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# New Jersey Catholic Records Newsletter, Vol. 1, No.3

New Jersey Catholic Records Commission

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# New Jersey Catholic Records Newsletter

VOLUME 1 NO 3

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*Interior of St. Patrick's Catholic Church*

## Jersey City Parish Declared Landmark

Governor Brendan Byrne announced the addition of St. Patrick's Church Complex in Jersey City to the State Register of Historic Places on March 17.

Located at the intersection of Bramhall Avenue and Grand Street, in Jersey City's Arlington-Jackson urban renewal area, the pure Victorian Gothic church was designed by noted cathedral architect Patrick C. Keely. Bishop Michael A. Corrigan, officiating at the August 19, 1877, dedication, noted that "the plan consists of a nave, two aisles, chapel,

and chancel, with a tower in the northeast corner of the front. The Architect, Mr. P. C. Keely, has skilfully placed the tower in an angle of the irregular plot, so as to hide the angle and even add to the beauty of the building .... The sitting capacity is 2,000. The walls are all built of blue flint stone obtained in the neighborhood, trimmed with silver-colored hammered granite from the Hallowell quarries in Maine. Entire cost said to be \$300,000."

In addition to the church, an adjacent chapel, rectory, convent, recreational center, meeting hall, and school constitute the remainder of the complex. A particularly interesting feature of the three-story red-brick

school is its full-size replica Broadway theater. Completed in 1910, the theater includes an orchestra with twin balconies, eight private booths, and eighteen dressing rooms. During its halcyon years, the theater offered operettas under the direction of Victor Herbert, Henry Hadley, and Edward McDowell. A choir, directed by Professor James P. Dunn of the New York and Boston symphonies, performed there regularly, earning widespread professional acclaim.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection also nominated St. Patrick's to the Heritage Commission and Recreation Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior for inclusion in the National Register.



## From the Collections

During the 1870 fall semester, declining enrollments at Seton Hall and burdensome debts created a serious financial crisis at the fourteen-year-old diocesan college. Future prospects appeared bleak. Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley, after realistically assessing the situation, contemplated closing the College, selling the South Orange property, and removing the Seminary to Newark.

Rev. James Corrigan, Director of the Seminary and Professor of Philosophy and Ethics, urged Bishop Bayley not to embrace any drastic, short-term solutions. Fr. Corrigan admitted that "the collegiate education of youths from all parts of the country is not precisely a diocesan work, nor the duty of a Bishop."

Seminaries, however, "are of the very highest moment, greater than the welfare of any other institution so far as the diocese is concerned." Furthermore, "what may, both as to place and its surroundings, suit the education of youths destined for worldly pursuits, may not be in harmony with what is required for those destined for the priesthood."

Sleepy South Orange, according to Fr. Corrigan, offered a very attractive seminary site. The spacious grounds and healthy air were "well adapted for the recreation indispensably required for young men so long and so much

confined as seminarians must be." Its location possessed other advantages as well. "The place is sufficiently out of the way of the public thoroughfares to preclude too much visiting from outsiders, and consequently will keep the minds of the seminarians comparatively free from outside nonsense."

Isolation benefited the College's faculty as well as its students. "Professors are not particularly liable to be interrupted in their studies by visitors, and consequently have more time to prepare the lessons for their classes." Fr. Corrigan admitted that Seton Hall's convivial instructors might occasionally venture into South Orange; however "if they do go out sometimes, it is only at night, and into the very best society."

Contrastingly, the Seminary Director viewed urban Newark as a potentially disastrous location. Crowded streets and heavy industry created an unhealthy atmosphere and precluded collegians from exercising in wide-open spaces. Fr. Corrigan lamented that the student body could not even take regular group walks "for we do not live in a European city and in a Catholic atmosphere, where seminarians can go without danger of being insulted and stared to death." Allowing students to stroll in groups of two or three would be out of the question "on account of the multitude of occasions and facilities of visiting, drinking &c, which seminarians precisely because being seminarians together often times easily fall into."

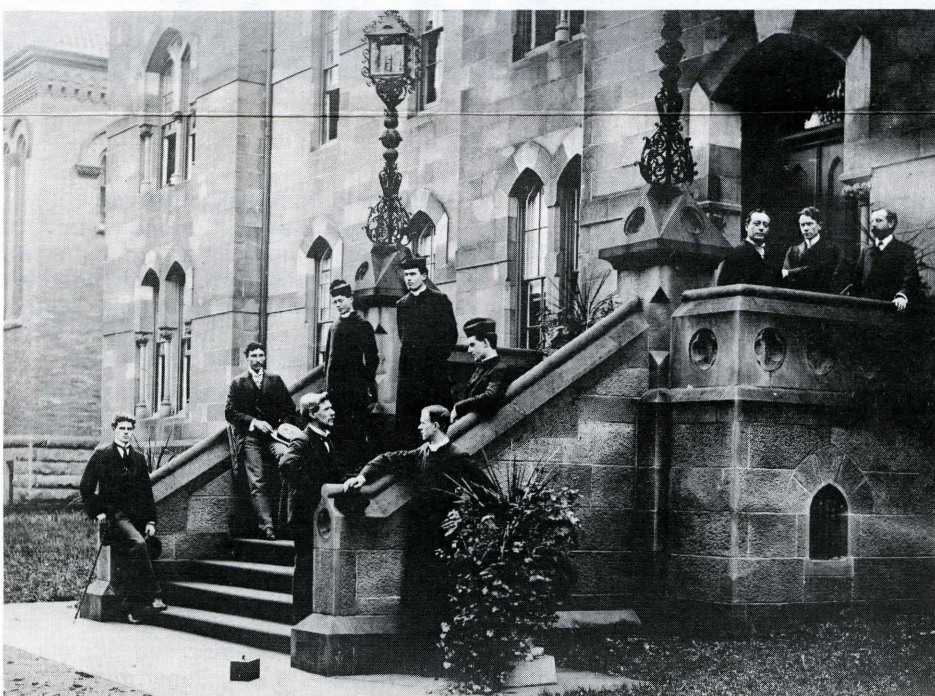
Maintaining proper vigilance over student behavior appeared nearly impossible. "In the city seminarians will be exposed to make visits which no stringent laws or rules can prevent, for they can be kept secret." They might "be tempted to introduce on account of the facility, forbidden and dangerous articles." In an urban environment, "news, talk and scandal" would flow freely between city and seminary, proving "an immense source of distraction."

City life might undermine instruction, as well as morals. Visits from priests and other acquaintances could create excessive demands on professors' time. As a result "lessons would not be well prepared and seminarians not well taught, though there be the best will in the world." The College faculty "would more or less frequently visit their friends at all hours throughout the day as well as in the night." Frequent socializing could damage the Seminary's reputation. Fr. Corrigan cautioned the Bishop that "you will readily admit that the Newark Catholic society is not the most refined."

Bishop Bayley responded favorably to these arguments. A substantial financial contribution by the Corrigan family to maintain the South Orange facility considerably eased his decision. Seton Hall remained in South Orange where, presumably, teachers and students pursued their work in a peaceful, contemplative atmosphere.

Fr. Corrigan's view of seminary training remained the standard conception for many years. When Seton Hall President Thomas McLaughlin proposed separating the Seminary from the South Orange campus in 1927, he cited the necessity of locating "a place more removed from the suburban congestion, preferably in Morris or Sussex Counties." An early Seminary catalog praised Darlington (the new site) for "its comparative retirement in the Ramapo Valley... an ideal location for a scholastic institution devoted to the preparing of young men for the holy priesthood."

Did isolation produce "better" clerics? Could an atmosphere conducive to quiet theological reflection adequately prepare priests for toil in Newark, Jersey City, and Hoboken? These issues remain controversial and unresolved. Perhaps an examination of past efforts to answer these questions might prove fruitful for contemporary ecclesiastical decision makers.



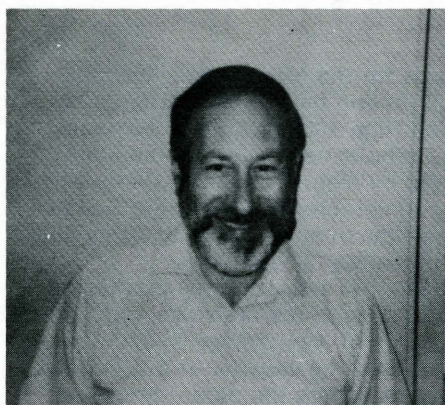
*Seminarians and faculty at the turn of the century*



## Meet the Commission

Carl E. Prince, a founding member of the commission, was born in Newark, N.J., on December 8, 1934, the son of Philip and Anne Silver Prince. He worked at various jobs in his father's plumbing supply business and at other odd jobs during his years at Weequahic High School and while he attended Rutgers-Newark, where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree, with honors, in 1956. Two years later he earned the Master of Arts in history at the New Brunswick campus of Rutgers and in 1963 completed work on his doctoral degree there under Professor Richard P. McCormick.

By that time Dr. Prince had already begun his career at Fairleigh Dickinson University, where he taught from 1960 to 1963. In the latter year he joined the faculty of Seton Hall University. During his five years there he was instrumental in developing several innovative approaches to the history department's offerings and actively participated in faculty and University affairs. In 1968 he joined the faculty of New York University, where he is currently chairman of the history department and has been



*Dr. Carl E. Prince*

chiefly responsible for developing their program of study for a degree in history and archival work.

Professor Prince has engaged with outstanding success in many professional activities. In 1967, he published *New Jersey's Jeffersonian Republicans, 1789-1817*, a study of the early political history of the state, and ten years later brought out *The Federalists and the Origins of the U.S. Civil Service*, an examination of the role of patronage in forming the first political party and of the political party in forming the public service. Both studies offered new insight into

American development. He has in addition published numerous articles and reviews.

Besides engaging in research and publication, Dr. Prince has long been active in editing the works of significant early American figures. In 1968, he accepted the position as editor of the papers of Albert Gallatin, Jefferson's Secretary of the Treasury. Since 1976 he has been editor of the *Papers of William Livingston*, first Governor of the state of New Jersey and a key figure in the American Revolution. Through the efforts of Dr. Prince and his staff, thousands of lost Livingston documents have been discovered. The first volume of the work appeared in 1979.

Professor Prince has also found time for numerous other activities. In 1966 he held a post-doctoral fellowship at Hebrew Union College, and in 1972-73 served as a Fulbright scholar at the University of Tel Aviv in Israel. He is a Fellow of the New Jersey Historical Society and is active in many professional committees.

He and his wife, the former Sue Grill, have two children and are active in the life of their hometown.

## Msgr. Field Assumes New Post

Msgr. William Noe Field assumed a new position with the University on June 15. His responsibilities now include developing and administering Seton Hall's growing Department of Archives, Rare Books, and Special Collections. An active member of several library organizations and a familiar figure in New Jersey historical circles, Msgr. Field traces his professional association with the University to 1940. He has taught English at the Prep and College levels, served as head of development, chaired the English Department, remained active in the University's religious life, and, since 1963, held the position of University Librarian.

In recent years, Msgr. Field has added formal professional training to a long-standing interest in archival work. He completed New York University's program in archival management, historical editing and historical society administration in May.

Fr. James C. Sharp has been named Interim University Librarian.

## On Loan

Several items from the NJCHRC collections were displayed in the New Jersey Historical Society's "Germans of New Jersey" exhibit. A statewide search by the Society located numerous artifacts, photographs, and manuscripts documenting the German-American community's development from colonial times through the early twentieth century.

Though most German immigrants worshipped in Lutheran or German Reformed churches, they contributed significantly to the growth of New Jersey Catholicism as well. German Catholic families have resided in northern New Jersey mining communities since the eighteenth century. Several urban German national parishes date from the 1850's, and many rural ethnic clusters were attended by traveling priests in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition, Newark's third Bishop, Winand Michael Wigger (1880-1900), hailed from Westphalia and supported national immigrant aid and social welfare institutions throughout his episcopate.

The NJCHRC's contributions to this exhibit include: Bishop Wigger's

photograph, vestments, and some personal effects; German language church booklets from a nineteenth-century Newark national parish; the minute book of a German Catholic social welfare organization attached to St. Nicholas' in Egg Harbor City (1866-1878); and Bishop James Roosevelt Bayley's handwritten account of an 1854 nativist riot directed against Newark Germans.

*The Commission acknowledges with gratitude the generous grant from an anonymous donor which made possible this publication.*



## Historical Memorabilia on New Jersey Catholicism Sought

Historians still argue over the relative influence to be attributed to individuals or to mass movements in explaining the causation of any event. But they are at least agreed that both must be considered. In its efforts to establish a research center for the study of Catholicism in New Jersey, the NJCHRC is seeking to acquire the materials which will enable scholars to assess the roles of individuals and organizations in the growth of the Catholic community.

One major source of such information is the correspondence, diaries, notebooks, and other memorabilia of individuals who have played a role—large or small—in New Jersey Catholicism. Frequently these are tucked away in an attic or in an old suitcase and forgotten by the descendants of the author. At other times they are thrown out by either the author or someone else who fails to realize their potential importance to historians and to an understanding of the American Catholic past.

The very varied experience of New Jersey's Catholics means that almost everything is grist to the mill of the historian who would understand that past and its present influence: the diaries of clergymen, religious, students, farmers, housewives, factory workers; the lecture notes to professors and teachers; the sermon outlines of preachers; the correspondence of family members separated by migration, schooling, or war.

Publications by Catholic organizations constitute another significant

source for the researchers. Perhaps chief among these was *The Monitor*, which from 1906 to about 1930 was the Catholic newspaper in the state. Edited by Msgr. William P. Cantwell, long-time rector of Star of the Sea in Long Branch and later of St. Mary's in Perth Amboy, *The Monitor* represented very personal journalism and dealt with the activities and concerns of New Jersey Catholics. The current newspaper of the Trenton Diocese honors the older journal in its title.

Unfortunately, no complete run of the original *Monitor* appears to exist. Several libraries have either isolated copies or fairly extensive collections. But these together do not constitute a full set of this major source. The commission is particularly anxious to locate copies of the newspaper so that a complete run might be constructed and microfilmed for researchers.

The commission thus appeals to *Newsletter* readers to rack their brains (and rummage in their attics) to discover the kinds of material that may be useful. If you find letters, diaries, publications, issues of *The Monitor* (or know who has them), please let us know. Otherwise, the documentation of the story of New Jersey Catholicism may mold away.

Communications should be addressed to:

Peter W. Wosh  
Archivist  
Seton Hall University  
South Orange, N.J. 07079

## 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.

- *Newark — St. Michael's Hospital (1871-1947) (one volume)* constitution; by-laws; and minutes of meetings.
- *Bishop Michael A. Corrigan Papers (1874-1883) (ca. 200 items)* Xerox copies of Newark-related correspondence in the Archives of the Archdiocese of New York. Corrigan carried these documents to New York upon his appointment as coadjutor to Archbishop McCloskey, and this material supplements an existing collection.
- *Leonard Dreyfuss Papers (1900-1977) (12 ft.)* includes diaries, speeches, publications, correspondence, subject files, photographs, and scrapbooks of this former sales manager of the Hires Root Beer Corp. (1904-1912); President and Chairman of the Board of the United Advertising Corp. (1914-1969); and New Jersey Civil Defense Director (1941-1955).
- *Newark Diocesan Senate of Priests (1968-1977) (1 ft.)* Minutes of meetings, committee reports, and correspondence.
- *Advocate photograph files (1954- )* including photographs of deceased Archdiocesan priests, and duplicate prints and negatives maintained in the newspaper's active files.

