

Spring 1980

# New Jersey Catholic Records Newsletter, Vol. 1, No.2

New Jersey Catholic Historical Commission

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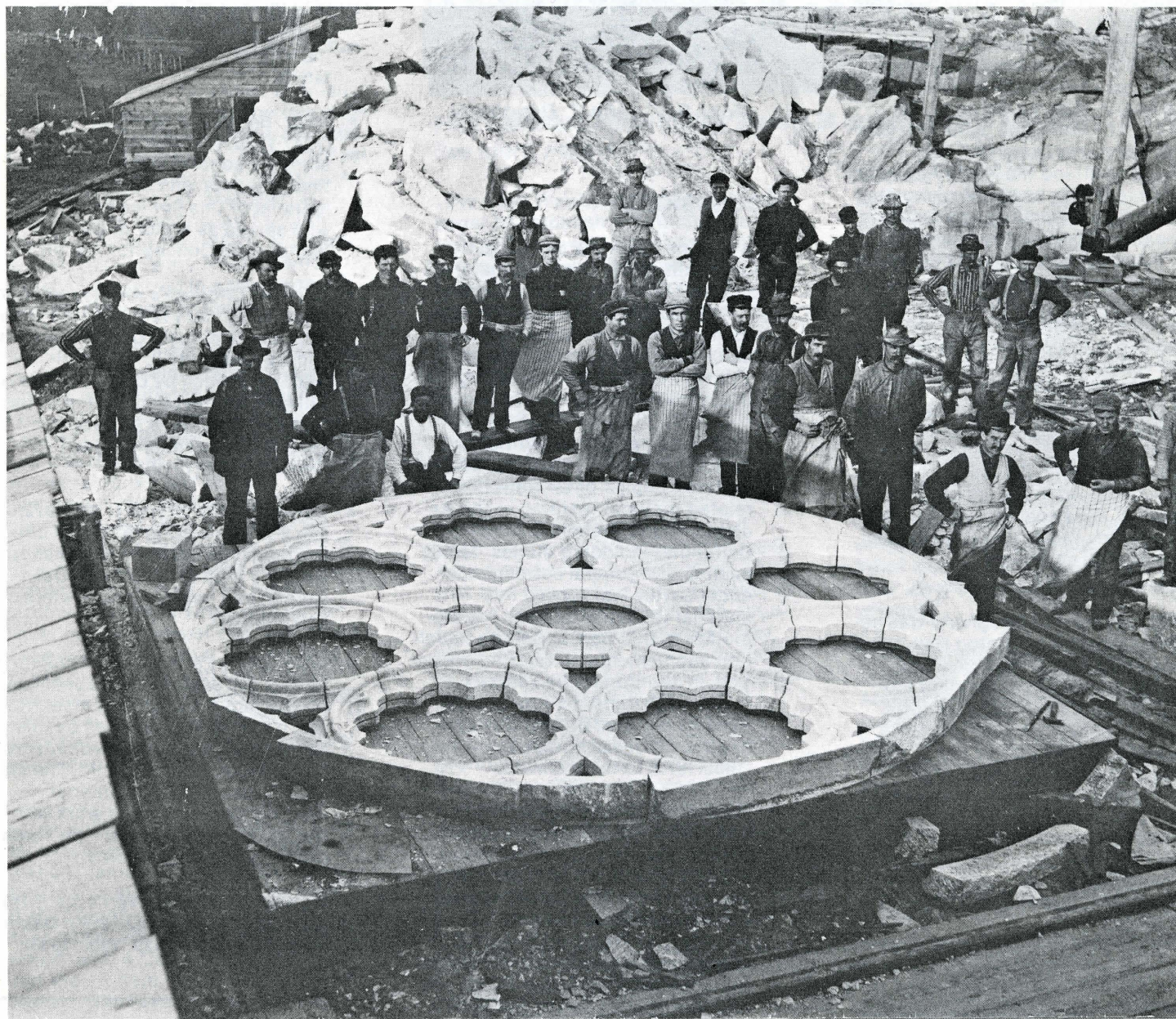
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# New Jersey Catholic Records Newsletter

VOLUME 1 NO 2

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Workmen, circa 1920, preparing the form for one of the windows of Sacred Heart Cathedral, Newark. Construction of the church, which spanned more than fifty years, is documented in one of the extensive record groups transferred to McLaughlin Library by the Archdiocese of Newark.

## Meet the Commission

Founding chairman of the New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission is Bishop John J. Dougherty, auxiliary bishop of Newark, former president of Seton Hall University, and currently scholar-in-residence at Seton Hall.

Born in Jersey City, New Jersey, in 1907, the future bishop attended St. Aloysius parochial school, then St. Peter's Prep in his native city, where his athletic interests led him to playing on the varsity football team and to summer life-guarding at the Jersey shore. In 1926 he entered Seton Hall College as a candidate for the priesthood and in 1929 moved on to the seminary at Darlington. After one year there, the young Dougherty was selected to attend the North American College in Rome, where he completed his theological training, was ordained to the priesthood, and remained to earn his doctorate in Sacred Scripture.

Returning to Darlington as professor of scripture, Fr. Dougherty engaged in week-end parish work, published scholarly research in his field of study, and developed a reputation as a public speaker, becoming eventually one of the regulars on "The Catholic Hour" on both radio and TV. His involvement in the media led to his appointment to episcopal and Papal committees dealing with film, radio, and TV activities which he still continues.

In 1959 Monsignor Dougherty was appointed president of Seton Hall University. During the next ten years he directed a substantial building program, and more significantly, gave shape to rapidly growing academic programs. In these same years, he was consecrated auxiliary bishop of Newark and participated in the sessions of Vatican II. In 1969 he left the University to become pastor of St. Rose of Lima in Short Hills and, on his retirement from that position in 1977, returned to Seton Hall as scholar-in-residence.

Bishop Dougherty's youthful experiences as a student in Europe during the 1930's awakened a political and social consciousness which manifested itself in his continuing ecumenical and social concerns. He currently serves on several commissions in Rome and at the United Nations in New York.



*Most Rev. John J. Dougherty*

## Accessions

This column attempts to acquaint readers with newly acquired material and collections which have recently been opened for use. Not all listings are completely processed. Interested researchers should contact the archivist for information concerning possible restrictions.

- *Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley Papers (1843-1877)* (ca. 3 ft.) consist of Xerox copies of all Newark-related material residing in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, including diaries, family papers, and general correspondence. Bayley had carried this material to Baltimore upon his promotion to that See, and this acquisition supplements an existing collection. In addition to the xeroxed material, Baltimore's Archbishop Borders donated Bishop Bayley's original diocesan scrapbook (1855-1872) to the archives.
- *Bernard M. Shanley-Papers (1951-1961)* (ca. 20 ft.) including diaries, personal correspondence, subject files, political files, and scrapbooks of this former special counsel and appointments secretary to President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Includes considerable material relating to New Jersey and national politics during the 1950's.
- *Roland E. Lindbloom Scrapbooks (1943-1958)* (ca. 3½ ft.) Newspaper clippings of articles written by this former *Newark Evening News* columnist, covering his years as war correspondent and television critic.
- *Bishop Joseph A. Costello Papers (1935-1978)* (ca. 3 ft.) consist mainly of lectures and sermons delivered at St. Brigid's parish in Jersey City throughout the 1930's and 1940's by Bishop Costello and Fr. James W. O'Neill; notes compiled during Vatican II sessions; and personal memorabilia of the late auxiliary Bishop.
- *Macopin — St. Joseph's Parish Birth and Baptismal Register (1836-1852); Burial Records (1843-1845); Account Books (1847-1849); various programs, anniversary booklets, and parish histories (1895-1924).* Donated by the Virginia (Shulster) Kopack family.
- *Msgr. Bernard J. Mulligan Papers (1877-1920)* (130 items) include some personal correspondence, financial data, and ephemeral material of this domestic prelate who served as rector of Camden's Immaculate Conception parish.
- *Catholic Children's Aid Association (1903-1932)* (ca. 1½ ft.) including the Charter, Certificate of Incorporation and By-Laws (1903); Annual Report (1907); a speech by Director John A. Cullen, "Abbreviated Sketch of the Catholic Children's Aid Society," 1932; Superintendent's Case Reports (1905-1919).
- *Gerety Family Papers (1900-1972)* (ca. 2 ft.) consisting mainly of correspondence between Archbishop Gerety's mother, Charlotte (Daly) Gerety, and her husband, sisters, and children.
- *Mary Smith Papers (1937-1970)* includes correspondence, speeches, photographs, minutes of meetings, and memorabilia acquired by this former president of the Volunteers of the Mount Carmel Guild. The collection also includes material relating to Mrs. Smith's work with the USO in Newark, and with some other charitable agencies.
- *Newark—St. Philip Neri's* (ca. 2 ft.) Marriage forms (1942-1968); Death Registers (1905-1929; 1950-1968).

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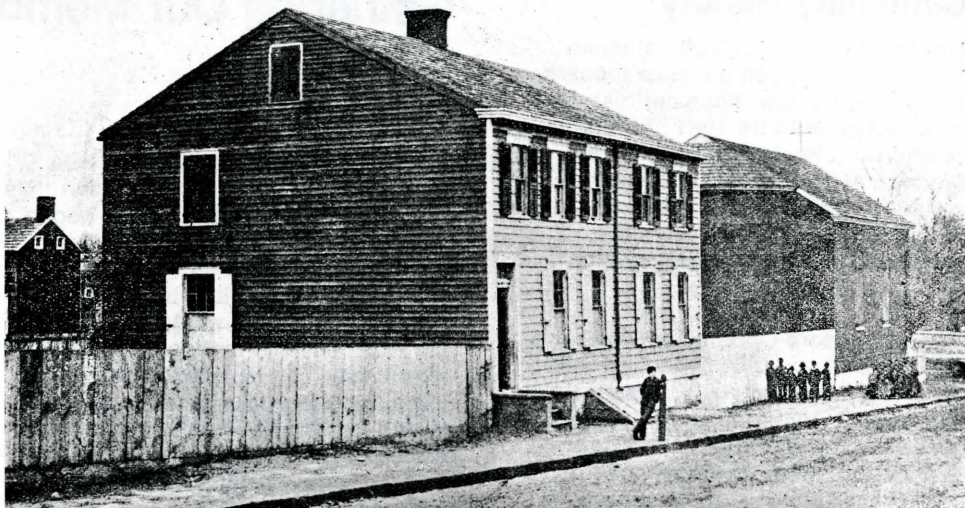
## From the Collections

Though urbanization and industrialization dramatically altered New Jersey's middle and late nineteenth century landscape, much of the State retained a sleepy, backwoods appearance. Scattered farmhouses, tiny settlement villages, and rural hamlets especially characterized the northwestern counties of Warren and Sussex.

As might be expected, the Catholic Church grew slowly in this area. Several German Catholic families had resided in northern New Jersey since colonial times, mainly finding employment in the area's charcoal iron industry. By the mid-nineteenth century, substantial numbers of Catholic workmen and laborers lived in small iron manufacturing communities such as Andover, Oxford Furnace, Franklin Furnace, and Hamburg. Their spiritual needs remained largely neglected. A lone Catholic priest, stationed at Newton, was responsible for both counties during the 1850's. Not until the late 1860's were small mission parishes organized in a few northwestern New Jersey towns.

Surprisingly, the earliest recorded request for a mission parish in Sussex County was initiated by a group of Protestants—the owners of the Wawayanda Iron Works. Oliver, William, and Oakes Ames owned a number of shovel factories and forges throughout Massachusetts. In 1845, they expanded their holdings into New Jersey by purchasing a tract of land at the outlet of Lake Wawayanda, bordering New York. The Ames brothers quickly erected a blast furnace, run by charcoal and dependent upon a 6000-acre tract of woodland for its supply. Though the furnace only operated briefly and Wawayanda never realized its iron-producing potential, a small mining community flourished during the 1850's.

On September 16, 1854, company agent William E. Brown penned a letter to Newark's recently installed Bishop, James Roosevelt Bayley. Brown had already "called on Arch Bishop Hughes in New York a few days since, with a request that he would send a Catholic Priest to our Iron Works here," and was referred to Bayley. "We have here among us, most of whom are in our employ, some fifty or sixty Catholics. A portion of them have families; we would willingly pay the travelling expenses of a Priest who will visit the place once a month or once in two months."



*First Catholic Church in New Jersey: St. John's Chapel and School in Trenton. See story, page 4.*

Why were Wawayanda's owners so eager to establish a Catholic mission? "Those who have charge of the Works here," wrote Brown, "wish to have proper influences brought to bear upon the men in their employ, in a moral as well as religious point of view." Brown urged Bishop Bayley, therefore, to send "a man whose views regarding *temperance* shall be right, and one who will not hesitate to proclaim those views, and urge their observance upon all who come within their influence."

Newark's first Bishop responded positively to the Wawayanda request, informing Brown on September 20 that he "was making arrangements to send a priest to his part of the country." In fact, Bayley dispatched Rev. Philip McMahon "to spy out the land in Sussex Co. and see about commencing a new mission there." The diocese did establish St. Joseph's parish at Newton in 1855. The Bishop eventually visited this area in September 1859, and noted in the diocesan register that he "saw Mr. Brown, the Agt. of the company & his

family—very civil to us...stayed at the Agts. House—confirmed 8." Unfortunately, while Bayley commented at length on "the deluge of rain" which greeted him and grumbled about the "train having been detained by an accident," he failed to record any further impressions of Sussex County Catholicity.

Who were Wawayanda's Catholics? How did they perceive their own religious needs? Did Protestant factory owners and entrepreneurs often tolerate, or even encourage, Catholicism as a restraining influence on workers' attitudes and lifestyles? What was social life like in northern New Jersey's isolated manufacturing villages?

These tantalizingly incomplete references in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Newark provoke more questions than answers. Hopefully, however, the availability of previously inaccessible source material will focus attention on and stimulate inquiry into largely unexplored historical problems.

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Seton Hall University, South Orange, N.J. 07079

Most Rev. John J. Dougherty, S.S.D., *Chairman*; Bernard Bush; Rev. Stephen Dibble, O.F.M.; John B. Duff; Rev. Msgr. William N. Field; Sr. Mary Ellen Gleason, S.C.; Rev. William Keller; Rev. Raymond J. Kupke; Joseph F. Mahoney; Sr. Margherita Marchione, M.P.F.; Peter M. Mitchell; Rev. M. Joseph Mokrzycki; Miriam L. Murphy; Rev. Msgr. Theodore A. Opdenaker; Carl E. Prince; George L.A. Reilly; Rev. Msgr. Francis R. Seymour; Rev. Edwin V. Sullivan; Rev. Robert T. Wister.

*Newsletter Staff:* Joseph F. Mahoney  
Peter Wosh

## Trenton Diocese Plans Centenary History

Trenton's Roman Catholic diocese recently announced plans to prepare and publish a new diocesan history in conjunction with its 1981 centenary celebration. Walter T. Leahy's *The Diocese of Trenton* (1906) presently constitutes the main source book on southern New Jersey Catholicism and is in need of considerable revision and updating.

Msgr. Theodore Opdenaker (Trenton's Executive Director of Catholic Institutions and Agencies) will collaborate with recent Princeton University graduate Christine Forsman on the publication. Msgr. Opdenaker brings a quarter century of experience and interest to the project, having compiled numerous parish histories, articles, and bibliographies during that time. The authors contemplate a relatively short, popular publication for the centenary, with a more comprehensive scholarly endeavor to follow.

Locating and researching widely scattered source materials poses a major problem. The researchers plan to review thoroughly Msgr. Opdenaker's own extensive historical library and collection, as well as to comb likely Catholic repositories throughout the country. Potentially fruitful archives include the NJCHRC holdings at Seton Hall, the Archives of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia (which possessed jurisdiction over southern New Jersey prior to 1853) and Baltimore's Archdiocesan Archives.

The Trenton diocese has also established a Centenary Committee to coordinate its 100th anniversary celebration. Substantive plans are now being formulated and will be announced as they are developed.

## Gathering Our Memories: Oral History

Oral history developed in the years just after World War II when Allan Nevins of Columbia University began collecting interviews by using the newly invented wire recorder. In the intervening generation, technological improvements have made the cassette recorder inexpensive and ubiquitous. The tape recorder, like the computer, supported a movement among historians to recover the experiences of ordinary men and women, thus adding a new dimension to the study of history.

Although the oral history effort of the Commission began shortly after its establishment, it has so far been slowed by the initial emphases on organizing and on obtaining funding.

The Commission's aim is to interview people who have played a significant role in the development of New Jersey Catholicism—not only public figures, but also those whose experiences are part and parcel of Everyman's experience. Immigrants who helped to shape the life of ethnic parishes are as vital to the program as members of the Catholic Trade Union movement, pastors who founded and directed suburban parishes in the 1950's, businessmen, or public officials. The Commission plans to establish an oral history collection which will supplement and illuminate written records and which will enable researchers to develop a fuller picture of the Catholic experience in the State.

To this end the Commission solicits the aid of *Newsletter* readers. Because it is impossible for Commission members to know all the people who should be interviewed, we therefore ask our readership to help us identify those people whose experience can shed light on New Jersey Catholic history. Readers who know of someone who ought to be interviewed are requested to send the Commission the name, address (and telephone number) of that person, together with a brief description of why the person is significant, e.g. "Jane Doe, 20000 Offset Street, Millville, N.J.—immigrant from Poland who has been active in parish activities for 40 years."

At the same time, in order to accelerate the collection of interviews, the Commission is seeking volunteers to conduct oral history interviews. The Commission will provide the necessary training and materials. With the aid of volunteers, the Commission hopes to add substantially to its oral history collection over the next two years.

Communications should be addressed to:

Professor George P. Browne, Director  
Oral History Program  
New Jersey Catholic Historical  
Records Commission  
Seton Hall University  
South Orange, N.J. 07079



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