



CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Diocese of Amarillo

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Museum Ext. 120 or 118

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VOLUME ONE

SPRING

2017

Third Bishop of the Diocese of Amarillo



Museum... in process...



Bishop FitzSimon was born in San Antonio on Jan. 31, 1895, and was baptized in St. Mary's church, receiving the name Laurence Julius. His parents were Dr. and Mrs. John Thomas FitzSimon. Dr. FitzSimon, a native of Dublin, Ireland, was a graduate of the Chicago school of pharmacy and of the Memphis College of medicine. He came to San Antonio in 1890. In 1996 he moved to Castroville, where he remained until his death in 1924. Mrs. Fitz-Simon, who later in life entered the Catholic Church as a convert from Lutheranism, was born in Hamburg, Germany.



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Theodora Okelmann FitzSimon
Bishop's Mother



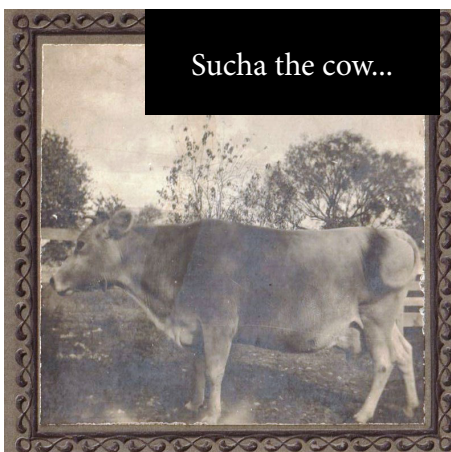
Memphis college of medicine... Bishop FitzSimon's father is in the third row marked with an x.

Castroville, a small town in Medina County 25 miles west of San Antonio, became the residence of the FitzSimon Family in 1896. It was founded in 1844 by a colony of Alsatians. It has a very fine old church, built in 1869, and many old stone houses. One of these, formerly known as the Tarde hotel, built before the Civil war, was occupied by Dr. FitzSimon and his family.

In this town, Dr. FitzSimon practiced medicine and for many years was the only doctor in that vicinity. He was a typical country doctor and was highly respected by the local town's people, both for his ability in the medical profession and for his strong Irish faith. As a boy Bishop FitzSimon attended the local St. Louis parochial school, conducted by the Sisters of Divine Providence.

In those days, Castroville enjoyed the exciting atmosphere of the "Old West." Bronco-busting was a familiar pastime on the public square and often almost endless droves of cattle passed through the town from the western ranches to the stockyards of San Antonio. On Saturdays Castroville was the meeting place of the gay-spirited, hard – riding cowboys from the nearby ranches. Most of the inhabitants, however, were Catholic immigrants from Europe who contributed much to the picturesque town with their quaint customs and traditions.

At the age of 12, bishop FitzSimon was sent to San Antonio to continue his education at St. Anthony's college, conducted by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. It was there under the spiritual guidance of the Oblate fathers that he decided to become a priest, not in the Congregation of Mary Immaculate, but for the Diocese of San Antonio. On mentioning his intention to Bishop Shaw (later Archbishop of New Orleans) and the Chancellor, Monsignor Hume, he was accepted for the diocese and was later informed that he was to begin his priestly studies at the American college in Rome.



Sucha the cow...



FitzSimon home... formerly the Tarde hotel in Castroville.



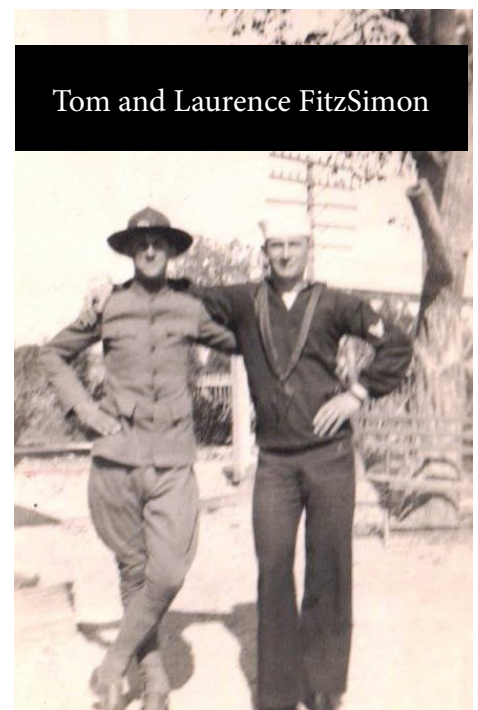
FitzSimon Drug Store

While in Rome, Bishop FitzSimon was privileged to witness many historic Church events, such as the funeral of Pope Pius X in 1914 at the outbreak of the First World War, and the election and coronation of Pope Benedict XV. Among his schoolmates were several priests who are now distinguished members of the American Hierarchy: Archbishop Spellman of New York, Archbishop Robert E. Lucey of San Antonio, Bishop Charles F. Buddy of San Diego, Bishop Gerald T. Bergan of Des Moines, Bishop Bartholomew J. Eustace of Camden, and Bishop Edward J. Kelly of Winona. Bishop Stephen Donahue, Auxiliary Bishop of New York, was a classmate of his. During the time of Bishop Fitzsimons's stay in Rome, the World War broke out and he saw the Italian army march to the front in 1915.

In Rome, he took advantage of the many opportunities for study and research that are offered by the historic buildings and landmarks of that ancient city. Besides fulfilling the routine of his regular classes, Bishop FitzSimon was greatly interested in the study of history, archeology, and languages. After he completed the second year, ill health compelled him to abandon his studies and return to his native Texas for recuperation.

When he returned home to Castroville in 1916, his father advised him to discontinue his studies for an indefinite period. After a few months, however, his health was restored sufficiently for him to resume studies for the priesthood. But at this time the United States entered the war, and Bishop FitzSimon felt that he was not entitled to exemption as an ecclesiastical student. Shortly after the declaration of war, he volunteered in the service and enlisted in the United States Navy. He chose the hospital corps, as being more along the lines of his vocation. After some time at San Francisco and Newport, R. I., he was assigned to the Chelsea naval hospital near Boston. Attaining the rank of pharmacist mate, second class, he answered the call for duty with the mine force which laid down sea mine barrage, which extending from Scotland to Norway, effectively blocked the German fleet and kept it out of the Atlantic. In 1919 he was assigned to the mine sweeper Heron, and took part in clearing the mine barrage, a very thrilling yet

dangerous task. Pharmacist's mate Laurence FitzSimon had other duties besides caring for the sick and injured,. With two assistants, he was assigned to make a careful study of the mine field and to draw accurate charts of the whole area, showing the location of each row of mines, together with their individual markers or buoys. These maps were in constant use, for they gave the various danger zones. Bishop FitzSimon has in his possession a map of the mine area which he made during these operations in the North Sea. It is one of the most accurate existing maps on the subject. These three "charters" took turns on the quarterdeck presiding over the ship's chart. Day after day, week after week, in all kinds of weather, the work went on. As mines were exploded they were checked off. The days were very long in the North Sea, not unlike the long days of the subarctic. Danger was ever present, even during, the infrequent calm weather. The North Sea is noted for its gales and sudden storms.



Tom and Laurence FitzSimon

Bishop as Sailor



During rough weather the boats were bounced up and down by the waves. It was impossible to tell how near mines were. When storms became too rough, the ships headed for port. Sometimes they could not make port, so they just sat the storm out.

At times the waves were so high they covered the entire superstructure of the vessel.

Ships and crew members had to be tough and sturdy under these conditions. The strain of ships and personnel caused by concussions of the exploding mines must be added to the unfavorable weather factor. Ships were damaged often but they could be repaired quickly. Had the crews not been able to laugh quickly and heartily in the face of danger at any queer situation, they too would have suffered mental and nervous damage besides frequent minor physical injuries.

At the conclusion of the war he completed his seminary studies with the Benedictines at St. Meinrad Ind., where he was ordained May 17, 1921.

His first appointment was to St. John's Seminary, San Antonio, where he taught for four years. In 1925 he was appointed pastor of St. Anthony's parish at Runge, Karnes country, with a mission at Nordheim. Later, the parish at Karnes City with its mission at Kennedy was added to his charge. Thus his parish became one of the largest areas in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. In caring for the large number of Mexicans in the territory, he was frequently assisted by refugee priests from Mexico. While working in that area, Bishop FitzSimon not only built up the faith of the many scattered families, but also gained the friendship and good will of the non-Catholic population.

In 1932 he was transferred to Seguin in Guadalupe County. Here with a larger group of faithful and in a community where has always existed a fine spirit of religious toleration, Bishop FitzSimon found a fine field for his talents and worked with the various civic organizations, both for the spiritual and material welfare of the city. With the American Legion, the Rotary club and the chamber of commerce, he took active part in many notable public affairs. In 1937 he was elected president of the Seguin and Guadalupe County chamber of commerce and under his direction was formed and association to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of Seguin. In 1938, as president of the Seguin Centennial associations, he directed the activities of many events of the celebration, and contributed to it his own researches and writings, previously prepared, such as a complete history of Seguin and a pageant depicting the city's founding.

In 1941 his old friend and schoolmate, Bishop Lucey of Amarillo, was appointed Archbishop of San Antonio. Shortly after the installation Bishop FitzSimon was called from Seguin to take over duties of Chancellor of the archdiocese, retaining, however, the pastorate of Seguin. But his labors at the Chancery office were cut short by the announcement on Aug. 5 that he had been chosen to fill the vacant of Amarillo.

Bishop was probably the first and only Catholic prelate to first hear of his elevation by radio. This entirely unofficial notification, occurred while he was driving Aug. 5, 1941, with the Rev. Fridolin Schneider. The car radio was on when a news cast announced the news.

The West Texas Register best describes the new bishop: "His background of scholarship, of

active civic consciousness, of true concern for spiritual advancement for his people fitted him for the position to which he was called". It might be added that he was a true patriot, proud of his native state and proud of its history which is rich in brave deeds of men who loved liberty.

Installation dinner for Bishop FitzSimon at the Herring Hotel.



"Nine of Hierarchy to Attend Installation. Archbishop Lucey will Enthroned Successor in Amarillo Amidst Distinguished Gathering. Msgr. Pokluda to Read Papal Bull at Services Beginning At 9:30 a.m."

So read the headlines when the third bishop of Amarillo was installed. At this installation all available space was taken. To control the size of the crowd and accommodate all parishes, a stated number had been assigned to represent each parish in the diocese. Besides former Bishop Lucey, now Archbishop of San Antonio, the first bishop, Most Rev. R. A. Gerken, now Archbishop of Santa Fe, was also present for the ceremonies. The diocese had come of age. There were now fifty-three priests caring for the 23,075 Catholics here. It was in this setting that Bishop L. J. FitzSimon was installed to head the diocese November 5, 1941. "May the Prince of Peace Reign" was the motto the new bishop chose, and he earnestly sought to bring this about in the hearts and minds of those under his direction.

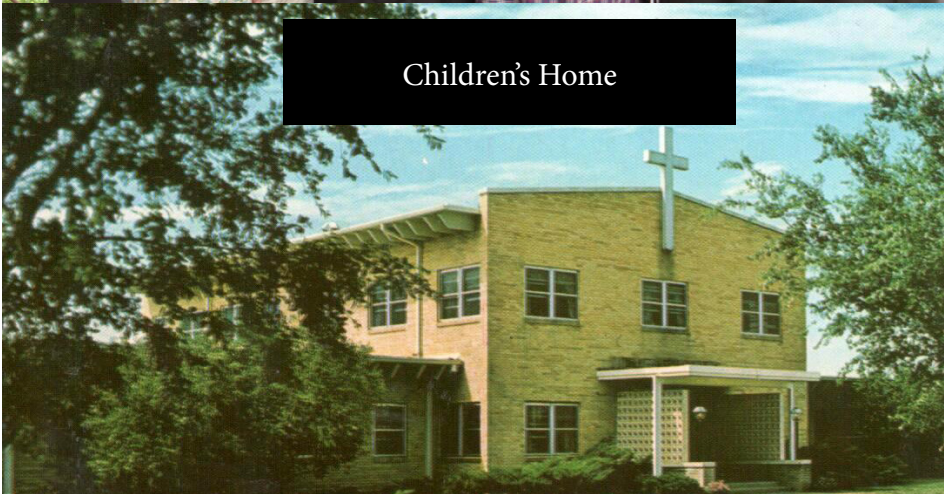
Just a little more than thirty days after he arrived in Amarillo came the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the subsequent mobilization of our nation for war. He knew firsthand what war meant.

Shortly, fifteen military bases were established in this diocese. He urged the laity to work in the U.S.C., the Red Cross, or in any way to help the young servicemen who were away from home.



One of the most worthwhile projects undertaken was arranging for retreats for servicemen. In this endeavor, the bishop asked the help of the Amarillo DCCW. Retreats were financed with the help of the women's parish organizations and held at all fifteen military bases. Proof of the bishop's interest in the spiritual welfare of the servicemen is a paragraph in the book, *War Is My Parish* by Dorothy Fremont Grant. In this book, one of the Catholic chaplains stationed at the Amarillo Air Force Base, had this to say: "In the early part of July we began our campaign for the establishment of the Holy Name Society in the field. We called a meeting of the Catholic commissioned and non-commissioned officers and laid our plans. We enlisted the aid of Bishop FitzSimon. On August 29 the campaign culminated in our first Holy Name Communion Sunday. Bishop FitzSimon offered the Mass. We enrolled 1,250 men that day to whom we distributed communion. Since then we have enrolled another 500..." After hostilities ceased, the diocese experienced an unprecedented building and expanding period. The Chancery office was erected as was the Bernard Gordon Memorial Home for Children at Panhandle. A number of schools and churches were built. It is noticeable that the buildings from this period on were more solidly constructed, having an appearance of permanency. Parish units or 'plants' appeared. As directed by His Excellency, ample surface area was to first be obtained by parish committees, giving room for expansion. This was imperative.

There was to be built a church, rectory, school and convent – all alike in material and design. In 1950, St. Mary's Church in Clarendon, which is the oldest church building in the diocese, was completely renovated. It is now most appropriately called St. Mary's Church, Shrine of Our Lady of the Panhandle. It was in 1954 that the school sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis arrived to take over the administration of the Bernard Gordon Memorial Home, which is now called the Catholic Children's Home. Many in the diocese will recall the humble beginning of this home. They will remember the small white frame house with its narrow stairs leading to the attic-like bedrooms. Mrs. Rose Gordon had generously donated the house and ten acres of land in memory of her son who was a casualty of World War II. The work of charity begun by Mrs. Gordon has been carried forward by many hands. But nothing could have been accomplished here without the work and sacrifice of the sisters. Today their American motherhouse is located on the land donated by Mrs. Gordon, and they care for both the Children's Home and St. Ann's Home for the Aged nearby. They also conduct a number of parochial schools.



In all, fifty buildings were erected during the time Bishop FitzSimon administered the diocese. The roots of Catholicism were now deep in the wide open plains of Texas. Much of the material and spiritual progress of the church is due to the work and devotion of the priests who serve it.



It was in 1954 that some of the priests were honored for their efforts in some phase of diocesan growth. Rt. Rev. Msgr. Pokluda and Rt. Rev. Msgr. Steinlage, who were the first Domestic Prelates of the diocese, were made Protonaries Apostolic; Fathers Tom and Bart O'Brien and Father Wilfred Bosen were appointed Domestic Prelates; Father A. M. Bottoms and Father L. T. Matthiesen were made Papal Chamberlains, which entitled them to be addressed as Very Reverend Monsignor.

Bishop's FitzSimon's work is with his people. He takes trips outside his diocese when they are necessary, but his preference is to stay close by. His work also sometimes takes him away from his Amarillo home and office to other sections of his diocese on religious business or business business. When at home, the busy man's busy day follows a general routine he has established.

He rises about six o'clock each morning and spends the first hour or so in meditation and prayer and in saying his dally Mass in the small private chapel which is a converted bedroom on the second floor o his home. Breakfast, and reading of the morning paper, follows.

At nine the bishop arrives at his office, located in the Catholic chancery near downtown Amarillo. The Chancery is the general headquarters of the diocese where the direction of the 60 some localities with separate congregations, parishes or missions carried out, It is staffed by the chancellor, who serves as the Bishop's right hand man and who prepares intricate forms and documents dealing with church affairs; the financial secretary; the editor of the Amarillo Catholic Register, the weekly diocesan publication; and by clerical assistants. There the Bishop takes care of office matters, dictating letters, signing papers, appointments until a little after noon.

He drives back home again unless a special appointment keeps him at the office, and after lunch, a rest is usually taken. Then the Bishop dives into his "homework" sheaf's of paper he has brought from the office.

His home office—complete with desks, typewriter, unabridged dictionary and other usual furnishings—is the scene of his afternoon work. It is here that Bishop FitzSimon writes his sermons and does the work which needs concentrated study. At 6:30 dinner usually interrupts this work, to which he returns if necessary. If the evening is free it is devoted to his hobby or to visiting with friends who call. The churchman says he tries to be in bed by 11, but admits that he seldom makes it that early.

Bishop FitzSimon celebrated his silver jubilee commemorating his ordination to the holy priesthood in May, 1946. The Pontifical high Mass was held in Sacred Heart Cathedral.

During his long service in the priesthood and later, following his elevation to the office of bishop, he made several trips overseas, his last being in 1951, when he received a private audience with Pope Pius XII in the Vatican.

During his custodianship of the Catholic Archives of Texas, bishop FitzSimon visited England, Ireland, France and Switzerland, as well as in Rome. During this journey he collected historical information on early day Catholic missionaries and priests who came to Texas from Ireland and France. For his research on pioneer French priests of Texas, he was awarded the title of Chanoine d'Honneur de la Primatiale in 1951 by the cardinal bishop of Lyons, the first American to be so honored.

FitzSimon possessed one of the most complete collections of historical books in Texas and the Southwest, these volumes revealing the work of the pioneers in the opening and development of this area.

A man of unusual literary talent and pursuits, Bishop FitzSimon contributed much as a member of state committee appointed by gov. Allan Shivers to preserve Texas historical shrines and documents.

One of his many contributions is "A History of Seguin, Texas," written while he was pastor at Seguin. His Library contained more than 3,000 books relating to Texas.

Bishop FitzSimon continued his strenuous episcopal duties -visiting, planning, building - until he suffered a stroke for which he was hospitalized for many months. He recovered sufficiently to attend to some of his duties, but not to assume a full schedule. He was given an auxiliary in 1956.

Bishop Laurence J. FitzSimon died at 12:45 a.m. Wednesday, July 2, in St. Anthony's Hospital. The Last Sacraments were administered by Auxiliary Bishop John L. Morkovsky. The 63-year-old Ordinary of the diocese took ill in his home on the Price college campus about 8:30 p.m. July 1 and was removed to St. Anthony's Hospital.

Funeral services will be held in Sacred Heart Cathedral, Amarillo, Tuesday, July 8 at 10 am. Bishop Lucey of San Antonio will preside at the Mass and absolution.



Overflowing crowd in Sacred Heart Cathedral for Bishop FitzSimon's Funeral July 8, 1958.





Bishop FitzSimon being presented with ship's chromometer by North Sea Mine Force association Boston, Mass. August 20, 1949

In the mine-laying process, all mines had been carefully numbered. Thus in destroying them, they had to be checked off, one by one. This, too, was Pharmacist's Mate FitzSimon's assignment, and he checked off 2,000 mines destroyed by the U. S. S. Heron.

Finally, at the end of October after six months of sweeping, it was officially established that all American mines had been accounted for, and the sweepers gladly set sail for the U.S.A. and home. The complete mining operation, from beginning to end, had been so successful that Josephus Daniels, secretary of the navy, termed it "the greatest achievement of its nature recorded in navel history."

Last week on Navy day, Bishop FitzSimon told of other incidents of the mine-sweeping operation. He recalled how the Heron, with its sweeping partner, hooked a sunken submarine. First a patch of oil rose to the surface, followed by all sorts of debris, then the bodies of the crew themselves, floating around in their bulky submarine clothing.

When the sweepers floated the first mines, the crews manifested a very dangerous type of bravery. One day a mine bobbed up under the stern of the Heron. The crew waited with bated breath--nothing happened. A sailor gingerly inched his way down to the mine. He touched it, finally sat on it, and patted it affectionately. Minutes later it floated on. A scarce hundred yards away it exploded suddenly without warning or provocation. The crew was very careful thereafter.

Originally, too, mines fouled in the sweeping gear, were frequently hauled up on deck. The Bishop had a picture showing several crew men sitting on and around such a mine. After a few hair-raising narrow escapes in which mines suddenly decided to go to pieces, this practice was discontinued.

Modern sea warfare is much harder on fish than peace-time commercial fishing, and His Excellency says he will never forget the thousands of dead fish that would litter the sea where a nest of mines was exploded.

Bishop Laurence J. FitzSimon regards his experience on board the U.S. S. Heron as one of the high points of his lifetime.



A sign in a patch of Iris by the roadside reads: : The Bishop's House." It might be called "the house of history," so completely stocked are the library shelves of this red-brick residence of the Most Rev. Laurence J. FitzSimon, D.D., Bishop of Amarillo.

The scholarly prelate, renowned for one of the most complete historical book collections in Texas and the Southwest, has lived closer to the triumphs and despairs of the West than most. Within the Bishop's daily reach are facts that happened before: "Texans became Texans" and the buffalo roamed at will.

It is all there on his book shelves in the early letters of the French missionaries, and in the antiquated, battered volumes of the Army and Frontier Days (not without Custer), Jesse James, is not far on the shelf from Sam Houston. There are church and mission histories, army registers, tales of cowboys, adobes and Texas Heroes... All arranged according to history's periods. A beloved founder of a city may dwell beside a reprobate of yesterday's saloons.

There are few old-time Texans that can't be found in the Bishop's complete MUG collection. "People used to speak lightly of these," said the Bishop. "Peddlers visited the pioneers and offered to print their life histories and photographs for a hundred dollars." Consequently, these MUG books are the priceless biographical data of the men who built Texas from 1900 on, to illustrate, the Bishop opened a MUG book on "North and West Texas" and pointed to a picture of Dr. W. G. Fly, Amarillo's first physician.

How many Texas histories and rare editions does the Bishop have?

He says there are approximately 3,000 titles.

The books and pamphlets line the walls of three large rooms and the overflow is packed away in the attic. The oldest and rarest are in glass bookcases.

Meticulous in detail as a scholar who has devoted 20 years to history The Bishop has indexed and cross-indexed his books. He has each edition listed on a card file as to date of purchase, price and where obtained.

When asked what such a collection is worth the Bishop smiled, saying, "I have had offers from book collectors but it's too much a part of me to sell. Today, it is worth three times what I paid for it when you figure the elapsed time since the initial purchase, plus my analysis and labor."

The \$100, \$300 and \$45 books we found so often on the shelves led us to imagine what the collection is worth. The Bishop selected one of his oldest and most valuable volumes, "The History of the World." Written by Kobert in 1493. Carefully he turned the pages of the two-foot high book, scrolled in Latin on linen sheets with Shakespearean type characters depicted in wood cuts.

The Bishop is proud of an original leather -bound copy of "Ramona"

His copy of the history published in Texas in 1835 is bound in calf hide. He chuckled over "The Whole of Captain Cook's First, Second, Third, and last voyages: published in 1791. It is an unvarnished account of lusty adventures.



Almost in awe, a visitor follows the Bishop around the ceiling-high shelves loaded with every western title one can request. Musty odors of time-worn leathers entice the curiosity. There are Texas Almanacs that go back to 1838, but the Bishop wistfully says he has a book titled "Vida Margil De Jesus, 1775 which is curiously intact. There's the first edition of J. Evetts Haley's XIT Ranch that was impounded by the court (Now valued at \$2100) The Bishop has read most of his books or knows the contents thereof. He mentions an incident in a re edition of Central Texas -- called "Sixty Years in the Brazos."

The story concerns a cowboy who wore a rattlesnake belt to a dance. The belt got so hot it smelled, so the cowboy went to a grocery for some cinnamon to apply to his clothing. When he returned to the dance, he smelled not only like dead rattlesnake but like cinnamon, too.

Where are these rare out-of-print books found? The Bishop says you scarcely can buy any of them outright from dealers. Sometimes he orders them through agencies which deal in such rarities; often he comes across them in old book shops. "You may find Texas history books all the way from Singapore to Switzerland," says the Bishop.

E. R. Archambeau, a book collector, says the book collector has a sixth sense. He may be walking down any street in the world. Suddenly he gets a whiff of old leather and musty pages, and his book sense tell him he's close to rare old volumes. In the big cities, there are mountains of used books in block long book stores.

Mr. Archambeau Believes book-lovers like the Bishop are not routine collectors in that every item purchased is a project, a revered object, to be sought after in patient detail.

One of the prelate's most prized sections in a glass-enclosed case of "church histories" from 1882 to 1910. Following the wars of Texas Independence, the Missionary Society of France sent missionaries out to replace the Mexican priests who had served Texas.

The letters they sent back contained priceless material on everyday life in Texas a century ago. The Bishop's zeal over these letters led him to trace the life history of the first Bishop of Galveston. John Odin. The quest took him to Lyons, France, where he visited relatives of the missionary and microfilmed the old letters. He also visited the archives of cities like Paris and New Orleans in search of old documents.

"I made photostatic copies and had the letters transcribed by French priests and retyped; thus I have three separate records of all traced letters," he added. (these documents are held in the museum)

But such books aren't alone in epic grandeur here on the high plains. Filed in a huge atlas are letters preserved through the ages by the Catholic Church. It's startling to look upon a document signed by Maximilian, or Mexico's emperor or from Benito Juarez, who ordered Maximilian's execution, and a museum manuscript is there in a decree dated 1575, written by Philip II of Spain and signed, "I, the King. . ."

If you had any doubt about who founded the City of Albuquerque, there's a document signed by the Duke of Albuquerque, and Santa Anna has his day-so in a letter dated 1864 and bearing his signature. One of the oldest autographs is that of the First Bishop of Mexico, in 1540.

When the Empress of Mexico (Carlotta) traveled, an itinerary entitled "Itinerario de Emperaiz de Mexico" shows her travel log for 1857.

Nothing happened in time without being put down in formal writing. There's an entire card in the Bishop's collection of services in the Cathedral of Mexico and a printed program depicts the church pews of dignitaries, military personnel, priests, etc.

Perhaps the most beautiful and unusual volume in the bishop's collection is a three-foot high book of hand-tinted lithographs depicting the war between the United States and Mexico.

Only two or three hundred of these copies were printed," said the bishop. "Carl Nabel did the lithographs after which they were sent to Paris to be tinted by girls on the assembly line." One girl put in all the blues, another the reds, etc." He pointed to a red coated general saying. "The girl artists had only one red stroke in this picture."

In a sideboard cupboard are shelves of maps that reach to the ceiling. Pulling out the drawers, the Bishop exhibited a map, printed in 1785, and there are maps from the time of the Texas Republic and early statehoods.

A man of unusual literary talent and pursuits, Bishop FitzSimon has contributed much as a member of a state committee to preserve Texas historical shrines and documents. One of his contributions to Texas is A "History of Seguin, Texas," which he wrote in 1938 while he was pastor of Seguin.

To visit the Bishop and his treasured history books is such an absorbing experience that the present is blotted out, and it would not be surprising if Maximilian's army marched in, climbed upon the book shelves and disappeared between the book covers... Not surprising at all." May 1957

FitzSimon Collection donated to Library

The diocese of Amarillo has donated the extensive historical collection of the late Bishop Laurence J. FitzSimon to the city of Amarillo for placement in the new central library now under construction at 3rd and Buchanan.

The collection, which included between 3,000 and 4,000 rare books and maps, contains the history of the Southwest from Louisiana to California.

Mayor John Drummond, a member of St. Hyacinth's Parish, accepted the gift from Sister Nellie Rooney, superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Amarillo and member of a committee which supervised transfer of ownership of the collection from the diocese to the city. The formal presentation was made to a meeting of the Amarillo City Commission Aug. 12.

Conditions of the gift include provisions that the collection be kept under lock and key, that no part of the collection be removed from the library, and that the books and maps be kept in good condition.

A two-member committee, composed of a representative of the diocese to be appointed by the Bishop and the head city librarian, will be responsible for seeing to it that conditions of the gift are met.

Other member of the diocesan committee responsible for safeguarding the interest of the Diocese in the transfer include Monsignors Francis Smyer and L.T. Matthiesen. Father Tom McGovern of Lubbock has been added to this committee.

The Fitzsimon collection will be housed alongside the Bush Collection in a separate room on the main floor of the new library. The new central library is due for completion next summer.

City Librarian Alice Green said the library and city are fortunate to obtain such a collection.

"It is an extremely valuable collection for persons interested in material detailing with the history of the Southwest," Miss Green said.

"It will enhance the Bush collection and be of great value to the library in meeting the need of the community."

The city will be responsible for moving the collection from the Bishop's house on the campus of Alamo Catholic High School, where it is now housed, to the new library.

The collection was a lifelong project of Bishop FitzSimon, Bishop of the diocese from 1941 until his death in 1958.

In addition to the hundred of maps and books, the collection contains journals, series, and numerous unpublished theses on the Southwest.

Several priests, Sisters, and Brothers assisted Bishop Fitzsimon in compiling the collection. Among them were Father J. Arnold Carlson of Groom, who photo stated the old Southern Messenger newspaper in its entirety and other material; and Sister Nellie, who helped catalog the collection.

Sister Nellie said it had long been a hope of those familiar with both the Bush and the FitzSimon collections, that they would someday be put together.

"The main difference between the two collections is that in the Bush, the acquisition of books was limited to those published before 1890 and, in some cases, before 1875. Bishop FitzSimon did not limit his collection in that way. As new books were published on Texas, he secured them."

Sister Nellie said the Bishop got "everything he could get his hands on about Texas. He was adding contemporary books all the time, not only on Texas, but on other states as well."

The collection has works on every state between Louisiana and California, and also includes some materials on Oklahoma.

The collection starts with Spanish and United States exploration, and continues to include historical information on every subject imaginable-cattle, railroads, oil, cowboy lore, sheepherders, early forts, trade, Indians, art, flora and fauna, law and government, county histories, rivers. There is also extensive biographical information in the collection.

What's Happening at the New Museum



Displays in process...



Stack of Altar Stones



October 16 to 21, 2017

MUSEUM CONTRIBUTIONS

Adam & Kerry Acker	25
Pearl Acker	25
Anonymous	20
Don & Mary Bednorz	20
Dennis Boylan	25
John & Elaine Borman	500
John Doucette	25
Davlyn Duesterhaus	20
M/M Eric Haiduk	100
Mike Harter	40
M. Kornovich	50
Msgr. Norbert Kuehler	300
Msgr. Mathew Malnar	50
Katherine Monceballes	25
Dcn/M John Peters	25
M/M Jerry Poirot	25
Dee Ramirez	50
Bob and Mary Sloan	50
St. Benedict Monastery	50
M/m Arnold Schwertner	25
Rev. Ed. Sweeney	150
Vernon & Mary Wilhelm	30
Jan McCoy	1000
Total	2630

MEMBERSHIP

J. Thomas Campbell	25
Mike Harter	40
Sharon Moylan	20
Peggy Newcomb	25
	110

HONORARIUM

Dennis A. Boylan -- in memory of Bishop L. T. Matthiesen	25
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ST LUCIEN'S CHAPEL

Gerald & Sue Diller	100
Maida Villasenor in memory of Manny Villasenor	25



Displays in process...





**Thank you for your
continued generosity.**

we will be having a book, frame and misc. sale in the near furture. Be watching for information regarding this up comming event to benefit the new museum.



P.O. Box 5644
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Next month: The fourth bishop of the Diocese of Amarillo, John L Morkovsky
Bishop Morkovsky pictured with his father.