

'Shrines Mark Pioneers' Heroism In State

By REV. ROBERT F. McNAMARA

Father McNamara is professor of history at St. Bernard's Seminary. He is a long time associate of Mr. Hetzler in marking spots of historic interest in New York State.

On June 11, the site of St. Michael's, a sixteenth-century Jesuit mission among the Seneca Indians, will be marked by a new commemorative monument. The mission village, called Gandougare, by the Iroquois, was located on the old Onondaga road, two miles east of Holcomb, and a dozen miles south of Victor.

Donor of the monument is the prominent Rochester industrialist, Herman G. Hetzler.

This will be the sixth monument of the sort placed by Mr. Hetzler to identify ancient Iroquois sites.

"We are likely to forget today that western New York, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was visited more often by Canadian Frenchmen than by Englishmen."

Many of us, indeed, do not know that the soil of the present Diocese of Rochester was once trodden by such famous French explorers and leaders as LaSalle, Tonin, Duluth, and Desnoyers, by such renowned Franciscans as Monseigneur, Ribourie and Menzies; and by such prominent Sulpician priests as Dellerie, de Cassin and Gallene.

But it was the French Jesuits who left the deepest impression. They came, not as visitors, but as missionaries. They stayed, they stayed many years and painful years, among the Senecas and Cayugas, on what was possibly the most difficult missionary assignment in the history of the Church.

If the average person in our area has any acquaintance with the work of these missionaries, it is due to the small measure to the efforts of Mr. Herman Hetzler in placing markers to their memory.

Mr. Hetzler frankly admits, however, that he owes his inspiration to five priests of the Diocese of Rochester—now deceased—through whom he first became acquainted with the old Jesuit missions. They were: Rev. James J. Dougherty, of Canandaigua; Rev. Edward Blay, of Geneva; Rev. Martin J. Cloney, of Honeoye Falls; and the brothers, Rev. Andrew Byrne and Rt. Rev. Magr. Edward Byrne, of St. Bernard's seminary.

As a matter of fact, the new monument at St. Michael's has as its purpose not only to mark the mission site, but to do honor to the late Fathers James Dougherty and Andrew Byrne, who set up the original marker on the same spot.

It was back in the early 1920s that Hetzler first became interested in this unusual avocation. Father Dougherty and Byrne had lately raised the monument

at St. Michael and a second monument on the location of another mission village, Gandougare, at St. James, which stood on a hill summit of Boughorn Hill.

Applying himself to a study of the thrilling history of these old missions, Mr. Hetzler decided that somebody should take steps to mark the other Seneca villages where the Jesuits had worked. The most important of these villages was Tottakton, site of the mission of the Immaculate Conception. Tottakton, in 1687, probably stood a little west of Honeoye Falls.

Circumstances prevented Mr. Hetzler from taking any steps for the next few years. But in 1933 he received a new incentive.

That year, through the petition of interested groups in the Auburn area, the newly-constructed highway bridge which crosses Route 5 and 20 across the Seneca River near Montezuma, was given, by state law, the name "Rene Monard Bridge."

Father Rene Monard, a Jesuit who lived and worked among the Cayuga Indians of that vicinity in 1686-1687, surely deserved this honor. He was the first white resident in the Cayuga country. Father Edward Byrne, one of the commissionmen at the dedication, turned to Hetzler for aid in preparing the required bronze plaque. Mr. Hetzler undertook to manufacture the plaque himself. This was his first mission monument.

That same fall Hetzler's plans to mark the Tottakton site matured. He set up a granite-block tablet at Dan's Corners on Route 15. The tablet listed the five Jesuit Fathers who had labored at Tottakton from 1686-1709. The Order of the Alabamas, Mun Curavon No. 25, at the suggestion of Mr. Hetzler, one of its past commanders, sponsored the erection of the monument.

The dedication took place on October 29, 1933. Five thousand people were in hand for the ceremony. Among the speakers was Rev. Michael J. Jacobs, S.J., himself an Iroquois Indian, and the first Iroquois to become a Jesuit.

This was Mr. Hetzler's second monument. On the very day of its dedication, a man in attendance recommended the setting up of what was to become Hetzler's third marker. "Why don't you mark the site of the first chapel within the boundaries of the city of Rochester?" The questioner was Mr. George B. Selden, of Buhreille Basin, who, though not a Catholic himself, is an authority on ancient Catholic French contacts in the Rochester area.

Herman Hetzler needed no second invitation. On October



Herman Hetzler and Father McNamara study photo of monument on Redman farm. Hetzler's home is treasury of Indian relics.

13, 1935, he unveiled his third tablet, to identify the locale of Rochester's first chapel and, in all probability, of its first Mass. It was the famous explorer, Father Hennepin, who gave the location in the story of his voyage.

In June, 1679, he and his Franciscan companions had come down to the head of Irondequoit Bay, and built, in the nearby woods, "a small cabin of bark of trees to perform divine service therein." This was near the grounds of Our Lady of Mercy High School.

With the permission of the Sisters of Mercy, therefore, the monument was erected on the High School grounds. The dedicatory address was given that day by a member of the same order as Father Hennepin, the Franciscan historian, Father Francis Borja Steck.

Hetzler's monument No. 4 was erected to honor an Iroquois Christian rather than a missionary. It was a Rochester nun, a School Sister of Notre Dame, who introduced Herman Hetzler to one of the nobles of the Iroquois chiefdom, Ahasa, called Kryn, the Great Mohawk, by the Dutch colonists. Kryn, grandfather of the famous Mohawk chief, Joseph Brant, was a convert to Catholicism. Like many other Iroquois converts, he moved to Canada after his conversion so that he might practice his new religion without interference.

In 1687, the French governor of New France, Marquis de Denonville, became indignant at the bold attacks which the Seneca Iroquois were making upon the French in Canada and their Indian allies. To punish them, he led an expedition of some two thousand soldiers—French and Indians—down from Quebec to the Seneca country.

They landed at Irondequoit Bay on July 10, 1687, and marched with as little delay as possible towards the western Seneca villages near Victor. At Victor, on July 13, they were ambushed by the Senecas. For a while there was great confusion, but the Christian Indians, under Kryn's cool leadership, finally sent the Senecas flying.

There were no further battles. Denonville's army spent

the rest of its sojourn burning the villages and provisions in the Victor and the Honeoye Falls districts, including Gandougare, or St. Michael's.

When Mr. Hetzler proposed to honor this distinguished Indian, some opposition was raised. Friends of the Senecas were inclined to consider Kryn a turncoat for taking up arms against his fellow Iroquois. Nevertheless, Hetzler, sure that reason was on his side, went ahead with his preparations.

The unveiling of the monument—which stands at the four corners of downtown Victor, took place on June 11, 1939. Two of the speakers, Mr. George Selden and Dr. Alexander M. Stewart (a Baptist minister who is one of

our greatest experts on the local Jesuit missions) were at pains to point out in their addresses that Kryn was a worthy and noble member of the Iroquois nation.

Another speaker at the rite was Sakora-Karonk Jacobs, a Canadian Mohawk. Before the end of the ceremony, Jacobs officially inducted Mr. Hetzler into the Iroquois nation. He gave him the name "Borivatoke," which means "Loyal."

The Kryn tablet was the fourth Hetzler missionary monument.

On September 17 of the same year, Mr. Hetzler unveiled his fifth, Marker Number 5, unlike the earlier ones, was outside the Diocese of Rochester. It was placed on the high

shore of Lake Ontario near Cape Vincent in Jefferson County.

Hetzler had often summered in this district, and camped on the point then known as Stony or Dutch Point. After his interest had been stimulated in the New York Jesuit missions, he began to investigate the possible connection which this point—approximately on the spot where the Lake narrows, to become the St. Lawrence River—may have had with the journeys of the missionaries between Quebec and Montreal and the Iroquois country.

He found that on March 19, 1636, Father Claude Dablon, S.J., one of the pioneer missionaries among the Onondagas, camped in this very place with a score of Indian companions, while bound on a heartbreaking embassy to the authorities at Quebec. On this promontory, therefore, Mr. Hetzler set a bronze marker; and behind it he planted a thirty-foot rustic cross.

His old Rochester friends, Monsignor Edward Byrne and Mr. Selden participated in the unveiling. So, too, did Mr. Matthew Long, owner of the Point, who, at the ceremony, consigned the deed of the monument site to the parish of St. Vincent De Paul, at Cape Vincent.

Not was that the end of it. Later that fall, Mr. Long and Mr. Hetzler petitioned the United States Government to resume the promontory "Dablon Point." The federal government declared, in an official letter of December 6, 1940, that the change of name had been approved.

The Dablon cross now rises from Dablon Point, therefore, to mark for modern wayfarers of the Seaway the landing place of one who blazed that trail three centuries ago.

The St. Michael's site, soon to be identified by Mr. Hetzler's sixth marker, was populated by Hurons rather than Iroquois. To keep up their ranks, depleted by death, the Hurons often brought back slaves to live among them or accepted surrendered enemies or immigrants. Gandougare

COURIER-JOURNAL Friday, May 13, 1960

from Mr. Redman, the owner of the farm, he engaged the services of Mr. Harry Schoff, the Holcomb archaeologist, to investigate the locale.

During the course of the excavation, which was in progress for several months in 1940 and 1941, Mr. Schoff made many interesting discoveries. He uncovered three hundred Indian graves, many of which contained devotional rings and medals of the sort which the missionaries gave to their Indians. In one grave Schoff also found a unique wooden cup of Iroquois origin.

But perhaps most important of all was his discovery of the floor plan of what seems likely to have been the mission chapel. A large iron key, turned up in the digging, may have been the very key used by the missionaries to lock the door of their little rustic church.

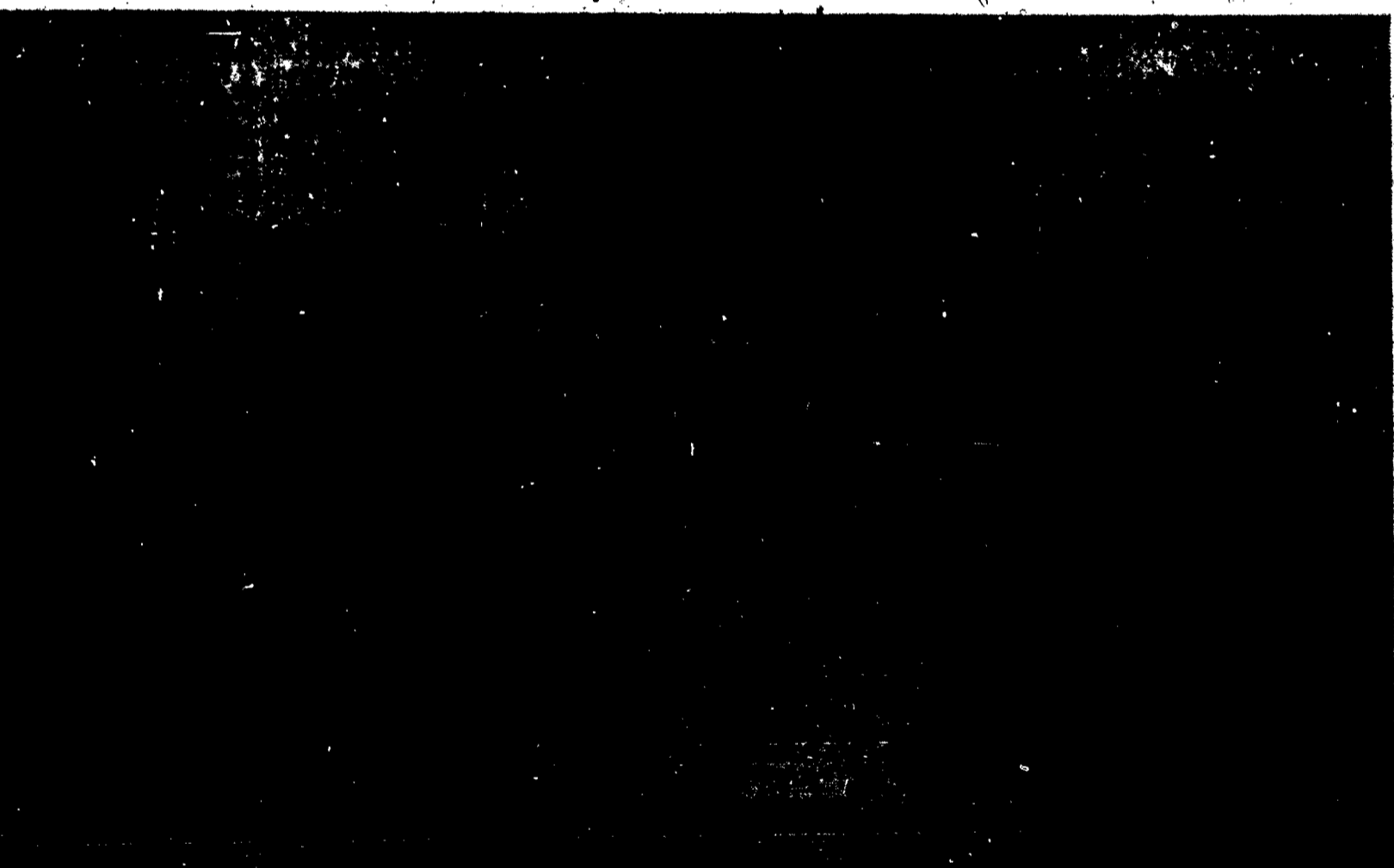
Mr. Hetzler, after dedicating the new monument at Gandougare, has hopes of marking additional spots of missionary interest. He would like, for instance, to place one on the Kirkwood property near Dan's Corners. This was the location of another village of Christian captives, as he was able to prove by excavations he made there in 1940. The Mission of St. John's, or Gandachiragou, a few miles nearer Lima, likewise deserves a monument.

We hope that Herman Hetzler will be able to realize his dreams. His hobby has been an unusual but a very valuable one. As the periodical "America" put it in an editorial appearing in the October 21, 1939 issue: "If the country at large had a couple dozen Mr. Hetzlers, our glorious Catholic past would not be brushed aside and forgotten as easily as it is."

The Diocese of Rochester and the Church in the United States are indeed indebted to Herman G. Hetzler.

The Jesuits who worked on this arduous missionary assignment three centuries ago, must often have been tempted to think their efforts were absolutely fruitless. But who can say how much they contributed then, by their "life which may be called one continual death," to the prosperity of the Catholic faith in the Diocese of Rochester today?

Having secured permission



Dan's Corners' monument near Honeoye Falls was unveiled in 1933. Picture shows Iroquois Jesuit Rev. Michael Jacobs, Mr. Hetzler, Jesuit Father Aloysius Thibbitts and Monsignor Edward Byrne.

Reapings At Random

Are Current Issues Topics For Church?

During the past several months we have commented from time to time on social and economic problems. We've had letters complaining about our intrusion in church matters from readers who tell us that bishops, priests and Catholic editors should stick to religion and keep out of such worldly matters.

The great encyclical by Pope Pius XII on social reconstruction, Quadragesimo Anno, published in 1931, effectively answers those who would challenge bishops, priests and Catholic editors to make comment.

Pope Pius XII gives a definite reply when he says: "... that principles which Leo XIII so clearly established must be laid down at the outset here, namely, that those residing in the United States and duty to pronounce with supreme authority upon social and economic matters."

Certainly the Church was not given the commission to guide men to an only fleeting and perishable happiness but to that which is eternal.

"Indeed the Church holds it is unlawful for her to mix without cause in those temporal concerns; however, she even can in no wise renounce the duty God entrusted to her to interpose her authority, not of course, in matters of technique for which she is neither suitably equipped nor endowed by office, but in all things that are connected with the moral law."

"For as to these, the deposit of truth that

God committed to Us and the grave duty of disseminating and interpreting the whole moral law, and of urging it in season and out of season, bring under and subject to Our supreme jurisdiction not only the social order but economic activities themselves."

Then again the successor of this great pontiff, the late Pope Pius XII, made exactly clear in January, 1947, that the Church and its bishops, its priests and its editors could well go beyond the confines of that familiar refrain put out by the secularists, "stick to religion."

Pope Pius XII said: "To wish to draw an exact line of separation between religion and life, between the natural and the supernatural, between the Church and the world, as if they had nothing to do with each other, as if the rights of God were valueless in all the multifold realities of daily life, whether human or social, is entirely foreign to Catholic thought and is positively anti-Christian."

"The more, therefore, the power of darkness bring their pressure to bear, the more they strive to banish the Church and religion from the world and from life, the more there is need on the part of the Church itself of steadfast and persevering action in order to respond and to place all friends of human life under the most sweet empire of Christ, so that His spirit may breathe more abundantly. His law reign with a more sovereign sway, and His love triumph more victoriously. Behold what we must understand by the Kingdom of Christ!"

Of course, some will ask why we cannot

"This task of the Church is indeed arduous, but they are simply unwitting deserters or dupes who, in defiance to a misguided supernaturalism, would confine the Church to the 'strictly religious' field, as they say, whereas by so doing they are but playing into the hands of their enemies."

Of course, these definitive observations by the two Pontiffs are not a mandate for priests, or laymen to give a personal political interpretation of social and economic issues in order to thrust them down the people's throats as official interpretations of the Church.

We, for our part, constantly strive to make clear what is the official Catholic view and what is merely the view of a Catholic—and there is a rather important difference.

Catholic newspapers have a part to play in guiding their readers towards at least a Catholic view on social and economic matters. It is, to quote one of my fellow editors, a question of bringing the teachings of the city of God in contact with the realities of the city of man.

Therefore, the function of the Catholic editor is to apply insofar as it is possible, the message of the gospel to the passing events of the days in which we live; and, by asserting the relevance of the gospel to the other, to provide a kind of leadership which faithful Christians will be encouraged to follow.

Of course, some will ask why we cannot

concern ourselves solely with things of the spirit. But we are not merely members of the Church. We are its witnesses, witnesses for Jesus Christ among men. We who are in the world make a witness to Jesus in the world. We are not the prophet calling to judgment, but the witness testifying to the truth of Christ.

This testimony gives witness to the life, becomes a lesson in the mass. It's not sufficient to call down the wrath of God upon men or save them from their own folly. Something much more positive has to be done—promulgating the gospel which are the "good news" for all men.

This "good news" has to be applied to the whole of life—all men have to see the need for it in the exercise of daily living.

The social and economic lives of the people cannot be separated from the rest of life, insofar as we are concerned with the whole man; then we must be concerned about business practices, labor unions, housing, racial discrimination. Where we can elevate these matters to conform with the dignity of the human being, we must surely do it through the "good news" of the gospel.

No! We cannot be oblivious to the social and economic needs of man. But our interpretation of these needs must be based on the truth of the gospel and not on personal, political, or other pet theories born of the secular, materialistic mind.—GERARD B. SHERRY

THE CATHOLIC
Courier Journal
OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

Friday, May 13, 1960 Vol. 71, No. 33

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Report on blood test matter in the Post Office at Rochester, N. Y.

As required under the Act of Congress of March 1, 1937.

Single copy: 10¢. 1 year subscription: \$12.00. (N.Y. State Post Office Permit No. 1000)

Classified Matter: 10¢ per line per week. Foreign Postage: 50¢ per year.