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New Jersey Catholic Historical Commission

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VOLUME IV NO. 3

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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?

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.

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.

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

Dues Books (1898-1905; 1922-1935; 1941-1950). Ledgers (1923-1957).

Jersey City — St. Ann (Lithuanian) Church

Baptismal Registers (1913-1969). First Communion Registers (1937-1957). Confirmation Registers (1941-1961). Marriage Registers (1913-1968). Sick Call Registers (1936-1974). Death Registers (1936-1974). Board of Trustees Minutes (1927-1974). Certificate of Incorporation (1910). Annual Reports to the Archdiocese (1952-1973). Financial Statements (1952-1974). Correspondence (1952-1974). Financial Ledger (1945-1974). Account Books (1962-1974). Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (1945-1964). Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament (1944). Holy Name Society (1937-1945).

Moonachie — St. Anthony Church

Baptismal Registers (1903-1955). First Communion Registers (1930-1955). Confirmation Registers (1913-1952). Marriage Registers (1910-1955).

Newark — St. Mary Magdalene Church

Baptismal Registers (1892-1920). Confirmation Registers (1899-1909). Marriage Registers (1892-1920). Board of Trustees Minutes (1892-1920).

Newark — St. Peter Church

Baptismal Registers (1932-1972). First Communion Registers (1936-1972). Confirmation Registers (1886-1970). Marriage Registers (1923-1974). Death Registers (1928-1974). Pre-Nuptial Files (1942-1974).

Newark — St. Stephen Slovak Church

Baptismal Registers (1901-1967). Confirmation Registers (1924-1946).



Sister Mary Angeline Cece visits a member of the parish of Christ the King, Jersey City, in the 1930's.

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Archives Survey Expanded

Several archivists and historians will be exploring Roman Catholic parish and institutional records throughout Middlesex, Somerset, Warren, and Hunterdon counties during the next few months as a result of a \$63,385.00 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission, based at Seton Hall University, received this grant to survey northern New Jersey Catholic records, identify their scope and research value, rescue physically endangered materials, and produce a guide to the records. While the Commission has been accumulating similar information concerning Catholicism in the Newark and Paterson dioceses since July, the project will now be expanded into the newly erected Metuchen see.

Central New Jersey offers historians and social scientists an especially fascinating research laboratory. Though a few towns like Lambertville, Phillipsburg, Perth Amboy, and New Brunswick received some mid-nineteenth century Irish Catholic immigration, the area remained sparsely settled until nearly the turn of the century. Excepting priests in these communities, most Catholic clerics ministered to widely scattered, dispersed settlers over a broad geographic area in a predominantly Protestant terrain. By the early twentieth century, immigration began exerting a tremendous influence on the area. Poles, Slavs, Hungarians, and Italians moved into the factory and mill towns, which grew along the Raritan River. Perth Amboy and New Brunswick matured into bustling, densely packed, multi-ethnic communities with significant Catholic constituencies. Smaller cities like South River, Carteret, Sayreville, Bound Brook, Raritan, and Port Reading also boasted large immigrant populations. Their complex ethnic mix, disproportionately large number of parishes, and relatively small physical boundaries enhance their research attractiveness.

Suburbanization also affected the area, as second and third generation Americans moved out of northern New Jersey's cities and constructed middle-class communities in Middlesex and Somerset counties. Further, the post-World War II period witnessed a large increase in the area's Spanish Catholic community. Dominicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanics found jobs in factories and industry, and their experiences offer an interesting



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.

contrast with the earlier immigrants. Church records constitute an integral aspect of this story.

In conjunction with this survey, Rev. Emmanuel Vernon, Assistant Chancellor of the newly erected Metuchen see (established 1982), recently assembled an historical committee to plan and implement a diocesan archival program. Members include: Lorraine Coons, field archivist at Seton Hall University and doctoral candidate at New York University; Ronald Becker, from the Rutgers University Department of Archives and Special Collections; Rev. Mark Dobrovolsky, pastor at Sacred Heart

Church in South Plainfield; Sr. Giovanni McDonough, Congregation Archivist for the Sisters of Mercy of New Jersey; Stephen Novak, field archivist at Seton Hall University; and Peter J. Wosh, university archivist at Seton Hall.

The Committee will analyze survey results and formulate a records retention and disposition program for non-current Chancery records, as well as coordinate historical efforts throughout the see. Please contact Fr. Dobrovolsky for additional information at: 149 South Plainfield Avenue, Sacred Heart Church, South Plainfield NJ, 07080.

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Most Rev. John J. Dougherty, S.S.D., *Chairman*; Bernard Bush; Rev. Mark Dobrovolsky; John B. Duff; Rev. Msgr. William N. Field; Sr. Mary Ellen Gleason, S.C.; Rev. Raymond J. Kupke; Joseph F. Mahoney; Sr. Margherita Marchione, M.P.F.; Rev. Msgr. Robert Moneta; 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.

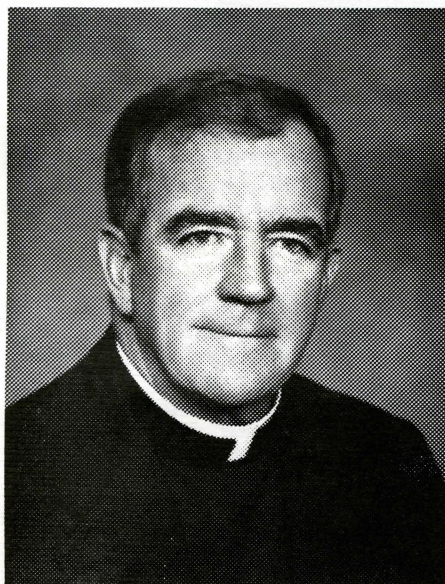
Newsletter Staff: Joseph F. Mahoney; Peter J. Wosh

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.

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.



Reverend Edwin V. Sullivan

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

Accessions (continued)

Marriage Registers (1901-1912; 1920-1968). Death Registers (1901-1904; 1920-1959). Pre-Nuptial Files (1942-1962). Board of Trustees Minutes (1900-1911; 1929-1973). Deeds and Mortgages (1902-1919). Newark Building Inspector Report (1902). Building Contract (1905).

Newark — St. Philip Neri Italian Church

Baptismal Registers (1918-1968). First Communion Registers (1905-1960). Confirmation Registers (1906-1958). School Student Academic Records (1932-1960). School Student Attendance Registers (1917-1960). School Student Directories (1909-1933).

Bayonne — St. Henry Church

Movies entitled "Holy Name Parade, 1915," "Congregation Leaving Old Church," "Masses at New Church, 1929," "Catholic Education in Bayonne," "Dedication of New Church," "25th Jubilee of Msgr. Mulligan."



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