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"Elevating influence of the church" is a commonplace, but elevating influence upon the church is something else again. The picture above shows the second building of St. James Church, Woodbridge, being moved from Main Street to the corner of Amboy Avenue and Grove Street in 1924. The event marked the first occasion on which so large a building had been moved by a tractor. The building served in its new location until 1968, when it was demolished to make way for a larger church.
Oral History Projects Launched

The Oral History Program is presently conducting a series of interviews on the subject of Black Catholicism in New Jersey. Margaret McGuinness, a field archivist for the Commission, plans four interviews during the course of this pilot project. Some of the questions she hopes to begin addressing as a result of this effort include: Why did many Blacks convert to Roman Catholicism in northern New Jersey during the 1930's; do they support the concept of Black national parishes; and what purpose does the Black Catholic parish serve in their own lives?

Another very different, yet equally significant, project has been undertaken in cooperation with the Newark Archdiocesan Priests' Senate. Rev. Robert Wister, a Commission member and professor at the Immaculate Conception Seminary, is conducting a series of interviews to document the founding and functioning of the Senate. Founded in 1967 in response to Vatican II's call for collegiality, Newark's Senate is now undergoing a major reorganization to conform with the legislation of the new code of Canon Law promulgated this year. The Senate's oral and written records thus offer a complete fifteen-year body of constitutional ecclesiastical history which is now coming to a close.

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Drucillar Pittman and Emeral Allen, two of the interviewees, have been members of Christ the King parish in Jersey City for about fifty years. Christ the King was founded in 1930 and is the oldest black national parish in the Archdiocese of Newark. Researchers interested in this particular parish, as well as the Jersey City urban experience, should find these interviews particularly useful. These interviews, it is hoped, will serve as a base from which to build a broader oral history series that will focus on other New Jersey Catholic ethnic experiences. Oral histories from "the bottom up" constitute important resources for historians examining American Catholicism and help scholars move outside a narrow institutional focus and inside people's lives and thoughts.

The Oral History Program, dedicated to gathering the memoirs of persons linked to the life and role of the Church in New Jersey, continues to pursue other projects and looks to discover and gather memoirs which will complement and complete the collections of archival materials gathered and surveyed by the Commission.

Accessions

Bayonne — Ss. Peter & Paul Lithuanian Sick and Death Benefit Society


Jersey City — St. Ann (Lithuanian) Church


Moonachie — St. Anthony Church


Newark — St. Mary Magdalene Church


Newark — St. Peter Church


Newark — St. Stephen Slovak Church


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Sister Mary Angeline Cece visits a member of the parish of Christ the King, Jersey City, in the 1930's.
A knot of interested parishioners examines the new chime of bells for the Church of St. James, Red Bank. The bells were displayed in front of the church preparatory to being blessed and installed.
Meet the Commission

Rev. Edwin V. Sullivan, a founding member of the Commission, first saw the light of day on the rock-bound coast of Maine, having been born at Eastport in October 1920. He attended public schools in his native state and in New Jersey, and in 1938 entered Seton Hall College. Upon completion of his theological studies at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Darlington, he was ordained to the priesthood in 1946. Assigned to Seton Hall University in June of that year, Fr. Sullivan initially taught both American history and sociology, with the latter interest gradually becoming sole claimant on his classroom work. He pursued graduate studies at Fordham University, where he received the Master of Arts, and at the University of Ottawa, which awarded him the doctorate in philosophy. In 1963 Fr. Sullivan became the first chairman of the newly established Department of Sociology and during the turbulent sixties led an expanding department and actively worked in the civil rights movement. A study he pioneered probed the significance of social class in the inter-racial relationship. As chairman, he introduced the study of social work into the undergraduate curriculum and, with a grant from the New Jersey Community Affairs Department, began a work-study program to bridge the gap between classroom learning and the society at large. Besides serving as weekend assistant at several parishes, Fr. Sullivan was for 23 years a very active chaplain at Marylawn School of the Oranges.

A member of numerous professional societies, Fr. Sullivan also served on the New Jersey Advisory Committee to the National Commission on Civil Rights, the Community Service Council of the Oranges and Maplewood, and the editorial board of The Advocate, the archdiocesan weekly newspaper. He is presently State Chaplain of the Sons of the American Revolution and chaplain to the Montclair SAR and the South Orange Council of the Knights of Columbus. He is much sought after as a speaker at parish and ethnic societies and other forums. He chaired the authors' committee for The Bishops of Newark, the anniversary history of the archdiocese published in 1978, and wrote the chapter dealing with the early years of the diocese under Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley. The latter, indeed, has been a persistent personal interest for Fr. Sullivan; his doctoral dissertation was an annotated edition of Bayley's episcopal diary, 1853-1872, and he is looking forward to further research into Bayley's times during the coming academic year. His interest in the Commission's work, he says, flows both from his personal background as a New England Yankee and his professional concerns as an observer of social change.

Accessions (continued)


Newark — St. Philip Neri Italian Church


Bayonne — St. Henry Church