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### Merrimack College: Genesis and Growth, 1947-1972

Edward G. Roddy Jr.

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# **Merrimack College: Genesis and Growth 1947-1972**

**E.G. Roddy, Jr.**

Foreword: Very Reverend John R. Aherne, O.S.A.

North Andover, Massachusetts 01845

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## FOREWORD

*The biography of a college (as of an individual) need linger only briefly on externals since these constitute an undifferentiated facade. Merrimack College, established in 1947, had its roots in the desire of Catholics in the Merrimack Valley for a Catholic college in the area. The then Archbishop of Boston, Cardinal Cushing, gave enthusiastic approval, and the Augustinians accepted the mandate. In September, 1947, one building and 165 students with a faculty of nine Augustinians and five laymen constituted Merrimack. Twenty-five years later the profile exhibited comprises 2,000 men and women students, seventeen buildings, and a faculty of 150 Augustinians and laymen, organized in three full-time divisions: Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, and Engineering. The Part-Time Division includes 1,300 students with a full-time faculty equivalent of 60.*

*To define the personality of Merrimack College is a more arduous task, perhaps the pursuit of the indefinable. Such a quest would have to reckon with the indomitable spirit and labor of the founder and first president, Father Vincent A. McQuade and his primary aide, Father Joseph J. Gildea, whose academic competence, intelligence, and heart shaped the institution in its first twelve years. Making their dreams possible was a dedicated group of Augustinians and laymen who joined in the long struggle to make a college viable.*

*The world has changed in twenty-five years, and Merrimack has changed with it. No college is exempt -- nor should it be -- from the intense self-scrutiny which changing times demand. Merrimack College is now engaged and will be engaged for a long time to come in such appraisal.*

V. Rev. John R. Aherne, O.S.A.

## PREFACE

When I returned from a summer in Germany last year, Father Aherne asked if I would undertake the preparation of an anniversary edition of the history of Merrimack College. I brashly agreed. At the time it seemed no larger a task than sketching the life and times of a twenty-five year old youth.

Today, some thirteen months later, as the history now stands completed, I realize that the undertaking was much larger than expected. Young institutions, like young people, tend not to have much sense of history. College archives in this case were not the dusty things a researcher expects. They were non-existent. Correspondence files were incomplete, and statistics were often difficult, occasionally impossible, to come by.

A good illustration of the frustrations encountered in researching the history may be gleaned from the following. Although I had access to much of Father McQuade's correspondence with Cardinal Cushing, I knew that he had burned hundreds of personal papers when he left Merrimack College in the summer of 1968. Yet, as I was in the final stage of writing Chapter V, I stumbled across two large file cabinets on an upper floor of Austin Hall which were filled with literally hundreds of documents bearing on the early history of the College.

Both aghast and delighted at this discovery, I wondered what effect the documents might have on the history already written. Fortunately, after examining them, I found that they simply corroborated the history of those years which I had put together in piecemeal fashion.

Administration officers were amazed when I reported the find to them. No one was aware of the existence of this gold mine of historical information.

Another problem which plagued the writing of the history



was the endless number of times I encountered the following notation at the end of an important letter: "But, we can discuss that by phone."

Yet, there was a very real advantage in writing the account of so young an institution. Many of the old-timers on campus, some of them having been here for almost the entire period, gave generously to me of their time and memories in sketching the atmosphere of Merrimack in its early, formative years.

I couldn't possibly list all the individuals who aided in the preparation of the history. Early alumni, faculty, staff, members of the Board of Trustees and of the Haverhill labor-management group who conceived of the idea of a college, -- these and countless other individuals have helped to give life to what might otherwise have been a dry-as-dust account.

Additionally, members of the present administration extended me every cooperation possible. Without their help, this account would be less than complete. Needless to say, all clerics mentioned in the history are members of the Order of St. Augustine (unless specifically identified otherwise).

There are, however, two friends whose perceptive red pencils have contributed greatly to whatever literary or stylistic merit the history may have. Professor Peter A. Ford, Chairman of the Department of History at Merrimack College, and Miss Patricia McNulty, '59, labored long hours in a struggle with my syntax and punctuation. Their comments and advice were more valued than they realized.

I should also like to thank Professor Francis E. Griggs, Jr., Chairman of the Department of Civil Engineering, for preparing and coding the map of the campus.

Photo credits are impossible to acknowledge because the majority of the photographs used in the history are without identification markings. I do know that both Loring and Albert Studios, Lawrence, Massachusetts, have done much photographic work for the College over the years. Look Photo Service, Andover, prepared the copies of all photos used in the history. Father Aherne's portrait is by Fabian Bachrach.

A special thanks to Miss Marion Mack, McQuade Library staff member, who typed the appendices. I am much indebted

to Mr. Phillip A. Costello, Director, McQuade Library, who assisted me in publication arrangements.

Finally, I can only marvel at the cryptographic skills and patience of Miss Donna McLean, who prepared the final draft of the history. Working from my mutilated, fractured drafts, she has brought order from disorder.

I have, in the following pages, attempted to write an objective, historical account of Merrimack College in the first twenty-five years of its existence. Aside from several explanatory footnotes, I have refrained from employing footnotes as documentation. Transcripts of personal interviews, together with all primary documents pertinent to the history, are now on deposit in Merrimack College's archives. The history makes no pretense at being a definitive study. There were many aspects of the College's social history (sports, winter carnivals, dramatic productions and other extracurricular activities) which limitations of space preclude my treating. Hopefully, the following account is neither pedestrian nor pretentious. How well or how poorly I have done remains for the reader to decide.

Merrimack College  
North Andover, Massachusetts  
September 19, 1972

Edward G. Roddy, Jr.



DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN  
A PART OF THE HISTORY OF  
MERRIMACK COLLEGE

“Horas non numero nisi serenas.”

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CATHOLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Reliable information, both historical and statistical, is so lacking for much of American higher education in the two centuries preceding the Civil War, that only the most general observations are possible. The picture is even more barren in the case of Catholic higher education; indeed, there is not a single comprehensive social history of American Catholics as a group. While this is understandable for a period when the Catholic population was relatively small, that the situation persists today, as we move into the final decades of the twentieth century, is shameful.

Harvard, the nation's oldest and most prestigious university (founded in 1636), and Georgetown, the nation's oldest Catholic university (founded in 1789), were both denominational schools, small, uncertain of their future and constantly pressed to adjust to the changing environment of the American society. That Georgetown's founding coincided with the establishment of the United States of America may have been more than mere coincidence. It wasn't until the adoption of the First Amendment to the Constitution that the handful of American Catholics -- located primarily in Maryland and Virginia -- could be assured of their religious future in the new nation.

With the arrival of large numbers of Irish immigrants in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Catholic colleges began to grow in both size and number; Villanova and Notre Dame were both founded in 1842, Holy Cross opened in 1843 and Loyola of Baltimore in 1852. Indeed, considering the relative poverty of Catholic immigrants and their peasant background, it is surprising that so many Catholic colleges were founded in the last century. However, without a centrally-controlled educational body, it was relatively easy for any bishop to open a college within his diocese or to permit the

superior of a religious community -- most frequently the Society of Jesus -- to found an institute of higher learning. Both the birth and death rates of Catholic colleges have been amazing for the entire period of American history. Between 1789 and 1956, 267 Catholic colleges for men were founded. Sixty-eight percent of the Catholic colleges for men founded prior to 1956 are no longer in existence. Between 1860 and 1920, more than 150 Catholic colleges opened their doors; only 36 of them continue operations today. The main reason for the demise of these colleges was insolvency -- that same specter which today haunts the campus of every private college. The survival rate in every decade of founding, according to Andrew Greeley, was less than fifty percent until 1940. At that point the founding of colleges for men seems to have tapered off. During the 1930's, Catholic colleges tightened their belts as they moved through the grim years of the Great Depression. Only the outbreak of World War II saved still more Catholic colleges from bankruptcy. Burdened with too many faculty and starved for students, they eagerly clutched at various officer training programs offered by the United States armed forces. It may not be amiss to remark, apropos of the Depression, that most of the senior administrative personnel in Catholic colleges and universities today grew up during these bleak years, and many of them are not convinced that "it couldn't happen again." Of the post-World War II boom in Catholic higher education, we shall have more to say in the following chapter.

Consciously or unconsciously, American Catholic colleges tended to develop along the same lines as other American institutions of higher learning, but there was always a time lag. As Georgetown came more than a century after Harvard, so Catholic colleges in general have lagged in curriculum changes and other innovations. A critic of Catholic higher education once remarked, "We have taken the worst aspects of American higher education and ignored the best."

The single most striking difference between Catholic and non-Catholic private colleges is that clerical control remains the rule in the former, whereas, in the latter, control and direction long ago passed from the hands of the ministers to laymen.

This applies to the make-up of boards of trustees as well as to the administrative hierarchy within the colleges themselves.

The continuation of clerical control of Catholic colleges is an indication of the very deep roots that clericalism exercises in American Catholicism. Philip Gleason of Notre Dame University, one of the handful of first-rate scholars in the history of Catholic higher education remarks, "The very persistence of the phenomenon invites careful analysis of its origin, development, and rationale." Suffice to say, throughout American Catholic history down to Vatican II Council in the early 1960's, the accepted view was that if an activity was religious, a priest, or at least a religious, should be in charge of it, and education was viewed as such an activity. That this view is undergoing modification today goes without saying.

Perhaps the most critical problem facing Catholic higher education in the 1970's -- aside from the need to avoid insolvency -- is in the area of ideological adjustment. "It is a crisis of purpose, a question of the fundamental *raison d'être* of Catholic higher education," as Gleason succinctly phrases it. The major institutional divergence of Catholic schools from the American norm -- clerical control -- is closely related to the fundamental ideological problem of secularization.

Both Gleason and Greeley offer generalizations which help one's understanding of the structure of Catholic higher education in America today. (1) American Catholics are as likely to graduate from college as are other Americans. (2) Half the adult Catholics are either immigrants or the children of immigrants. (3) The development of Catholic higher education has followed the same general pattern as that of non-Catholic colleges and universities, "but," as Gleason notes, "with a chronological lag." (4) Catholic higher education departs from the American institutional pattern in but a single, important respect, and that is the matter of clerical control. (5) The most critical problem today is finding a meaningful and valid answer to the soul-searching question faced by religious bodies operating colleges and universities: "Why are *we* involved in Catholic higher education?"

In the following chapters we shall see how valid these

generalizations appear to be when they are applied to a single Catholic institution of higher learning, Merrimack College.

In 1972 there were some 284 Catholic colleges and universities (including sixty-two junior, two-year institutions) in the United States, excluding seminaries. The giant Catholic university is Loyola of Chicago, with more than 13,500 students, a full-time faculty of 524 (of whom 416 are laymen) and a part-time staff of 960 (of whom 932 are laymen). The library holds 485,146 volumes. Sixty-four percent of the faculty hold doctoral degrees. Loyola was founded by the Society of Jesus in 1870 as a men's college but is co-educational today.

At the other extreme is Cardinal Cushing College, Brookline, Massachusetts. Founded in 1952, this women's college is operated by the Sisters of the Holy Cross of Notre Dame. The student body numbered 371 in 1972. The faculty consists of a staff of forty-three professors (twenty-seven laymen) and thirteen part-time teachers. The library holds 27,326 volumes. Fifteen percent of the full-time faculty hold doctoral degrees. In the spring of 1972, Cardinal Cushing College authorities announced the closing of the institution because of financial problems.

Somewhere between Loyola University and Cardinal Cushing College stands Merrimack College, North Andover, Massachusetts, one of thirty-eight private, four-year liberal arts colleges in the Bay State. Let us now turn to an examination of the genesis and growth of this particular Catholic institution of higher learning.



## CHAPTER II

### THE ORIGINS OF MERRIMACK COLLEGE

To relate adequately the history of this small New England college, one must first describe the area and the people who inhabit the 5,000 square miles of the Merrimack Valley. The river which gives its name to the area and the College has been described as a river of romance and industry. Born of scenic lakes in the heart of the White Mountains of New Hampshire, it empties into the Atlantic at the northern tip of Massachusetts between Salisbury and Newburyport. Along the course of its 183-mile length stand such historical towns as Concord, New Hampshire, and North Andover, together with the industrial centers of Manchester, Lowell, Lawrence and Haverhill. A century before the founding of Merrimack College, Henry Thoreau spoke of the river as it first comes "murmuring to itself by the base of stately mountains, through moist primitive woods whose juices it receives, and the cabins of settlers are far between and there are few to cross its stream." Like the Pennacook Indians who once fished this majestic stream for shad and salmon, much of the beauty of the river has long gone. From Manchester to the sea, it glides its polluted course past long miles of textile and leather mills in the larger industrial cities. This was but one of the many prices that the valley had to pay to merit the nineteenth-century description of "the most noted water-power stream in the world."

The Industrial Revolution changed the Merrimack Valley from the pastoral, agricultural land of Thoreau's era. It gave birth to a center of textile manufacturing which was the marvel of the world by the 1880's. From the hundreds of thousands of spindles in the countless mills of the valley, came the cotton and woolen cloth which for decades would bring such wealth to the area. Although the falls and canals along the Merrimack



continued to supply water power to the textile and leather factories, the early supply of docile, female mill hands, drawn from the large farm families of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, proved insufficient for the growing demand for more and more labor. By the mid-nineteenth century their place was taken by penniless, Irish-Catholic immigrants who poured into the valley in the 1840's and 1850's. When Confederate batteries fired on Fort Sumter, the Irish had already displaced native Americans as unskilled machine operators in the factories of Manchester, Lawrence, Lowell and Haverhill.

Two particular aspects of the social behavior of these Irish-Catholic immigrants merit at least brief mention in a description of the origins of Merrimack College. First, we must note the great financial sacrifices which these working people made to build their parishes and to support the priests who brought consolation into their drab, often dreary lives. It all seemed worthwhile to them, for their religion was their main source of self-help and security. Important, too, for these early Irish-Catholic immigrants was the hope for advancement through education. The Irish textile workers, the crews who built the granite dams along the Merrimack, the servant girls in the homes of wealthy Andover and Amesbury families -- these humble people of the valley were determined that their sons and daughters should know a better life. Their hard-won earnings went into the building of parochial schools and the support of Catholic institutions of higher learning such as Villanova, Fordham and Holy Cross. It is no mere coincidence that all three of these Catholic colleges were founded in the early 1840's.

In the years between Appomattox and the end of the century, the industrial towns of the Merrimack Valley changed from cities of native Americans and immigrant Irish-Catholics, where the natives were in complete command, to polyglot, cosmopolitan cities in which Irish-Catholics and native Americans ruled French-Canadians, Italians, Poles, Syrians, Jews, Lithuanians and the numerous other ethnic groups who made up the second and final great wave of foreign immigration into the region.

By the time of the Lawrence strike of 1912, the immigration cycle had made a complete revolution, as the Irish shanty-dwellers of 1850 were now in complete control of the city's politics and were in many ways indistinguishable from the natives. The French-Canadians, while still somewhat insecure, now had newer immigrants below them on both the social and economic scales.

After the brief but heady prosperity of World War I, the economic future of the textile industry in the valley seemed less than bright. The invention of synthetic fibres, together with the growing discord between management and organized labor, saw the slow but steady departure of many industrial establishments for relocation in southern states, and the closing of still others. By the time of the Great Depression of the 1930s, the remaining textile and leather industries were barely maintaining their solvency. The World War II years and endless government orders for boots, leggings, uniforms and blankets gave the valley and its 700,000 inhabitants a new lease on life.

It is during the immediate post-World War II era that we find the actual origins of Merrimack College. During the War years, President Roosevelt's Chairman of the Federal Manpower Commission, Paul V. McNutt, had appointed a labor-management committee for the city of Haverhill. The group consisted of eight members, four representatives of labor and four of management. They performed services connected with securing manpower for critical and essential industries and attempted to assist in cooperative endeavors between the federal government, labor and management. With the conclusion of the War and the return of thousands of veterans to the Merrimack Valley, the Haverhill labor-management group sought to broaden its industrial relations program in order to aid in the readjustment to civilian life of these returning soldiers. In addition to assisting the returnees in securing on-the-job training in local businesses and industry, the committee took upon itself the task of advising and assisting those veterans who wished to take advantage of the so-called G.I. Bill of Rights.

Partly as a result of the philosophy of the "New Deal," and partly perhaps to avoid a repetition of the "Bonus" demands of World War I doughboys, Congress enacted in 1944 the Servicemen's Readjustment Act and President Roosevelt signed it into law on June 22, 1944. This G.I. Bill of Rights contained provisions which would make available a college education or other form of training to any person who had served in the military or naval forces after September 16, 1940, and had been honorably discharged or released from the forces and whose education had been interrupted by such service. Courses of training or education were open only to persons not over 25 years of age, and had to be started not later than two years after discharge or the termination of the War. Time spent in an educational institution could not exceed the time spent in active service. Eligible persons were free to enroll in any course they wished in any qualified institution in the United States approved by the Administrator of Veteran's Affairs. Each enrolled student was to receive a subsistence allowance of \$50.00 a month, if without dependents, and \$75.00 a month, if with dependents. For each student enrolled, the qualified institution was to be paid the customary cost of tuition and related fees as normally charged. Congress later amended the act to increase subsistence allowance.

The flood of veterans saved higher education from a grave situation. A 1945 survey prepared for the House Committee on Education revealed the grave financial situation of most colleges and universities resulting from the drop in enrollment and the abandonment of the Army and Navy training programs in many of them as the War terminated. The survey estimated that possibly ten percent of the nation's 12,000,000 veterans would apply for educational benefits under the G.I. Bill of Rights. Subsequent events were to prove that the survey had erred on the conservative side. The desire for a college education was to send 4,302,000 veterans knocking at the admission offices of the country's two thousand-odd colleges and universities. It was a deluge of unprecedented proportions, and institutions of higher learning which only a few years before had gone begging for students, now found their existing



faculties and physical plants insufficient to handle the influx.

Such was the general, national educational scene as the Haverhill labor-management committee assumed the task of helping Merrimack Valley veterans secure admission to college in late 1945 and early 1946. To aid them in their endeavors, the committee conducted a survey of Haverhill veterans and learned, to their surprise, that one out of four returning G.I.'s wanted to attend college under the G.I. Bill of Rights. Indeed, many of the veterans erroneously assumed that the act "guaranteed" them admission to college. The nationwide cry, "Bring our boys home," caused the United States to demobilize at an even more accelerated pace in 1946. As the number of valley veterans swelled, the Haverhill group requested Washington to enlarge the committee size to sixteen to handle the increased work-load. The original members had been Andrew J. Germain, Ellery Atwood, J. Leo Cronin, Sidney L. Culloford, Edwin L. Liedick, Francis X. McNamara, Patrick J. Murnane and Richard Walsh. When Chairman McNutt authorized doubling the committee membership, a special panel on veterans' education was established. It was this group, made up of J. Leo Cronin, Andrew Germain, John O'Shea and Louis Hartman of management and Joseph Goyette of labor, which was the seminal source of Merrimack College.

In early 1946, after a series of conferences, they decided to make tentative plans for a two-year "Academic Center" (their term) in the Merrimack Valley to accommodate returning veterans. The group envisioned this quasi-institution of higher learning as offering a year of intensive review of high school subjects and a year of first-year college work. If veterans performed well, they could then transfer to a regular four-year college. The panel discussed the feasibility of such an institution with the dean of the University of New Hampshire. He suggested that they survey the lower Merrimack Valley and locate their site so that it would be equally accessible to students within a range of twenty miles. This they did, and the circle they drew on the map of Essex County included Lowell, Lawrence, Haverhill, Salem, Danvers and several cities of

southern New Hampshire. If twenty miles was the maximum feasible commuting distance, where would be the best location for the "Academic Center"? The obvious site was somewhere in the vicinity of Andover and North Andover. That locale could be reached from all of the larger cities to the north of Boston without the need of passing through an intervening, heavily-populated area. Equally important, from a cultural and educational point of view, the Andover-North Andover area was the home of three outstanding preparatory schools, Phillips Academy and Abbott Academy of Andover and Brooks School of North Andover. Further, the area was conveniently located between Salem and Lowell, the homes of Salem State College and Lowell Institute of Technology. Bradford Junior College was but a few miles to the north of the area. Andover-North Andover was only an hour's drive to Boston and its magnificent research facilities and rich cultural heritage and activities. Finally, that locale boasted much open farm land, and the two towns still had about them a quiet country atmosphere that has changed in the intervening quarter of a century.

The sub-committee polled the towns and cities within the twenty-mile radius of their site location; they visited local draft offices to secure the exact number of veterans who had been drafted or had enlisted during the War years. As a result of their study, they compiled an impressive twelve-page brief for an "Academic Center" and buttressed it with population statistics, high school enrollment figures and veterans' data. Then began the endless round of inquiring among Boston's larger institutions of higher learning for assistance in staffing the college. Everywhere they went, from Harvard to M.I.T., Tufts and Boston University, they received a polite but firm negative response. These universities had more than they could handle in simply coping with veterans and students seeking admission from the greater metropolitan area.

The Haverhill group was not at all inclined to seek assistance from the Commonwealth's Department of Education in establishing their academic institution. They believed, as might well be expected of representatives of management, in

private education. They liked the concept of diversified educational facilities, private as well as public. Mr. Cronin recalls that the memory of what Mussolini and Hitler had done with public education in the previous decade was painfully alive in the minds of his colleagues. Since most of these men were Catholics, it is not surprising that they approached Reverend William L. Keleher, S.J., President of Boston College.

Apparently they argued their case well, for the Jesuit educator promised to take the matter to his Board of Trustees. After all, Campion Hall, the spacious Jesuit retreat house estate, was located in North Andover, and might be an ideal site for a "feeder" school for Boston College. The Board of Trustees' reaction was unanimous: under no circumstances could the institution, already caught up in the flood of returning students and veterans, and desperate for faculty, undertake so venturesome and risky a task as opening a two-year college in the Merrimack Valley. Father Keleher attempted to soften the blow when he next met with the Haverhill group by suggesting that they opt for a regular four-year liberal arts college instead of their modest plans for a two-year "Academic Center." He further suggested that they approach Archbishop Richard Cushing with such a proposal.

They presented their plans to the Archbishop in early June, 1946, with a recommendation for a definite site for the proposed college. The site was Wilson's Corner on the border of Andover and North Andover. Cushing requested his secretary, Reverend Jeremiah F. Minihan, a native of Haverhill, to meet with the sub-committee to discuss the plan further. Minihan had hoped to confer with the entire group, but it was a warm summer weekend, and only J. Leo Cronin and Francis McNamara resisted the lure of the shore and conferred with the Archbishop's assistant.

Both men were delighted to hear that Archbishop Cushing looked with favor upon the proposal. After all, much of the population in the lower Merrimack Valley was Catholic and an integral part of the Archdiocese of Boston. Further, there were no Catholic colleges to the north of Boston in Massachusetts. As the three men talked into the night, the hopes of the



Haverhill businessmen soared. Finally, as the hour grew late, Minihan picked up a large black crayon and wrote across the title page of the brief, "2 colleges." One would be located in the northern area of the Archdiocese and the other to the south of Boston, near Brockton. Whether this was a spontaneous idea of Minihan's or the wish of the Archbishop is not clear, but Cushing authorized his secretary to enter immediately into correspondence with various religious orders engaged in higher education in the United States with a view to establishing two new colleges in Massachusetts. Bishop Minihan no longer recalls all the religious orders he approached. Suffice to say, the Augustinians were the first to reply affirmatively, and they were offered their choice of either the northern or the southern area. For reasons which will be made clear in the following chapter, they opted for the Andover-North Andover site in the Merrimack Valley. The second group to reply favorably to the Archbishop's invitation was the Holy Cross order. The Augustinians founded Merrimack College in 1947, and the Holy Cross group established Stonehill College, in North Easton, in 1948.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BIRTH OF MERRIMACK COLLEGE

The order of Hermits of St. Augustine (O.S.A.) -- commonly known as Augustinians or Austin Friars -- is a mendicant order that traces its spiritual lineage back to St. Augustine (354-430), Bishop of Hippo and Doctor of the Church. The American province started in the 1790's as part of the Church's movement to evangelize the new nation. Progress was slow, however, and after almost fifty years of existence there were but five priests of the order serving in the United States, and they were located in Philadelphia. But with the advent of large-scale immigration of Irish-Catholics in the 1840's, the fortunes of the Augustinians brightened. They purchased a small farm outside of Philadelphia and opened Villanova College in 1841. The growing need for parishes and schools demanded paramount attention in America, and it was to this effort that the Augustinians devoted -- and continue to do so today -- their fullest energies. In the Archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts, St. Mary's Parish of Lawrence came under their direction in 1848, and from there missions were inaugurated in Andover, Methuen, Ballardvale, Wilmington and Tewksbury. Today the Augustinian Friars in the United States staff two provinces: the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova and the Province of Our Mother of Good Counsel in Chicago. It was the Villanova Province that established Merrimack College.

Exactly why the Augustinians accepted Archbishop Cushing's invitation to open a new college in the Merrimack Valley is difficult to answer. Most of the men who made the crucial decision are dead, and the college's archives reveal no definite explanation for the 1946 decision. At the risk of being accused of second-guessing, we can only suggest that some or all of the following considerations surely bore weight. The Order had ample manpower to launch the new college:

vocations to the Augustinian order soared in the immediate post-World War II era (as indeed they did for most religious orders), the Order had not yet opened Archbishop Carrol High School in Washington D.C. nor Monsignor Bonner High School in Philadelphia, and there was a sufficient supply of qualified Augustinian teachers, a fair number of whom were about to receive doctoral degrees in various academic disciplines. Needless to say, there was the simple fact of the challenge itself; a second American college would be an additional star in the educational constellation of the Order. Too, a steady flow of students -- thanks to the G.I. Bill of Rights -- would be assured for some years to come. Finally, the Augustinians had been working in the Merrimack Valley for a century.

Despite the fact that the area was economically depressed, the officials of the St. Thomas Province voted to assume the task of opening, financing, staffing and operating the college. Admittedly, it was a risk, at best, in the helter-skelter years following World War II. Fortunately, their faith and trust in the people of the Valley were not without foundation. Nor, for that matter, can one underestimate the encouragement of Archbishop Cushing. Such urging must surely have carried hints of financial assistance. Whatever other considerations may have entered into the decision, it was, as Theodore Roosevelt would have phrased it, "a bully decision."

By late summer, 1946, Reverend Mortimer A. Sullivan, who held the post of Provincial of the Province of St. Thomas at Villanova, was faced with the task of assigning an available, well-qualified Augustinian to head the new college. Tentative plans provided that the college would open in 1948. The press of veterans seeking admission, coupled with pleas from Archbishop Cushing and the Haverhill group, caused the Provincial and the soon-to-be-appointed president to endeavor to admit the first class in September, 1947. In retrospect, the obstacles to such a hurried opening were gargantuan. The paper college, in the fall of 1946, had no land, no physical plant, no equipment, no faculty, no organization and, finally, no charter from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. That

Merrimack College actually held its first class on September 29, 1947, is a tribute to the one man who, more than anyone else, made it all possible.

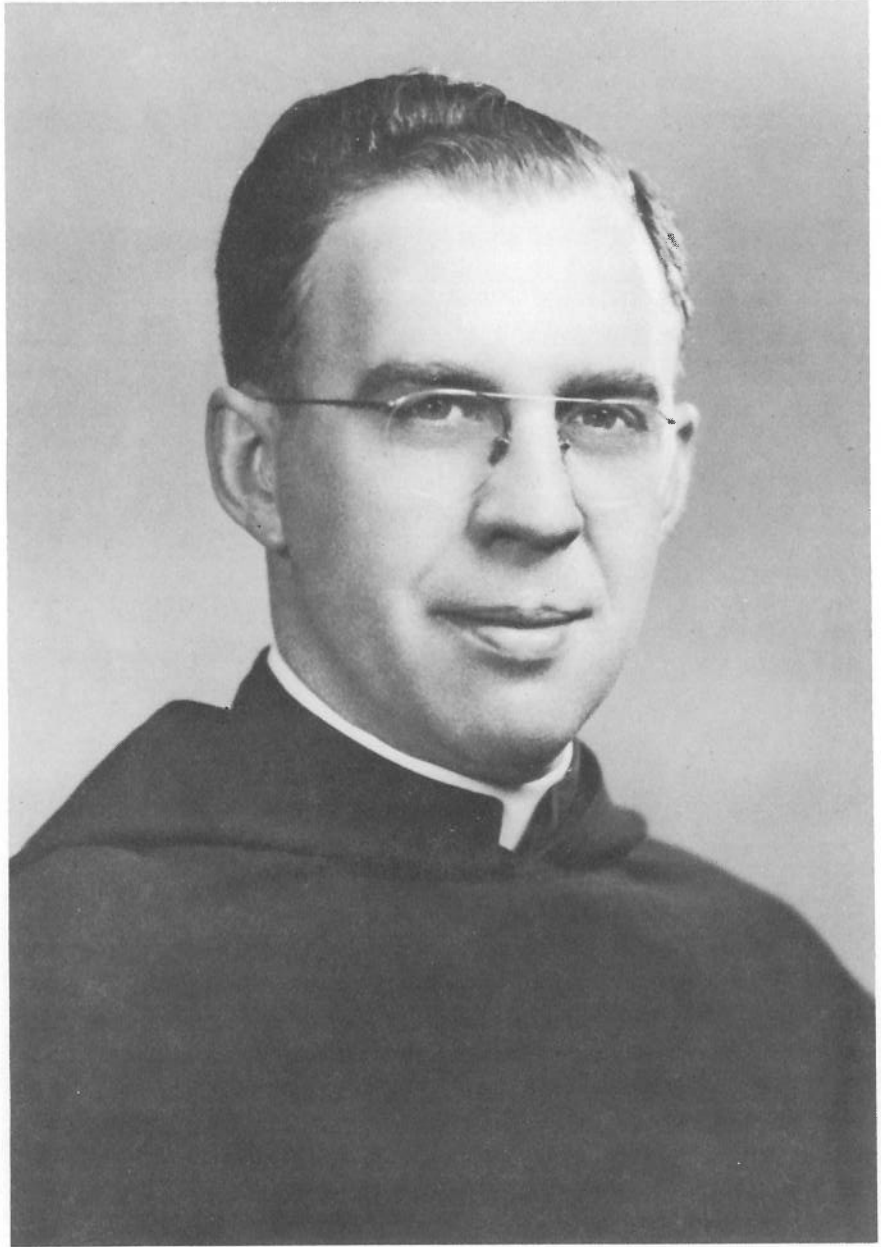
That man, of course, was Reverend Vincent A. McQuade, now to return to the region of his birth, and, for the next twenty-one years, direct a college which eventually became a showcase of the Merrimack Valley. He was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, on June 16, 1909, the son of Owen F. and Katherine (McCarthy) McQuade. Educated at St. Mary's Parochial School in Lawrence, he entered the Augustinian Order at the age of thirteen. He was ordained June 12, 1934, after receiving his bachelor's degree from Villanova in 1931 and completing theological studies at the Augustinian College, Washington, D.C. Additionally, he pursued graduate studies in the field of sociology at Catholic University, receiving his master's degree in 1933 and his doctorate in 1938. His dissertation, "The American Catholic Attitude on Child Labor Since 1891," published in 1938, soon became the standard monograph on the subject.

At the age of twenty-nine, the young priest-scholar returned to Villanova University to serve as professor of sociology and student counsellor. In addition to these duties, he also held, successively, the following positions at the University: assistant to the president, dean of the college, coordinator of the Navy V-12 program, and director of the Veterans Guidance Bureau. Despite these not inconsiderable duties and responsibilities, he somehow found time to serve as president of the Catholic Sociological Association and the Catholic Anthropology Association and to take an active role in various Catholic organizations in the Philadelphia area. As one sketches the biography of this individual, it is not surprising that his order tapped him for the presidency of the new college.

On Wednesday, January 8, 1947, the fathers of the Monastery at Villanova tendered McQuade a farewell dinner and wished him every success in his new assignment. Little did any of them, including McQuade himself, realize the height of the hurdles that lay ahead.

Within twenty-four hours the new president stood in





*Very Reverend Vincent A. McQuade, O.S.A., founder  
and first president of Merrimack College, 1947-1968.*

darkness, midst falling snow, on what would shortly become the first piece of real estate purchased by the Order. In those early months of 1947, Father McQuade kept a diary, and his entry for January 9th reads:

...There is one grave defect with the property -- there are no buildings whatever on the land we are purchasing. It will be difficult to start in September of 1947 unless we can obtain government buildings or else lease a suitable building. The high costs of building make it impossible to build at this time.

The farm land in question, some forty-five acres, is located on the southerly side of Peters and Haverhill Streets (Route 133), partly in Andover and partly in North Andover. In retrospect, the decision to purchase this particular piece of property appears less than far-sighted. The terrain is hilly and part of the land swampy. Adjoining property was either unsuitable or unavailable for expansion of the campus. Further, drainage problems would be encountered. The most obvious of the many liabilities of this parcel of land was that it had only a fifty-foot frontage on Andover and Elm Streets and no frontage at all on Turnpike Street (Route 114), thus seriously restricting access routes to and from the proposed commuter college.

Equally unfortunate, though it was apparently a case of necessity, was the purchase of 24,000 square feet of property across Peters Street from the campus site in early 1947. The fairly commodious dwelling on the property was deemed a convenient faculty house for Augustinians who would be assigned to staff the college in September. Subsequent months were to prove it less than spacious and expensive to renovate.

Far more important to Father McQuade in that month of January, 1947, was the necessity of publicizing the opening of the new college, securing a charter from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and arranging for the leasing of a suitable building in the area to accommodate the first class.

Only a middle-aged reader can recall the chaos and confusion which characterized the United States in 1947. The Cold War



was just getting under way; thousands of strikes, some of them nationwide, involving tens of millions of man-days lost, rocked and angered the country; construction costs were prohibitive and building material in short supply. The removal of price controls by the Republican-controlled Congress sent prices soaring, and everywhere the demand for consumer goods -- automobiles, furniture, clothing, steaks, appliances -- simply overwhelmed the productive segment of the nation's economy. Yet, in the midst of all this, Father McQuade methodically set about seeing to his priorities. Without a car until late February, when a compassionate, local automobile dealer supplied him with a new Mercury, the president travelled to Worcester, Newton, Chestnut Hill and other Catholic college sites by train and trolley. His diary occasionally reflected the frustration he felt in wasting so much valuable time by having to use public transportation. Wherever he went, from Boston College to Holy Cross, from Newton College of the Sacred Heart to Regis College, he received encouragement and promises of assistance. The presidents of all the Catholic colleges in the metropolitan area readily agreed to write favorable recommendations to the Collegiate Board of the State Department of Education on behalf of the Augustinian petition for Commonwealth approval of its proposed college.

When Father McQuade presented himself before the Board on Thursday, March 27, he outlined the objectives of the proposed college:

The purpose of the Augustinian Fathers in establishing Merrimack College is to offer young men an opportunity of receiving a thorough, liberal education -- an education that develops all the faculties of soul as well as body, and finds its expression in a clear-thinking, right-acting Christian gentleman. A trained mind and critical judgment, although essential to happiness and success, are of little avail unless controlled by a strong will and directed by a keen moral sense. The College will strive to supply an atmosphere favorable to the development of a sense of responsibility and the upbuilding of character. Consequently, in the form of discipline and the method of

teaching, *due emphasis will be placed on moral and religious agencies* (italics mine). Motivated by the educational traditions of the Augustinian Order, Merrimack College will constantly strive to advance the fields of human knowledge, render service to the nation and give its students a combination of scientific and humanistic learning which will fit them to take their positions in society as Christian gentlemen. While Merrimack College will make no distinction of creed in her requirements for admission, she will exist primarily for the training of Catholic youth and will follow Catholic principles in her educational policy.

He explained that the College would offer courses of study leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and, additionally, the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Within the Liberal Arts School (which would include major concentrations in literature, history, economics, social sciences, languages and philosophy), there would be a special curriculum designed for pre-medical and pre-dental students.

Apparently the Board was more than satisfied that the Augustinian Order was qualified and able to staff and operate a new college in the Commonwealth, for it voted unanimously to approve the petition. The charter authorized and empowered "The Augustinian College of the Merrimack Valley" to confer collegiate degrees, excepting medical and law degrees.

The original, somewhat cumbersome name of the College proved initially confusing to residents of the Merrimack Valley. Some referred to the College as "The Augustinian College," others called it "Merrimack College." No few outsiders thought it a "Catholic Seminary!" Twenty-two years later, on May 2, 1969, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts responded favorably to the College's Board of Trustees' petition, and the name was officially changed to "Merrimack College."\*

\*This seems an appropriate moment to say a word or two about the name Merrimack itself, surely one of the more debated place-names in all New England. The Merrimack River was discovered by Champlain on July 17, 1605 and named "Rivierre du Gaust." The River, however, has kept its Indian name. The northern

One of Father McQuade's first official acts upon arrival in Andover had been to call on Archbishop Cushing on January 10, 1947, to pay his respects. From this initial meeting, the two men hit it off quite well. Over the ensuing twenty-odd years, a deep and warm friendship was to develop and mature between them. McQuade was thirty-eight and Cushing, a dynamic, middle-aged prelate of fifty-two, who had been appointed Archbishop of Boston in 1944. The Archbishop brimmed enthusiasm over the prospect of the new college opening in September. McQuade's diary reads:

He said he would do everything he could to help us and authorized me to use his name as being behind the college and he said he would give it his full support...

Cushing had recommended that the president attempt to secure some government buildings to serve as temporary structures on campus. Endless phone calls and visits to the War Assets Administration in Boston proved not too fruitful. The demand for surplus government buildings in the New England area came from all sides -- elementary and high schools, colleges, trade schools, vocational institutions, state agencies, hospitals and the private sector, -- and the supply was limited.

The next alternative was to find a suitable building in the Lawrence area and lease it for class use. Oddly enough, despite the depressed economy of the region, suitable buildings were difficult to locate. Several mills were considered, but their location in the industrial district of the Merrimack River and its canal system made them less than suitable.

Indians called it MERRIMACK: MERRAH (STRONG), AUKE (A PLACE). The Massachusetts Indians called it MENOMACK: MENO (ISLAND), AUKE (A PLACE).

Down through the centuries there has been no uniformity to the spelling of the word. Aside from the two most common spellings, Merrimack and Merrimac, these additional spellings appear from time to time in historical documents: Malamak, Maremake, Meremack, Merremeck, Merrimeech, Merrymacke, Monnomacke, Monomack and Monumack. The 'k' predominates, Merrimac, Massachusetts, and the Confederate iron-clad notwithstanding.

In a brief moment of mild desperation, McQuade toyed with the idea of buying three houses on Peters Street, adjoining the faculty house property, for use (together with their garages) as classrooms.

Finally, as January drew to a close, he entered into negotiations with a contractor to arrange for the construction of a one-story, cinder-block building to contain seven classrooms, two laboratories, a small library and administrative offices. It was to accommodate 200 students and could be built, so he hoped, for \$20,000. Some indication of the prohibitive construction costs of 1947 can be seen in the actual cost of the building. It ran to more than \$80,000.

Understandably, Father McQuade had misgivings about the concept of a temporary cinder-block building. He feared that the reaction of Merrimack Valley residents might be, "So this is the much-touted Catholic college...a makeshift affair!" The priest did his psychological homework, however, and publicized plans for an imposing three-story brick structure.

The local newspapers (the Lawrence journals were particularly generous in their coverage of the new college) explained that the press of veterans seeking immediate admission and the decision of the Augustinians to open the College in September, 1947, a year ahead of schedule, necessitated this purely temporary action. The ruse worked, and the first application for admission came from a veteran on February 15.

Between perusing college catalogs and designing the format for Merrimack College's own first catalog, Father McQuade, working without any clerical or secretarial assistance, typing his own correspondence, penning replies to applicants, consulting attorneys regarding the search for titles of the land being purchased, saying daily Mass at St. Mary's, Lawrence, and living in its rectory, visiting contractors and war surplus agencies -- between all these chores and responsibilities and mundane practical affairs of the moment, -- still found time to give thought to the long-range plans he envisioned for the college.

He wasn't particularly happy with the forty-five acre location





*As late as 1944 the farm land at Wilson's Corner, North Andover, Massachusetts, where Merrimack now stands, was still producing hay.*

on which the first temporary building would be erected. Because of its uneven terrain and drainage problems, he felt that the construction of permanent buildings on this small, hilly site would be both difficult and expensive.

Apparently he was much taken with the property at Wilson's Corner. The parcel consisted of 100 acres, was quite level and for sale at a reasonable price. Further, the Haverhill labor-management group had recommended this site in their 1946 pilot study. The land (well known in the area as the Richardson farm, but then owned by the Higgins family of Lawrence) consisted of sixty acres in North Andover and the remainder in Andover. The latter forty acres had been somewhat developed; water mains, sewers and dirt roads were installed in 1946.

This entire farm site had served for years as a horse-breeding farm, and the outline of its race track may still be discerned on the playing fields to the side of Austin Center, the men's dormitory.

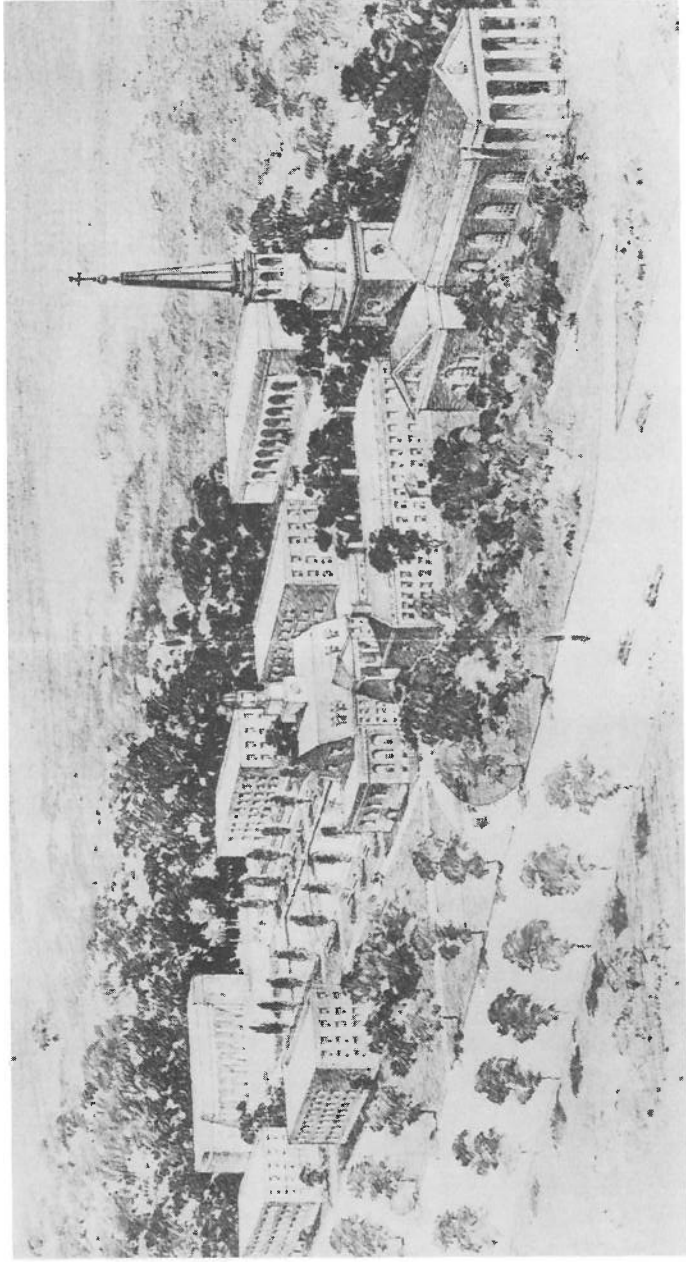
Fearful that the property might be sold, Father McQuade urged the Provincial to make a hurried trip to the area to examine the site. The two men decided to purchase the sixty-acre North Andover tract and a ten-acre portion of the Andover property. Both were in complete agreement that the land would make an excellent site for the permanent campus of Merrimack College.

The failure to purchase the entire Richardson property is perhaps best attributed to the Order's reluctance to become land-poor before they built the first structure. Admittedly, in future years there would be occasional criticism voiced at this missed opportunity. The remaining portion was divided into house lots and is the site of the suburban development which borders the present main campus on the west.

Yet, the 1956 acquisition of an additional 100 acres from the Farnsworth estate, on which the athletic fields, Monican Center and the town houses are located, certainly makes for a desirable, attractive campus. Further, the neighboring suburban development is a well-maintained, nicely landscaped site which complements the College campus.

In June, 1947, the Andover and North Andover Planning





*Master Plan for Merrimack College (1947). Designed by William B. Colleary, Architect*

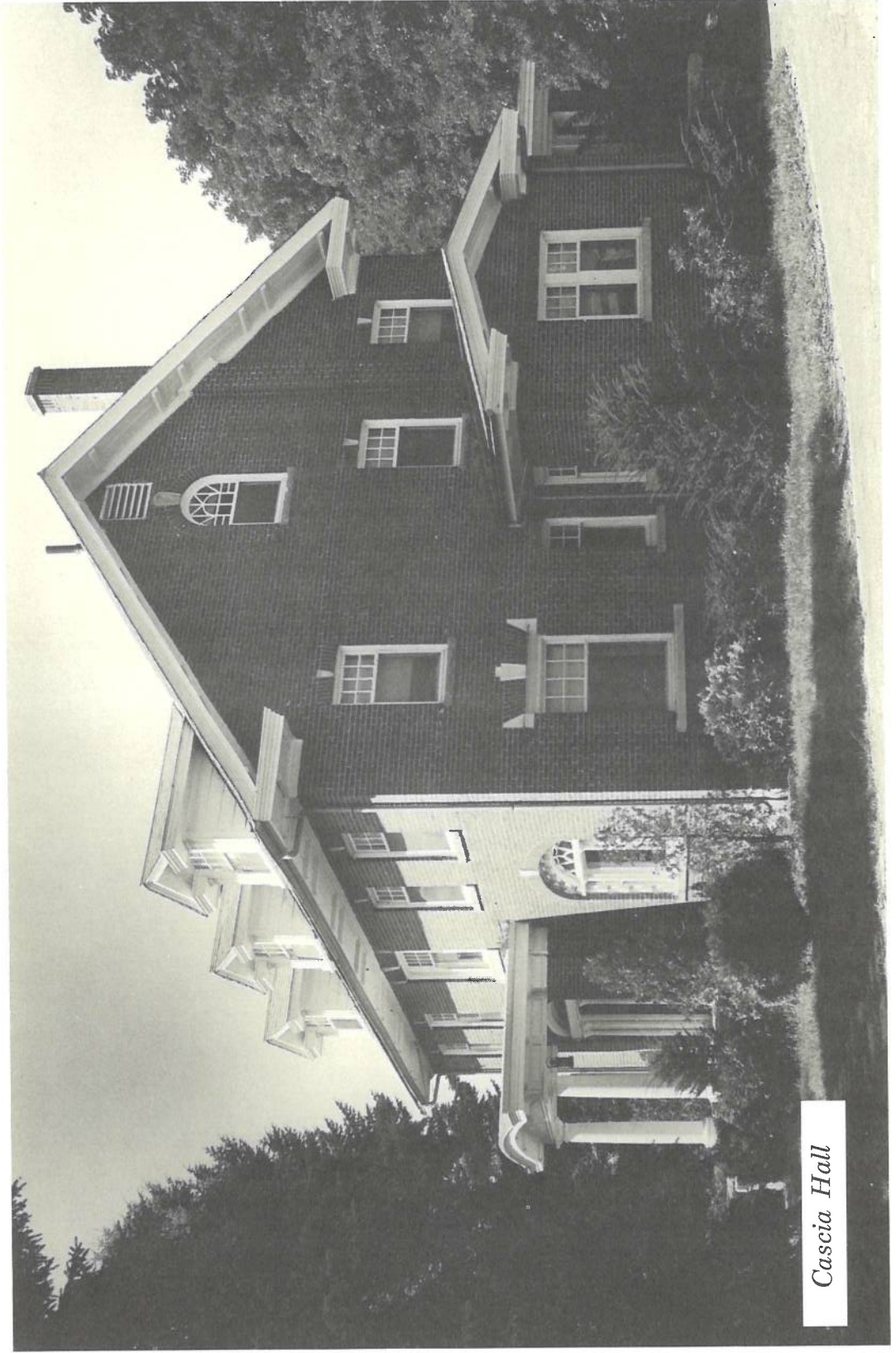
Boards readily agreed to rezone the recently-acquired Richardson property as an educational district, so as to permit the construction of the first building.

The present 240-acre campus was rounded out in the late 1950's and early 1960's with the purchase of five acres (along the eastern edge of college property) from the Trustees of Phillips Academy and the acquisition of almost twenty acres (along the southern portion of the campus) from the Downing estate.

Returning to the hectic months of 1947, applications for admission were given to some 350 students during May, and, by the end of the month, more than 100 had been completed and returned. As was to be expected, most of the applicants were veterans.

Thomas Murray, class of '51, a journalist with the *Boston Traveler*, would later write of this era: "An ex-GI -- eager for an education -- slugged up hilly Haverhill Street in North Andover one rainy day in 1947. The young man had walked more than a mile through the downpour from Shawsheen railroad station. He was looking for Merrimack College. Drenched, the ex-GI pressed the bell at the entrance to a red brick Colonial-style building. The nameplate on the door read 'Merrimack College Faculty House'. 'Father, I'm here to enroll,' he explained to the Very Reverend Vincent A. McQuade who answered the door. He was invited to 'sign up.' A few minutes later the ex-GI stood with the priest at the faculty house doorway and asked rather sheepishly: 'Just whereabouts is the college, Father?' Fr. McQuade -- Merrimack College president -- gestured toward mounds of cinder blocks, lumber and other building supplies stacked in a pasture across the road. 'There it is,' he said proudly. The view was nothing that any young man would expect on his first day of enrollment at a college. No ivy-colored halls greeted his glance. In fact, the scene looked like a hastily-arranged regimental depot of a military engineer's unit on a Pacific atoll.."

During the spring, Father John V. Casey was assigned to Merrimack to assist Father McQuade in completing the college catalog and arranging the curriculum for the fall. Merrimack



*Cascia Hall*



College's first catalog was a modest, unassuming, thirty-one page pamphlet. Under the section, "Description of Courses," the following notation appeared: "The courses in Biology and Chemistry will not be offered unless adequate laboratory equipment is obtained."

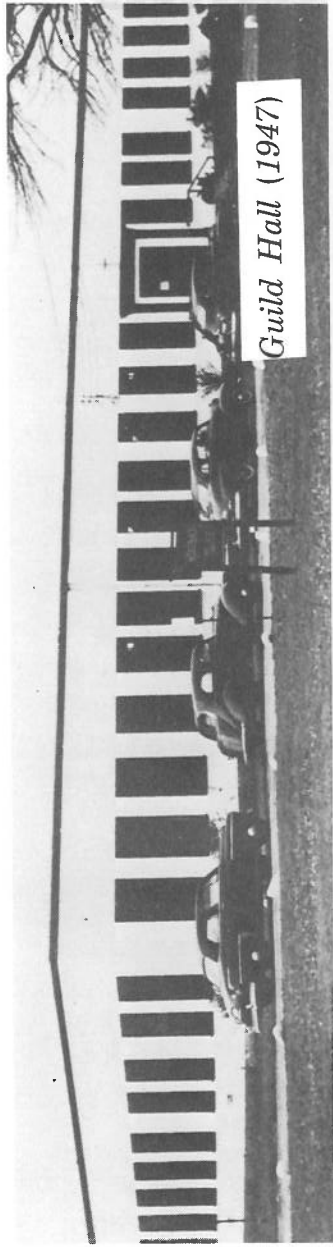
Reminiscing about those shoestring days, Father McQuade once remarked, "We begged, borrowed, or, in the last resort, bought what we needed. That's the way we started."

The appointment of the Board of Trustees (necessary for the incorporation of the new college) was a rather cut-and-dried affair. Father McQuade had originally advised against making the board top-heavy with local Augustinian pastors for fear that the college might be viewed as a "parochial affair." Nonetheless, the original Board of Trustees was made up of seven Augustinians, four of them local pastors. For all practical purposes, Merrimack College's Board of Trustees was, in 1947, more or less a legal necessity and nothing more. The President of the College and the Provincial made all major decisions.

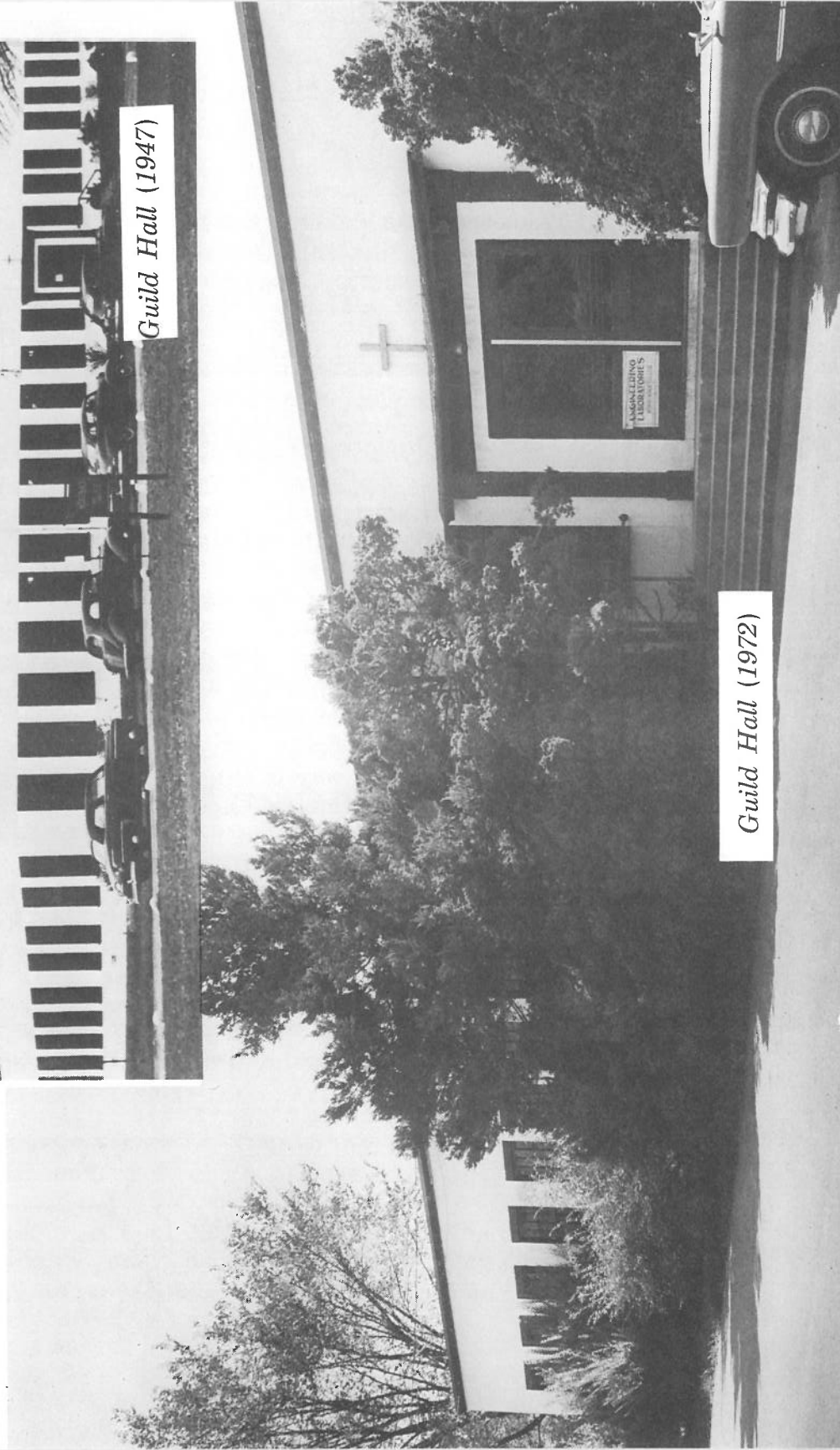
Construction of the temporary, one-story, E-shaped, cinder-block building got under way in early summer, and the builder promised completion within two and one-half months. The dedication of the building was scheduled to take place on September 22nd. No sooner had the invitations been mailed than lightning struck the front wall and knocked down part of it. McQuade was quite philosophical as he relayed the news to the Provincial:

The net result is that the damage will set us back a few days. It comes at a time when we need time. However, such is life and no doubt the Lord knows what He has in mind.

Modest dedicatory ceremonies marked the formal opening of Merrimack College on September 22, 1947. A solemn High Mass in St. Augustine's Church, Andover, with Archbishop Cushing presiding, was attended by the faculty, college trustees, student body, and members of their families. Congratulatory cablegrams were received from Pope Pius XII



*Guild Hall (1947)*



*Guild Hall (1972)*



and Very Reverend Joseph A. Hickey, Prior General of the Augustinian Order. The Pontiff's message read:

Occasion inauguration Merrimack College, Holy Father lovingly imparts rector, professors, students, benefactors, college, paternal apostolic blessings implored.

After returning to campus, the entire assembly gathered for the Archbishop's dedication and blessing of the as-yet-unnamed building. At a later date it would be called Guild Hall, "after our good friends who worked so hard in the early days," as Father McQuade explained.

On September 29, classes opened to the accompaniment of hammering, sawing and plastering, as workmen raced to complete the finishing touches on the interior of the structure. Merrimack's first freshman class numbered 165 male students. Records do not indicate how many qualified applicants had to be rejected. The 165 freshmen fully taxed all of the college's limited facilities.

Ninety-nine of the freshmen were veterans, sixty-six were non-veterans. Ninety-nine were enrolled in Business Administration, thirty-three in the Liberal Arts program and thirty-three pursued the pre-dental and pre-medical curriculum. Surely this pioneer class was the most mature, widely travelled, experienced and oldest group of freshmen which Merrimack College would ever welcome.

The majority of students came from the Merrimack Valley area; the cities of Lowell, Lawrence and Haverhill were home to more than forty. There was a scattering from the metropolitan Boston region and a few from out of state (New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Maine). Many of the students were married, although records at the time did not indicate a student's marital status.

The class was literally a microcosm of the heterogeneous ethnic make-up of the Merrimack Valley. Most of them came from working class backgrounds. Ninety-nine percent of the freshmen were Roman Catholics. The average age of the class

was twenty-three. Americans of Irish extraction made up the bulk of the class, but French, English, Italian, and an occasional Armenian name dotted the roster. Surprisingly, a fairly large number were transfer students. They came to Merrimack College from Dartmouth, Harvard, Boston University, Boston College, U.C.L.A. and Michigan State.

Of the 165 students who matriculated in September, 1947, 111 graduated in June, 1951. Some of the original class transferred to other colleges, some were recalled to military service during the Korean crisis, still others simply dropped from the records, either for personal reasons or because of academic difficulties.

Although ninety-nine members of the class were enrolled in the Business Administration program in 1947, the 1951 graduating class indicates that, of the 111 degrees conferred, only sixty-six were Bachelor of Science degrees in Business Administration. The remaining forty-five were in the Liberal Arts (including thirteen pre-dental and pre-medical degrees).

These pioneer freshmen were, in the main, serious about their education and concerned about the accreditation of the infant college. In order for an institution of higher learning to be accredited nationally, it must meet the standards of a regional accrediting organization. Ordinarily, however, educational associations refrain from undertaking an examination of a college with a view to accrediting it, until the college has been in existence for at least six years. As an intermediate measure, Father McQuade requested and received recognition and accreditation of Merrimack College by the New York State Board of Regents in January, 1951. Additionally, the College became an affiliate of Catholic University. The New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools granted full accreditation to Merrimack College in December, 1953. That the struggling, youthful institution was able, within the space of six years, to gain national accreditation was a tribute to faculty, students and administration.

But there was more to collegiate life in these early years than classes and examinations. A Glee Club and a Debating Society were formed in the late fall of 1947, together with informal hockey teams. It may come as a surprise to some readers to

learn that debating was so popular an extracurricular activity in the early years of the College. Indeed, in February, 1953, Merrimack's debating team, "The Austins," won the Eighth Annual Invitational Debating Tournament at M.I.T. Competing against thirty-two teams, Merrimack's team, coached by Reverend John M. Quinn and consisting of Rene Beauchesne, Paul Veronese and Carhels Zimbell, emerged victorious over teams from Harvard, Holy Cross, Dartmouth, Georgetown, M.I.T., Annapolis, Fordham and New York University.

A College newspaper, *The Press Club Bulletin*, appeared in mimeograph form on a regular basis. The predecessor of *The Warrior* (which first appeared with its familiar Indian masthead on June 2, 1948) gives a good picture of campus life in those pioneer days in Guild Hall. Considering the large number of veterans in the class, it isn't surprising that a regular column, "Oh My Achin' Back," concerned itself exclusively with veterans' affairs. There was the habitual griping about overdue subsistence checks from the Veterans' Administration and frequent references to "the ruptured ducks" which decorated students' jacket lapels. Kilroy cartoons dotted most issues of the school paper. The onset of the Cold War was reflected in lengthy editorials warning of the dangers of Communism, both domestically and internationally. Publication of the first Dean's List Scholars (those students with a minimum average of B or a cumulative average of 3.0) in late fall, 1947, revealed that twenty-three students among the 165 freshmen had achieved honor grades. The first Merrimack student to achieve a 4.0 cumulative average (all A's) was a slender veteran from Lowell, a pre-med major, James P. McLaughlin. The still vivid memories of World War II appear again and again in the college newspaper in 1947 and 1948. In December, 1947, Paul A. DeMarco, another pre-med major, was awarded the Navy Cross for heroism as a torpedo plane pilot against Japanese fleet units in July, 1945.

Although the College had no facilities for resident students in these years, the terms 'Residents' and 'Commuters' quickly became part of the undergraduate vocabulary. 'Residents'



referred to those students who had taken quarters in Andover and North Andover. 'Commuters' encompassed all others.

Everyone connected with the College in its infancy commented upon the esprit de corps and camaraderie which characterized Merrimack. The thirteen-man faculty was relatively young. The veterans were considerably older than the majority of non-veteran freshmen, so it was only natural that a generation gap simply did not exist in those years. The feeling that all connected with Merrimack College were pioneers, working and studying and building together, further cemented the unusually high morale of both students and faculty.

Of its many uses in those days, Guild Hall was the home of Merrimack's first library. The Augustinian Order had purchased the large personal library of Professor Van Deventer, well-known classical scholar of the University of Pennsylvania, and this collection of almost 10,000 volumes was augmented by a gift of almost a thousand volumes from the Library of Congress. Reverend William J. Wynne was the first librarian.

Aside from the main corridor of Guild Hall, there was no place where the entire college community could gather for either Mass or assembly. The need for still another temporary building was obvious from the first day of class in September, 1947.

"The Gym," a typical corrugated Quonset hut, was erected several hundred yards to the east of Guild Hall in record time during late summer and early fall of 1948. The center for indoor athletic facilities, it also served as an auditorium for social functions and the offering of Mass for the entire student body. Additionally, it was utilized as an examination center and emergency classroom building when Guild Hall literally exploded at the seams in September, 1948, when the student enrollment rocketed from 165 to 292. Graduates of the class of 1952 will remember it as the scene of commencement services which had been held outdoors the previous year. Like its predecessor, this second "temporary building" would see multi-activities within its echoing walls for the next quarter of a century. Indeed, at time of writing, this venerable old

structure has been refurbished as maintenance headquarters for the College. Its athletic past is now but a faded memory!



## CHAPTER IV

### THE MCQUADE ERA: 1947-1968

A most difficult venture had been launched successfully with boldness and with vision in an incredibly short space of time. The 1953 yearbook commented: "Founding a new college is in itself a monumental task. Founding a new college in times of uncertainty and inflationary spirals, is a calculated risk."

The one sobering thought that plagued Father McQuade was the fact that the very nature of a new college does not permit standing still or holding back until faculty, buildings and equipment are available for a complete four-year undergraduate cycle. September, 1947's freshman class would be sophomores next year, and, meanwhile, another freshman group would take its place. Thus the timetable was already set. Deadlines had to be met if the College was to continue. Projected enrollment figures indicated that Merrimack would have 300 students by 1948, 450 by 1949 and some 600 by the following year. It was obvious that, until the latter date, there could be no breathing space.

The most pressing need was a permanent building on the main campus. William B. Colleary, a Boston architect, designed the physical science building and the Vara Construction Company erected it. Built of brick and limestone, the four-story structure contains laboratories, classrooms and a large auditorium. It first opened its doors to students in September of 1949.

During the course of the construction of this first permanent building, Father McQuade thought it advantageous to launch Merrimack's initial capital fund drive. Upon advice from Archbishop Cushing, the goal was set at \$1,000,000. The prelate assured McQuade that he would contribute ten percent of that amount. Reverend Francis P. Fenton was appointed Executive Director of the Merrimack College Building Fund.

On the afternoon of May 8, 1949, a massive rally in the Lawrence Memorial stadium publicly launched the undertaking. Early that warm Sunday morning, Augustinian priest-teachers from the College, augmented by several Villanova colleagues, traveled the length and breadth of Merrimack Valley, speaking at scores of parishes, publicizing the drive and soliciting contributions. Archbishop Cushing and Governor Dever were the major attractions on the speaker's platform that afternoon. Local press and radio were most generous in their coverage of the event and, indeed, of the College's first major fund-raising effort itself.

When the drive was completed in late summer, College authorities were delighted with the result. Not only had the goal been reached, it had been surpassed by almost twenty percent. Thanks, in large measure, to 7,000 solicitors who canvassed individual families, industrial and business establishments, \$1,190,000 was collected. Even more impressive, insofar as the newly-founded College was concerned, 29,000 gifts were represented in the total. Within the relatively brief period of less than two years, Merrimack could boast of such a large group of friends and benefactors.

The drive had been unique in many ways, and certainly it could never be repeated. Parish solicitors and parish contributions supplied the bulk of the gifts. One final observation about this milestone in the history of Merrimack: 90 individuals contributed more than \$300,000 to the drive, or about one-third of the total raised. Archbishop Cushing was the largest single benefactor.

In this present era of the early 1970's, when the vogue for "women's liberation" has caught the fancy of countless Americans, the following few pages will surely seem amusingly archaic to many readers.

From the earliest inception of the idea of an Augustinian College in the Merrimack Valley, it was deemed prudent, if not traditional, to operate it as an all-male undergraduate College. The United States in the late 1940's was not very tradition-minded, however, nor, for that matter, was Archbishop Cushing. From his very first meeting with Father

enrollment during the early 1950's. Secondly, a Catholic co-educational college in New England would surely attract a wider range of applicants, especially if resident facilities were provided.

There was a very real possibility that a religious order of nuns might well accept the Archbishop's invitation to build a college in the area. What if that college became co-educational? All the ramifications of the problem plagued Father McQuade for most of 1950. Not wishing to incur the displeasure of Cushing, who obviously wanted Merrimack to become co-educational within the immediate future, the President diplomatically advised the Archbishop that the summer meeting of the Augustinian Provincial Chapter had favorably discussed the feasibility of Merrimack College becoming co-educational. The delighted prelate immediately informed the Boston press that Merrimack College would become co-educational in the fall of 1950. The Augustinians had been thinking of 1951 or 1952!

Mr. J. Leo Cronin, a member of the Haverhill labor-management committee, and a close personal friend of Father McQuade, recalls that he was driving from Boston to North Andover with McQuade when they first heard the news over the car radio. "Father McQuade turned deep red, muttered something under his breath, and snapped off the radio," he recalls.

But the die was cast, and the 1950 freshman class of 121 students included eleven females; Merrimack's first co-eds were Estelle T. Bernadin, Barbara A. Coughlin, Catherine C. Cullen, Grace Delamare, Patricia A. Hart, Margaret M. Hickey, Loretta Konopacka, Georgen Laite, Antoinette J. Mazzaglia, Beverly Briggs and Helen M. Toohig. Seven of the eleven graduated in 1954. The honor of being the first co-ed to graduate from Merrimack belongs to Mary Claire Hickey of North Andover, who transferred to the College from Emmanuel in 1951 as a second-semester junior. The distinction of being the first co-ed accepted at Merrimack belongs to Mary Claire's sister, Margaret.

Life for these young lasses, lost in the midst of 471 males, was both exciting and fearful. Their "Coeds' Corner" column in the



1950 issues of *The Warrior* reflects both their humor and a wee bit of pathos. Their presence on campus necessitated a Dean of Women, and Miss Cathleen M. Murphy, an instructor in English and the first woman appointed to the faculty, was named Acting Dean of Women. Now that Merrimack was co-educational, additions to the curriculum were deemed advisable. The inauguration of Secretarial Science and Medical Technology courses were obviously intended for female students. Plans were also made for the introduction of a two-year course leading to an Associate degree for women who preferred spending no more than two years in college.

The impact of the Korean War, which erupted in June, 1950, could be noted in the recall to active service of thirteen Merrimack undergraduates who were in the Naval, Marine and Army Reserves. Indeed, Father Vincent I. Meany, a member of the faculty, was also to exchange temporarily his Augustinian robe for a chaplain's uniform as a result of the Asian crisis.

Another addition to the curriculum which generated much discussion and no little controversy at this time was the introduction of Engineering as a major undergraduate concentration. At the direction of Reverend Joseph M. Dougherty, who had replaced Reverend Mortimer V. Sullivan as Provincial, Father McQuade appointed a "Committee on Engineering" in late 1950. The group consisted of five Augustinian faculty members: Fathers Albert J. Shannon, Joseph B. Murray, William G. Cullen, Edward J. Burns and Joseph J. Gildea. They were charged with studying the feasibility of establishing a School of Engineering at Merrimack. Their detailed, nine-page report, submitted to the Provincial in early 1951, concluded that such a school was neither feasible nor desirable. Father McQuade's cover letter also strongly recommended against establishing such a school. The Merrimack community's opinion and recommendations elicited a somewhat tart reply from the Provincial on May 7, 1951:

Unfortunately your report and my findings do not agree.  
It will not be necessary to have any more conferences





*Father McQuade and Richard Cardinal Cushing (wearing the robes of the Order of St. Augustine), September, 1960.*



*From left to right, Fathers Gildea, Lanen, Hannan and McQuade pose on the steps of the gym with nine of the first coeds admitted to Merrimack College, September, 1950.*

about this matter...I have instructed Father Crawford to secure further information on the establishing of a course in Civil Engineering at Merrimack, beginning next September...

Villanova University had a large, successful School of Engineering, and, admittedly, there was a nationwide shortage of engineers in the early 1950's. Further, the Provincial was convinced that Engineering at Merrimack would attract a still larger clientele of students. He misjudged, and by a very wide margin, the cost of necessary equipment for the Engineering laboratories.

Nonetheless, Civil Engineering was incorporated into Merrimack's curriculum in September, 1951. A second major, Electrical Engineering, was inaugurated in 1954. This second Engineering major was introduced primarily because of the plea of Western Electric officials in the region, who were desperate for engineers in the immediate pre- and post-Sputnik eras. In 1964 the Civil Engineering major was accredited by the Engineers' Council for Professional Development, and two years later the same recognition was extended to Electrical Engineering. Father John H. Crawford was appointed the first "Dean" of the School of Engineering and served in that capacity until his sudden death on February 12, 1957. Father Thomas A. Burke succeeded Crawford and headed the School until 1961, when the present director, William R. Garrett, Jr., assumed the post. In the years since the first Engineering degree was awarded by Merrimack (1955 for Civil Engineering and 1960 for Electrical Engineering), 184 students have graduated as civil engineers and 196 as electrical engineers. Save for four stouthearted young ladies, all the graduates have been male.

Still another early but ill-advised addition to the curriculum was the inauguration of Nursing Education in the fall of 1952. Operating in the Part-Time Division of the College, this program was intended for Registered Nurses who desired to pursue course work leading to a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. Sister Mary Margaret of Bon Secours Hospital,

Methuen, was named Acting Chairman of the program.

The rationale for this move was that both Archbishop Cushing and Father McQuade were desirous of opening a medical school sometime in the future, and it was believed that a nursing program should be the initial step. The boldness of their dream now appears rather premature, if not utopian, but, as Cushing wrote, "Nothing attempted, nothing done." The obstacles and difficulties in establishing a medical school were, of course, staggering, and the plan was dropped.

The nursing venture also proved less than satisfactory. There was little or no attempt to publicize the program in the area and Bon Secours did not have a school of nursing to serve as a feeder for the College's program. The first degree in Nursing was awarded in 1957 and the last degree in 1958, at which time the program was suspended. Between the inauguration and the demise of the experiment in Nursing Education, a major in Medical Technology was added to the full-time curriculum. This major has remained under the direction of the Department of Biology.

There were more conventional changes in the curriculum of the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences as the years went by and the enrollment increased. In 1948 a Bachelor of Science program in Chemistry was introduced. As mentioned elsewhere, the College's becoming co-educational saw the introduction in 1952 of a two-year program of Secretarial Studies for students unable to devote more than two years to college study. Experience proved that this two-year program was not satisfactory, and it was phased out by 1960. It was replaced by a four-year Secretarial Administration and Secretarial Science program, which granted its first degree in 1964. This program also proved unsatisfactory, and the College phased it out between 1965 and 1968. A Biology major was introduced in 1951. A major in Mathematics was first offered in 1958. The ramifications of the post-Sputnik crash program to train scientists can be seen in the establishment of a Physics Department in 1959. In the following year, a combination program of Science, Mathematics and Education was introduced to train General Science teachers at the secondary



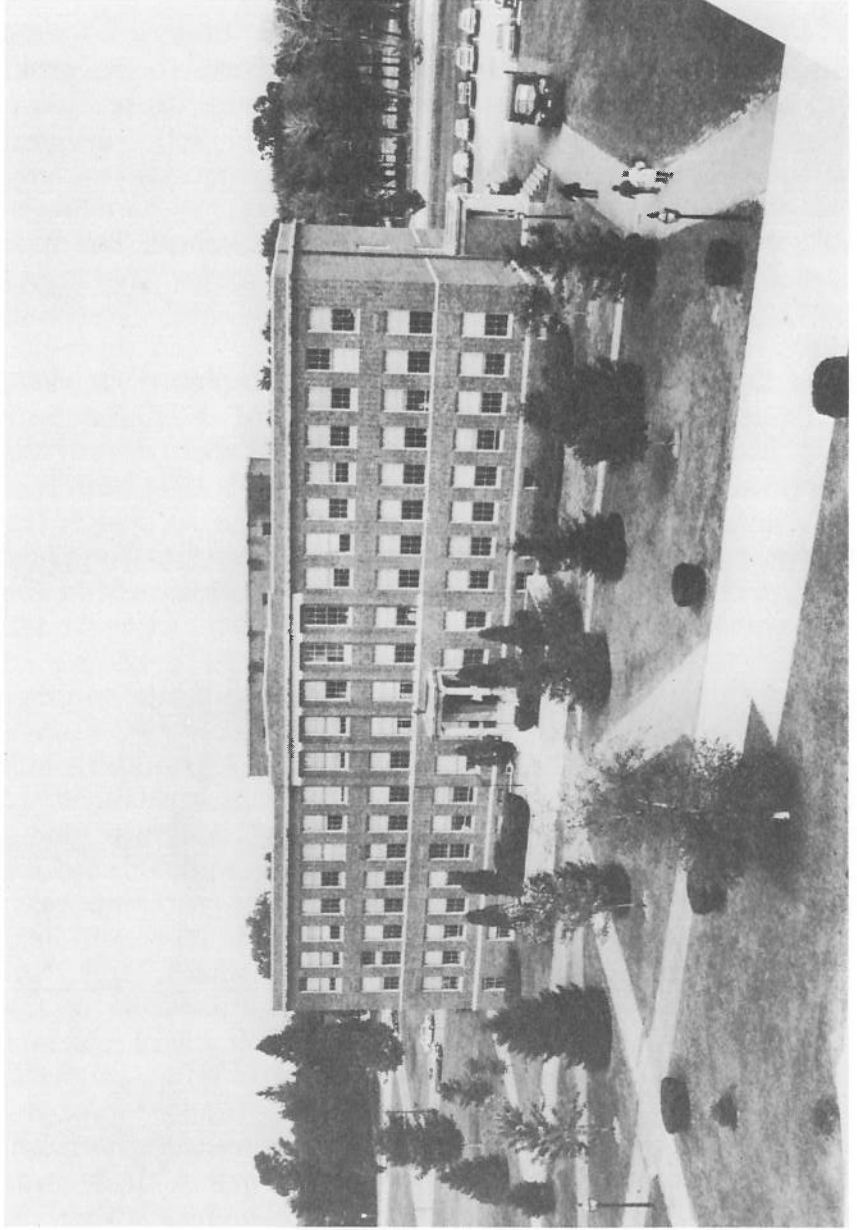
school level. Provisions were also made for undergraduates desiring a career in secondary school education to major in History-teaching, English-teaching and Humanities-teaching. Sociology became a major program in 1960, as did Mathematics-teaching, Biology-teaching, Economics-teaching and Engineering-Physics. Four years later, a Language-teaching major was incorporated into the curriculum. The year 1965 saw the addition of three new major fields of concentration: Psychology, Political Science and American Studies.

As the first permanent building neared completion in 1948, ground was broken for the construction of a liberal arts building. McQuade had not been completely satisfied with the architectural work connected with the College's first building, and he engaged the services of Joseph McGann to design the second main building. The Beresford Construction Company erected the structure. Named Sullivan Hall, in memory of the Very Reverend Mortimer A. Sullivan, the Augustinian Provincial who had been instrumental in the founding of Merrimack College, it was ready for occupancy in late summer of 1951.

Suddenly, midst all the hustle and bustle of building and expansion, it was time for the first commencement of Merrimack College. Four years had raced by, and the young men who had matriculated in September, 1947, and endured the crowded conditions in Guild Hall during their freshman year, were about to graduate. Commencement ceremonies were held outdoors in front of the science building on June 3, 1951. Not only was this first commencement another milestone in the history of the College, it also started a tradition of outdoor graduation ceremonies which Merrimack would follow until the mid-1960's, when fickle New England weather finally forced the relocation of commencement exercises to Lowell Auditorium.

The first degree conferred by Merrimack College was bestowed upon Archbishop Cushing. The Honorable Paul A. Dever, Governor of Massachusetts, received an honorary degree and delivered the commencement address. Raymond Eugene Alie, Dover, New Hampshire, was the first





*Sullivan Hall (1951).*

undergraduate to actually receive an earned degree from a beaming Father McQuade. One hundred and eleven proud seniors, members of the class of 1951, became Merrimack's first alumni. It was an historical event, and everyone in the audience sensed it -- faculty, graduates, parents and friends. None were more aware of its historical significance than the prelate and priest who presided at the ceremonies. As Cushing later wrote McQuade:

It [Merrimack College] is a big task -- in fact the biggest ever undertaken in this area, but it is tremendously needed. Even though we only sow the seed and someone else reaps the harvest, we will have made the work possible.

On May 27, the *Lawrence Sunday Sun* caught the impact of the College's first commencement in a front-page editorial entitled "The Miracle of Merrimack:"

Next Sunday, an event of great historic significance in the academic history of Greater Lawrence will take place: the awarding of degrees to 100 members of the first graduating class of Merrimack College. For the first time in the approximate 300 years of civilization in this area, a class of college graduates, trained under the most modern conditions, will enter the lifestream of the nation and the State.

Merrimack College is still in its infancy, but its eventual stature may be measured by its growth to date. Since 1947, it has progressed steadily, and the entire area on which its initial permanent building was erected is a beehive of activity, with new construction on two more structures moving along to a point at which they will be ready for use in a period of only a few months.

On the instigation of Archbishop Richard J. Cushing, the priests of the Order of St. Augustine took on the task of making something out of nothing, an artistry at which they have been skilled for years untold. People of all

religious creeds contributed money to what seemed like a dream and saw the dream become a reality almost overnight. It shall be an enduring one.

Archbishop Cushing, the first Roman Catholic prelate to inaugurate such a program in this area, and the Very Rev. Vincent A. McQuade, first president of the Augustinian institution, must feel a great sense of gratification today, in measure equal to the pride which this community has in its first college.

The third structure to be erected on the main campus was Austin Hall, a combination administration building and residence hall for Augustinian members of the faculty. The College had long outgrown the building on Peters Street which had served as a residence for the Augustinians since 1947. Anxious to avoid the somewhat drab style which characterized the earlier structures (indeed, some wags had dubbed them "Boxcar Baroque"), McGann and Powers designed an imposing four-story, red-brick, gabled edifice which for many years would be the showcase of the campus.

Upon completion of Austin Hall in the summer of 1952, Archbishop Cushing dedicated all three buildings on September 29, 1952. On this date, the physical science building was named Cushing Hall, in honor of Merrimack College's earliest friend and benefactor. Within the relatively brief period of five years, the main campus had taken on the appearance of a permanent and growing institution.

The lack of trees and shrubery, which was lamented by the more esthetic members of the Merrimack College community, partially accounts for the custom of each junior class planting a tree during Junior Week festivities in early May. The first such student contribution to the beautification of the campus was planted by the class of 1951 on a chilly May 8, 1950.

As the College took shape, Father McQuade requested William F.J. Ryan, heraldry expert of New York, to design a seal for Merrimack. For almost a quarter century this amorial seal has graced college stationery, yearbook covers and the college flag, yet few know its history. In the language of

heraldry, the technical, rather ornate description of the seal reads as follows: "Blazon: or, six pales wavy azure, and over all in base a trimount of the field, charged with a cross fleurette, on a chief of the second, an open book of the field, garnished and latched argent, inscribed 'Tolle Lege' on each page also of the second. Encircling the base of the shield on a silver background is a golden scroll displaying the motto 'Per Scientiam Ad Sapientiam' in blue letters. A blue peripheral band, edged in gold, bears the title MERRIMACK COLLEGE with A.D. 1947 between two crosses fleurette also in gold." More simply, since wavy lines represent water in heraldry, wavy pallets were chosen to represent Merrimack, which meant "swift water" to some of the Indians who once dwelt in the valley. The wavy lines are vertical rather than horizontal, not alone for artistic reasons, but also because wavy vertical lines seem to capture the feeling of swiftly flowing water better. The seal is an unusually good example of canting arms, of which the medieval heralds were so fond. Canting arms, or "arms parlantes" sing out, as it were, the name of the bearer. The wavy pallets are thirteen in number to recall that Massachusetts was one of the thirteen original colonies. And-over (Andover) all in the base is a trimount, charged with cross fleurette, from the coat of arms of the Archdiocese of Boston. The old name of Boston was Trimountain or Tremount. The cross fleurette refers to the French ancestry of Bishop Cheverus, the first Bishop of Boston (1810-1823). Thus, the shield refers to the name of this Augustinian College and to its location in the Archdiocese of Boston. The trimount also is a charge on the coat of arms of Pope Pius XII, in whose pontificate Merrimack College was established.

In accordance with the custom of displaying arms of Order or Congregation in chief, a book from the complicated insignia of the Order of St. Augustine is appropriated and charged with the famous words connected with St. Augustine's conversion, "Tolle Lege" ("Take up and read"). The school colors, blue (color of loyalty and the cold, rippling waters of the Merrimack) and gold (symbol of wisdom and a papal color), predominate on the shield.



The motto of Merrimack College appears on the inner circle of the shield: “Per Scientiam Ad Sapientiam” (“Through knowledge to wisdom”).

Thumbing through the issues of *The Warrior* and the early *Merrimackian* volumes, reading the correspondence of Father McQuade and talking with old-time faculty members and some early graduates, gives one a certain feeling of what collegiate life was like in those first years of Merrimack College. Most students “brown-bagged it,” as lunchroom facilities were practically non-existent in Guild Hall. The heating equipment failed frequently, and overcoats with scarfs were worn to class regularly. Parking facilities were primitive, and cars frequently bogged down in the mud and snow.

Plays, guest lecturers and dances, together with whist parties, glee club concerts and debating matches, made up much of the extracurricular life. The College’s first musical, “Swigo-Doon” was presented to capacity audiences in Holy Rosary Hall, Lawrence, on April 19 and 20, 1951. Old-timers recall that the cast was appropriately “well-oiled” for both performances. *Warrior* editorials lamented the absence of pencil sharpeners in the newly-constructed Sullivan Hall and the insufficiency of chairs in the basement cafeteria, and also chided undergraduates for littering the tables. On April 30, 1950, Congressman John F. Kennedy spoke at the College Communion Breakfast in the gym. Much of his talk centered about the growing unemployment problem in the nation, “even for college graduates,” as the young Kennedy put it. And here is a rather quaint description of the first co-ed tea held at the College in April, 1952: “Tea was served in the library of the Liberal Arts Building. The glittering silver and dainty refreshments created a most refined and proper atmosphere.”

Daniel B. Breen, '51, was known to his classmates as “Mr. First.” Dan was the first student to apply for admission, the first student to register and the first student for whom Father Gildea arranged a class schedule. If these weren’t enough firsts, this twenty-seven-year-old former naval officer was the first father of twin boys, born March 30, 1948. Finally, he was the first of 320 Merrimack undergraduates who, over the course of

a quarter of a century, have majored in History.

As the Cold War intensified and the Korean hostilities focused attention on United States military capabilities, Father McQuade devoted considerable time and energy in attempting to secure R.O.T.C. installation on campus. In early 1951 he traveled to Washington and conferred with Speaker of the House, Representative John W. McCormack, Congressman Thomas J. Lane and General Earl S. Hoag, U.S.A.F., a member of the War Department's general staff. Although the Pentagon had announced that sixty-two additional Air Force R.O.T.C. units were about to be set up at various colleges and universities, all of Father McQuade's endeavors that spring and summer were in vain. Perhaps he was overly optimistic in believing that he had a good chance in securing an Air Force commitment. After all, Merrimack was a small, relatively young college with but two permanent buildings. It might be the educational wish fulfilled of the Merrimack Valley, but one could scarcely expect that the Pentagon would be impressed by the institution in 1951. As Frank T. McCoy, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, remarked in a letter to Congressman Thomas J. Lane, dated May 3, 1951, "Merrimack College was not one of those colleges accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, and only those colleges bearing the approval of the North Central Association were favorably considered in the New England section of the country."

It is difficult to resist speculation as to the reason Merrimack College conferred an honorary degree upon Lieutenant General Thomas F. Hickey in 1956. Aside from a distinguished career in World War II, General Hickey happened to be the Commanding General of the United States 3rd Army in 1956.

As late as July, 1967, McQuade filed a petition with 1st Army Headquarters, Fort Meade, Maryland, for an R.O.T.C. program at Merrimack College. By this time, however, the Pentagon had serious misgivings about opening additional programs at a time when campus military installations were the object of growing student unrest and demonstrations.

For obvious financial reasons, there were few frills in the

College in these early years. The unpretentious wooden sign--with cracked and peeling paint -- along the edge of Route 114 announced to one and all that this was the site of MERRIMACK COLLEGE. Not until 1964 was the impressive brick and bronze marker (a gift of the classes of 1962 and 1963) erected in its place. Indeed, the campus was without a flagpole until 1957, when the class of 1957 gave the present flagpole and marker in memory of their classmate, Helen Singer. A *Warrior* editorial of March, 1954, suggested, partly in jest, partly seriously, that Senator Joseph McCarthy might term "Merrimack as an alien, subversive, un-American college" unless we flew Old Glory.

As the college body grew in enrollment and in faculty, parking facilities were constantly taxed to capacity as soon as they were completed. Currently, there are parking facilities for 1,190 cars on campus.

In 1956, Father Paul Thabault and a group of student volunteers constructed an outdoor hockey rink in the field to the northwest of the Student Union building. It was primitive perhaps, but it served the campus until arrangements were made in the late 1950's with Phillips Academy for Merrimack students to use their ice facilities.

In the early years, the clocks in Sullivan Hall had the habit of indicating seven different times, and the bells would go off with annoying irregularity. There were never enough seats in the library as it moved into ever larger quarters: first in Guild Hall, then into Sullivan, then into Austin, then into the Student Union building. In retrospect, all these seem minor annoyances. Amusingly enough, some bells and clocks are still erratic in performing their assigned duties.

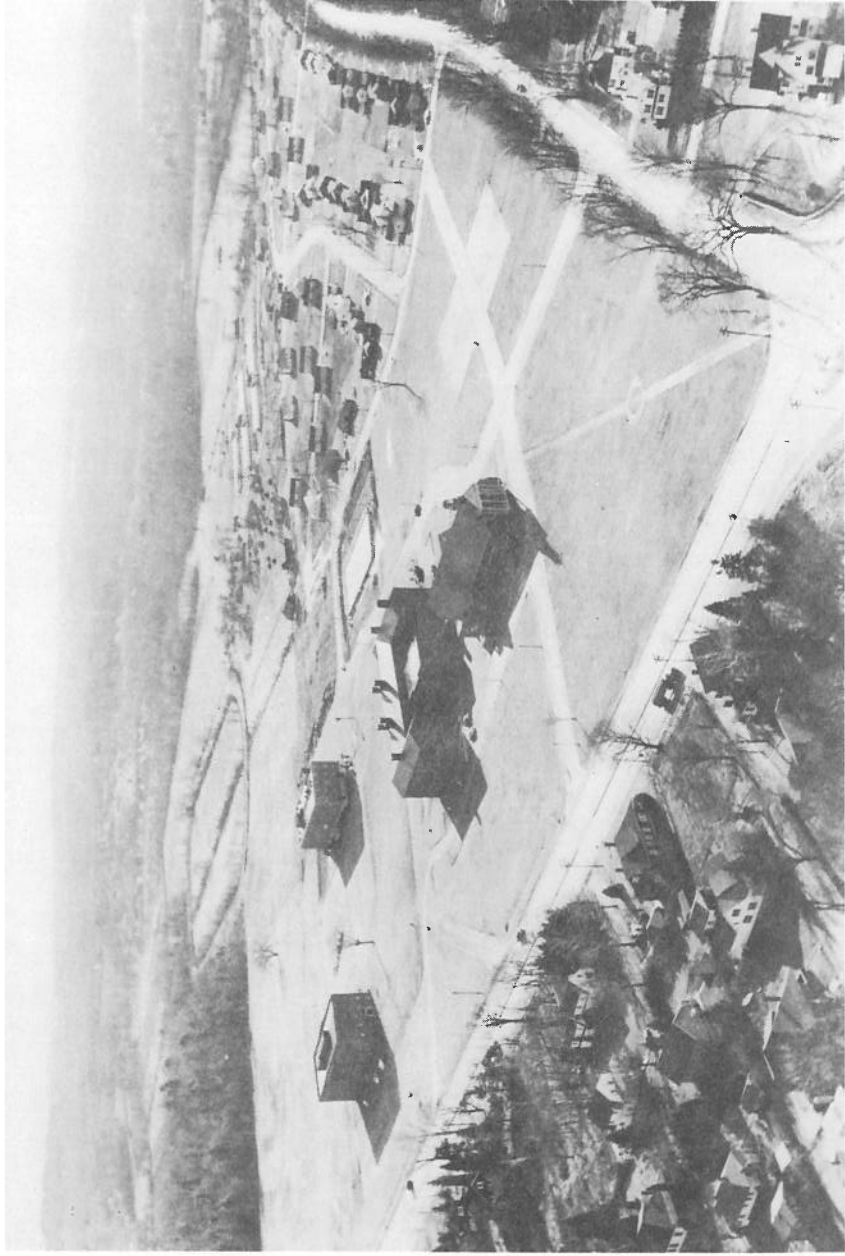
By 1954, full-time enrollment stood at the 600 mark, and faculty numbered almost fifty. The need for continued expansion of the physical facilities saw the inception of the Collegiate Church of Merrimack College. Father McQuade, in February, 1953, had requested, and readily received, permission from Archbishop Cushing to open the chapel in Austin Hall to the public on Sundays and holy days. It was Father's hope that by such a move, more and more people

would visit and get to know Merrimack's campus. The limited size of the monastery chapel, together with the steadily increasing enrollment, made a collegiate church eminently desirable. John Heffernan, a Boston architect, was selected to design the edifice, which was to seat 1,000. The lower level of the church would contain an auditorium with stage. Ground was broken in late April, 1954, and, despite the two hurricanes which roared across New England that summer, delaying construction, the Collegiate Church of Merrimack College was dedicated with a Solemn Pontifical High Mass on April 25, 1955.

Standing on a slight bluff a hundred yards in from Elm Street, the gold-domed chapel is a fitting companion to Austin Hall, to which it is joined. Together with the College library (built in 1966-67), these buildings are, architecturally, the most attractive edifices on the main campus. Setting off the Collegiate Church is a seven-foot bronze statue on a granite base of "Christ the Teacher," standing some seventy-five yards to the front of the building. The sculpture, created by John Angel of Saybrook, Connecticut, and cast by the Roman Bronze Works of New York, was the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Louis H. Hamel and family of Haverhill. It was not the first, nor would it be the last, generous gift of this good friend and benefactor of Merrimack College.

When the third graduation was held on June 2, 1954, for the eighty-two graduating seniors and eleven associate degree recipients, it was the second year that the ceremonies were conducted outdoors in front of the flag-bedecked portico of Austin Hall. Father McQuade, Archbishop Cushing, the faculty, staff, students, parents and friends could look about with something more than a sense of satisfaction and pride, and see that the College was taking shape. There was a feeling of permanency about the large, solid, red-brick buildings. Perhaps they were not ivy-covered, but landscaping was beginning to show its worth in the growing number of shrubs, firs and lilac bushes. The campus roads were paved, walks connected the three main buildings -- Austin and the Collegiate Chapel, Cushing and Sullivan Halls, -- and announcement was made





*Aerial view of Merrimack's campus in 1956. Note the outdoor hockey rink to the right of Austin Hall. In the background may be seen the outline of the race track to the right of the wooded area. In the upper right portion of the photo, note the three long white buildings. They were the "chicken farm" which is now the site of Monican Center. There were less than half a dozen trees on the main campus in 1956.*

that the construction of two additional buildings, together with a powerhouse, would commence within three years.

What had been only a dream in 1946 was now a reality. "Insufficiency was becoming fulfillment," to use the description of Gustav Mahler's 8th Symphony, and the fulfillment which was, and is, Merrimack College is due in no small measure to three exceptional men whose extraordinary talents created and sustained the College for almost a quarter of a century. In a preface which he penned for the 1972 *Merrimackan* yearbook, Father John R. Aherne, President of Merrimack College, paid tribute to this marvelous trio: "Cardinal Cushing, to whose great heart and clear vision this college owes its inception; Father Vincent McQuade, who saw it through the first twenty years of its existence and Father Joseph Gildea, first Vice-President and Dean, who brought to the College qualities of mind and heart which affected every faculty member and every student who set foot on this campus. Working with them, and indispensable to the life of the institution, were a host of Augustinians and laymen to whom we all owe a debt larger than we can pay..."

It is no exaggeration to state that Cushing, who was elevated to the princely dignity of Cardinal in November, 1958, loved Merrimack College. He visited the campus frequently and presided at most of the graduation ceremonies until ill health compelled him to limit his public appearances. In twenty years he had formed a deep and affectionate friendship for Father McQuade. Physically, the two men complemented one another as they sat at speaker's tables and presided at formal college ceremonies. Both were large, tall men with commanding appearances. The prelate was a gregarious outspoken public figure whose "Benedictions" could, on occasion, be lengthier than the commencement address itself. Father McQuade, on the other hand, was a serious, taciturn, shy individual, who disliked speaking in public. Although his voice was deeply resonant and often audible without the aid of a microphone, it had a certain unique characteristic which invited mimicry on the part of Merrimack undergraduates. Indeed, imitations of the voices of the two were perennial campus pastimes in days

gone by.

On the occasion of Father McQuade's death, February 11, 1971, Joseph V. Maloney, '51, managing editor of the *Lawrence Eagle Tribune*, wrote: "He built a College...with Money, Mortar and Much of Himself." The preceding pages, and those which follow, bear lasting testimony to how well and how much the President built and how much he gave of himself to this institution. In financial matters, he and Cushing worked harmoniously and successfully from the very inception of Merrimack College. But to measure Cushing's role in the history of the institution in purely financial terms would be to do him a grave injustice. He was a deeply spiritual man of vision and faith, and of these latter qualities he gave lovingly and generously to Merrimack.

The third man who left a lasting mark upon the College was Father Joseph J. Gildea, first Vice-President and Dean. Like Father McQuade, a native-born (1913) son of Lawrence, Massachusetts, he was ordained an Augustinian in 1939 at the age of twenty-six. He received his doctoral degree in Romance Languages from the University of Pennsylvania while teaching at Villanova University. In late summer of 1947 he knocked at the door of Cascia Hall (the faculty residence) and announced his assignment to the new College. Father McQuade was delighted. Here was a fine combination of teacher, scholar and administrator who had much to offer a new school. He would serve as Dean and Vice-President until 1959, when ill health forced his transfer to the Monastery of St. Thomas at Villanova.

It is no exaggeration to say that this dedicated, tireless priest is more responsible than any single individual for the academic excellence which has become a hallmark of Merrimack College. Father Gildea insisted upon the highest standards from both faculty and students. Personally tailoring undergraduate programs of study for every single individual, he was capable of working seventeen and eighteen hours a day, both in his capacity as Dean and as a Professor of Modern Languages.

In 1960 the College conferred an honorary degree upon Father Gildea, who was then Vice-President for Academic Affairs at



Villanova University. In part, the citation read, "During his twelve years at Merrimack his vigorous and well-balanced judgments were always an inspiration to the faculty. His devotion to duty and anxiety to be just and charitable endeared him to all the students..."

For those readers who never had the experience of knowing these two Augustinian priests, the following sidelight may be interesting. As Sullivan Hall neared completion in late summer, 1951, the need for a sidewalk connecting it with Cushing Hall was obvious, but the construction crews were busy completing the new building. Fathers McQuade, Gildea and Crawford donned work clothes, dug the ground, leveled the terrain, poured the hot top and rolled the walk. This was how the first of the score of walks which today line the Merrimack campus was built. It was built by the President, the Vice-President and the Dean of the School of Engineering. Indeed, there were countless other instances of their performing heavy manual labor in the early years. Such men could not but succeed in building a college!

To Father Gildea, as to Father McQuade and Cardinal Cushing we all owe a debt larger than we can pay. Without any one of them, Merrimack College would not be the Merrimack College we know.

The year 1957 marked the tenth anniversary of Merrimack College and occasioned the second capital fund drive. The previous year, on the occasion of one of his visits to the campus, Cushing told an undergraduate audience of 611 men and 245 women, "I'm all for co-education. Not only has it been a necessary financial maneuver, but, equally important, it is good for you to be together." He then challenged the College to raise \$500,000 from the business and industrial community of the Merrimack Valley. If they were successful, he would match the sum with an additional \$500,000. This would finance the second stage in Merrimack's development program, which called for two additional buildings: a business administration building with classrooms, language laboratories and offices; and a Student Union building with student lounges, offices for student activities, a cafeteria and dining hall, and rooms for



The development fund appeal received the enthusiastic support of Governor Christian A. Herter: "I am fully aware of the great contribution that Merrimack has given to the area that it serves. I heartily endorse this present appeal and would ask everyone to contribute as fully as possible to this important cause." Encouragement and, more importantly, financial support came from prominent businessmen and industrialists who realized that Merrimack was the source of the future leaders of the area. If the Merrimack Valley was to continue its economic recovery, industrial development and urban renewal, Merrimack College had to continue its growth and expansion. As the *Lawrence Eagle Tribune* editorialized, "Merrimack College is a community asset and therefore is a community enterprise. 'The college next door' can use your co-operation." Elsewhere, the editor comments, "As the college has prospered in the ten years since the first of its buildings rose from the sprawling fields in North Andover, so it seems has the community in whose wheel it has become a major spoke. Not many years ago this area was labelled the No. 1 distressed area of the nation...When an institution of learning in a rather small part of the world is enabled by the support of its friends and the dedication of its teachers and administrators to award degrees to hundreds of young men and women, many who have been practically reared in its shadow, we can only quote the time honored prayer that "God's in His Heaven, all's right with the world."

Yet, when all the plaudits had been exhausted and the last door-bell rung, the results were less than expected. Contributions fell \$74,450 short of the \$1,000,000 goal. It was a disappointment, but it wouldn't be the first nor the last for the Merrimack College community. The building program would go on. Further, in the back of Father McQuade's mind was the hope that in several years dormitories might be built to accommodate an important new source of enrollment, resident students.

An extra bonus that the development fund publicity won for Merrimack College was the attention which the Boston newspapers devoted to the ten-year-old institution. The *Boston*

*Globe*, the *Boston Sunday Advertiser*, the *Boston Sunday Herald* and the *Boston Traveler* all ran illustrated feature articles. The latter's headline blazed, "Merrimack College Attaining Stature -- Growth Amazing in 10 Years." The *Sunday Advertiser* carried the banner, "Merrimack College: Faith and Work Transform Pasture into Great School." Indeed, the fame of the ten-year-old college was spreading. This was attested to by the growing number of applicants for admission from out of state. There was a distinct advantage to Merrimack College's being the first co-educational Catholic college in northern New England offering degrees in Liberal Arts, Business Administration and Engineering. Indeed, fifteen years later, Merrimack remains the only Catholic college in all New England with a Division of Engineering.

Construction of the fifth and sixth permanent buildings got under way in 1957-1958, together with erection of a power plant. Cushing Hall had its own heating system, but Sullivan received its heat from an underground system linked to Austin Hall. The new power plant would not only supply heat for the Student Union Building and the new classroom building, but would be capable of heating dormitories when they were built. The new classroom building would become the home of the Business Administration, Language and Economics faculty and students and serve as the main center of the Part-Time Division of the College. Like most buildings on campus, it was named in memory of a particular aspect of the history of the Augustinian order.\*

\*Cascia Hall, the original faculty residence on Peters Street, was named in memory of the birthplace in Umbria, Italy, of St. Rita, the Augustinian mystic. After the Augustinian community moved from there to Austin Hall, it served as a meeting place for alumni and special college functions. Later it became a residence for upperclassmen and still later a residence for junior and senior women. Austin Hall, the administration building and faculty residence, derives its name from the term employed in England to describe Augustinians, Austins. Sullivan Hall had been named in memory of the Provincial who was instrumental in establishing Merrimack College. Tagastan (Student Union building) is so called in memory of Tagaste, the North African birthplace of St. Augustine. In late 1972 Tagastan Hall was renamed Gildea Hall in honor of the first Vice-President and Academic Dean of Merrimack College. If the athletic fields, located inside the old Richardson farm race track, are someday equipped with bleachers, the Augustinian tradition would permit the area to be called, perhaps, the Hippodrome!

The new classroom building, which was completed in late summer, 1958, was named O'Reilly Hall in memory of one of the most famous Augustinian priests ever to be associated with the Merrimack Valley. Pastor of St. Mary's Parish in Lawrence from 1886 to 1925, Father James T. O'Reilly was the creator and sponsor of the city's "For God and Country" parade in 1912. The aftermath of the great textile strike of 1912 -- one of the most publicized happenings in the annals of American labor history -- had left the city with a nationwide reputation of being a godless industrial giant, peopled by socialists, anarchists and worse. The parade was intended to change that unfortunate picture of Lawrence which "muckraking" journalists who covered the strike had created. The name of Father O'Reilly still evokes as much admiration in Lawrence oldsters as do the initials F.D.R.

The second building, a large, three-story, red-brick edifice (the now-traditional design of most of the campus buildings) was, and remains, the multi-purpose Merrimack College building. It was built to serve as a Student Union center, so necessary and desirable for a College whose student population had grown to more than 1,000 by 1959, and the vast majority of whom were commuters. Tagastan Hall was dedicated by Cardinal Cushing, October 1, 1959. The first floor is a dining area which can accommodate 500 and has large kitchen and storage facilities. The second floor contains Perkins Lounge, a faculty dining hall, a Presidential Dining Hall and numerous administrative offices occupied by the Dean of Students, Dean of Men, Dean of Women, Director of Student Activities, Social Director, Vice-President for Development, the College Public Relations and Alumni officials. The third floor houses WVMM, the campus FM station, Student Government offices, the *Warrior* and *Merrimackan* quarters, Counseling and Guidance offices and other student-oriented campus activities. Here also is the location of the Campus Ministry, formerly the Chaplain's Office. The large and spacious lower level of the Student Union building was an ideal temporary location for the college library.

Between 1947 and 1952, the library moved from Guild Hall to Sullivan Hall to Austin Hall. As the holdings had grown at an



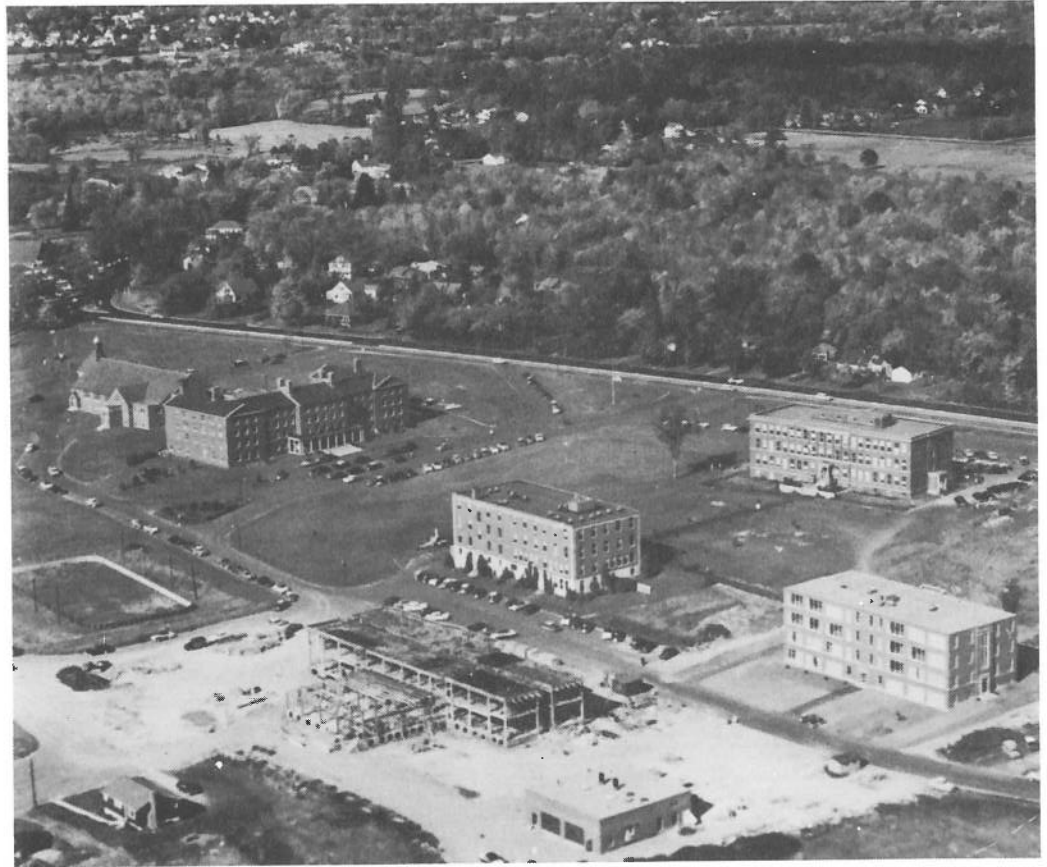
annual rate of 2,000 volumes a year, the College by 1959 had a collection of 25,000 books that taxed the facilities of the temporary quarters in Austin Hall. In the summer of 1960, the library was relocated on the lower level of Tagastan Hall, with a seating capacity for 250 readers. Father William J. Wynne, O.S.A., college librarian from 1947 until his transfer in 1958, was replaced by Frank Seegraber, who would serve as director of Merrimack's library until 1965. At that time, the present director of the library, Phillip A. Costello, assumed the post. The need for a separate library building was obvious to all in the early 1960's, as the Student Union quarters became more and more crowded with books, periodicals and students in search of seats.

Any account of the new buildings which were erected in 1958 and 1959 would not be complete without at least a passing mention of the location of the power plant. Surely it has been the major campus target of criticism from ecologists, anti-pollution fans and *Warrior* editorials since it first emitted its initial belch of acrid smoke in 1958. A utilitarian building, it made no pretense at esthetic or architectural qualities. Squat, ugly, but necessary, it is now landscaped and partially enclosed with a stockade fence, so that it is no longer an offense to the eyes -- only to the nose.

The year 1958 also witnessed the purchase of a small frame building on Fox Hill Road which would serve as the College Infirmary for almost fifteen years. Through its narrow front door, according to the staff of nurses, have passed enough aches and pains (most very real and some imaginary, especially during examination periods), to boggle the mind. In the intervening years, as the College provided more and more residential facilities, the limited quarters of the Infirmary proved barely able to accommodate the student population.

While work on the Student Union building was underway, Father McQuade and College officials decided that in the endless order of priorities, residential facilities stood high. From the very first days of the College, there had been resident students, but accommodations off campus, in approved private homes and apartments, had to serve until the needed classroom





*Aerial view taken in 1958. Tagastan Hall is still under construction. O'Reilly Hall and the power plant are completed. The frame structure, lower left, is the College Infirmary.*

and laboratory facilities could be erected. In 1959, thanks in large measure to federal assistance in the form of a Housing and Home Finance Administration loan of \$725,000 from HUD, work was started on a dormitory for men and a dormitory for women. The first campus quarters for resident students were opened in September, 1960, with accommodations for 110 students in each facility. They were ninety percent occupied that fall. Two additional wings were added to each of the dormitories in 1962, which increased resident accommodations to 532. Austin Center, the men's residence hall, is located in a wooded area to the east of the playing fields. Monican Center, the women's dormitory, stands on a slight knoll on the southwest side of the campus and commands a fine view of the surrounding area. There was something about the completed dorms that bothered many in the collegiate community. The facades of both dormitories were a blend of brick and clear glass with blue and gold inserts. Whether it was the design of the architect or the desire of Father McQuade, the blue and gold inserts were arranged in such a way as to form four large, conspicuous, less-than-attractive crosses of gold on a blue background. Not only did the buildings appear garish, particularly Monican Center, because of its prominent location, but the effect was something less than esthetic. After several years, Father McQuade bowed to the opposition, and the crosses were broken up into a pleasant blue and gold mosaic. "After all," as a fellow Augustinian put it, "there were only three on Calvary."

With several hundred resident students on campus, there developed a slight but noticeable change in the student body. Prior to the building of the dormitories, there had been a certain camaraderie among the entire undergraduate group. All of them, including those few dozen out-of-staters who had taken quarters in Andover or North Andover, were commuters. They not only attended classes together, but they lunched together. Now that changed. The resident students roomed together, ate together and socialized together. This is not to say that friendships between residents and commuters did not develop, nor that the two groups did not freely socialize, but

this new development in the life of the college did produce changes. Some of the changes obviously were beneficial. Local area students, many of whom tended to be somewhat provincial in their views and opinions, were now exposed to a wide geographical and social variety of backgrounds. No longer was the campus deserted by five o'clock in the afternoon. Henceforth, there would be considerable social and extra-curricular activities in the evenings and on weekends in the College community.

As the College grew and developed, there were other changes, some obvious and deliberate, some fortuitous, some accidental and a few unfortunate. But, growth carries within itself the seeds of change, and such was to be expected. The change in the religious life of the community is particularly striking. When Merrimack first opened its doors in 1947, it announced that "While Merrimack College will make no distinction of creed in her requirements for admission, she will exist primarily for the training of Catholic youth and will follow Catholic principles in her educational policy." The 1971-72 College catalog reads, "True to the tradition of a church-related institution, the College offers a religious life program which enables students to grow spiritually as well as intellectually. The presence of priest-teachers, opportunity to share in the liturgical life, and the availability of spiritual counseling are all essential to the character of the College."

In these two brief statements can be seen the profound change which has affected Catholicism in general and Augustinian attitudes here at Merrimack in particular. Until the early 1960's, the formal religious life of the undergraduates was closely regulated. Weekly, obligatory Mass attendance and a three-day retreat once a year were minimum requirements which every student had to meet. Older alumni will surely remember the familiar "Mass attendance cards" which were collected at the doors of the Collegiate church every Friday. In the curriculum there were certain minimum core requirements for graduation, and these included two courses in religion and in philosophy each semester for the four years for all liberal arts majors. The requirements were somewhat



modified for business, science, and engineering majors. Even in the administrative organization of the College in these years, the Chaplain's Office was under the supervision of the Dean of Men. When Austin Center opened, young priests were assigned to the men's dormitory, ostensibly as spiritual counselors but actually as disciplinarians. But this wasn't unique to Merrimack. It was simply a reflection of the traditional, American-Catholic attitude toward religion at all levels of education: elementary, secondary and collegiate.

The winds of change which swept Catholicism during and after Vatican II (1962-1965) wrought dramatic alterations everywhere, Merrimack included. Obligatory mass attendance was abandoned in early 1963. The Chaplain's Office simply announced, "The college period must be a period of maturity." A headline in *The Warrior* read, "No More Tickets." Compulsory evening prayers for resident students met a similar fate several years later. In the spring of 1969, a voluntary one-day retreat replaced the required three-day affair, and attendance was sparse. As noted elsewhere in these pages, the minimum curriculum requirements in Philosophy and Religion were reduced in this same period. Today, the Campus Ministry (formerly the Chaplain's Office) explains, "Faith has to be a free, voluntary response. The days of obligatory Mass attendance and required retreats are gone. Today's students are socially conscious and community oriented. They want their liturgy to be a very personal, communal thing. One senses this in their concern with the social gospel and their favorable response to folk Masses." This is not to say that today's students at Merrimack are any less religious than their predecessors of fifteen or twenty-five years ago; they simply have their own personal approach to religion and tend to ignore anything which they see as regimented or superficial. The profound changes and upheavals which swept across the nation during most of the 1960's could not but have impact upon their concepts of morality and the social gospel. More particularly, the ferment which is everywhere visible within the Catholic Church in America and throughout the world, has crested among the young and thoughtful, on and off



from the Department of Religious Studies to speak on campus. Included among the guest speakers have been Colin W. Williams, Dean of Yale's Divinity School, James I. McCord, President of Princeton Theological Seminary, and Gregory Baum, O.S.A., of the Toronto Graduate School of Theological Studies. Since 1970 these lectures have been funded by a generous grant from the Arlington Trust Company.

The 1950's and 1960's were decades of remarkable growth for Merrimack College, not only in enrollment, in physical facilities and in the variety of major programs of study, but, perhaps most important of all, in the successful recruitment of competent, qualified faculty members. From the very first day of classes in 1947, Father McQuade was anxious to engage the very best staff which the College could afford. The demand for teachers at the collegiate level rose steadily in the post-World War II decade. Indeed, until the late 1960's it would continue a "seller's market" for the products of the nation's graduate schools. The supply of qualified Augustinians with advanced degrees was fairly large, but not bottomless, and Villanova University always appeared to have priority in the search for teaching talent within the Order. Even so, Father McQuade managed to initially secure the services of a remarkable group of fellow Augustinians. Many of them would spend the next fifteen or twenty years at Merrimack, a few even longer, and the collective and individual mark which each of these dedicated priests has left on the College is both indelible and impressive. Father Edward J. Burns, holding a doctorate in Economics, came in 1947. He would remain until his transfer to Biscayne College in 1969. During the intervening years, he served as chairman of the Economics Department and Director of the Division of Liberal Arts and Science. Father William G. Cullen, with a Master of Science degree in Mathematics, also came in 1947 and remained until 1961. Father John J. Gavigan, holder of a Ph.D. in Classics, arrived in 1947 and taught Latin and Greek to Merrimack undergraduates -- "Yes, Nancy, there once was a day when Merrimack students could read Latin and Greek" -- until 1950. Father Joseph J. Gildea came in 1947 and remained until 1959. Fathers James E. Hannon and William J.

Wynne were other members of the pioneer community of Augustinian priest-teachers; Hannon served as the first Chaplain of Merrimack and taught religion; Wynne taught Fine Arts, served as College librarian and Glee Club director until 1957. Father Joseph A. Flaherty, holder of a doctorate in English literature from Harvard, arrived in the summer of 1948 with the second contingent of Augustinian scholars to man the academic ramparts of the young college. He would remain until February, 1964, when he was briefly transferred to Villanova, where he served as academic Vice-President and President. In 1967 he resigned the Presidency of Villanova and returned to teaching duties at his first love. During his twenty-two years of service to the Merrimack College community he has served as Professor of English, Chairman of the Department of English and Director of the Part-Time Division. "No Charity Flaherty" is probably better known to more Merrimack alumni than any man alive. Father Mariano Arconada, complete with his beret, came in 1948 and served as a Professor of Spanish until his retirement to Spain in 1966. Father Francis X. Smith was another pioneer of that era. He served as Professor of English and Public Speaking and was the College's drama coach until 1959. The last of these early Augustinian veterans were Father Arthur B. Maxwell, who came in 1948 to teach English and remained on the faculty until his retirement in 1963; Father Albert C. Shannon, holder of a doctorate in history from Columbia University, who came in 1949 and headed the Department of History and Social Sciences until his transfer in 1964; and Father Thomas F. Walsh, who came to teach Philosophy in 1950 and continues to teach in the Department of Religious Studies in 1972. It is to these early Augustinians and their lay colleagues on the faculty that Merrimack College owes so great a debt.

This rich flow of academic talent from the Augustinian Order was nonetheless limited, despite the increase in vocations which characterized the immediate post-War years. The following figures indicate the steady, methodical increase in the ratio of lay faculty to priest faculty. From the initial 1947 clerical-lay ratio of nine priests and four laymen, the ratio had

changed by 1957 to forty-three laymen and nineteen Augustinians. In 1967 the ratio stood at ninety-eight laymen to twenty-one priest-teachers. For the twenty-fifth anniversary year, 1972, the figures are 131 laymen and nineteen Augustinians. Perhaps of equal significance has been the tendency over the years on the part of the Augustinian community to move from the classroom into administrative positions. Currently, there are but six full-time teachers and five part-time teachers among the nineteen Augustinians on campus. Understandably, the majority of the teaching priests are in the Department of Religious Studies. The Order's commitment to Merrimack continues strong, but the same can no longer be said of their historical commitment to teaching. That this undramatic, yet visible, change has occurred is due in no small measure to the decline in vocations to the priesthood during the past decade. Perhaps of equal importance is the fact that the Augustinian Order now operates Villanova University, Biscayne College and Merrimack College, in addition to several large high schools. Finally, Merrimack now requires the same professional background from its clerical teaching faculty as it requires of the lay faculty.

To augment the ranks of the priest-teachers, Father McQuade recruited laymen from the very first semester. It was both obvious and desirable that, as the College grew, more and more specialized talents would be needed to teach subjects outside the field of Augustinian interests and qualifications. In those early days of the then unknown College, it is remarkable that so many able men joined the ranks of the faculty. Many of them, like their Augustinian colleagues, would remain with Merrimack for decades.

Here are the men and women who have been members of the faculty for fifteen or more years. Professor James A. McGravey has been teaching English and Public Speaking here for a quarter of a century. Laurence D. Frizzell, holder of a doctoral degree in Chemistry from Harvard, served as Chairman of the Chemistry Department at Merrimack from 1949 until his retirement in 1969. Donald A. Kearns, with a Ph.D. in Mathematics, came in 1949 and, save for a brief absence in the



mid-1950s, continues his association with Merrimack today. He served as first Chairman of the Mathematics Department. Simeon E. LeGendre, Jr., a graduate of Boston University Law School, came in 1949 and has been with the College since that date. Professor Alphonse M. Lesinskas is another member of the vintage year 1949. He continues to teach Modern Languages to Merrimack undergraduates. Professor Ralph P. Parrotta, who arrived to teach Mathematics and Engineering that same year, has been doing so at Merrimack for more than twenty years. Dr. Frederic J. Guerin joined the Department of Chemistry in 1950 and retired in 1967. John T. Lawlor, holder of a doctorate in Biology from Harvard, came that same year and served as Chairman of the Biology Department until 1965, and, until 1969, as Professor of Biology. Professor James J. St. Germain was another of the 1950 group. He has been teaching the Social Sciences, more particularly Political Science, for the past twenty-two years. Professor Thomas P. Hogan arrived in 1953 and has served for the past nineteen years in the Department of Economics. Additionally, he has been Director of the Part-Time Division since 1963. Professor James F. Liebke arrived with Hogan and taught Business Administration and Marketing for twelve years before accepting a position elsewhere. He returned to Merrimack in 1969 as Registrar, replacing Father Paul C. Thabault, who had been Registrar and Professor of French at the College from 1952 to 1969. Miss Virginia G. O'Neil also came in 1953 as an Assistant Professor of Business Administration. In 1954 she was appointed the first Dean of Women, replacing Professor Kathleen M. Murphy, who had served as Acting Dean of Women from the time Merrimack became co-educational. Professor Paul Shea is still another of the veterans. He came to teach Sociology in 1954 and serves currently as Chairman of the Department. In 1956 Professor Gerald M. Barry came to offer Education courses and continues to do so. Professor William R. Garrett, Jr., joined the faculty as an Instructor in Engineering in 1955. Currently he serves as Director of the Division of Engineering. 1956 saw two more "old-timers" join the faculty: Frederick D. Peterson, a graduate of the class of



1952, came as an Instructor in Sociology, and Irene McGravey, came as an Instructor in Chemistry. This was another first for the College, a husband-wife teaching team. Professor Yvonne Ground joined the Department of English in 1957 and currently serves as Chairman. Another fifteen-year veteran is John Sifferlen, who joined the Department of Electrical Engineering in 1957. Robert D. Keohan, a graduate of Merrimack in 1955, joined the faculty of his alma mater in 1957 as an Instructor in English. Paul L. Lonardo, Professor of Modern Languages, also came to the College in 1957, as did Ennis J. Montella, who is an Associate Professor of Mathematics. Dr. John J. Warren arrived this same year, 1957, to teach Philosophy. For many years he would serve as Chairman of the Department of Philosophy. Currently, he is Chairman of the American Studies program. Another of the veterans is Assistant Professor James P. McLaughlin, a graduate of Merrimack's first class (1951), who joined the Department of Biology in 1955. Speaking of firsts, Lawrence J. Morrisroe, *magna cum laude*, a graduate of the Class of 1951, was the first alumnus to join the Merrimack faculty. He returned to his alma mater in the fall of 1951 as an Instructor in Social Sciences. In the years to follow, many graduates would return from graduate studies and join the faculty for both brief and extended stays. Indeed, among the 150 members of the faculty and administration on this twenty-fifth anniversary year, there are fourteen who are alumni of Merrimack.

This listing has not been intended to be a litany nor an essay in hagiology; it is simply a brief tribute to a large group of men and women who have given most or much of their adult life and knowledge to thousands of undergraduates at Merrimack College. An equally impressive number of faculty members have been associated with the college for more than ten years. Indeed, longevity and a solid stability seem to characterize Merrimack's faculty, and tenure does not explain the whole story.

As American higher education burgeoned under the press of hundreds of thousands of students seeking admission to colleges and universities in the mid-1950s, the Ford Foundation

announced its intention of granting \$210,000,000 to certain qualifying, four-year, regionally-accredited, privately-supported colleges and universities. The money was to be used for faculty salary increases. Here was an instance of foresight and largesse previously unknown in the entire history of higher education.

In late December, 1955, Merrimack College was notified that it had been awarded an endowment grant of \$180,500 by the Ford Foundation. It was the College's first grant from a national foundation, and it couldn't have come at more auspicious a moment. In publicly announcing the gift, Father McQuade remarked: "The economic burdens that rest upon our teachers are heavy, and it is significant that one of the largest foundations in the country has made this noteworthy contribution to the well-being of our institutions of higher learning."

In a thank-you letter to Mr. William McPeak, Vice-President of the Ford Foundation, McQuade concluded: It will enable Merrimack College to continue its growth and development and maintain a first-class faculty in all our departments. It is our earnest hope and desire that we will be able to show our appreciation through the quality of our teaching and the ability of our graduates." In a later communique to the national foundation, he advised:

The Grant has had a tremendous impact upon the morale of our faculty. In our particular instance it was especially significant. We are a young institution and have just completed our eleventh year of operation. The award of the Grant to Merrimack College by the Ford Foundation in the eyes of the community constituted an endorsement for the College and has stimulated others in the community to take a greater interest in our young institution. The faculty felt that we were receiving recognition of a worthy type. The gift was a real stimulus to the institution itself since it led the trustees to adopt a forward looking policy on faculty salaries and led to substantial improvements. Within the past four years our faculty salaries have been increased by more than

two main dormitories, and 168 were housed in the fourteen town houses. The College catalog lists the faculty as numbering 150 members. Excluding those individuals who are engaged primarily in administrative duties, the teaching faculty numbers approximately 120. Student-teacher ratio stood at seventeen-one. For those interested in the male-female ratio of the faculty, there are fifteen women on the faculty, constituting ten percent of the total.

Student preferences for major fields of study have changed considerably in the past twenty-five years. Of the 165 students who matriculated in September, 1947, ninety-nine were enrolled in Business Administration, forty-five in the Liberal Arts program and eleven in pre-medical or pre-dental study. Of the 440 full-time students who graduated on May 28, 1972, sixty-two were enrolled in the Division of Business Administration, twenty-five in the Division of Engineering and 314 in the Division of Liberal Arts and Science. An even better indicator of the distribution of undergraduate majors can be obtained by noting that between 1951 and 1972 Merrimack College granted a total of 4,895 Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees. Of this number, 3,255 were granted to students enrolled in the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 1,095 to students enrolled in the Division of Business Administration and 380 to students in the Division of Engineering. Clearly, majors in the Liberal Arts and Sciences continue to be the most popular fields of study among Merrimack undergraduates. Down throughout the years, the four most popular fields of concentration have been Biology, English, History and the Social Sciences. If one lumps English and English-teaching majors together, they total 482 of the 3,255 degrees granted between 1951 and 1972 by the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences or some ten percent of *all* degrees awarded in the past twenty-one years by the College as a whole. Faculty distribution also reflects the primacy of the traditional Liberal Arts and Sciences programs at Merrimack. In 1971-1972, 107 of the faculty were members of the Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences; nine of the Division of Business Administration and ten of the Division of Engineering.



Some indication of the generally inflationary movement which has characterized the economy of the United States for the past quarter of a century with a few brief respites is clearly visible in the slow but unrelenting increase in tuition charges at the nation's colleges and universities. Merrimack, sad to relate, has been no exception to this necessary, yet ominous, trend. In 1947, tuition for full-time students was \$300 per academic year. By 1952, it had increased to \$350. In 1957, tuition stood at \$400 per academic year. Five years later it had moved to \$600. In 1967, it stood at \$650, and currently tuition is \$1,700 per academic year. Clearly, the increase cannot continue. The need for state and federal assistance to the nation's private institutions of higher learning is imperative, indeed crucial, if these colleges and universities are to continue serving the educational needs of so large a proportion of the nation's undergraduates.

That Merrimack has steadily grown over the past quarter century, in enrollment, faculty and physical plant, and yet continues to operate in the black, is gratifying, yet one wonders how long this solvency will be possible. Were it not for the services of countless Augustinian priest-teachers over the years, together with the tight, personal economic controls exercised by Father McQuade, this would never have been possible. For twenty years he permitted no frills. In his list of priorities, landscaping, outdoor lighting, handsome, illustrated College catalogs, and other campus luxuries received scant attention. Recall that the appearance of a single flagpole in 1957 on campus was the result of a class gift, not college appropriation.

Tuition, it might be pointed out, pays but a third of the cost of a college education in the United States today. This money goes toward faculty salaries and the acquisition of books and periodicals in the library, but there is much more involved in operating Merrimack College. Clerical staffs, grounds-keepers, maintenance personnel, kitchen and dormitory staffs and security personnel must be provided. Then there is the landscaping and care of the several hundred-acre campus. The plowing, planting, trash removal, replacement of light bulbs,



road surfacing, sidewalk installations and a thousand and one other practical necessities of operating a college must be provided. Always the need and search for funds continue and grow. In 1962, the College established a Development Office which by 1967 had grown into the Office of the Vice-President for Development, currently headed by Robert F. Hatem, '58. The earlier Development Office was first headed by Joseph A. Lawlor, '51. His successor (named in 1965) was Joseph C. Nahil, '60, who served as Director of Development and Alumni Secretary until 1967.

There are some additional salient facets of the administrative history of Merrimack College which merit mention in this overall account of the past quarter century. Father McQuade, the founder and first President of the College, served in the latter capacity for twenty-one years. Upon his resignation in 1968, the Board of Trustees appointed Reverend John R. Aherne as his successor. The first Dean and Vice-President of the College was Father Joseph J. Gildea, who served in that capacity from 1947 until 1959. Reverend Joseph P. Murray was appointed his successor in 1959 and occupied the office until ill health forced his resignation in 1961. His duties were assumed by Father John M. Driscoll, who served as Dean and Vice-President until his transfer to Villanova in 1962. It was at this time that Father Aherne arrived from San Diego, California, to begin his association with the Merrimack community, first as Vice-President and Dean and later as President of the College.

There have been three Deans of Admission at Merrimack in the past twenty-five years. Reverend Francis X. Smith held the post from 1958, when the office was established, to 1959. His successor, Reverend Ezra J. Fenton, served until 1968, when the current Dean, Reverend Harry J. Erdlen assumed the post.

The Registrar's post was first held by Father Francis X. Smith, from 1948 to 1959. His successor was Reverend Paul C. Thabault, who served until his transfer in 1970. Mr. James F. Liebke, who had previously been a member of the faculty from 1953 to 1965, resumed his association with Merrimack in the role of Registrar in September, 1970.

The post of Dean of Men was first held by Reverend Joseph P. Murray. The first Acting Dean of Women was Miss Kathleen M. Murphy, who served from 1950 until 1954 when Miss Virginia C. O'Neil became Dean of Women. Miss O'Neil continues to hold that post today. Reverend William G. Cullen became Dean of Men in 1953 and served until his transfer in 1961. Reverend Philip F. Barrett briefly held the post until Reverend William J. Murray assumed the office in 1962. In 1968 Murray was appointed to the new position of Dean of Students. Mr. Richard J. Cunningham became Dean of Men.

The position of Bursar or Procurator ("the money man," as he is called on campus) was held by Father McQuade until the arrival of Reverend Vincent J. Meaney in 1950. Reverend Thomas F. Walsh held the post from 1953 until Reverend Albert C. Shannon assumed the duties in 1958. Reverend Patrick J. Rice took over in 1960 and continued in that office until his transfer in 1966, at which time the present Procurator and Vice-President for Financial Affairs arrived on campus, Reverend Thomas C. Kenney.

Insofar as the three divisions of the College are concerned, their administrative history is as follows. In the Division of Liberal Arts and Science, Father Joseph J. Gildea served as Director until 1959, when Father Edward J. Burns assumed the post; the latter continued in that position until his transfer to Biscayne College in early 1969; Ernest F. Costello, Jr., who had served as Assistant Director of the Division, became Director at that time.

In the Division of Business Administration, Father Burns was the first Director and served until 1953, when Father Joseph P. Murray took over and headed the Division until 1960, when Professor Joseph M. Hennessey assumed the directorship. Professor Joel E. Ross became Director in 1963 and served for one year; he was followed by Professors Ray J. Ziegler (1964-1965) and William E. Bell (1966-1967). In 1968, Professor Philip H. Lee was appointed Division Director.

Father John H. Crawford was the first Dean of the Division of Engineering and served in that post until 1958; he was succeeded by Father Thomas A. Burke, who held that position

until Professor William R. Garrett, Jr.'s appointment in 1961.

For the first twenty years of Merrimack's existence, the number of administrative personnel (exclusive of clerical and secretarial help) was rather small. But as the College grew, so did the complexities of administering it, and within the past five years there has been a proliferation of additional posts connected with administration. Assistant to the President, Vice-President for Financial Affairs, Director of Personnel, Vice-President for Student Affairs, Assistant Dean of Men, Director of Student Activities, Director of Counseling, Director of Social Activities, Director of Financial Aid, Director of Athletics, Placement Director, Director of Public Information, Vice-President for Development; these and other titles now appear on the organizational chart of the College.

When one examines the decade of the 1960's in retrospect, it seems no exaggeration to say that it has been perhaps the most traumatic ten-year span for the nation since the ante-bellum crises and the Civil War years of mid-nineteenth century. True enough, the Great Depression of the 1930's was a frightening experience for most Americans, but in comparison with the past decade it seems to pale and take on softer hues. Perhaps it is only our close proximity to the decade of the 1960's that makes those years appear so fraught with divisiveness, fear, violence and the multiplication of seemingly endless social, economic and political problems which defy solution. This is scarcely the place to discuss the nationwide -- on occasion, worldwide -- perplexities, problems and pathos which characterized most of the past decade. But in focusing our attention in these final pages on Merrimack College's past twelve years, we must keep in mind the larger backdrop to the stage that occupies 240 acres in North Andover and Andover, Massachusetts.

As momentous events rocked the nation and the world in these years, memorable, historic events dot the pages of the life of Merrimack College. Not only were the 1960's years of remarkable growth for the institution, as we have seen, but there were more striking developments in other, equally-important aspects of Academe.

For the resident students, who numbered more than 775 (or almost forty percent of the entire student body) by 1969, the approval of "parietals" by the administration and the Board of Trustees, on November 30, 1970, was the glorious climax to a decade of petitions, meetings and mild-mannered protests. And many a commuter student also rejoiced at this liberalizing of campus regulations. Incoming freshmen will never appreciate the careful study and cooperative planning on the part of the resident student groups and the administration, which led to the dormitory visitation policy which permits gentlemen to entertain ladies in their dormitories, and visa versa, on a limited basis. It is much too early to judge the success of this innovation in campus regulations for it has been in operation but two semesters. Indications are that students (whose parents must give written approval for parietal privileges) are handling it to the satisfaction of the Dean of Men and the Dean of Women. Their victory did not come uncontested, for there were conservative members, especially among the clergy, who looked askance upon this "dangerous innovation." But, as dozens of colleges and universities across the nation instituted cooperative housing accommodations (men and women housed in the same buildings), and hundreds of others liberalized their parietal regulations, Merrimack bent to the breeze...which by 1969 had become a howling nor'easter.

In a similar vein, the College opted for upperclassmen as proctors in Austin Center, starting in the fall of 1963. Not only were there too few priests to handle the duties now that the dormitory had tripled in size, but the Augustinians were anxious that students break themselves of a habit which most of them had acquired in elementary and secondary school. That was Catholic students' proclivity for associating clerical garb with discipline and regulations.

Still another instance of liberalization of the traditional *in loco parentis* philosophy of the Augustinians, was the administrative decision in the spring of 1967 to permit seniors with a 2.0 cumulative average (C average) to live off campus, with their parents' permission.

There were other developments closely related to student



unrest which affected the undergraduate life of Merrimack students, but we shall touch upon them elsewhere.

Insofar as the academic life of the College was concerned, for both faculty and students, the April 6th, 1966, groundbreaking ceremony for the library building was a red-letter day. The previous year, Father McQuade and the Board of Trustees had decided that the next building would be a library. By then, the library's temporary quarters on the lower level of Tagastan Hall, which had served since 1959, were literally bursting at the seams with books and readers in search of study space.

College authorities selected the Boston architectural firm of Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott (don't those proud New England names evoke historical memories?) to design the edifice. Phillip J. McNiff, city of Boston librarian, served as consultant. The construction work was done by Volpe Construction Company. Thanks to a loan of \$700,000 from Washington and an outright government grant of \$604,000, the \$2,000,000 three-story building was dedicated on Friday, April 26, 1968. Special guest speaker was Walter Muir Whitehill, Director and Librarian of the Boston Athenaeum. The Honorable John A. Volpe, Governor of Massachusetts, also spoke to the more than 1,000 who crowded the Collegiate Church of Christ the Teacher for the ceremonies. Whitehill's address was a carefully polished gem of erudition graced with dry humor which well merited the honorary degree which Father McQuade conferred upon this "good friend from North Andover."

The library building itself, recognized as one of the finest small college libraries in the nation, is surely the showpiece of the campus. By day its perpendicular lines of poured concrete and glass, give the appearance of a floating, yet solid, mass. At night it is a blaze of shimmering light and whiteness. Situated across the main quadrangle from Austin Hall and flanked by Cushing to its left and Sullivan to its right, it is ideally located, both from an aesthetic and practical point of view.

Air-conditioned and carpeted throughout, the library has a capacity of 250,000 volumes. As of the twenty-fifth Anniversary year, the College had a collection of 73,000

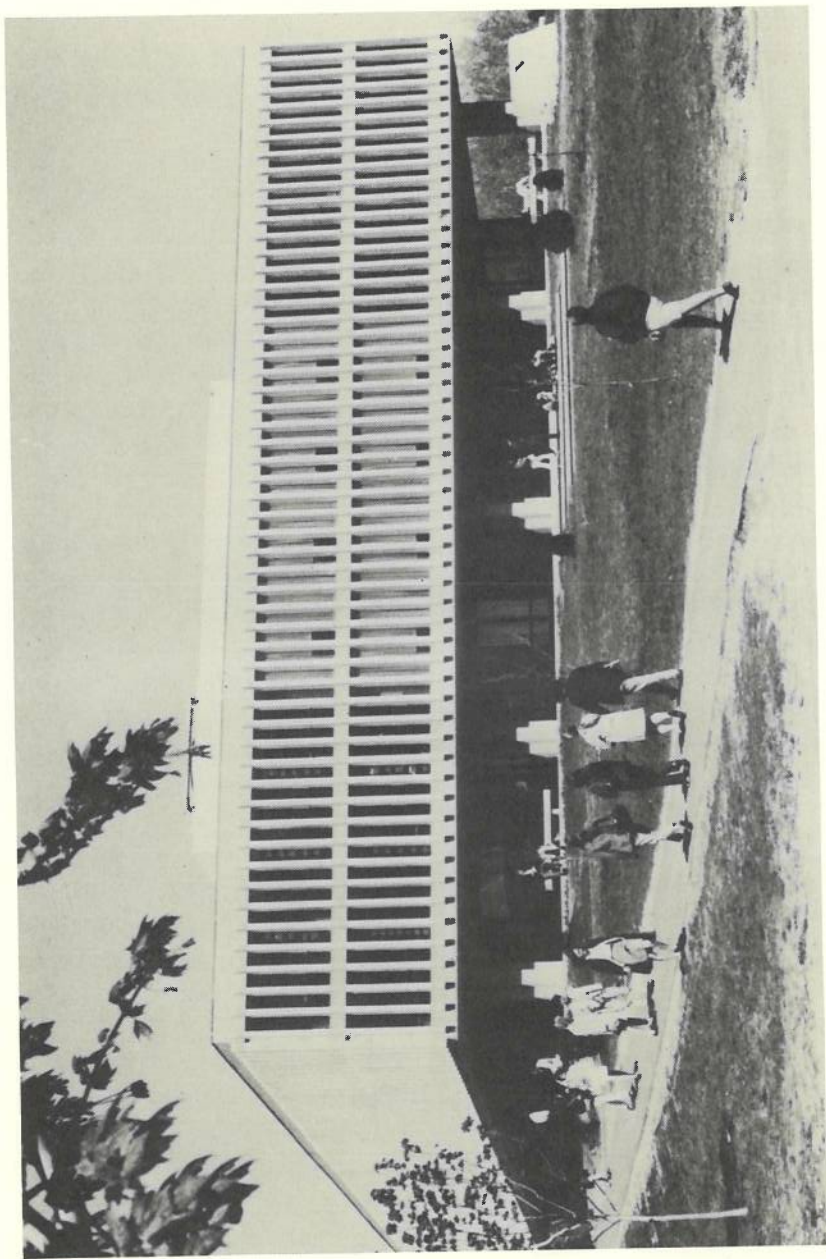
volumes. At an annual acquisition rate of 5,000 volumes, the library should be filled by 2007, at which time Merrimack will, hopefully, be celebrating its sixtieth Anniversary.

The lower level of the building houses the bound periodicals and microfilm collection. Currently, the library subscribes to 950 periodicals. In addition, it contains an Exhibition Gallery and Lounge, a large seminar room and a beautifully-designed lecture hall seating 200. The latter has been designated as Alumni Hall. When the official name was announced, Father McQuade said: "The dedicated efforts and enthusiasm of the alumni have given the College development program great impetus and the future growth and reputation of the College will be enhanced by the continued efforts of the Alumni Association."

The main level contains the reference room, the card catalog, circulation desk, lobby, and office quarters for the library staff. The second level contains study carrels, audio facilities, listening booths, two seminar rooms, a Fine Arts Reading Room and stacks. The top floor houses the Arundel Room (Rare Book collection), named after the late John Arundel of Lawrence, a generous benefactor to the college. In addition, there are seminar rooms, additional carrels, typing booths and stacks.

The library provides accommodations for 800 users and houses forty-five individual faculty offices. The most functional building on campus, it remains, at the same time, an architectural jewel, proving the wisdom of Walter Gropius' belief that form and function, if properly combined, can produce beauty, both in design and execution.

As Merrimack continued to grow and expand in the 1960's, a perennial problem which had developed in the 1950's became increasingly acute. The matter of communication, not only between faculty and administration, but between students and faculty and students and administration, became a cause of concern for all. The attempts to resolve the overall problem were both interesting and fairly successful. The reader might keep in mind that the 1960's were characterized by a national concern with participatory democracy. Merrimack was not



*The McQuade Library (1968). Western facade.*



immune to this political virus.

During much of the "McQuade Era" there had been semi-annual faculty meetings, brief for the most part, rather perfunctory in nature, wherein the faculty was informed and advised of administrative decisions and policies. The concept of shared powers or "faculty primacy in academic matters" was somewhat alien to Father McQuade's philosophy. A communication channel of sorts had been introduced in the spring of 1962 with the establishment of a Committee on Faculty Affairs. The fundamental purpose of this group, whose name was eventually changed to the Faculty Liaison Committee, was to serve as a channel of communication between the administration and faculty. During its seven-year life span, the Liaison Committee proved, at best, an intermediary step towards greater faculty participation in institutional policy making. In an effort to organize the faculty, a local chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) was established at Merrimack in 1968, but only a minority of the faculty elected membership in the national body.

Paralleling these manifestations of some degree of faculty unhappiness with Father McQuade's semi-authoritarian administration, was a growing student discontent which first manifested itself at a time coinciding with the large-scale involvement of United States military forces in Viet Nam. A *Warrior* editorial of October 22, 1965, lengthy and impassioned in nature, attempted to probe the dilemma posed by the War. From that date forward, Merrimack undergraduate discontent with President Johnson's "arbitrary" actions in Southeast Asia paralleled their more personal discontent with Father McQuade's regime. Indeed, the Board of Trustees had invited President Johnson to speak at the dedication ceremonies of the library in April, 1968, but the White House, fearing that his presence might trigger a demonstration, declined to accept the invitation.

Two events in the spring of 1966 presaged the growing student unrest on campus. On March 4, 1966, Merrimack's first underground newspaper appeared. *Vanguard* (VAM, the



initials of Vincent A. McQuade), as it billed itself, was a single-issue affair; verbose, poorly-edited and rather bitter, but its message was clear. It called for Father McQuade to abandon his "arbitrary control" of the College. In early 1967, student unrest came to a head. A December 9, 1967, front-page editorial in the *Warrior* severely criticized the President for his reluctance to communicate with the students and to permit them a greater say in matters of primary concern to them: housing, food service, etc. On January 4, 1968, Father McQuade met with a delegation of eighteen of the most respected and responsible students on campus. From the student point of view, the meeting, while appreciated, was less than productive. The President declined to answer some of their questions, requested that a tape recorder be turned off and generally convinced the students that the prevailing system of communication at Merrimack was not truly effective. "Disenchantment, as well as frustration and disappointment, best describe the feelings of those present at the meeting with Father McQuade," was the view of the editor of the *Warrior*. Throughout the remainder of the 1967-68 academic year, student discontent simmered on an outwardly calm campus. The following year, the debate over major curriculum changes, which centered in the faculty, gave students an opportunity to participate and direct their energies towards constructive action and helped to mitigate the tone of *The Warrior*.

It might be pointed out here that this faculty-student discontent was not campus-wide. There were the usual number of students who took no interest whatever in Merrimack politics, and there were faculty members who concurred in Father McQuade's semi-authoritarian control.

It was against this general background of discontent that the President made his startling announcement of July 15, 1968. After twenty-one years, the founder and first president of Merrimack College resigned his post to accept the position of Provincial Treasurer of the Augustinian Province of St. Thomas at Villanova. The Board of Trustees immediately appointed Reverend John R. Aherne, Vice-President and Dean of the College, as the new president.

For twenty-one years this stouthearted, courageous man had diligently labored to create an outstanding Catholic institution of higher learning. For many people down through these eventful years, the tall, reserved priest WAS Merrimack College, and Merrimack College WAS Father McQuade.

What were the thoughts that went through his mind that hot July day, as he packed his personal belongings and prepared to leave his beloved Merrimack? Joseph Maloney, '51, interviewed McQuade, and his feature article appeared in the *Lawrence Eagle Tribune* of July 15, 1968.

No one relinquishes the work of more than twenty years without some pangs. For all these long years he had made all of the decisions, and he never apologized for the tight reins he had held, which had triggered the student mini-revolt of 1967. "In a situation where you're trying to build something, one man has to be in complete charge," he said simply. "But," here a smile crossed his worn face, "my successor I'm sure will operate differently. There'll be modifications and changes, and some restructuring of the institution. In line with present trends in academic circles, I'm sure there will be greater participation by the faculty in making decisions."

Reflecting upon today's student population in the nation, Father McQuade remarked, "Today's student may not be any brighter but he's more confident, more aggressive, more sophisticated, more willing to accept and even want change, so life is more difficult with these children of an affluent and permissive society."

At the age of fifty-nine, this man who "built a College, with Money, Mortar and Much of Himself" departed from the Merrimack scene. True, he would continue as a member of the Board of Trustees until his death, but on July 15, 1968, when he passed on the reins, an historical era in the saga of Merrimack College came to an end.

The decision of the Board of Trustees to name the last building he had erected in his honor was both fitting and proper. The McQuade Library is the crown jewel of the fourteen buildings he built during his administration. Like its namesake, the imposing and magnificent building dominates

the campus.