

CHAPTER II
THE INTERIM

By James B. Macelwane, S. J.

After the disbanding of the Jesuit Seismological Service, the stations, left entirely to themselves, depended upon the presence in the college or university of a man who was interested in the science of seismology and in the details of instrumental care and adjustment. In the absence of trained seismologists, this was very much to expect.

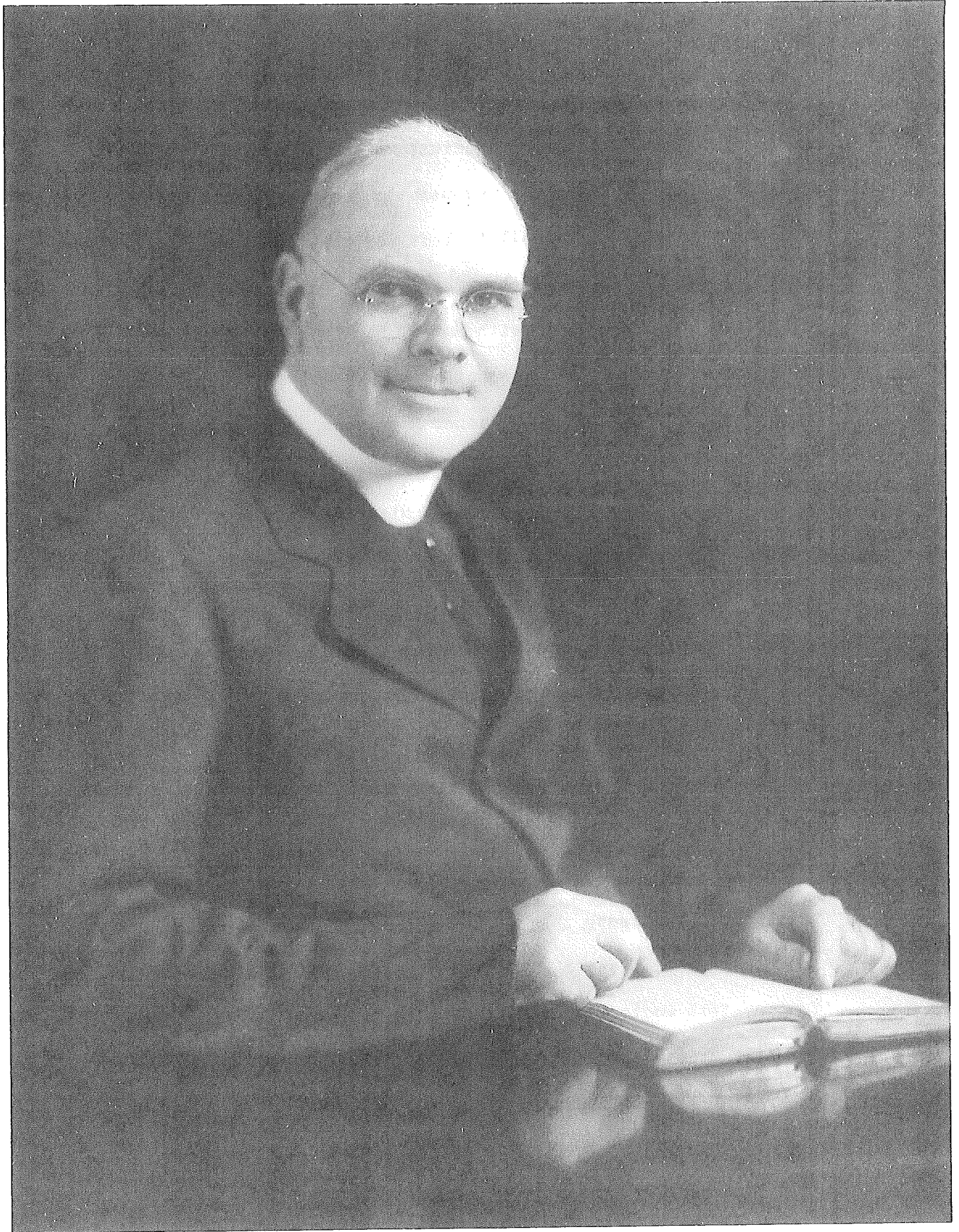
The history of most of the Jesuit stations during that time is one of fluctuation and, with notable exceptions, of gradual deterioration and lack of interest. A few stations, such as Denver, Georgetown, Spring Hill and Saint Louis, maintained an uninterrupted series of observations and published the results. Father Francis A. Tondorf, S. J., at Georgetown not only kept the station in continuous operation but even installed increasingly better equipment. It was due in great part to Father Tondorf's excellent public relations, his reports to the press, his lectures and published articles, that popular interest in seismology was kept alive in the interval. The Seismological Press Dispatches which he published were known and esteemed throughout the world.

After the First World War it had become evident to

everyone who had the interest of seismological science at heart, that some reorganization was necessary if the American Jesuit chain of stations was not to represent a wasted effort. It was not surprising that scientists outside the Jesuit institutions should discuss among themselves how this reorganization might be accomplished. Thus about 1921 Professor H. W. Gregory of Yale University approached Mr. Harry O. Wood, who was then connected with the National Research Council in Washington, with a proposal that they take up the question of reorganization with the Jesuit institutions. Mr. Wood refused because he had in view a program of investigation into the local earthquake problem in reference to geology which was later carried out in Southern California under the auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.

But the idea did not die and in 1921 Father James B. Macelwane was sent to the University of California in Berkeley to complete his studies for the doctorate. After receiving the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Physics, with minors in seismology and mathematics and with a geophysical thesis, Father Macelwane was appointed Assistant Professor of Geology in the University in charge of the seismographic stations in Berkeley and at the Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton and was given the task of developing a program of graduate studies in geophysics at the University. In the course of the following year, Mr. Wood came to Berkeley and related the

conversation he had had with Professor Gregory back in 1921 and asked what the situation was. Father Macelwane told him that the seismological stations are integral parts of the Jesuit institutions to which they belong; that they are run entirely on local funds and are governed by the local administrations. Consequently each individual station would have to be persuaded to enter into any scheme of reorganization that would be proposed. He also stated that if Professor Gregory had in mind any central funds or central authority for the whole country, he was mistaken. Father Macelwane explained to Mr. Wood the organization of the Society of Jesus and of its educational institutions. Mr. Wood then wrote to Professor Gregory, asking what he had in mind and Professor Gregory acknowledged that the situation was in no wise as simple as he had imagined. Mr. Wood also wrote to Doctor Arthur L. Day, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Seismology of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and Director of the Geophysical Laboratory in Washington, D. C. Doctor Day wrote to Mr. Wood in reply: "The development of an organization of all the Jesuit stations under the relation now prevailing between them is likely to require slow and tactful procedure. Father Tondorf at this end is also interested in some form of general cooperation and has talked with Commander Heck on the subject..... My own reaction at the moment is that the best thing for seismology would be an



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organization within the Jesuit group through which a certain amount of standardization of instruments and uniformity of procedure might be obtained. Cooperation between that group and others outside might well be left for the future." In answer to Mr. Wood's suggestion that Doctor Day come out to California and have a talk with Father Macelwane on the subject, Doctor Day wrote: "Respecting the Jesuit situation, I shall be glad to confer with Father Macelwane, as you suggest."

As soon as Father Macelwane heard of this, he wrote to the Provincial of the Province of Missouri, Father F. X. McMenemy, S. J., telling him all the circumstances and asking for direction. Under date of April 3, 1925, Father McMenemy wrote to Father Macelwane: "In regard to the proposal to coordinate the Jesuit seismological stations in this country, etc., I shall put the whole matter before the consulters at our next meeting." A few weeks later under date of May 12, he wrote, "I have just written to the Provincial of the East to suggest that the Jesuit seismologists hold a meeting this summer for the purpose of planning some kind of coordination of all Jesuit stations." A few days later, May 17, he wrote: "You may tell Doctor Day that the coordination of Jesuit seismological stations is now under consideration. Our Eastern Brethren, as you will see from the enclosed (letter of Father Lynch in the Science Bulletin of the Maryland-New York Province) have been considering coordination. I am convinced that the only way to have anything done is to call a meeting

of those interested. This I proposed to Father Kelly of New York. I will let you know about the meeting."

In the meantime, the late Father M. M. Sanchez Navarro Neumann, S. J., Director of the Cartuja Station at Granada, Spain, wrote to Father Macelwane, in part as follows: "I believe it would be very much AMDG if our chain of seismographic stations in the United States would rise once for all out of its present state which in your great charity and in consideration of the intention which prompts me, you will pardon me if I dare to call 'wretched'..... One absolutely first class station with choice instruments in sufficient number, two kinds of Anderson-Wood instruments, short-period and long-period, one complete set of Galitzins..... and a Galitzin vertical to ten seconds or less, and no mechanical registration -- together with the present chain and, still better, stations in Manila and Guam, together with visits for mounting and inspection, would put us in the front rank in this new science and would allow us besides to do research of absolutely first order with a sum of money that would not suffice to mount the smallest astronomical observatory which would be good for anything." This letter Father Macelwane sent to all the four American Provincials.

Soon after this Father Macelwane had a visit from Doctor Arthur Day and told him of the proposals for a meeting of representatives of the Jesuit institutions. He was delighted and expressed his happiness by getting from

Father Macelwane the addresses of the Provincials and by writing to all four of them himself.

In the meantime Father Macelwane was appointed Professor of Geophysics in Saint Louis University and came East at the beginning of July. He had a long talk with the Provincial, Father McMenemy, and with the Rector of Saint Louis University, Father Charles H. Cloud. He found them both quite enthusiastic about the prospects of a meeting and its outcome. Father Cloud told Father Macelwane that it was his wish that the latter should develop and head a department of Geophysics in Saint Louis University. He also commissioned Father Macelwane to offer to our seismologists at the forthcoming meeting the facilities they would need for a central station in case that were proposed. Father McMenemy stated that the Provincials were calling the meeting of Jesuit delegates from the four Provinces on the 24th of August at Loyola University in Chicago.