

## NEW PAGE IN CITY'S HISTORY UNCOVERED

### John Greene Prepares Article On Catholic Church Here

Unearth Much Data in Delving  
Into Records up to the  
Year 1885.

In preparing a history of the Catholic church in Newport up to 1885, and a history of St. Joseph's Church from its foundation in that year down to the present day, John H. Greene, Jr., clerk of the superior court, has uncovered a new page in local historical annals. His account will be published in the St. Joseph's annual, to be issued soon in connection with the celebration of the golden anniversary of the church. It contains much hitherto unearthed data.

Delving into the years between 1791 and 1809, Mr. Greene found little matter available about the church in local sources, and material in Providence was also meagre. He was referred to the arch-diocese of Boston, and to Monsignor Phelan, the chancellor, who put him in touch with the Rev. Robert H. Lord, S. J., a former Harvard professor, now at Brighton Seminary. Father Lord is interested in early Catholic history in New England, and provided Mr. Greene with a list of baptisms in Newport in the early days of the colonies. Some of these he gave in French and some in Latin, from the early records of the priests who visited here. These records were found in the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, Boston.

#### French Revolution

In his article Mr. Greene will show the repercussion of the French Revolution in the French colonies of the West Indies—Guadaloupe, San Domingo, Martinique and Haiti—where there were rich and influential planters, and members of the French nobility. When Toussaint L'Ouverture, the "Black Napoleon," began his massacres in the islands, many of these planters and noblemen came to America, and some to Newport, where there was a colony large and influential enough to bring a French vice consul here. M. Louis Arcambal, whose advertisements can be seen in the Newport Mercury of the period.

An interesting sidelight is that a suspicious ship came into the harbor, but nobody paid any attention to here except Arcambal, who investigated, found it was manned by French pirates, had them arrested and shipped to France, and when he returned there later was handsomely rewarded for his work.

The French residents, Mr. Greene says, were virtually all Catholics, and he discussed frequent visits made here by Father Thayer, Father Matignon, Father Cheverus, later to become a bishop and then a cardinal; Father Tisseraint and Archbishop John Carroll of Baltimore. The priests performed many baptisms and Mr. Greene secured copies of these records from Father Lord. They are interestingly written, and form a valuable page in local church history, he says.

One of the baptisms is for a child of M. and Mme. Louis Rene Adrian Dugar de Vallon, a French officer of high standing, who came from San Domingo, and another for a child of M. and Mme. Henri De La Vincendiarre, also a French officer. Another name mentioned is Jean Nicholas Gibert, and also John Nicolai, who married Catherine Anne Gilbert, although Mr. Greene believes Nicolai was an Italian. There is reference, too, to the daughter of the celebrated French voyager and explorer, La Peyrouse, who married Dennis Laureal, and whose child was born and baptized here by the early priests.

#### Wiseman's Career

Mr. Greene spent much time in tracing the history of Don Josef Wiseman, who lived here from 1795 until his death in 1805, and lies buried beneath a flat gravestone in the Old cemetery. There is an account of his death and burial in the Newport Mercury of the time. Mr. Greene says this man was born in Ireland and went to Spain, as his father was a merchant, and was educated there. He embarked in the diplomatic service of that nation, as did many other Irishmen who left Ireland at that period. Mr. Greene wishes to find whether there was any relationship between this man and His Eminence, Nicholas Cardinal Wiseman, archbishop of Westminster who was born in Ireland and spent his early life in Spain, but later went to England and Ireland for his education. Mr. Greene says the Spanish embassy in Washington has no records of the Wisemans, as all Spanish records prior to 1900 have been sent to the foreign offices in Madrid. He has written to Claude Bowers, American ambassador to Spain, with whom he has a strong friendship, to procure further data, and also to Father Sargent, formerly of Portsmouth Priory, for information.

There are other interesting data in the account Mr. Greene is compiling, most of it requiring considerable research over a long period of years, but which, it is believed, will form a valuable addition to Newport's historical archives.