Hour, an annual event founded and planned by Loyola students during the same time period as the construction of Sacred Heart. Fr. Engh gave me helpful documents and book titles I could find in the library for my research. He also explained more about the circumstances of the time period, which galvanized my secondary research. Using the library catalog, I found the books Fr. Engh had recommended as well as books pertaining to the connection between religion and the Cold War.

Now I was able to begin writing the paper. I found that my research did not support the connection to the Second Red Scare, but instead pointed to the links between the construction of Sacred Heart, the founding of Mary's Hour, and the waning of anti-Catholicism in American life.

Ultimately, I argued that these developments led to the maturation and growth of Loyola University. Moreover, I was able to connect my thesis to the present situation of Loyola Marymount University – specifically, the construction of the William Hannon Library - as it continues to mature and grow.