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New Jersey Catholic Records Newsletter

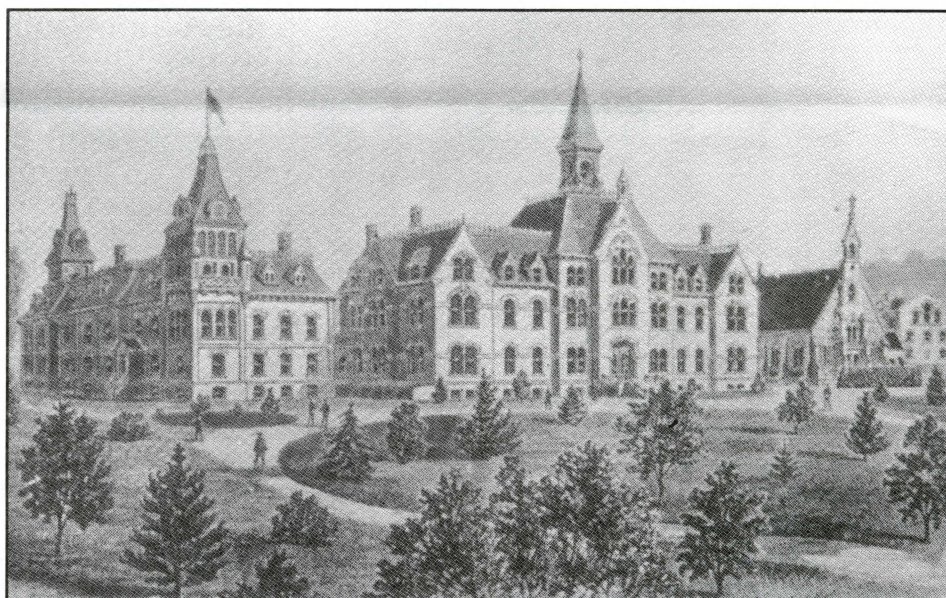
VOLUME XIII NO. 1

AUTUMN 1993

A historical review of the Seton Hall Battalion

One hundred years ago this autumn the groves of academe in South Orange, New Jersey, echoed to sounds formerly strange to them — the tramp of marching feet and the stirring call of martial music — as the Seton Hall Battalion began to learn the ways of the United States Army. An unusual concatenation of events combined to make this surprising development possible.

One factor clearly had to be the background and personality of the institution's president, Reverend William Francis Marshall. Father Marshall was born in Millville, Cumberland County on January 29, 1849. Early in his life Father Marshall met Bishop Bayley, who stopped regularly at the Marshall home on his visits to the scattered Catholics of South Jersey. In the later 1850s, the Marshall family moved briefly to Philadelphia and about the time the Civil War broke out returned to New Jersey, settling at Salem, where young Marshall



Seton Hall College in 1895.

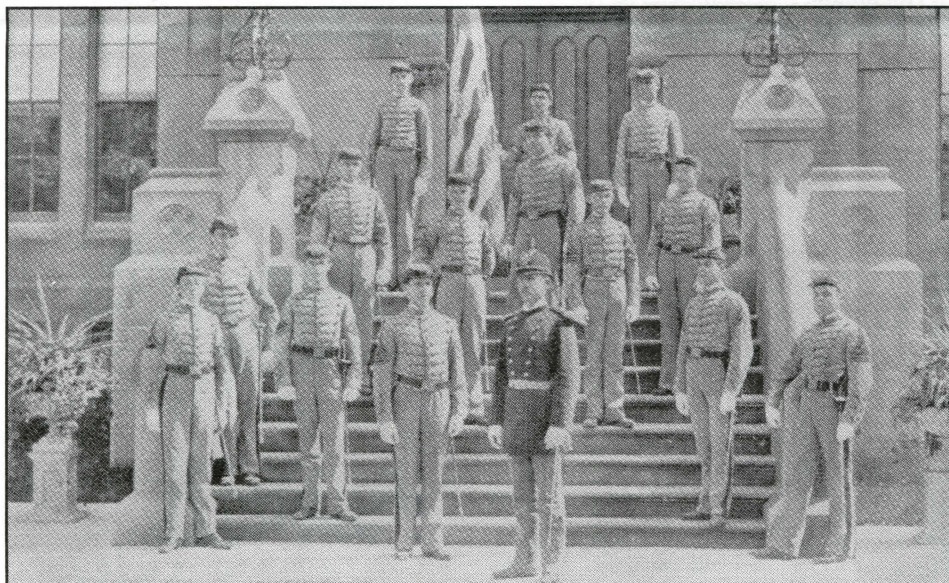
enrolled in Smith's Academy. His father soon joined the Union Army and in Sheridan's Shenandoah Valley campaign

received the wound which resulted in his death shortly after the war ended.

Young William Francis, in the meantime, studied at Chritenden's Law and Business College in Philadelphia, then followed a commercial career there until 1871. In 1872 he entered Mount Saint Mary's College at Emmitsburg, Maryland, and in 1877 came to Seton Hall for his theological studies and was ordained in February 1881.

Young Father Marshall was immediately appointed to the Seton Hall faculty, where he taught elocution, Latin and Greek. But his real metier was administration. In September 1881 he was made treasurer of the college, soon added the office of vice president and in 1888, when Father James Corrigan resigned because of ill health, Marshall was named president in addition to his other duties and retained the offices until his own resignation for reasons of health in 1897.

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Lieutenant Michael J. Lenihan and cadet officers pose on the steps of Presidents Hall, 1895.

Historical Seton Hall Battalion

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The Seton Hall Battalion in column of companies on the front lawn, 1895.

In his 1895 *Sketch of Seton Hall College* Marshall wrote that he had for some time been thinking of introducing military instruction into the college curriculum. He found the man to help him in Democratic Senator James Smith Jr., who had joined the college Board of Trustees in 1891. Through his influence with Secretary of War Daniel S. Lamont, Smith obtained the appointment of an army officer to conduct the program. Congress had already begun providing for such activity in the Morrill Act of 1862, when it specifically included military science among the arts and sciences the land-grant colleges could teach.

In the Army Act of 1865 Congress provided for detailing officers to colleges to conduct military instruction and subsequently increased the number each year to about 50 officers. In 1891 the future commander of the AEF, John J. Pershing, began such a tour at the University of Nebraska.

In August 1893, Secretary of War Lamont issued orders for Second Lieutenant Michael J. Lenihan of the 20th Infantry to report to Seton Hall College as professor of military science and tactics, and Seton Hall officially established a department of military instruction. Announcement of the appointment led to a brief flurry of complaints in newspapers about alleged violation of the

separation of church and state; one Protestant minister circularized his colleagues, urging all to join the American Protective Association to resist Catholic incursions. But from Boston Captain Scantling, commandant of Fort Warren, whose son was studying at Seton Hall, wrote to Marshall: "A better selection could scarcely have been made. . . he is a man whose acquaintance and friendship is well worth gaining."

Despite the outcry, Lieutenant Lenihan reported for duty on September 6, the opening day of the semester. Born in Hopkinton, Massachusetts in 1865, he had graduated from West Point in 1887, the year after Pershing, had been assigned to the 20th Infantry Regiment and by the time of his arrival at Seton Hall had already completed the Infantry and Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth in 1891 and a tour of duty in Washington, D.C. in the office of Arthur MacArthur, father of Douglas MacArthur.

He organized the cadets into one battalion of three companies, and selected cadet officers — corporals from among the sophomores, sergeants from the juniors and the officers from the seniors. Captain Scantling designed a cadet uniform based upon the West Point model, and by herculean efforts Lenihan managed to obtain the necessary military equipment — including two three-inch guns — by November. The college

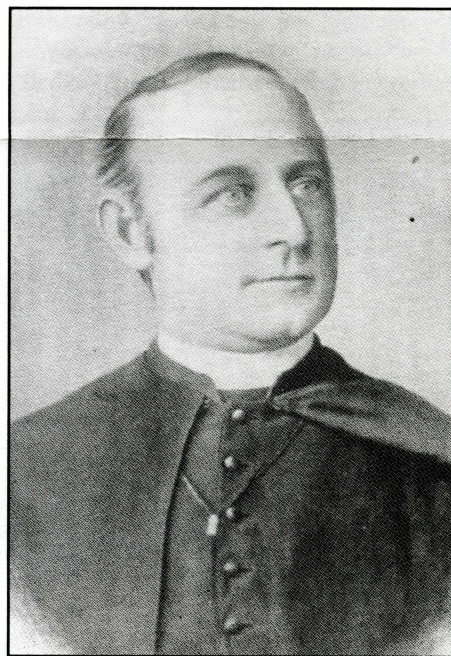
posted bond to twice the value of the equipment for its security.

The Seton Hall Battalion drilled three times a week on a 20-acre area of the campus set aside for student use and also planned to use a three-acre site owned by the college in the Orange Mountains for a summer encampment each June.

In May 1894 the unit underwent its first general inspection, conducted by Colonel R. P. Hughes. He noted that, because of the extensive acreage available, Seton Hall was in a better position to carry out practical military training "than most of the colleges in this inspection." He added that the college authorities were very supportive of the military efforts and provided good care and security for the government equipment. "The battalion has not yet reached such a degree of efficiency as authorizes undertaking tactical problems," he remarked, "but the work will come in good time."

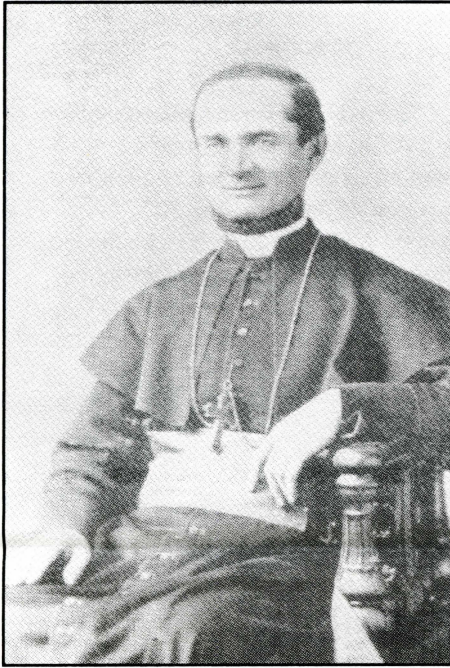
On June 4, 1894, the three companies competed in drill for the honor of carrying the national colors during the succeeding year. First Lieutenant John J. Briarton, professor of military science and tactics at Rutgers College, judged the event and awarded first place to Company B. On Commencement Day, June 12, the battalion gave its first public

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Reverend William Francis Marshall, president of Seton Hall College, 1888-1897.

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Bishop Winand M. Wigger

demonstration and Company B's cadet commander, Michael J. Donnelly, received a set of silk colors donated by Mrs. Eugene Kelly to be carried by the battalion.

Lenihan recalled years later that Bishop Wigger, who had taken up residence at Seton Hall, was particularly interested in the military department. He formed a close friendship with Father Marshall and they corresponded for many years after both had left South Orange, Marshall writing to him in French while Lenihan was serving in the trenches of World War I. With Professor of Chemistry, Dr. Thomas O'Connor Sloane, Lenihan took long bicycle rides around the countryside on the new "safety" bicycles, which had wheels of equal size rather than the earlier large front wheel and minuscule rear wheel.

Nor were his friendships only with the faculty. One of his math students (Lenihan also taught mathematics while he was at the college), Father John Hagen, wrote him from St. Andrew's, Westwood in 1917 to congratulate him on his promotion: "May your advancement continue till such time as we can hail you top-ranking officer of the entire Army!" And another student, Stuart Moore, who made a career of the Army, recalled to him in 1940:

"... I will remind you that I was the little 'runt' from Kentucky who refused

to salute the United States flag and when you reprimanded me severely for refusing to salute my country's flag, I replied: 'Sir, my country's flag is a blue cross on a red field and it has thirteen stars on it.' I still remember the smile on your face when you asked me if my father was in the Confederate Army and I proudly told you that he was on J.E.B. Stuart's staff and your reply: 'Go back to your class, you little rebel.'"

Stuart Moore was a lieutenant colonel in the Army in 1940 and his brother Thomas, also a Seton Hall

his New Deal, and for suggestions on "how our government can better serve our people."

In "Catholic Clergymen, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the New Deal" (*Catholic Historical Review*, January, 1993 [LXXIX:1]), Monroe Billington and Cal Clark examine a "representative sample" of the responses of Catholic priests to F.D.R.'s request. New Jersey is selected as representative of the East Coast. The responses of the 18 priests who wrote to Roosevelt are included in their study.

Recent publications of interest

Samuel T. McSeveney's "Religious Conflict, Party Politics, and Public Policy in New Jersey, 1874-75" (*New Jersey History*, Spring/Summer, 1992 [110:1/2]) examines the efforts of Catholics in New Jersey to provide religious services to their co-religionists in the Jamesburg reformatory and to establish a Catholic protectory during the mid-1870s. The article sets these in the context of state and national political attitudes.

In September 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt mailed a form letter to over 120,000 American clergymen asking for their views on

student, was Benedictine prior of St. Anselm's in Washington. A third brother, Banks Moore, had been first lieutenant of Company A, Seton Hall Battalion in 1895.

Military science remained a part of college life at Seton Hall at least until 1898. At the commencement exercises that June the cadets gave a drill demonstration and fought a sham battle, tactical instruction having progressed as Colonel Hughes anticipated. However, the records are very sparse and give no

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South Orange Avenue entrance to a still-rural Seton Hall College, 1895.

Commission member honored

The Science Center at Liberty State Park was the site of the October 3, 1993 induction of Sister Margherita Marchione, M.P.F. into the New Jersey Literary Hall of Fame. Sister Margherita was honored for her more than 30 books dealing principally with Italian language and literature, including several works on Philip Mazzei, friend and correspondent of Thomas Jefferson.

She joins such luminaries as Walt Whitman, James Fenimore Cooper, Joyce Kilmer, John McPhee, William Carlos Williams and James McPherson in the state pantheon of literary figures.

Also inducted on October 3 were Carl Sagan, Robert Lipsyte and Patricia Gauch. The Commission congratulates Sister Margherita on this honor and wishes her continued success in all her endeavors.

Personnel changes at NJCHRC

Two members of the New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission have recently resigned. Reverend John F. Wrynn, S.J. has assumed added responsibilities at Saint Peter's College in Jersey City and Dr. Rita C. Carney has become vice president of Georgian Court College. The Commission is very grateful to Father Wrynn and Dr. Carney for their contributions to its activities and wishes them every success in their new responsibilities. *Ad multos annos!*

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Most Reverend Dominic A. Marconi, D.D., *Chairman*; Reverend Monsignor Joseph C. Shenrock, *Vice chairman*; Bernard Bush; Ms. Jo Ann Cotz; Reverend Augustine Curley, O.S.B.; Reverend Monsignor William N. Field; Reverend Monsignor Charles J. Giglio; Sister Mary Ellen Gleason, S.C.; Reverend Michael G. Krull; Reverend Raymond J. Kupke; Joseph F. Mahoney; Sister Margherita Marchione, M.P.F.; Reverend Monsignor Robert Moneta; George L.A. Reilly; Sister Irene Marie Richards, O.P.; Sister Thomas Mary Salerno, S.C.; Bernhard W. Scholz; Reverend Monsignor Francis R. Seymour; Reverend Monsignor Edwin V. Sullivan; Reverend Joseph D. Wallace.
Consulting Member: Barbara Geller

Newsletter editor: Joseph F. Mahoney

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indication of why the military science department ceased to exist. Perhaps Father Marshall's resignation in 1897, on account of ill health, removed the driving force behind the innovation, and his successors did not wish to continue it. At any rate, the hiatus lasted until the 1930s, when the Reserve Officers Training Corps brought to the campus the successors of those 1890s cadets.

Lenihan took fond memories with him from Seton Hall, where his second daughter was born, to his next assignment at Fort Keogh in far western Montana. He was briefly in Cuba in 1899, then served in the Philippines against the

Insurrection until 1902. He was a member of the General Staff Corps from 1906 to 1910, served in Hawaii and then attended the Army War College.

During World War I he commanded both the 83rd and 153rd Infantry Brigades in France. After the war he served as Army instructor at the Naval War College in Rhode Island and commanded the 3rd Division until his retirement in 1929. The lengthy memoir he dictated is deposited at the U.S. Army Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. He died in 1958 at the ripe age of 93.



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