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CATHOLICITY
IN
PHILADELPHIA.

BY MARTIN J. GRIFFIN.

Last month we showed that the first positive evidence of the celebration of Mass in Philadelphia was based upon the letter of Rev. John Talbot to George Keith found in "Chronicle" (Connecticut, p. 37, under date of February 14th, 1716, where Talbot says: "I saw Mr. Bradford in New York. He tells me that Mass is publicly set out and read in Philadelphia, among which London is one and his son is another."

In *The American Catholic Quarterly Review*, for July, 1883, Dr. John Gilmary Shea has an article on "Converts—their Influence and Work in this Country," in which he confirms our statement when he says: "The earliest evidence we have of the presence of priests in Philadelphia is connected with the conversion of Dennis Britton, a prominent and well-to-do personage, and the public celebration of Mass at the time. This conquest preceded the entrance of the Jesuits into that province, and was probably due to the Franciscans, who had been sent to Maryland by the Propaganda some years before."

As the letter of the Propaganda is dated February 16th, 1716, we are able to state that Mass was first celebrated in this city as early as the month of February, 1716. This is the date of the Propaganda letter, which is the earliest date of the year as yet before the close of 1717.

But we have since obtained an earlier evidence than that which we offered last month and which Dr. Shea declares to be "certain."

It is from a letter of the same Rev. Talbot to the Secretary of the London Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and dated New York, January 10, 1717, which says: "A Mr. O'Leary has just arrived at Philadelphia for the purpose of settling here. Our Fathers yet remain to render what consolation they can to distressed Catholics."

The names of the priest who "traveled on foot to Maryland," as our investigators, not given. But he did not travel through Philadelphia, and, if so, he would have been noted by the city authorities as he did not go to Philadelphia. It is not possible also that the traveling Jesuit was Rev. Thomas Harvey who is set down as in New York from 1703 to 1709, the latter year in which "Annual Letters" closed the year. New York "travelled on foot to Maryland"—just the year the Roman Catholic saves Father Harvey to have gone to Maryland, where he appears to have remained until 1709, when he returned to New York, and was there in 1709.

Does this not look as if Father Harvey was the apostle of the Faith in Philadelphia?

If Father O'Leary, as we have seen, was the apostle of the Faith in Philadelphia in 1716, and that the first positive evidence of the celebration of Mass in Philadelphia was based upon the letter of Rev. John Talbot to George Keith found in "Chronicle" (Connecticut, p. 37, under date of February 14th, 1716, where Talbot says: "I saw Mr. Bradford in New York. He tells me that Mass is publicly set out and read in Philadelphia, among which London is one and his son is another."

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In 1707, wrote Logan to send a report relative to it to him, "as his lie is made of it against me here."

He had returned to England to look after his property rights, and he believed they would suffer, if it became known that he allowed "Papal" liberty of conscience.

While Dr. Shea says that it was Francis X. who "probably" celebrated the Mass and made the convert, we offer a contribution to the elucidation of the history of the question our conclusions below, that the priests were Jesuits.

We gave the evidence relating to the Franciscans last month. That relating to the Jesuits this month seems to us the more conclusive.

We mentioned last month the names of Rev. Polycarp Wicksted on Rev. Jas. Haddock as Franciscans, either of whom might possibly have been the priest who celebrated Mass in Philadelphia in 1707.

Fr. Thomas Harvey, who was sent from New York to Maryland, returned to New York and took up his abode in a room at the corner of Walnut and Pine streets in Philadelphia and made this New York his home for the rest of his life. He was a member of the Society of Jesus, and was one of the most prominent of the order in the province of Maryland.

He was born in England in 1660, and came to America in 1703, where he remained until his death in 1714, at the age of 54.

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We find by the Roman Catalogue of the Society of Jesus the names of those priests who are recorded as being in New York City between the years 1700 and 1714. These are: Fr. Thomas Harvey, Fr. John Harrison and Charles Gage. Fr. Harvey was born in London in 1660, and came to New York from 1683 to 1690, and in Maryland in 1703, and again in New York in 1709.

It is not very probable that on his way from New York to Maryland that Philadelphia and intervening country was unexplored? It is possible that Maryland had been visited by the Jesuits, but we know that wherever a few Catholics could be found while they were on their journey.

Had the Franciscans, Rev. Polycarp Wicksted or Rev. Jas. Haddock, entered our city they would reasonably be expected to have been held to it as their field.

But to find Jesuits passing from Maryland to New York from 1708 and returning as late as 1714, seems to determine that the Jesuits had taken possession of the city, and maintained their right to it by visitations from time to time.

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HICKNER'S ROBBERY.
M. J. O'Brien, the C. K. of A. Treasurer is thus reported in *The Times*, of Chattanooga, Tenn.:
"Shortly after My return to the position of Treasurer of the Order, I visited O'Brien, in the home of my predecessor, in order to make a settlement. I expected to find all his books in shape, and to receive the full amount of the Order's funds, but I was offered only a bill for \$1000 of the window and cupboards and general fund. His record was incomplete, and from his books, the exact amount due to him to the Order could not then be ascertained."
"Mr. Hickner desired to retain his books in order to post them, and also wished to

transfer a considerable part of this fund for the payment of orders which had a few days previous been received by him. This request was declined and the money demanded. He subsequently agreed to turn over the amount of the fund to the Order, but the payment of these orders with the exception of \$2000 held by the First National Bank of Crawford."
"He showed me a letter from the cashier of this bank in which he was ordered to turn over \$2000 of the order's money, and he proposed to hold for the payment of these orders with the exception of \$2000 held by the First National Bank of Crawford."
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"Catholic parents, teach your children to take a special interest in the history of our country. . . . We must keep firm and stable the liberties of our country by keeping fresh the noble memories of the past.—Fathers of the III Plenary Council of Baltimore.

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Monsignor Andrew A. Lambing

Source: John W. Jordan, *Genealogical and Personal History of Western Pennsylvania*, vol. 3 (Lewis Historical Pub. Co., New York, 1915), 1457

In Pennsylvania in the late 1800s, Monsignor Andrew A. Lambing and Martin I. J. Griffin were the driving forces in research on the history of the Catholic Church in early America. The following chart presents the chronology of the two Catholic historical societies established in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia in the mid-1880s, and their historical journal publications that witnessed amalgamation of Monsignor Andrew Lambing's *Researches* into a Philadelphia publication and the subsequent history, replete with several name changes:



Martin I. J. Griffin

Source: Lloyd Collection Digital Library @ Villanova University

Historical Society, Person, or Event	Date of Establishment	Location	Publication	Years
Ohio Valley Catholic Historical Society of Pittsburgh (Andrew A. Lambing)	February 1, 1885	Pittsburgh	<i>Historical Researches in Western Pennsylvania, Principally Catholic</i>	July 1884 - April 1885
			<i>Catholic Historical Researches</i> (name change)	July 1885 - October 1886
Andrew A. Lambing sells <i>Researches</i> to Martin I. J. Griffin		Pittsburgh to Philadelphia		December 1886
Irish Catholic Benevolent Union (Martin I. J. Griffin)		Philadelphia	<i>I.C.B.U. Journal</i>	March 1873 - Jan. 1, 1892
			Renamed in 1892: <i>Griffin's I.C.B.U. Journal</i>	Jan. 15, 1892 - June 1, 1894
			Renamed in 1894: <i>Griffin's Journal</i>	June 15, 1894 - 1900
Martin I. J. Griffin		Philadelphia	<i>American Catholic Historical Researches</i> (Vol. III, No. 3 et seq.)	1887 - 1912
The American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia (Martin I. J. Griffin & Thomas C. Middleton)	July 22, 1884 Incorporated December 26, 1885	Philadelphia	<i>Records</i>	1887 - 1912
Martin I. J. Griffin dies in November 1911. William L. J. Griffin edits until July 1912.		Philadelphia	<i>American Catholic Historical Researches</i>	December 1911 - July 1912
Griffin Estate settlement with The American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia in 1912		Philadelphia	<i>Records</i> with which is combined <i>American Catholic Historical Researches</i>	September - December 1912
The American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia		Philadelphia	<i>Records</i>	1887-1998
			Renamed in 1999: <i>American Catholic Studies</i>	1999 - to date