

Winter 2000

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New Jersey Catholic Historical Commission

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New Jersey Catholic Records Newsletter

VOLUME XIX NO. 2

WINTER 2000

Commission Sponsors Program on Women's Higher Education

On March 25, 2000, the New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission will present a conference on women's Catholic higher education in New Jersey at the College of Saint Elizabeth (CSE) at Convent Station. This academic year, the College is celebrating its centennial, having received its first freshman class in September 1899. CSE is the first permanent four-year liberal arts college for women in New Jersey and one of the earliest Catholic colleges to grant degrees to women. It is appropriate, therefore, to take some time during March, Women's History Month, to look back over the past century to recall some of the benchmarks of the development of Catholic higher education for women in New Jersey.

The day will begin at 9:30 a.m. with registration and coffee in the upper lobby of Henderson Hall on the college campus. At 10 a.m. Sister Frances

Rafferty, S.C., president of the College of Saint Elizabeth, will welcome the participants and the featured address will follow. Professor Barbara Bari, chairperson of the CSE history department, will speak on "Visions and Memories: The College of Saint Elizabeth Celebrates One Hundred Years."

Professor Bari is an alumna of Saint Elizabeth's, who later completed her doctorate in history at Rutgers University. She taught at Douglass College from 1973 to 1976, and since 1977, has taught at her alma mater. Her principal areas of interest are modern German history, women's history and international affairs. Professor Bari has written and spoken in this country and abroad on all three topics. Her major focus for the past several years has been Mother Pauline von Mallinckrodt, foundress of the Sisters of Christian Charity. She has already published articles on elements of Mother Pauline's impact and looks

to complete a book which will illuminate the course of women's history in Germany through the prism of von Mallinckrodt's activities.

In 1990 the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) selected Professor Bari as New Jersey Professor of the Year. There will be time after Professor Bari's presentation for audience questions and comments.

Following a brief break, a panel of historians, archivists and college administrators will address the Hamlet-like question, "To Go or Not To Go? Co-ed, That Is." A century ago colleges were male institutions, except for a few female colleges that had begun. In the course of the twentieth century, co-education developed at the college level, and in the 1960s there was a movement to eliminate the one-gender college. Catholic colleges, like the rest of the nation's institutions of higher learning, had begun to deal with the questions involved well before the social upheaval of the Sixties and Seventies, although the latter certainly focused attention on co-education.

The panelists briefly will examine how five Catholic institutions of higher learning – Caldwell College, the College of Saint Elizabeth, Georgian Court College, Saint Peters College and Seton Hall University – answered the title question and how they view the results. After time for questions and comments, a concluding luncheon will follow. For further information, contact Professor Joseph F. Mahoney at (973) 275-2773.



Xavier Hall, completed in 1901, the earliest building erected for the college was named for Mother Mary Xavier Mehegan first superior of the community, over her protests. (Sisters of Charity Archives)

The College of Saint Elizabeth: A Glimpse Into Its Past

As the nineteenth century drew toward its close the movement in the United States for higher education for women continued to gain strength. The Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth had been conducting a very successful academy since the early days of their existence, when the mother-house was in Newark. Aware of the opportunities which higher education might open to women, the community determined to extend its academic reach and open a full four-year college for women. In September 1899 six young women – four of them graduates of the academy – entered as the first freshman class of the College of Saint Elizabeth. Four years later, four of them composed the Class of 1903, the first graduating class.

Sister Pauline Kelligar served as first president of the college, from 1899 until her death in 1922. Born in Millstone, New Jersey in 1847, she was educated at a private academy and then attended normal school in Jersey City. She taught in public schools until she entered the Sisters of Charity in 1868. In 1877, she was appointed directress of the academy, and in 1899 assumed direction of the new college, while retaining her old job.

Sister Kelligar provided a vigorous leadership that contributed to substantial growth in a short period. The entering class in 1909, for example, was more than five times as large as the first class, and this in an age when only about four percent of the males of college age pursued higher education. The percentage of women still remained much smaller, so the growth at Saint Elizabeth's was really phenomenal.

The college has remained steadfast throughout the century in its commitment to providing a liberal education informed by Catholic ideals and values while at the same time responding to changing societal needs and opportunities. When, for example, older women began to apply to colleges for the opportunity to complete interrupted studies, or simply to expand their intellectual horizons, Saint Elizabeth's established a continuing education program in 1970 to meet this need. Later, Weekend College provided opportunity for older adults to earn a degree while employed full-time. As the complexity of American society began to demand greater preparation of the work force, the college in the 1990s gradually



Euripides' Medea being performed in the college's Greek Theater in 1965. (CSE Archives)

established a series of master's degrees in fields such as theology, education, nutrition and management.

From its initiation, Saint Elizabeth's has encouraged a broad range of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Sports have always played a part in its programs. The first announcement in 1899 assured everyone that the gymnasium, tennis courts, etc., were readily accessible to all students. Field hockey, basketball and equestrian sports arrived over time. The college newspaper, theatrical presentations, choral activity and corporal works of mercy helped to round out the Catholic education of the young students.

The college has been fortunate in the leadership of the five women who



Formal graduation portrait of the Class of 1903. Left to right are Mary Ennis, Esther Kenna (later Sister Esther Maria), Seton McCabe and Blanche Maskell (later Sister Blanche Marie). (CSE Archives)



The Class of 1913 assembled for their picture as entering freshmen. (CSE Archives)

SCHEDULE

- 9:30 a.m. COFFEE AND REGISTRATION
Upper Lobby, Henderson Hall
- 10 a.m. WELCOME
Sister Francis Raftery, S.C.,
President College of St. Elizabeth
Reverend Michael G. Krull,
New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission
- 10:10 a.m. "VISIONS AND MEMORIES:
THE COLLEGE OF ST. ELIZABETH CELEBRATES 100 YEARS"
Professor Barbara Bari, College of St. Elizabeth
- 10:45 a.m. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS
- 11 a.m. BRIEF BREAK ~ Coffee Available
- 11:20 a.m. "TO GO OR NOT TO GO? CO-ED, THAT IS"
Reverend Michael G. Krull, chairman
Sister Patrice Werner, O.P., Caldwell College
Dr. Johanna Glazewski, College of St. Elizabeth
Sister Barbara Williams, R.S.M., Georgian Court College
Professor Alan Delozier, St. Peters College
Professor Elizabeth Milliken, Seton Hall University
- 1 p.m. LUNCHEON ~ St. Joseph Hall
- COSTS: Registration \$5 (\$2 Students and Clergy/Religious)
Luncheon \$15
Luncheon reservations should be received by March 20, 2000.



Chemistry lab in the 1940s (CSE Archives)

have in turn succeeded Sister Pauline in the president's chair: Sister Mary Jose Byrne, Sister Hildegard Marie Mahoney, Sister Elizabeth Ann Maloney, Sister Jacqueline Burns and the current president, Sister Francis Raftery. Each has brought gifts of leadership and insight appropriate to the times in which they served.

The college has also been fortunate in that so many of its faculty and administrators over time have been formed on the model of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, so they shared the same basic understanding of their mission and a common sense of purpose. Given that, they could confidently accept new challenges, secure in the knowledge that, whatever their policy differences at any moment, their bedrock agreement would carry them through.

REGISTRATION FORM

Please register the undersigned for the conference on March 25, 2000.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

I enclose check(s) in the amount of \$ _____ for: _____ registrations @ \$5 (\$2 Student/Clergy/Religious).
_____ luncheon reservations @ \$15.

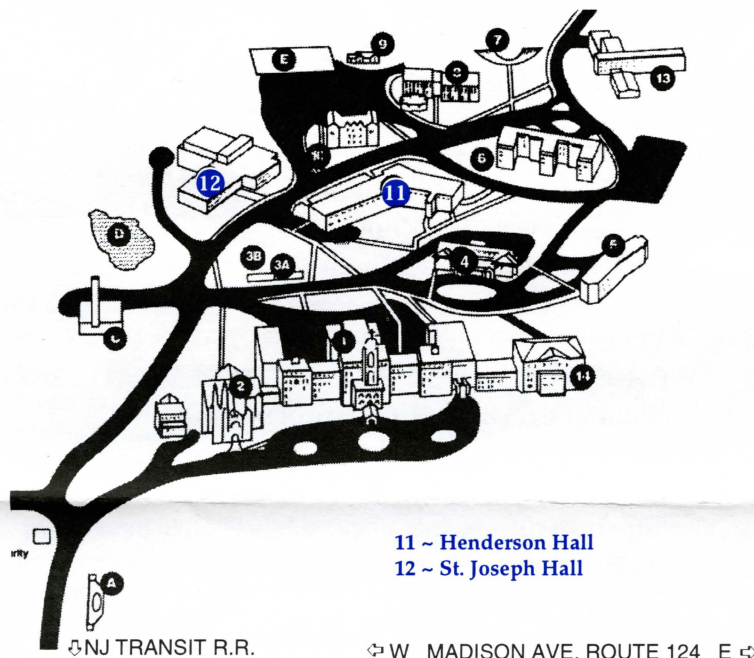
For multiple registrations, please attach names of all attendees.

Make checks payable to the "New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission."

Please return luncheon reservations by March 18, 2000, to:

Professor Joseph F. Mahoney, Department of History, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2687.

COLLEGE OF SAINT ELIZABETH



Published by the New Jersey Catholic Historical Records Commission,
Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2687

Most Reverend Dominic A. Marconi, D.D., *Chairman*; Reverend Monsignor Joseph C. Shenrock, P.A., *Vice Chairman*; Barbara Bari; JoAnn Cotz; Reverend Augustine Curley, O.S.B.; Reverend Daniel A. Degnan, S.J.; Reverend Monsignor William N. Field; Reverend Monsignor Charles J. Giglio; Reverend Michael G. Krull; Reverend Raymond J. Kupke; Joseph F. Mahoney; Sister Margherita Marchione, M.P.F.; Elizabeth Milliken; Reverend Monsignor Robert G. Moneta; Allan Nelson; Sister Irene Marie Richards, O.P.; Mark W. Rocha; Sister Thomas Mary Salerno, S.C.; Reverend Monsignor Francis R. Seymour; Reverend Joseph D. Wallace; Peter J. Wosh. Joseph F. Mahoney, *Newsletter Editor*

Recent Publications of Interest

Gleason, Sister Mary Ellen, S.C.,
Carol-Marie Kiernan and George
Sirgiovanni.

College of Saint Elizabeth

Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia
Publishing. 1999.

Navarra, Tova.

Seton Hall University

Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia
Publishing. 1999.

Arcadia Publishing is familiar to many historians and history buffs for its series on cities and towns, many of them in New Jersey. It has recently initiated "The College History Series," to which the two entries above belong. Like the urban series, the college history series depends very heavily on illustrations and captions to carry the story. They are popular introductions to their topics, not scholarly analyses replete with footnotes and bibliographies. The trio who researched and wrote the *College of Saint Elizabeth* have produced a particularly felicitous result.

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