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Minutes from the meeting of May 20, 1977

New Jersey Catholic Historical Commission

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New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission

Minutes of the Meeting of the New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission, 20 May 1977. Present: Bishop Dougherty, Msgr. Field, Frs. Keller, Seymour, Sullivan, Sr. Margherita, Messrs. Bush, Mahoney, Prince, Reilly.

1. The Commission discussed possible programs for participation in the American Catholic Historical Association Spring meeting, 1978. Possible speakers include Michael Ebner, Ray Ralph, Joseph O'Brien and George L. A. Reilly. Further information at the next meeting.
2. Discussion of the project to publish Bishop Bayley's diary ensued. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press is not interested; New York U Press and Scribners have not indicated their views. The Commission will obtain quotations with a view to publishing the diary under its own imprint.
3. Msgr. Field will consult with Msgr. Henry Beck about the papers of Msgr. Brady to determine if the library should seek them.
4. The Director was instructed to draft a letter for Bishop Dougherty to send to prospective members of the Advisory Board.
5. The Commission then discussed the matter of parish records. Fr. Seymour reported that Archbishop Gerety considers the records of births and marriages accessible to researchers and available for microfilming; he views them not as confidential but as semi-public records. Canonists at the Chancery Office, queried by Fr. Seymour, advised him that no canonical prohibition against researchers' use of such records existed, but that prudence and delicacy are needed. The Commission determined that its 50-year rule should be applied in this case and instructed the Director to draw up a statement reflecting the policy.
6. Those who had attended or heard about the Mid-Atlantic Archivists' Conference at Atlantic City on May 14 congratulated Msgr. Field on his address concerning the Commission's work and plans.
7. The Commission directed the sub-committee on grants to prepare a grant for submission to the NHPRC by Sept. 15, 1977.
8. The next meeting will take place on June 21, 1977 at 2:00 p.m. in the conference room of President's Hall, Seton Hall University.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph F. Mahoney,
Director

D R A F T

Statement on accessibility of parish records, to be added to current policy statement.

Research access to parish records held by the New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission/Seton Hall University Library:

Records of birth, marriage and death are held under a fifty-year rule, i.e., material over fifty years old is available to researchers. Researchers may not cite individuals by name without prior permission of the archivist.