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DEFENDERS' DAY OBSERVATIONS IN THE EARLY 1880'S
(MYSTIC ORDER OF THE ORIOLE/ROBERT GARRETT)

*Baltimore's Loyola,
Loyola's Baltimore*

1851-1986

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The Maryland Historical Society
Baltimore, Maryland

assigned subject in Christian doctrine, Father Fulton offered a prize of \$100—a princely sum, enough to pay tuition for more than a year. The first run of the contest, which included all but two schools of the Maryland–New York province, was won by a Loyola student, Oscar Quinlan (1890). The following year, with all seven schools competing, Alfred Jenkins Shriver (1889), another Loyola student, was the winner. Both went on to respectable careers as lawyers, and Shriver would four decades later list “Won Intercollegiate Prize \$100 over 2500 rivals” as the first of his many distinctions.³¹

Another participant in the contest was Bart Randolph (1888), who did not win a prize but achieved an even flashier distinction. Shortly after Grover Cleveland’s inauguration, young Randolph translated the president’s address into Latin. Father McGurk was so proud of the translation that he brought it to the attention of Leo Knott, who had just been appointed assistant postmaster general. Knott arranged for young Randolph to present the translation to President Cleveland in person. On June 19, 1885, Randolph, Father McGurk, and Knott all went to the White House for a pleasant little interview.³² Later, Randolph joined the Vincentians and became a noted figure on the faculty of Saint John’s College (now University) in Brooklyn.

Shortly after he took office, Father McGurk sought to add to the cultural life of the city by offering a regular series of lectures. Discussions of Dante’s *Paradiso*, the early phases of Christian art, volcanoes, glaciers, the solar system, the antiquity of man, Charlemagne, Peter the Great, and Egyptian hieroglyphics, as well as various entertainments by the students, were offered to the public.

What Loyola was offering was in no way competitive with the lectures at the recently established Johns Hopkins University. With the inauguration of its first president, Daniel Coit Gilman, on February 22, 1876, the new institution began presenting lectures of the most advanced scientific content and highest scholarly quality. The scholastics and priests at Loyola were regular auditors of these disquisitions, and they took pleasure at being “cordially received” by President Gilman himself.

The city had time also for less serious matters. For a number of years in the early 1880s the anniversary of the British attack on Baltimore was celebrated with appropriate pageantry. To organize these fetes, the Mystic Order of the Oriole was formed, with Robert Garrett, Baltimore’s leading financier, as its president. (The Baltimore Oriole was adopted

as the state bird parades up Calvert to watch from the room for the high in front of the pomp, the glorious municipal holiday.

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as the state bird in 1882.) These festivals were climaxed by torchlight parades up Calvert Street. On such occasions the students were invited to watch from the library windows, but the best view—from the classroom for the high-school juniors—was reserved for guests. The porch in front of the rector's room accommodated the Jesuits. In plumes and pomp, the glories of Maryland and Baltimore were proclaimed on these municipal holidays.

A less formal flourish of civic pride appeared in the establishment of the baseball team named the Orioles. It would be some time before this new institution was fully accepted, but meanwhile it inspired tentative imitation. At Loyola, for instance, two baseball nines were organized in some unrecorded fashion, and a game arranged with Saint Joseph's Academy (today's Mount Saint Joseph). At the end of May 1885, "the first nine," as noted in the prefect's diary, "went to Catonsville. . . . Our boys were beaten, the score being 25 to 24. . . . What a game! Such an umpire!" For the following day, the scribe recorded "rain—temperature of nature & boys low & cloudy."³³ Undaunted, Loyola's "second nine" traveled all the way to Catonsville on the next Saturday, only to find that a scheduling mistake had been made. It would be some time before arranging such events became systematic.

With such an inauspicious beginning it is not surprising to find sports deemphasized the following spring. "Base Ball batting [was] forbidden in yard—too many windows broken." Another four years would pass before this unfortunate memory receded enough to allow formation of the Loyola Athletic Association.

In 1880 Baltimore celebrated the sesquicentennial of its founding, and the college joined its neighbors in marking the anniversary. For the main anniversary parade Father McGurk received tickets from Mayor Ferdinand Latrobe so that he and other members of the faculty could join officials on the reviewing stand. Three days later the president and associated professors were participants in another grand procession, this time in the company of other religious, social, medical, temperance, and "colored" organizations of Baltimore.³⁴

It was a somewhat more dignified but no less festive gathering that Father McGurk addressed in the spring of 1884. The occasion was the annual remembrance of the state's original settlement. This commemoration had been started at Georgetown in 1842 by the Philodemic Society, but it had gradually come under the sponsorship of the Maryland Pilgrim's Association. This 250th anniversary bore a distinctively