

# Diocesan Figures in Political Life

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Father McNamara's history of the Diocese of Rochester is to be published early in 1968, the centennial year of the Diocese. This is another of his special articles on historical aspects of our diocesan past.

November is as much "Election Month" in the United States as October is "Halloween Month" and December "Christmas Month." The recurrence of the November campaigns and elections of 1967 prompts us to set forth a few recollections on a certain number of political figures of long ago who in their day were members of the Diocese of Rochester.

Upstate Catholics in the nineteenth century were a minority group, especially in the more rural areas. Furthermore, they were usually poor and had only a slight educational background. In an earlier article, we alluded to two very clearly Catholic leaders from Steuben County, General William Kernan and Francis Kernan. Francis, a native of Wayne, subsequently became a U.S. Senator.

His father, William, who continued for most of his life to live at Wayne, was also active in local politics. The General was a Democrat, but as a Steuben County historian said, "whether he is a Hunker or a Barnburner I am not able to say." These were current terms applied, respectively, to the conservative and the progressive Democratic blocs.

But figures like the Kernans, both well-to-do and well educated, and therefore equipped for political leadership, were rare among early Catholic settlers.

Where Catholics usually made their first bid for public office was on the ward level in communities where Catholics were fairly numerous and lived in "colonies." Take, for example, Joseph Schutte of Rochester. Schutte was born in Hopstein, Prussia, and came to Rochester in 1838. Up to 1870 he conducted a mirror and picture-framing business. Then he opened a furniture store on Main Street. He was active in St. Joseph's Church and in German-American associations in the city. But he also engaged in political activities. He was alderman for the Fifth Ward for several terms, and served on the Board of Supervisors. From 1875 to 1880 he held the elective office of Overseer of the Poor.

Probably the majority of upstate Catholics belonged to the Democratic Party through the years. This was considered the party of the laboring man and of the poor. The Whigs, and later the Republicans, were furthermore associated in the public mind with the white Protestant ascendancy.

In fact, Catholics sometimes acted as if abandonment by a Catholic of the Democratic Party was equivalent to an apostasy from the Catholic faith. This view dissipated only with the passage of time. American Catholic bishops repudiated it in one way or another. Bishop McQuaid of Rochester did so by assuming a strictly non-partisan stance. Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul did so by appearing publicly on the campaign platforms of the Republican Party.

Nevertheless, Catholic participation in the Democratic Party still remained very large. Hence we find a number of Catholic Democrats serving throughout the years as county chairmen of their parties. One such person was Frank L. McCabe, of Campbell, N.Y., who when he died in 1930 had for many years been Steuben County chairman of the Democrat Party. His funeral was one of the largest in the history of the village. He had been county clerk at one time during his career. But the Democratic Party was never strong enough in Steuben County to put many men into office or keep them there for long.

As immigrant families moved on into the second and third generations, their members, better prepared for civic leadership, were often chosen for public office, either elective or appointive. The election of Catholic mayors was at times a real sign of community recognition, although in some cases the men chosen were the creatures of political bosses, hence lacking in dynamism.

## Reds Block Confirmation

Vienna—(RNS)—Archbishop Frantisek Tomasek, Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Prague, encountered difficulties with the government during a recent tour of the archdiocese to administer Confirmation, according to reliable reports here.

The Austrian Roman Catholic press agency, Kathpress, said that he was forbidden to confirm some of the eligible children by authorities in an unidentified Central Bohemian town.

According to the report, 300 children were registered for Confirmation but local Communist authorities told the archbishop that he could confirm only 120 of them. Archbishop Tomasek reportedly phoned the national Office for Religious Affairs in Prague and was told that it had not issued any order limiting the number of children to be confirmed.



SENATOR MEAD

Senator Mead was not a resident of the Diocese of Rochester when he began his political career. But he was a native of Mount Morris, the son of Thomas and Jane Kelly Mead, who took him to Buffalo when he was five years old.

Jim Mead was a self-made man. His father was a section boss on the railroad, and he himself went to work as a water boy at the age of 12. Later he rose to the posts of lampighter, spike mauler, track walker, shoveler and switchman. This had interfered with his education, but at the age of 20, while still working on the railroad, he enrolled as a student at the Caton School of Engineering and at Buffalo Institute of Technology. Next he studied law in Washington and worked as a policeman. Even when he returned to Buffalo as a lawyer and novice politician, he played semi-pro football.

In 1914 he began to climb through election towards his federal career: Erie County supervisor (1914); State Assembly (1915-1918); House of Representatives (1918-1935). As might be expected from his earlier activities, he was a strong proponent of labor legislation both in the State Legislature and in Congress. As both a Democrat and a labor legislator, he naturally became an ardent supporter of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal.

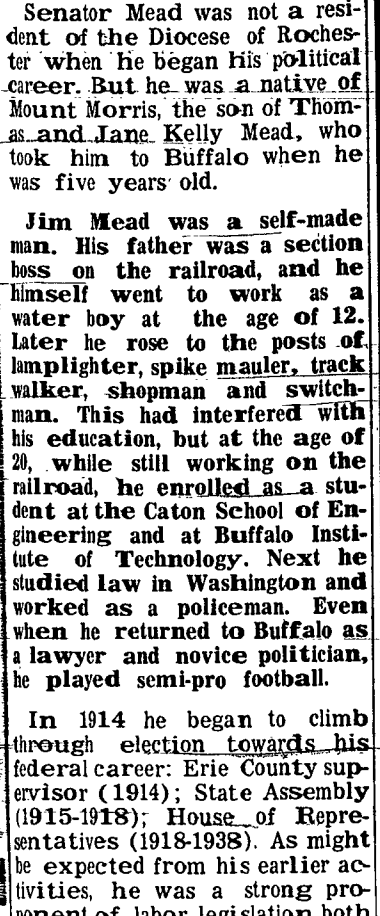
Though he loved Washington, he aspired to the governorship of New York State. In 1942, despite the backing he received from Roosevelt, he lost the nomination to James A. Farley. In 1944, on the other hand, he won the nomination and ran against Thomas Dewey, who was making a bid for his second term. The campaign was energetic, but Dewey won by 680,000 votes. From 1950 to 1955 Mead served as chairman of the Federal Trade Commission. His last post (1955-1956) was as director of the Washington office of the New York State Department of Commerce. In 1956, he resigned, and, retiring to Florida, began raising oranges. It was in Florida that he died, eight years after he had bidden farewell to the national capital.

Senator James Mead's career was in the best tradition of the self-made American political leader: a naturally talented boy from the "other side of the tracks" who found the college of hard knocks a wonderful training school for the battles that the dedicated political figure must fight in the arena of government.

One last figure in federal statesmanship of this time bore a native and lifelong residence of the Rochester Diocese: Lawrence O. Murray of Addison Hill, Town of Tuscarora, Steuben County.

Lawrence O. Murray was born in the Murray farm homestead on February 1864, and died in the same home on June 1924. His father was Thomas Murray, his mother, Ellen Brennan Murray.

Lawrence attended Niagara University for two years, and then went to study law in New York, where he was admitted to the bar in 1893. He next moved to Washington, secured a Master of Laws degree from Georgetown and a Doctorate of Canon Law from the Catholic University of America, and found employment in departmental offices of the federal government. Apart from two sojourns outside of Washington, when he worked for banking firms at New York and Chicago, Murray spent the rest of his civic career in Washington.



LAWRENCE MURPHY

From 1904 to 1908 he was Undersecretary of Commerce and Labor. His highest post, which he held from 1908 to 1913 was that of Comptroller of the Currency of the United States.

The Honorable Lawrence O. Murray remained a bachelor all his life. Among his collateral relatives is his grand-nephew, Monsignor William M. Roche, Superintendent of Schools of the Diocese of Rochester. Another grand-nephew is Mr. Thomas Kelley of Addison Hill, who with his wife, has made available to the present writer much of the material on Mr. Murray. Their son, Father Thomas P. Kelley, is a priest of the Archdiocese of Washington — back where his great-uncle began his distinguished career of public service in 1893.

But if city offices were now open to upstate Catholic candidates, why not aspire to State offices?

A Penn Yan Catholic, Thomas Carmody (1859-1911) served two terms as New York State Attorney General (1910-1914). A Rochester Catholic lawyer, Eugene Dwyer (1873-1946) was one of a number of Catholics to serve in the State Assembly, in the early years of the century. John S. Kennedy of Corning brought a constructive verve to his task as member of the New York State Commission on Prisons, to which he was named by Charles S. Whitman, Governor of New York from 1914 to 1916. A Rochesterian, Vincent Murphy, took up the reins of office of Comptroller of the State of New York in 1925. He was at the time the youngest man ever to hold that rank. The ability which was shown during his first term by this son of Daniel B. Murphy (one of the city's most distinguished Catholic leaders) was notable. Unfortunately, an untimely death cut short his most promising career.

Catholic lawyers from Rochester's diocesan area were also elected to the State courts. One of them was Peter A. Hendrick, for fourteen years a justice of the New York State Supreme Court, who died in 1923.

Peter Hendrick came from an unusual Penn Yan family. One of his brothers, Thomas A. Hendrick, was a priest of the Rochester Diocese and subsequently Bishop of Cebu in the Philippine Islands. Another brother, Michael J. Hendrick, was in the United States Consular Service for over thirty years. The family was staunchly Republican.

Nor was Catholic upstate service in the federal office restricted to orators. Among those Rochesterians who served in Congress as representatives was James M. E. O'Grady. O'Grady had earlier served twice as speaker of the Assembly in Albany. He held the post of congressman for one term.

No other Catholic of Rochester Diocesan origin was elected U.S. Senator after Francis Kernan until 1938, when James Michael Mead (1885-1964) was named to fill the unexpired term of U.S. Senator Royal S. Copeland. Two years later Senator Mead won the election to a full term.

# Large Families, Goal Of New Organization

Buenos Aires — (RNS)—Argentina will establish a new National Welfare Organization for Family Promotion and Stability whose purpose will include the promotion of large families. Raul Puigbo, secretary of Community Development and Assistance, announced here.

His announcement came at the end of a week-long meeting of the Christian Family Movement (MFC) attended by delegates from 79 countries. It was the sixth Latin American Assembly of the MFC.

Jose Alvarez Icaza, MFC secretary general for Latin America, stressed that the purpose of the movement is "to serve the Christian family, whether it is Catholic or not" and called for "unity and understanding between rich and poor families" which would offer "an example for youth."

The movement, established in

Latin America by an Irish Passionist priest, Father Peter Richards, in 1948, has a membership of approximately 150,000, including Catholics and non-Catholics.

Mr. and Mrs. Antonio Alcocer of Mexico were elected Latin American secretaries for the next three years.

Among those who attended the final session were Antonio Cardinal Caggiano, Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Archbishop Umberto Mozzoni, Papal Nuncio to Argentina, and Russian Orthodox Bishop Athanasius Martos.

Argentina's President Juan Carlos Onganía, who was unable to attend, sent a message in which he described the Assembly as "an event of profound significance for the people and government of Argentina."



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