

# American Catholic Historical Society

263 SOUTH FOURTH STREET | PHILADELPHIA, PA 19106 | WWW.AMCHS.ORG



FALL 2022

## From Our President

As you will see from this newsletter, we had a very busy and productive year. The technology that we put in place during the pandemic has allowed us to broaden our reach beyond the Philadelphia area, while the return to in-person events has enabled us to reconnect with members and friends.

One of our most significant internal accomplishments this past year was to embark on a strategic planning process. To guide us, we engaged Sister Mary Helen Beirne, SSJ. Working with her, we looked at ways to codify our mission and vision, to determine "Who are we?" and "What should we be doing?", and to find ways to honor the past but change with the times. We are pleased to have her continued assistance as we move onto the plan implementation phase.

To quote one of our past Society presidents, Rodger Van Allen, "Historical societies have a habit of proving to be not very historical.

Typically based on voluntary labor and modest finances, they frequently don't last very long." But as we enter our 138<sup>th</sup> year, we're proud that the ACHS has proven the exception. We hope that this planning process will set us on a solid path for many decades to come.

I also learned during the planning process what a diverse, dedicated, and knowledgeable Board of Managers we are blessed to have. I thoroughly enjoy collaborating with each one of them. We are actively seeking to add more such persons to our board. New perspectives and new energy will help the Society move forward in our changing world.

Please enjoy reading this newsletter and I hope to see you at an upcoming event.

Michael H. Finnegan  
President, ACHS



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# About the ACHS

Founded in 1884, the American Catholic Historical Society (ACHS) was established for the purpose of collecting and preserving materials related to the history of the Catholic Church in the United States and for documenting the contributions of Catholics to the building of the nation. It is the oldest historical society of its kind in the United States.

An independent, non-profit organization, the ACHS continues to promote the documentation and interpretation of the history of the Catholic Church in the United States. It accomplishes its ongoing mission by publishing an award-winning academic journal, *American Catholic Studies*; sponsoring public lectures and other Society events; and supporting the preservation of its historical collections located at the Catholic Historical Research Center of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Membership in the Society is open to all persons who share an interest in the history of American Catholicism.



Want to learn more?  
Visit our website:  
[www.amchs.org](http://www.amchs.org)

## BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- A subscription to the Society's award-winning quarterly journal, *American Catholic Studies*, with free online access to back issues.
- Discounted pricing for the ACHS's annual lectures and other events.
- Invitation to regular social gatherings, including our annual Christmas Party, St. Patrick's Day Social, and Summer Garden Party.
- Knowledge that you support the ongoing mission of the Society!

## Supporting Interfaith Philadelphia

The American Catholic Historical Society was privileged to be asked to be part of Interfaith Philadelphia's Dare to Understand Award ceremony, which was held on Thursday, May 12, 2022. Monsignor Gregory Fairbanks, who serves on both Interfaith Philadelphia and the ACHS boards, was among the speakers.

Interfaith Philadelphia was established in 2004 to be "an agency that could facilitate reconciliation, mutual trust, and common action across religious communities." From its beginning, people of many faith traditions have come together with the conviction that people ought to "dare to understand" each other as one of its signature initiatives.

This year, Interfaith Philadelphia chose to highlight local Catholic involvement in interfaith relations. Two long-time Catholic leaders in interfaith relations were honored: Monsignor Michael Carroll and Sister Maria Hornung of the Medical Mission Sisters. More than 150 attendees joined together to honor these two home-grown heroes who have worked extensively to help build "bridges to understanding."

As part of the program, the ACHS was asked to provide background on Catholic interfaith involvement in the Philadelphia area. Dr. Patrick Hayes helped gather documentary evidence, which included news of the first major interfaith prayer service in the city in 1964, while Vatican II was still ongoing.

That prayer service, sponsored by the archdiocese's newly established Commission on Human Relations, whose two-fold purpose was to foster ecumenical relations and attend to racial cooperation and healing, brought together in unity Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faith leaders to decry racial prejudice.



Monsignor Fairbanks at Interfaith Philadelphia's Dare to Understand award ceremony.



Tommy Loughran and Mike McTigue at Madison Square Garden in 1927.

## Donation of Loughran Portrait

The American Catholic Historical Society recently donated an original oil portrait of boxer Tommy Loughran to Joe Hand Promotions, a leading provider of live sporting content to bars, restaurants, and other businesses. Though the painting needed major refurbishment, President Joe Hand, Jr. recognized its value and wanted to add it to the company's collection of boxing memorabilia. He had the painting professionally restored and now proudly displays it at the company's headquarters in Trevoose, Pennsylvania.

Thomas "Tommy" Loughran (1902-1982), the son of Irish Catholic immigrants, began his professional boxing career in 1919, and, by the time that he retired in 1937, he had not only established himself as one of the premiere fighters of boxing's "golden era," but solidified his place in boxing history as one of the all-time greats in the light heavyweight division.

Raised in South Philadelphia and a member of Saint Monica's parish, Loughran's somewhat unusual path to his legendary boxing career began while he was a student at Roman Catholic High School. Eager to fight for his country in World War I, the 15-year-old sophomore lied to army recruiters about his age and enlisted. Army officers eventually realized the ruse before Loughran had shipped overseas and they sent him home. Loughran then left Roman to work for a local blacksmith until a Philadelphia promoter who had heard of his street fighting prowess asked Loughran to box at his gym.

Loughran's skillful foot work, defensive prowess, and accurate counter punching earned him the nickname "The Philly Phantom." He fought and defeated many middleweight, light heavyweight, and heavyweight champions in his career, including Jack Sharkey and Georges Carpentier, with "newspaper decisions" from sportswriters over boxing legends Harry Greb and Gene Tunney. As a light heavyweight, Loughran defeated two future world heavyweight champions, Max Baer and James J. Braddock, and successfully defended his title six times. He was the *Ring Magazine* Fighter of the Year in 1929 and 1931.

Following his retirement from boxing in 1937 with a record of 90-25-10, Loughran began a successful brokerage career on Wall Street. In 1942, he enlisted in the Marine Corps as a World War II physical fitness instructor, eventually achieving the rank of staff sergeant. He was the guest speaker at numerous alumni events for Roman Catholic High School, a boxing referee, and television ringside commentator in the 1950s. He died in 1982 at the age of 79. He was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1991 and the U.S. Marine Corps Sports Hall of Fame in 2017.



The restored portrait of Tommy Loughran.

### BARRY AWARD DINNER – 2022



Save the date! The Society's annual Barry Award Dinner will be held on Friday, November 18, 2022, at the Union League of Philadelphia. We are delighted to honor Mr. Jerry Parsons for his ongoing contributions to the church and society.

The retired president of CTDI, an electronic services company, Mr. Parsons has a long history of philanthropic commitment in the Philadelphia region, with a major focus on Catholic education. Among his many contributions, he currently serves as president of the Foundation for Catholic Education in the archdiocese.

We look forward to having our members, friends, and benefactors join us on November 18 as we celebrate the work of the ACHS and honor Mr. Parsons.

*Founded in Philadelphia in 1884, the American Catholic Historical Society promotes ongoing study and encourages thoughtful reflection on the diverse history of the Catholic experience in the United States. The Society fulfills this purpose by facilitating the preservation of sources, fostering research, and disseminating scholarship. The ACHS is an independent nonprofit organization with membership open to all those interested in U.S. Catholic history.*

## Revised Mission Statement

On May 17, 2022, the ACHS Board of Managers approved a new mission statement for the Society. The product of many months of deliberation, discernment, and drafting, the new statement is the first since the Society's incorporation in 1886.

The new mission statement, listed to the left, focuses on three important functions that the Society endeavors to fulfill: serving both church and society in preserving the documentary heritage and material culture of U.S. Catholicism; encouraging the free flow of ideas on church history through its programming at the Society's house and online; and promoting scholarly inquiry into the church's past for the sake of its future through the publication of the Society's journal, *American Catholic Studies*, and other initiatives.

The subcommittee charged with developing the new mission statement—Jim Fitzsimmons, Patrick Hayes, Kathleen Kahlau, Nick Rademacher, and Michael Finnegan (ex officio)—relied on the able assistance of Sister Mary Helen Beirne, SSJ, who kept the group focused on broad goals while helping them form a compelling vision for the Society's next several decades.

## American Catholic Studies

*American Catholic Studies* – the oldest, continuously published Catholic scholarly journal in the United States – is committed to encouraging research and publishing articles on the American Catholic experience. The quarterly journal features wide-ranging scholarship that contributes to our understanding of Catholicism in the American context as it intersects with history, literature, culture, politics, art and architecture, theology, and popular movements.

The journal has received numerous awards from the Catholic Press Association over the years, including First Place for General Excellence among scholarly journals on several occasions.

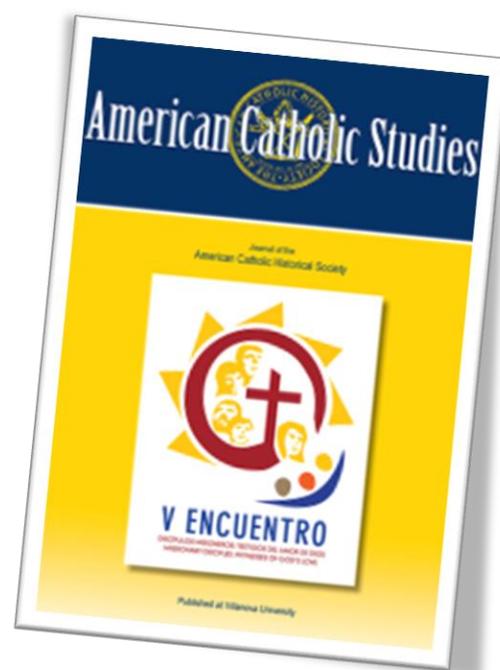
*Consistent excellence in topics, editing, design, and presentation. This publication...attracts solid scholars who offer relevant topics of current interest.*

– Catholic Press Association

Published at Villanova University, the journal reaches a national and international audience through our agreements with JSTOR and Project Muse, scholarly databases that provide full-text digital access to member libraries in the United States and internationally.

Your membership in the American Catholic Historical Society automatically subscribes you to *American Catholic Studies*.

**All members are subscribers, and all subscribers are members!**



### EDITORIAL BOARD

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## ACHS News and Notes

The past year has once again been a busy one for the ACHS. Most significantly, members of the board completed a year-long strategic planning process that led to the revision of our mission statement (see page 4) and the outlining of a series of strategic goals for the coming three to five years, which include board development, the implementation of a membership plan, and efforts to increase strategic partnerships. We thank all members and supporters who assisted in the process by completing the membership survey we sent out. We look forward to sharing more news with you over the coming year as we work to implement the goals and priorities we have set, and we extend our thanks for all that you do to support the Society and its work.

After a year's pause on account of the pandemic, we were delighted to return to the Union League for our annual Barry Award Dinner. Our 2021 honoree was Archbishop Nelson J. Perez of Philadelphia, who was appointed head of the archdiocese on January 23, 2020. The highlight of the evening was a "special musical presentation" by singer Tony Melendez. Born without arms, Melendez learned to play the guitar with his feet and has been performing since 1985. In 1987, he offered a special performance for Pope John Paul II during the pontiff's visit to the United States. We invite those who were unable to join us for the Barry Dinner to watch the recording of the evening's festivities—including Tony Melendez's inspired performance—on YouTube. The link can be found posted on our website under the 'news' tab.



The ACHS is pleased to announce its continued support of the digitization of the *Catholic Standard and Times* (CS&T). This summer, we provided a grant of \$6,235 to the Catholic Research Resources Alliance (CRRA) to digitize issues of the paper from 1917 to 1929. Those years were a particularly important era of growth in the archdiocese, and digital access to the paper will allow more people to appreciate that history. This grant builds on a contribution two years ago that enabled CRRA to digitize the CS&T from 1945 to 1962. As part of the CRRA's Catholic News Archive, those issues have been consulted extensively by scholars, students, and others. In 2021, more than 25,000 users viewed more than 68,500 pages of the CS&T, the highest number of any newspaper in the Catholic News Archive! Those pages have also provided dividends to the ACHS's journal, having been cited by a recently published article on the history of the Blue Army of Fatima, and having even been consulted by national news outlets, including the *Washington Post*.

On a sad note, the ACHS mourned the loss of one of our dedicated board members, Lou Baldwin, who died on October 18, 2021. Known and respected in the archdiocese for his years of reporting for *The Catholic Standard and Times* and *CatholicPhilly.com*, he knew the history of the local church inside and out, and was dedicated to sharing and preserving the story of the archdiocese and its people. He is also remembered for the biography he wrote of St. Katharine Drexel, to whom he was especially devoted. The ACHS also remembers his wife of 61 years, Rita, herself a devoted member of the Society, who joined him in everlasting life on March 10, 2022. They and all our recently departed members were recalled at our annual Memorial Mass, which was held on May 1 at Old St. Mary's.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to be welcoming our sister organization, the American Catholic Historical Association, to the Society house for a reception in January. This special gathering coincides with the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, which will be holding its annual conference in Philadelphia this year. The reception is our way of thanking the many members of the ACHA who assist the Society by contributing to our journal as authors and reviewers.

We look forward to welcoming members and friends to the house this coming year for a wonderful series of lectures and a new exhibit planned for January. Stay tuned for all the great things we have in store!

*Archbishop Nelson J. Perez, the Society's 2021 Barry Award recipient, with singer Tony Melendez, who performed at the dinner.*

## Recap of Our 2021-2022 Events



Sister Roseanne McDougall, SHCJ speaking on the history of the Holy Child Sisters.



Musical entertainment at our annual St. Patrick's Day Social.



ACHS member Dr. Andy Waskie speaking on Philadelphia Catholic contributions to the Civil War.

Our lecture series for the year began in September with a talk on the Society of the Holy Child Jesus and their ministry in the United States from 1862 to the present. It was delivered jointly by Sister Roseanne McDougall, SHCJ and Ms. Emily Siegel, who later adapted their presentation for publication in the Winter 2021 issue of *American Catholic Studies*. We were pleased that many members of the SHJC community, their associates, and alumnae from around the country were able to join us for the talk via the Zoom livestream.

Our fall events continued with two engaging book talks. In October, Dr. Zachary Schrag of George Mason University joined us to speak on *The Fires of Philadelphia*, his new history of the Nativist riots that engulfed the city in 1844. His account revisits an important episode in the history of American anti-Catholicism, reminding us of the dangers of extreme ideology. Then, in November, Dr. Peter Cajka of the University of Notre Dame joined us via Zoom to speak on his new book, *Follow Your Conscience: The Catholic Church and the Spirit of the Sixties*. His work highlights how and why Catholics turned increasingly to their own consciences as guides for their actions and beliefs.

We also joined with the Redemptorist Archives in sponsoring a screening of a new documentary film on Father Michael Doyle, *The Heart of Camden*. Our fall events concluded with our annual Barry Award Dinner, which honored Archbishop Nelson J. Perez of Philadelphia, and our traditional Christmas party.

Our spring season featured three presentations of local interest. In February, we welcomed Ms. Madeline Gambino, a doctoral candidate at Princeton University, who shared her research on institutional decline and demographic change in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Looking beyond parish closures, she explores how other archdiocesan policies, like school closures and the relegation of sacred space, affect the church's institutional presence.

Our annual spring lecture was delivered by Dr. Maureen O'Connell of La Salle University, who spoke on her new book, *Undoing the Knots: Five Generations of American Catholic Anti-Blackness*. Drawing on her own family history in the archdiocese, she asks us to recognize how Catholicism has long been entangled with race and racism. Her book was also the focus of a review symposium in the Summer 2022 issue of *American Catholic Studies*.

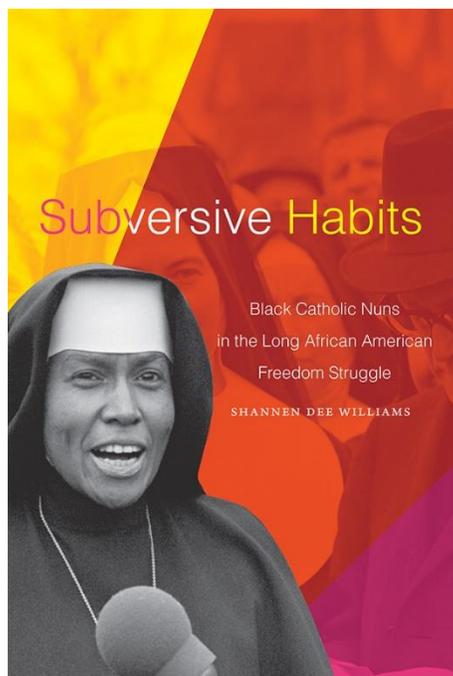
Finally, we welcomed long-time ACHS member Dr. Andy Waskie to share his research into those Philadelphia Catholics who served in the Civil War. Filled with rich biographical detail, his talk highlighted the remarkable contributions of that generation, including many immigrants who saw the war as a way to prove their loyalty and patriotism.

His talk also served as a welcome reminder that the ACHS strives to provide a space and an opportunity for parish historians, amateur scholars, and other community members who are passionate about history to share their work with an appreciative audience. Those who are interested in sharing their research are encouraged to contact us at [info@amchs.org](mailto:info@amchs.org).

Several of these talks were recorded and have been posted to our ACHS website. Visit [www.amchs.org](http://www.amchs.org) to view any that you may have missed.

Want to keep  
informed about  
our events?  
Like us on  
FACEBOOK!

## 2022 - 2023 Calendar of Events



For our fall lecture, Dr. Shannen Dee Williams will speak on the history of Black Catholic sisters in the United States.



Our spring lecture will feature Dr. Margaret McGuinness presenting her new biography of Saint Katharine Drexel.

Sunday, September 18, 2022 @ 2pm

Sr. Annette Pelletier, IHM

*The IHM Sisters and their Mission to Peru, 1922-2022*

Free and open to the public

Tuesday, October 25, 2022 @ 7pm

(via Zoom)

Dr. Shannen Dee Williams, University of Dayton

*Subversive Habits: Black Catholic Nuns in the Long African American Freedom Struggle*

Free for members / \$10 non-members

Friday, November 18, 2022

Barry Award Dinner

Honoring Mr. Jerry Parsons

Union League of Philadelphia

Friday, December 9, 2022

Annual Christmas Party

\$25 members / \$35 non-members

Sunday, January 22, 2023 @ 2pm

Dr. Thomas Rzeznik, Seton Hall University

*That '70s Catholicism*

Free and Open to the Public

Sunday, February 19, 2023 @ 2pm

Ms. Connie L. McCalla

*St. Elizabeth's Parish, Philadelphia: Forged in the Fire of the Great Migration*

Free and Open to the Public

Friday, March 10, 2023 @ 6pm

Annual St. Patrick's Day Social

\$25 members / \$35 non-members

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

5pm social hour | 6pm dinner | 7pm lecture

Dr. Margaret McGuinness, La Salle University

*Katharine Drexel and the Sisters Who Shared Her Vision*

\$20 members / \$30 non-members

Sunday, May 7, 2023 @ 2pm

*Irish Immigrants and Native Americans in the Trans-Mississippi West*

Mr. Conor Donnan, University of Pennsylvania

Free and Open to the Public

Friday, June 2, 2023 @ 6pm

Annual Garden Party

\$25 members and non-members

AND OTHER EVENTS AS THEY ARE ADDED

# Your Membership Sustains the Work of the ACHS. Join or Renew Today!

<p><b>I'd like to join the American Catholic Historical Society. (includes a subscription to <i>American Catholic Studies</i>)</b></p> <p>Name: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p> <p><b>Email:</b></p> <p>Please check one subscription option:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Special new membership rate!</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Regular one year membership</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> \$90 Two-year membership</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>\$120 Three-year membership</b> (BEST VALUE and includes gift subscription for a friend!)</p> <p>Please check one payment option</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Check enclosed \$ _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bill Me</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Charge my: __ VISA __ MasterCard</p> <p>Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____</p> <p>Signature _____</p>	<p>I have decided to take advantage of the best offer...I would like a <b>3-year</b> membership in the ACHS and send my one-year gift subscription to <i>American Catholic Studies</i> at NO EXTRA CHARGE to:</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address/Apt. No. _____</p> <p>City/State/Zip _____</p> <p><b>Email</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Please remit to: American Catholic Studies PO Box 465 Hanover PA 17331-0465</p> <p><i>You can also join online at: <a href="http://www.amchs.org/membership/index.html">www.amchs.org/membership/index.html</a></i></p>
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## American Catholic Historical Society

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