Glimpse at a 19th Century Tourist's Album

It was not always so. Some students of the question trace modern tourism to the Wanderjahr of German university students, a traditional year of travel after completion of formal study. The Grand Tour taken by young English aristocrats at the end of their studies also helped shape later tourist routes and practices.

In the 18th and 19th centuries sons of the English aristocracy, upon completing their formal studies, spent a year or two in the company of a tutor touring the capitals of Europe and becoming familiar with the language and customs of society in the various countries. If they wanted reminders of the scenery or the great buildings they had seen, they had to sketch them themselves. Land travel meant the slow progress of a jostling stagecoach over bumpy, rutted, dusty roads, and often danger from brigands. The expense and discomfort combined kept numbers low.

The 19th century brought changes. Railroads and steamships sped travel and reduced cost, and photography began to provide inexpensive reminders of the scenery and events of the journey. (Not yet the box Brownie or the 35-millimeter, but ponderous cameras and slow film.) Tourists could not take their own pictures, but along the usual routes sprang up professional photographers who recorded the local wonders and produced small photographs which tourists could bring home to refresh their memories in later years.

At the Seton Hall University archives, among the papers of Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, lies a leather-bound book — 11 inches high, 8 3/4 inches wide and 3 inches thick — recording the stages of one journey in 1871. Its pages are composed of two continued on page 2

Vendome column overthrown during the Paris Commune
layers of heavy gray paper, with apertures cut into the upper layer so that the souvenir pictures could be inserted between the sheets and be readily visible. The arrangement, more awkward than modern photo albums, is nonetheless effective and has preserved the commercial photos, most of them 3 1/2 by 2 1/4 inches, very well.

Although the book is part of the Bayley collection, the bishop of Newark was not the traveller. Notations next to the pictures show that the journey took place in the summer of 1871, and Bayley’s journal makes it clear that he was busy in New Jersey throughout that period. Who, then, gathered this album to commemorate a European trip?

An August 1871 entry in Bayley’s journal says: “Reverend Father Doane, who has been abroad on some business for me — and who went to see the miracle play, returned in the Russia.” The last photograph in the album is a picture of the Cunard Line’s Russia, with the handwritten notation “8/12/71.” When we find among the photographs several which picture the principals in the Oberammergau Passion Play, we can be reasonably sure that the book contains a photographic record of Monsignor Doane’s summer journey to Europe in 1871.

Doane (1830-1905) was born in Boston, Massachusetts, the son of George Docks at Antwerp

Washington Doane, an Episcopal clergyman who two years later became the second Episcopal Bishop of New Jersey. Young Doane himself was ordained a deacon in the Episcopal Church, but in 1855 became a convert to Catholicism, and two years later was ordained to the priesthood and assigned to Saint Patrick’s in Newark. In 1861 he served briefly as a chaplain with New Jersey troops in the Civil War, then returned to Saint Patrick’s, where he became pastor in 1868. He remained here until his death in 1905. A prominent figure in the city, he was Bishop Bayley’s right hand in financial and administrative matters, and for many years was a moving force in the development of every Catholic institution in the city.

What business took Doane abroad in the summer of 1871 is unclear, but the photo album begins with a picture of the Cunard liner S.S. Scotia, so Doane undoubtedly sailed aboard her from the Cunard pier at the foot of Grand Street in Jersey City. The date given is June 7, 1871. Possibly he landed at Liverpool, but the first collection of photos is of.

On July 9, 1871 he was in Oberammergau for the Passion Play. From there he travelled to Austria, Innsbruck and Salzburg, and brought home a lovely pastoral view of Berchtesgaden, long before the name had
any of its later sinister associations. Next he turned northwest, travelling back into Germany to Ulm, and then on to Paris. These were stirring times in Germany, for the new empire had been proclaimed only in January 1871. One can only regret that Doane did not provide a journal of his observations to accompany his picture collection.

The monsignor arrived in Paris only four months after the Paris Commune and the brief civil war associated with it. Some of his pictures here show the ravages of the war, while others depict imprisoned clergy who suffered during the Commune. From the French capital Doane travelled to Chartres, Amiens and then back to England, where he stopped at Stratford-on-Avon and Oxford on his way to Liverpool.

In this port city he visited Father James Nugent, an Irish priest who pioneered much social work in his ministry to the poor of the city, especially Irish immigrants. Nugent was the first Catholic chaplain at Walton Gaol and founded several welfare institutions, including an orphanage and a home for unwed mothers. His work won much admiration in this country as well as in the United Kingdom.

Doane set sail from Liverpool on August 12, 1871 aboard the Cunard ship S.S. Russia. With an average passage, he should have debarked at Jersey City about August 21, which agrees with Bayley’s journal entry.

Doane’s album reflects something of the man. It contains many standard views of the more popular tourist attractions, but also shows a definite bent toward ecclesiastical architecture. The inclusion of several photos of actors in the Passion Play as well as photos of notable paintings by Murillo, Van Dyck, Rubens and others may also indicate his religious interests. Certainly his photos of French clergy who suffered during the Paris Commune and of Father Nugent’s work mark his ecclesiastical concerns.

Monsignor Doane, proved himself a true representative of the best type of tourist, one who finds in the areas he visits not only things which are peculiar to it and strange to him, but also things which transcend the local and establish our human bond across time and space.

Meet the Commission

Reverend John F. Wrynn, S.J.

Reverend John F. Wrynn, S.J. was born in Sunnyside, Queens, grew up there and in Woodside, and eventually attended Brooklyn Prep, a prominent Jesuit high school, since closed. Young Wynn then entered the Society of Jesus at the novitiate of the New York Province in Plattsburgh, New York. Subsequently he received his baccalaureate degree, with a major in history, from Fordham University in 1963, the licentiate in philosophy from Shrub Oak in 1964, and his master’s degree in history from Fordham the following year.

Sent to Holland to continue his studies, Father Wynn attained the Bachelor of Divinity from the Catholic Theological faculty at Amsterdam in 1970, the licentiate (S.T.L.) in theology in 1973 from the Canisianum at Amsterdam, and in 1976 completed his doctorate in history at the University of Amsterdam.

From 1964 to 1967 he spent teaching Latin, English and history at Saint Peter’s Prep in Jersey City, and in the summer of 1966 he served as an adjunct instructor in history at his alma mater, Fordham. Since 1974 he has taught in the history department at Saint Peter’s College in Hudson County, and currently holds the rank of associate professor. Like most faculty members, he has served on numerous college committees, including the latest presidential search committee and the presidential inaugural committee. Currently, he is rector of the Jesuit community at Saint Peter’s.

Father Wynn’s background as a child of Irish immigrants has stimulated an interest in Irish studies, both literary and historical. He has studied Gaelic and teaches the language in the continuing education program at Saint Peter’s. He has also written in the language for Irish publications. In English, he has written for America, The Irish Literary Supplement and other journals. He has also published The Socialist International and the Politics of European Reconstruction, 1919-1930 (Uithoorn, 1976). In addition, with Robert Ward and Catherine Coogan Ward, he has also written Letters of Charles O’Conor of Belanagare: A Catholic Voice in Eighteenth-Century Ireland (Washington, DC, 1989). He is a member of numerous professional historical and archivists’ organizations as well as several Irish cultural associations. For the Commission, Father Wynn, who is also the archivist at Saint Peter’s, chairs the committee on archives and oral history.

Published by the New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2696.

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Commission Publications Available

The following publications of the Commission are available for purchase:

Sullivan, et al., *The Bishops of Newark, 1853-1878*, a history of the first 125 years of the archdiocese. Cloth, $10; paper, $5.

Wosh, Peter (comp.), *Catholic Parish and Institutional Histories in The State of New Jersey*, a checklist of materials available in the Seton Hall collections. Mimeograph, $2.


The last volume listed should be ordered from The New Jersey Historical Society, 230 Broadway, Newark, New Jersey 07104. The others may be ordered from the New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2696.