Gone and Forgotten?
New Jersey's Catholic Junior Colleges

Fernanda H. Perrone

In the late 1960s, New Jersey had eleven seemingly-thriving Catholic junior colleges; by the mid-1970s, all but one of these colleges had closed. This article analyzes why these institutions appeared and disappeared so quickly, and explores what contribution they made to Catholic higher education in the state. In some respects, the trajectory of New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges reflects the nationwide decline in numbers of private two-year colleges, which since the 1960s have been supplanted by public community colleges and four-year liberal arts colleges. In other ways, New Jersey's story is distinctive. The state does not possess a strong tradition of public higher education. While community colleges were successfully established in California, Illinois, and other states in the early twentieth century, the community college movement did not really get underway in New Jersey until the late 1960s. The population boom and vibrant Catholic culture of post-war New Jersey, however, provided a fertile ground for the establishment of junior colleges for young members of male and female religious orders. In this respect, these colleges differed from those in other states, many of which were founded for lay students—primarily girls and women. New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges initially succeeded because of lack of competition from the public sector. By the early 1970s, however, an economic downturn combined with the advent of community colleges offering a diverse and practical curriculum spelled the end of New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges. This article suggests that they made their most important contribution in the education of religious; in fact, one college, Assumption College for Sisters in Mendham, continues to do so. Founded at a time of dramatic change in the church and society, New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges reveal in microcosm the sometimes devastating impact of these changes on Catholic institutions.

Introduction

In the late 1960s, several Catholic junior colleges briefly flourished in New Jersey. In 1967, there were eleven Catholic junior colleges in

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the state, mainly located in the northern suburbs. By 1975, all but two of these institutions had closed, and one of those two had become a four-year college. In 2010, these colleges have been largely forgotten. This article unearths the history of these institutions and attempts to answer the question of why they closed so soon. The rise and fall of New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges during the turbulent 1960s and early 1970s suggests that they were casualties of the momentous changes in the Catholic Church, the role of women, and societal changes as a whole during this period. These colleges also suffered from the particular geography of Catholic higher education in New Jersey and in the New York metropolitan region, as well the dramatic expansion of public junior college education of the last forty years.

**Higher Education in New Jersey**

New Jersey, a geographically small state overshadowed by two large cities, New York and Philadelphia, has historically been slow in developing institutions of higher education. Apart from Princeton University, several private colleges — both church-affiliated and independent — founded in the state in the late nineteenth century were small and not well-known nationally. By the mid-twentieth century, public higher education was limited to one state university, Rutgers, and several teacher training colleges. In 1968, New Jersey ranked forty-ninth in the United States in per capita appropriations for the operating expenses of higher education, even though this amount was triple that of 1960. Meanwhile, in 1968, only forty-six percent of New Jersey college students attended institutions in their home state as compared to eighty percent nationally. Of course, students living in New Jersey could easily commute across the Hudson or Delaware rivers to attend college in another state.

Catholic higher education in New Jersey was also slow to develop. Mass immigration from Ireland and Germany, and later from Italy and Eastern Europe, swelled the state's Catholic population from a few thousand in the eighteenth century to 850,000 in 1850 to over one million at the turn of the century. It was only in the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, that a substantial Catholic middle class developed, one capable of providing higher education for its children. This population was centered in the cities and towns in the northeast

2. Ibid., 19.
near New York and in the southwest near Philadelphia. The first Catholic college in New Jersey, Seton Hall, was founded in 1856 in Madison, later moving to South Orange (See map). It was followed in 1872 by the Jesuit Saint Peter's College, also located in the northeast part of the state, in Jersey City. Both Seton Hall and Saint Peter's primarily served male students.

In New Jersey, as well as much of the nation during the nineteenth century, post-secondary education for Catholic women was found exclusively in girls' academies operated by women's religious communities. One of these, the College of Saint Elizabeth in Convent Station, became one of the United States' first Catholic women's colleges upon the accreditation of a baccalaureate program in 1899.
Less than ten years later, Mount Saint Mary College was established by the Sisters of Mercy in North Plainfield. In 1924, this institution moved to Lakewood under a new name, Georgian Court College. A third women's college, Caldwell, was founded in 1939 by the Dominican Sisters in that town. All were four-year baccalaureate institutions with a small middle-class and upper-middle-class clientele.  

New Jersey would predictably prove to be a late participant in the junior college movement that began in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The Junior College Movement

The earliest prototype junior colleges in the United States were nineteenth-century private secondary schools that expanded into six-year programs. The Lasell Female Institute in Massachusetts, founded in 1851, is considered to be the first junior college in the country. The junior college movement did not really get underway, however, until the early twentieth century. Numbers increased from about eight colleges at the turn of the century to almost 200 in 1920, when the Association of Junior Colleges was formed. Although several college presidents had discussed opening junior colleges during the late nineteenth century, the credit for founding the junior college movement as an educational philosophy is often attributed to William Rainey Harper, the first president of the University of Chicago after its reorganization in 1890, who coined the term "junior college." Influenced by the German model of gymnasium followed by university, Harper established two-year junior and senior divisions at the University of Chicago. The junior division had a broad liberal arts curriculum that prepared students for more specialized study at the senior level. Harper advocated "decapitation," where weaker four-year institutions would eliminate their last two years to concentrate their energies on freshmen and sophomores. He also encouraged secondary schools to start six-year programs.

While some institutions followed Harper's lead, the junior college movement in the United States ultimately took the form of creating

separate two-year colleges rather than expanding or shrinking existing institutions. Many of these early junior colleges were all-women's institutions. Girls' private schools like Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, started two-year programs at a time when there was increasing demand for higher education for women. The curriculum at these colleges mimicked the first two years of a four-year college. Middle-class students either transferred to a senior college upon graduation or became educated wives and mothers. The numbers of private junior colleges reached a high point of about 350 in 1940, educating 68,000 students. In addition, other types of pre-baccalaureate institutions – schools of nursing, technical colleges, normal schools, and business schools – blurred the educational landscape.

The first public junior college, Joliet Junior College in Illinois, was founded in 1902. William Rainey Harper encouraged Joliet High School Principal J. Stanley Brown to add a two-year program, with the promise that graduates could receive advanced standing at the University of Chicago. The idea spread slowly at first, until after World War I, when the growth in high school enrollment and need for educational opportunities in rural areas led to a dramatic increase in the number of public junior colleges, particularly in the Midwest and California. After World War II, the influx of returning veterans hungry for higher education led to the founding of many more publicly-supported two-year colleges. In 1944, foreseeing the need to integrate thousands of returning veterans into the economy, Congress passed the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act or G.I. Bill. By 1946, over one million G.I.s were taking advantage of the tuition benefit that could be used at the institution of their choice, seriously straining the resources of the nation’s colleges and universities. In the following year, the Report of the President’s Commission on Higher Education strongly recommended the establishment of public tuition-free or low-tuition community colleges. These colleges rapidly multiplied in many states in the following decades. As part of an increasingly democratic model of higher education that recognized the need to train skilled

7. Ibid., 39-42.
8. Woodroof, 3-6.
professionals for contemporary society, publicly-funded two-year colleges would eventually outnumber private junior colleges. In 1960, there were 390 public two-year colleges educating 650,000 students.13

Catholic Junior Colleges in the United States

Private junior colleges are seldom discussed in the historiography of American higher education. Existing studies treat them as way stations on the march towards the contemporary system of public community colleges.14 Histories of Catholic higher education similarly devote little space to junior colleges. According to Edward Power in his account of American Catholic higher education, "Without distinguishing themselves particularly in the junior college movement, Catholic educational leaders, nevertheless, took some part in it."15 Power then devotes a few sentences to Catholic junior colleges, noting that they developed at the same time as Catholic women's colleges, and many were, indeed, women's colleges.16 In his more recent study of Catholic women's colleges, sociologist Thomas Landy notes that junior colleges represent a significant portion of the number of colleges founded by women religious, but served a smaller number of students. The ratio of Catholic junior colleges to Catholic four-year colleges, however, was comparable to the national proportion of all private two-year to four-year colleges. Many Catholic women's colleges began as junior colleges as stepping-stones to becoming senior colleges. A few, like Saint Genevieve-of-the-Pines in North Carolina, converted from four-year to junior colleges. Others moved in and out of junior college status at various times during their histories.17 One of the earliest Catholic women's colleges, Mount Saint Agnes in Baltimore, was founded as a four-year college in 1899, and underwent two periods as a junior college before finally merging with Loyola College in 1968.18

Although historians in the early twenty-first century relegate

16. Ibid., 316.
Catholic junior colleges to minor roles on the national stage, they were the subjects of several sociological and educational studies in the 1950s and 1960s. Perusing this literature reveals that the development of Catholic junior colleges followed the general pattern of growth of the private junior college movement during the twentieth century. One chronicler, Mary Jerome Danese, SSJ, attempted to trace the origins of the Catholic junior college to the Jesuit schools of colonial Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania. Indeed, the Jesuit *ratio studiorum*, where students followed six-year secondary school programs that prepared them for European universities, can be viewed as a precursor of the junior college model. The first true Catholic junior college was probably Georgetown Visitation in Washington, D.C., originally founded in 1799 as a girls' school by the Visitation Nuns. This prestigious girls' academy educated several prominent nineteenth-century women, both Catholic and non-Catholic, including Emily Warren Roebling, one of the builders of the Brooklyn Bridge. The Visitation Nuns gradually expanded their academy's program to include higher-level courses, and in 1919, an attached junior college was chartered. Georgetown Visitation Junior College offered both terminal and liberal arts transfer courses, and later added specialties in medical and general secretarial training and home economics. The college numbered between one hundred and two hundred women, both boarding students and women who lived locally, known as day hops. The college offered an academically demanding curriculum and was accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools in 1933. The Middle States Association was one of six regional accrediting bodies founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At first reluctant to accredit junior colleges, the regional associations gradually grew in importance, ultimately replacing other accrediting agencies.

Three years after the establishment of Georgetown Visitation, the Sisters of Providence founded another junior college, Immaculata, in the nation's capital, when they expanded their girls' academy in 1922. It was followed by another women's college, Saint Catharine's, founded by a Dominican community in Kentucky in 1931. By 1950,

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there were forty-three Catholic junior colleges in the United States. Twenty-five of these were for lay students, while the remainder were for the training of sisters and priests. Of the twenty-five lay colleges, eighteen were for women only, four were for men, and three were coeducational. These colleges primarily served elite Catholic upper-middle-class and middle-class students. They all offered liberal arts programs equivalent to the first two years of a senior college, designed to enable students to transfer. They also offered various terminal degree programs. The colleges were quite small, numbering in total 3,752 students, with an average enrollment of 125. Most were residential and were associated with a private secondary school with which they shared space and services. Seventy-eight percent of the students were women, many of whom were "looking for a place to complete a general cultural education prior to marriage." The typical Catholic junior college student was described as a Catholic young woman nineteen years of age who lived in a dormitory and was from a city approximately three hundred miles away. There was a one-in-three chance that she would continue her education at a four-year college.

A survey by Mary Jerome Danese, SSJ, in 1962-1963 produced similar findings. Danese surveyed seventy-six Catholic junior colleges, of which twenty-six were colleges for lay students and fifty were for women religious only. Of the twenty-six lay institutions, most were for women only. One college president revealed a similar gendered mission:

The Catholic junior college, and especially the junior college for women, has a distinct terminal type of program to offer which fits families economically, and brings the young girl to a "semi-profession" which she can pursue in a practical manner prior to marriage and to which she can return in her later productive years.

Junior colleges were considered a less expensive option, not necessarily because the tuition was lower, but because the student attended for only two years. As in the 1950 survey, the majority of colleges in Danese's study were residential, with room and board comparable to that at four-year colleges.

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23. Ibid., 12.
24. Ibid.
26. Quoted in Danese, 172.
Colleges for Religious

Danese’s study revealed a dramatic increase in the number of junior colleges for women religious. Since the late nineteenth century, the proper education of young women religious had been a subject of debate. The Council of Baltimore in 1884, which instructed parishes to set up parochial schools, also directed religious communities to open novitiate training schools to enable young sisters to meet state teacher certification requirements.27 Ideally, after completing the two-year teacher preparation program, sisters transferred to four-year colleges or universities where they could complete their baccalaureate degrees. In reality, the demand for teachers in the nation’s parochial schools, as well as the need by religious communities for the income, however small, of those teachers, meant that many sisters began teaching with less than one year of formal education, attending the community’s college or university extension program on Saturdays and in the summer, often taking decades to earn their bachelor’s degrees.

Bertrande Meyers, DC, surveyed the education of sisters in her doctoral dissertation, published in 1941.28 By the late 1940s, individual communities were making efforts to establish and fund more systematic educational programs. The problem did not receive public attention, however, until 1949, in a symposium at the Midwest College and University Section of the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), organized by Sister Madeleva Wolff, CSC, President of Saint Mary’s College in Notre Dame, Indiana. Wolff described the miseducation of Sister Lucy, an enthusiastic young religious who, had she remained in the secular world, would have attained a degree from a four-year college before beginning to teach.29 Wolff’s case was buttressed by Pope Pius XII’s 1952 Directive to the International Congress of Teaching Sisters, which recommended that the education of sisters correspond “in quality and academic degree to that demanded by the state.”30

Catholic educators were aware of the national movement to improve standards in the training of public school teachers, evidenced by the formation of the National Education Association’s Commission

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30. Ibid., 17.
on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (TEPS) in 1946 and the establishment of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in 1952. They feared that if Catholic schools were believed to be inferior, parents might send their children to public schools. The women leaders of the NCEA quickly took up the challenge. In 1952, they conducted a survey that revealed only five percent of communities were educating their members in standard four-year B.A. programs. At the 1953 NCEA convention, they formed the Sisters Professional and Educational Standards (SEPS) Commision, which was renamed the Sister Formation Conference in 1954. The aim of Sister Formation was to improve the training of women religious for teaching, nursing, and social work by emphasizing the education of the whole person. The Conference, which lasted until 1964, resulted in greater cooperation among religious congregations in the education of their sisters, greater opportunities for full-time study for novices, and ultimately the founding of many new colleges. Because of the cloister tradition, it was deemed problematic, particularly for novices, to attend colleges away from the motherhouse. By 1960, there were ninety-three sisters' colleges in the United States, forty-nine of which were founded between 1950 and 1960.

The education of sisters would prove to be a key factor in the development of Catholic junior colleges in New Jersey.

**Junior Colleges in New Jersey**

New Jersey's junior colleges evolved as a series of historical accidents, rather than through a coherent plan. Like other northeastern states, New Jersey did not develop a system of public junior colleges analogous to those in California or Illinois. The few public junior colleges founded in the state only lasted a few years. An exception was the Union Junior College in Cranford. One of several colleges established by the federal government during the Depression, it evolved into Union County College. Similarly, the Trenton Junior College, founded in 1947 to accommodate the needs of returning soldiers, ultimately merged with Mercer County Community College.

34. Lynch, 4.
35. Brint and Karabel, 52-53.
37. Ibid., 71-72.
It was not until the County College Act of 1962 that a comprehensive plan was created to establish, operate, and fund a system of two-year institutions throughout the state.

By the early twentieth century, however, New Jersey had several public normal schools. Normal schools were two-year institutions – both public and private – for the preparation of elementary school teachers, which originated in early nineteenth century New England. As public education expanded, more states began to establish normal schools: the first in New Jersey was founded in Trenton in 1855.38 With the growth in high schools after the First World War, the demand for more and better teachers, and rising standards for teacher certification, normal schools were elevated into degree-granting institutions.39 The New Jersey Board of Education converted the normal schools at Glassboro, Jersey City, Newark, and Trenton into state teachers' colleges in 1934, with the right to grant the Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education.40

As in other states in the region, several private – both church-affiliated and independent – junior colleges opened in New Jersey during the first half of the twentieth century. Of the church-affiliated colleges, the most significant was the Methodist Centenary Junior College in Hackettstown, a former girls' academy that added a junior college in 1929. Of the independent colleges, of note was Rider College in Trenton, a school of business that began to offer a two-year program in 1922 – a program that continued after the college introduced a baccalaureate degree in 1955. Other independent colleges that offered two-year programs were Monmouth College in Long Branch and Fairleigh Dickinson College in Rutherford, founded in 1941.41 These colleges were mostly located in the northeastern part of the state near New York or in the Camden-Trenton area near Philadelphia. Before the 1960s, New Jersey thus had many small private colleges offering two-year programs. Students could also easily access private junior colleges in New York and Philadelphia, including several Catholic women's colleges – Elizabeth Seton College in Yonkers, New York, and Manor Junior College and Gwynedd-Mercy College in the Philadelphia suburbs.

New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges had their origins in institutions for the education of young male and female members of

41. Lynch, 129-134.
religious communities. In the early twentieth century, several communities with provincial houses in New Jersey established such institutions to prepare their novices for teaching and nursing. The Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Felix of Cantalice, known as the Felician Sisters, originally came to New Jersey in 1897 to serve the state's Polish-speaking Catholics. In 1909, the sisters purchased an estate in Lodi in Bergen County, an area heavily populated by Poles, where they established a motherhouse, novitiate, aspirancy, and an orphanage. In 1923, the Felician Sisters founded the Immaculate Conception Normal School at the Lodi site (See table 1). Through summer sessions, the normal school prepared in-service teachers for the state certification examinations. By 1936, the normal school was raised to the status of a teacher training college at a time when the state's public normal schools had recently become state teacher training colleges. Immaculate Conception was approved and affiliated with The Catholic University of America, and incorporated as a junior college in 1942. Although it did not have the prestige of regional accreditation, accreditation by the New Jersey Board of Education and affiliation with Catholic University ensured that the credits earned were transferable to four-year institutions. The Catholic University of America affiliation program, established in 1912, approved both Catholic high schools and colleges by following standards similar to those of non-sectarian accrediting agencies. Students at affiliated schools were able to transfer to Catholic University without penalty.

Elsewhere in the state, in 1910, five members of the Pontifical Institute of Religious Teachers Filippini emigrated to Trenton to teach in the Italian-American Saint Joachim Parish. After some early struggles, the sisters found a champion in James Thomas Walsh, appointed Bishop of Trenton in 1918. With Walsh's assistance, in 1921 the sisters established a motherhouse on a donated property near Trenton. In 1927, the Villa Victoria Normal School was accredited by the New Jersey Board of Education to prepare sisters to teach in parochial schools. The curriculum was unique in that it included both English and Italian and emphasized music and fine art, as well as the arts and sciences. When Walsh was transferred to Newark in 1928, he found property for the Filippini Sisters in Morristown, and encouraged them to move the motherhouse there. Renamed Villa Walsh in his honor, the normal school was upgraded to Villa Walsh Junior College
Table 1
Catholic Junior Colleges in New Jersey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date of Founding</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Admitted Lay Students</th>
<th>Date of Closing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alphonsus College</td>
<td>Woodcliff Lake</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Sisters of St. John the Baptist</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumption College for Sisters</td>
<td>Mendham</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Sisters of Christian Charity</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immaculate Conception/Felician College</td>
<td>Lodi</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Congregation of St. Felix</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>became four-year 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marianite Junior College</td>
<td>Princeton</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Congregation of Marianites</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryknoll Junior College</td>
<td>Lakewood</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Maryknoll Fathers</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother of the Savior Seminary</td>
<td>Blackwood</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Society of the Divine Savior (Salvatorians)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1966/1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Saint Mary College</td>
<td>Watchung</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Sisters of Mercy of New Jersey</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Gabriel's College</td>
<td>Lakewood</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Christian Brothers of Ireland</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesian College</td>
<td>Haledon</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Salesian Sisters of Saint John Bosco</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villa Walsh College</td>
<td>Morristown</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Religious Teachers Filippini</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1971</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

extension classes at the community's Englewood Cliffs motherhouse. Madeleine Crotty, CSJ, the foundress and first president of Archangel College, wrote that at that time the novices never left the grounds.

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Although the Sister Formation Conference devised an ambitious curriculum consisting of philosophy, theology, social sciences, and professional training – known as the Everett Curriculum – in reality the lack of resources meant that many of the sisters' colleges could offer only a limited number of courses. Like the other New Jersey sisters' colleges, Archangel College offered a basic program designed to prepare young sisters for teaching in parochial schools. Requirements included sequences of courses in English, theology, philosophy, and modern languages, and a few courses in mathematics, music, history, geography, and education. Upon completing the junior college program, students transferred to Caldwell College where they lived in a sisters' residence while completing their bachelor's degrees. Archangel College had fifty-four students in 1964. One of these was Kathleen (Corlis) Campbell of Ho-Ho-Kus, New Jersey. She recollected that the courses at Archangel provided basic preparation for elementary school teachers, which she did not enjoy, but acknowledged that "it was just something that you had to do," adding that the college courses were a minor part of a novice's busy day of prayer and work.

During this period, there also were several junior colleges located in New Jersey for the preparation of male religious. From the mid-nineteenth century until the early 1960s, men's religious communities rapidly established seminaries to keep up with the need for priests to minister to the growing Catholic population. These were "total institutions," with staff and students all belonging to the religious community. In 1884, the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore had mandated six-year courses for both major and minor seminaries. Minor seminaries were to provide a foundation in humanities, classical languages, and the rudiments of clerical culture and spirituality as preparation for serious theological and professional study at a major seminary. Although this decree applied primarily to diocesan seminaries, religious order seminaries tended to follow suit.

53. Beane, 63-68.
With the spike in religious vocations following World War II, minor seminaries proliferated. A 1959 NCEA study indicated that there were 381 minor and major seminaries in the United States, more than forty percent of which had fewer than fifty students, and fifty-three percent of which had opened since 1945.57 The minor seminary's six year program, which was influenced by the European gymnasium and lycée, was reinterpreted in the United States as a high school plus junior college.

Minor seminaries in New Jersey followed this pattern. The first of these, Saint Joseph's College in Princeton, was established in 1914 by the Congregation of the Mission, popularly known as the Vincentian Fathers, who raised money to build the institution through the sale of miraculous medals. From 1924 to 1938, Saint Joseph's was an eight-year institution that offered an A.B. degree.68 In 1953, Saint Joseph's was authorized by the New Jersey Board of Education to convert its four-year curriculum to a junior college program, which was ultimately accredited by the Middle States Association.59 In 1947, two more junior colleges for male religious were established in the state: Mother of the Savior Seminary and Maryknoll Junior College. The Society of the Divine Savior or Salvatorians opened their seminary on "Buffalo Farm" in Blackwood in the Diocese of Camden. Originally a minor seminary, Mother of the Savior's students entered after eighth grade. In 1955, the New Jersey Board of Education licensed a junior college program. From 1958 to 1961, the Salvatorians rapidly built new classrooms, a library, offices, dining facilities, a faculty residence, and dormitory spaces. Candidates for the Benedictines and other communities also attended, with enrollment reaching a peak of 327 in 1963-1964.60

Maryknoll Junior College was founded when the Catholic Foreign Missionary Society of America, known as the Maryknoll Fathers, purchased a former Catholic boys' boarding school in Lakewood. The college, which emphasized "development of resourceful, self-sustaining, independent, cultured, missionary priests," opened with

61. *American Junior Colleges*, s.v. "Maryknoll Junior College" (Washington, DC:
220 seminarians in residence. When the facility proved to be too small, the community constructed a new motherhouse and seminary near Chicago, closing the Lakewood college in 1954. The property was purchased by the Christian Brothers of Ireland (later the Edmund Rice Christian Brothers), a teaching order, which was also rapidly expanding due to an increase in vocations and the demands of the parochial school system. Renamed Saint Gabriel's College, the institution offered only a freshman year, after which the students transferred to Iona College in New Rochelle, New York. Like Maryknoll Junior College, Saint Gabriel's was licensed by the New Jersey Board of Education.62

By the mid-1960s, a growing number of educators were arguing that religious and lay students should be educated together. Colleges for religious were too small and lacked resources to provide an adequate selection of courses, library resources, and a meaningful intellectual atmosphere.63 Male seminary leaders, like sister-educators, became concerned with standards in American seminaries, citing their isolation from other United States educational structures, the importance of accreditation, and the academic weakness of many smaller seminaries. Indeed, during this period, two new junior colleges were founded in New Jersey that attempted to cater to both lay and religious women.

In 1965, the Sisters of Saint John the Baptist — another Italian-American community — moved their Alfonso Maria Fusco Institute on Long Island to a purpose-built facility in Woodcliff Lake in northeastern Bergen County. The Baptistine Sisters deliberately chose to relocate the college in this growing suburban area, where they saw a need for Catholic higher education.64 As a residential college, Alphonsus followed the model of the earlier Catholic junior colleges that had no connection to sisters' education. Alphonsus offered a liberal arts transfer program, associate degrees in child care and library assistantship, and general education. According to an early description, the general education program "prepares the students for a cultured and enriched home life, a recognizable degree of self-realization, and an effective community service."65 As the only


62. Seventy-five Years of Catholicism: Church of St. Mary of the Lake, Lakewood, New Jersey (Lakewood, NJ: Church of St. Mary of the Lake, ca. 1964), Special Collections, Georgian Court University, Lakewood, NJ.


64. Middle States Self-Evaluation, April 7, 1972, p. 1, Archdiocese of Newark/Woodcliff Lake–Alphonsus College, R.G. 6, SHUA.

New Jersey junior college to offer significant residential accommodation, Alphonsus claimed to provide "opportunities for self-expression and leadership by women" and stressed the "direct, personal contact with the administration, the faculty and the guidance personnel" possible at a small liberal arts college. Seventy to eighty percent of its students transferred to four year colleges. As one student of the late 1960s recalled, "it was a small 2 year college on a hill overlooking the Garden State Parkway. What a beautiful college. I guess you could say it was a basic 2 year college but, it was a new college."

The origins of the second "combined" college in New Jersey were unique. In its 1964 evaluation of Georgian Court College, the Middle States Association accreditation team was reluctant to approve Georgian Court's extension program at the Sisters of Mercy novitiate in Watchung. They judged the extension program situated too far from the college for proper scholastic supervision and united social activities. The novitiate library was also judged inadequate. Because the Sisters of Mercy had retained the 1905 charter under the college's original name, Mount Saint Mary, they were able to discontinue the extension program and reopen Mount Saint Mary College at the original site in Watchung. Located in a densely-populated area with a substantial number of Catholics, Mount Saint Mary had from the beginning the intention of serving laywomen as well as Sisters of Mercy.

The college opened in September 1965 with seventy students, including twenty-two freshmen, eight of whom were lay women, and fourteen postulants hoping to enter the community. The remainder of the sister students were sophomores and novices completing an intermediate year devoted to the study of theology and religious practice. The college offered a general two-year liberal arts program divided into four departments: theology and philosophy, humanities, 

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67. Middle States Evaluation, Alphonsus College, April 7, 1972, p. 1, Archdiocese of Newark/Woodcliff Lake—Alphonsus College, R.G. 6, SHUA.
69. In 1928 the section of North Plainfield Township where Mount Saint Mary is located became part of the Borough of Watchung.
70. Excerpts from Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Mount Saint Mary College, November 14, 1964, Watchung, Mount Saint Mary College, 1965-1970, H510.100, Box 6, Folder 1, Archives, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Mid-Atlantic Community New Jersey Site, Watchung, NJ (hereafter SMNJA).
science and mathematics, and social science. In 1965, the college was accredited as a "correspondent," the first stage in achieving accreditation from the Middle States Association. The following year, the college was accredited as a candidate, enabling it to apply for federal grants. In 1966, Mount Saint Mary received a Higher Education Facilities grant to equip new laboratories.73

Graduation, Mount Saint Mary College, 1968
Courtesy Archives, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
Mid-Atlantic Community New Jersey, Watchung, NJ

Decline of Colleges for Religious

Like the other sisters' colleges, Mount Saint Mary suffered from the decline in religious vocations of the late 1960s. After the record highs of the early 1960s, vocations dropped to 18,316 between 1962 and 1965, and fell dramatically to 8,699 between 1966 and 1970.74 The reasons for the decline are complex, relating to the social and cultural turmoil of the 1960s, increased opportunities for women in the professions and in service organizations, and reforms in the church brought about by the Second Vatican Council.75 Called by Pope John XXIII to renew the church and make it more effective in the changed conditions of the modern world, the Council met in four successive fall sessions from 1962 to 1965. Among calls for a reformed liturgy,

73. President's Report, Mount Saint Mary College, 1965-1966, H510.100, Box 5, Folder 5, SMNJA.
74. Ebaugh, 48.
75. Ibid., 95.
greater ecumenism, and an increased role for the laity in apostolic life, the Council issued a decree on religious life, *Perfectae caritatis*, which encouraged religious to renew themselves by returning to the mission of their founders. Although most women religious embraced this charge, they were ill-prepared for the drastic changes in their lives brought forth by the decree. Many sisters turned to other ministries that seemed more relevant to contemporary problems than maintaining schools and colleges. Other Sisters abandoned their traditional habits and institutional living, making them less visible to the laity. Some communities were torn by dissension as sisters struggled to accommodate themselves to the new reality, leading many women to leave their congregations and making it difficult to transmit values to entrants. This new model proved to be less attractive to young women; furthermore, Catholic parents were increasingly reluctant to encourage their daughters to enter religious communities.\(^76\) Kathleen Campbell recalled how suddenly convent life changed during the three years she spent in the novitiate. The resulting confusion over expectations and behavior contributed to her decision to leave the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Peace in 1967.\(^77\)

At Mount Saint Mary College, the number of full-time students dropped to thirty-seven in 1969, as the number of women religious steadily declined. In that year, the college barely met the basic standards to retain its license.\(^78\) The previous year, a consultant had recommended merging Mount Saint Mary with Georgian Court because of competition from nearby public institutions — Union County College in Cranford and Newark State College in Union — and the expense of hiring an appropriate number of faculty members and maintaining an adequate library at the Watchung college.\(^79\) In 1969, the college’s board voted to close as of June 1970, and to transfer the remaining religious students to a house of studies in Lakewood. The publication of the Sacred Congregation for Religious’ “Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Formation” in February of 1969 removed the requirement that sisters in formation live in the novitiate for two years, providing a justification for the college’s closing.\(^80\)

Villa Walsh College in Morristown also experienced a decline in

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\(^77\) Campbell, telephone conversation.

\(^78\) Visitation Report, State Department of Higher Education, February 28, 1969, H510.100, Box 6, SMNJA.

\(^79\) Elizabeth Geen, Consultant’s Report to Mount Saint Mary College, May 19, 1968, H510.100, Box 6, SMNJA.

\(^80\) Resolution, Board of Trustees, Mount Saint Mary College, July 14, 1969, H510.100, Box 6, SMNJA.
enrollment in the mid-1960s, as fewer young women entered the Religious Teachers Filippini. In 1966, Columbia-educated Margherita Marchione, MPF, a professor of Italian at Fairleigh Dickinson University, was appointed president. In an effort to save the college, lay trustees were added to the board, including Fairleigh Dickinson Chancellor Peter Sammartino, and the renamed Walsh College opened its doors to laywomen in September 1970.\textsuperscript{81} Walsh College offered an innovative curriculum, including a required six-credit seminar entitled "Persistent Problems of Living," that covered "ecology and the responses of our economic system to the problems generated in such areas as: environmental pollution; population trends; food, nutrition and hunger . . . the causes of poverty, urban housing and standards of living, [and] crime control . . . ." The college also required students to complete an internship at a social service organization such as a community hospital or geriatric center, and offered a number of courses in fine arts, music, and foreign languages. Students planned schedules and curriculum individually with faculty members.\textsuperscript{82} The twenty-five laywomen who arrived in the fall of 1970 were reputedly enthusiastic and the college was successful in raising funds.\textsuperscript{83} In early 1971, however, the Provincial Council of the Filippini Sisters voted to close the college, apparently wary of the financial commitment involved in maintaining the institution.\textsuperscript{84}

Marianite Junior College and Salesian College, which had never admitted lay students, closed in 1969 and 1973 respectively. The various religious communities in northern New Jersey decided to cooperate and send their novices to Assumption College for Sisters in Mendham. Unlike the other sisters' colleges, Assumption had been accredited by the Middle States Association in 1965. After Villa Walsh discontinued maintaining its state license, the institution combined its faculty and students with those at nearby Assumption, which extended invitations to other religious communities. By 1971, eight different communities were represented among Assumption's students and faculty.\textsuperscript{86}

In the late 1960s, similar trends forced colleges for male religious to close. The Second Vatican Council's document dealing with priestly

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Catalog}, Walsh College, 1970-1972. Courtesy of Margherita Marchione, MPF, Villa Walsh, Morristown, NJ.
\textsuperscript{83} Marchione, \textit{The Fighting Nun}, 196-197.
\textsuperscript{84} Margherita Marchione, MPF, personal communication to the author, February 17, 2009.
\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Trilòg} (Mendham, NJ) 8 (October 1971), Archdiocese of Newark/Catholic Colleges, R.G. 10, SHUA.
formation, *Optatum totius*, contributed to substantial changes in seminary education. While giving limited endorsement to minor seminaries, the document questioned their role in nurturing vocations – most of their students did not ultimately enter religious life – while criticizing their academic standards as well as the isolation of students from the rest of the world. Beginning in 1966, the number of students entering seminaries of all types began to rapidly decline; many seminaries closed or merged with other institutions while the minor seminary system collapsed.86 After a financial crisis caused by overextension of resources coupled with bad investments, the Salvatorians voted to close Mother of the Savior Seminary in late 1966, selling the complex to Camden County for the expansion of its community college the following year.87 The decline in vocations led the Christian Brothers to close Saint Gabriel's College, which had only ever averaged sixty-eight students a year, in 1968. Aspirants were relocated to Iona College.88 Similarly, in 1970, junior college students at Saint Joseph's College were transferred to a Vincentian residence in Niagara Falls, New York, where they attended classes at Niagara University. The high school seminary program continued into the 1980s.89

**Junior Colleges for Catholic Laywomen**

Another strategy to counter the decline in the numbers of novices was to admit laywomen. Three New Jersey sisters' colleges began admitting laywomen in the mid-1960s: Immaculate Conception in 1964, Tombrock in 1965, and Archangel, now renamed Englewood Cliffs College, in 1966. Madeleine Crotty, CSJ, writes that by 1964, it became clear that the new novitiate residence for which the Sisters of Saint Joseph had been raising money since 1960 would not be necessary. The sisters decided to turn the structure into a college building, which was dedicated in June 1966.80 At Tombrock, Dean Bethany Maak, SMIC, urged the president to admit lay women, stating that the sister students and faculty needed the "interchange of thought with a wider range of experience." Maak also mentioned that the college needed money for operating expenses and to pay off the debt incurred by the new building; additionally, a lay college

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86. White, 410-423.
88. Lynch, 117.
89. Rybolt, 402-403.
90. Crotty, 134.
would be eligible to apply for government grants. The transition from sisters' college to lay college involved some adjustment. Englewood Cliffs College established a Lay Board of Trustees that included the town's mayor, expanded its curriculum and extracurricular activities, and hired lay faculty. The college offered limited dormitory accommodation; students were primarily commuters from the cities and towns of northern New Jersey. The basic liberal arts curriculum was augmented by courses in the sciences, sociology, psychology, art, education, secretarial studies, and business. Reflecting the emphases of Vatican II, the theology department added courses in comparative religion, contemporary religious thought, and modern catechesis. Students at the congregation's Holy Name Hospital nursing school in Teaneck took liberal arts courses at the college. In 1969, the trustees made the bold decision to admit male students, necessitating still more changes in college life. The dress code was abolished and new clubs such as karate and an all-male vocal group appeared. Intercollegiate athletics were also introduced. Sadly, in 1974, the college's basketball team suffered a record-breaking basketball defeat against Essex County College; the score was 210 to 67.

Tombrock College in West Paterson began admitting lay students at its large new building in 1966. The college grew quickly, from eighty-five students in 1966-1967 to 289 in 1968-1969, a 240 percent increase in two years. Inspired by its sponsoring order's Franciscan tradition, Tombrock's mission was to help students reach their potential and meet the needs of the surrounding community. The catalog stated, "the basic criterion for admission is whether the applicant will benefit from the environment and opportunity Tombrock offers," meaning that sometimes the admissions requirements were waived for students who demonstrated promise. Completely non-residential, the college sought to forge ties with the local community.

92. Crotty, 136; and Vista [Englewood Cliffs College Yearbook], 1972, Archdiocese of Newark/Catholic Colleges, R.G. 10, SHUA.
97. Catalog, Tombrock College, 1970-1971, CCC.
economically depressed city of Paterson just a few miles away. According to administrator Anita Uhia, "To use the Vernac, we were into the bag of diminishing social and educational inequities long before the severe convulsions of our society made the need apparent."\textsuperscript{98} Students and faculty volunteered at the Passaic County Children's Shelter and County Jail. The United States Department of Labor funded a New Careers program, introduced in 1968, that provided fifty part-time students the opportunity to work three days a week as teacher assistants in Paterson schools, while attending classes the remaining two days. The college had a larger number of minority students than the other junior colleges: in 1970-1971, of the 501 students, 125 were African-American and twenty-five were described as "Spanish-surnamed."\textsuperscript{99} One former student recalled, "At Tombrock, I met many people of different backgrounds. We shared many things together, and I grew to learn, to love, and understand which as a human being, it is the most important thing."\textsuperscript{100}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{sister-gervasia-schreckenberg-with-her-sister-students-tombrock-college-late-1960s-courtesy-provincial-archives-missionary-sisters-of-the-immaculate-conception-paterson-nj}
\caption{Sister Gervasia Schreckenberg with her sister students, Tombrock College, late 1960s. Courtesy Provincial Archives, Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Paterson, NJ}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{98} Presentation by Anita Uhia, Advisory Board Meeting, November 6, 1971, Community Service File, "Tombrock" box, SMICA.
\textsuperscript{99} Tombrock College Five Year Plan, Spring 1971, SMICA.
\textsuperscript{100} Results of Alumnae Questionnaire, Tombrock College, 1973, SMICA.
Ironically, Catholic junior colleges were being established in New Jersey at the same time that national educators were questioning the purpose and viability of the private junior college. In 1963, the Association of Junior Colleges organized a National Conference on the Private Junior College that identified lack of clear mission, low enrollments, and limited funds as key challenges facing these institutions. The strengths of private junior colleges – superior teaching and advising, individual attention for students, a variety of liberal arts and vocationally-oriented programs – were costly to maintain. Catholic educators had similar concerns. Beginning in 1958, administrators and faculty members from Catholic junior colleges met as a group at the NCEA annual conference. Discussion topics included the difficulty of meeting the needs of different types of students, admission standards, accreditation, public relations, and, of course, finances. Catholic educators questioned why there were so many Catholic junior colleges with so few students, especially compared to the burgeoning number of public community colleges. Existing Catholic junior colleges were not serving students who could not pay full tuition and had to work part-time to finance their educations. While some critics advocated establishing a network of Catholic junior colleges that served local communities, others acknowledged that this goal was probably not realistic considering the demands of maintaining existing Catholic educational institutions. Indeed, in the 1960s, over one hundred private junior colleges either closed or became four-year institutions. Among these were Gwynedd-Mercy College, which introduced a four-year program in 1963, and Georgetown Visitation, which closed the following year. The president of the latter cited rising costs, the shortage of religious personnel, and the expense of hiring lay faculty to meet the demands

104. The first point of view is expressed by Jerome Keeler, OSB, "The Catholic Community College," *NCEA Bulletin* 57 (November 1960). Keeler was president of Donnelly College, a coeducational diocesan junior college in Kansas City, which in 2010 continues to serve the local community. For the second perspective, see Mary Agnes Micek, "The Concept of the Junior College Derived from the Opinions of Selected Groups of Educators in Catholic Education" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1965), 118-122 and 144.
of the Middle States Association as reasons for closing the junior college division.106

In New Jersey, in 1967, Immaculate Conception Junior College was approved by the state to function as a four-year institution, granting a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education under its new name, Felician College. Immaculate Conception differed from the other New Jersey Catholic junior colleges in that beginning in 1965 it had offered a popular Associate of Science degree program in nursing, apparently the first in the state.107 Of forty-seven graduates in the year 1969, twenty-three were in the nursing program.108 Felician College administrators showed foresight in introducing a nursing degree at a time when the training of nurses was gradually shifting away from diploma-granting schools based in hospitals, like the Sisters of Saint Joseph’s Holy Name Hospital School of Nursing, to programs based in colleges and universities.109

Laboratory at Tombrock College, October 1967
Courtesy Provincial Archives, Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Paterson, NJ

106. Sullivan, 150.
108. Yearbook, Felician College, 1969, FCA.
Challenges of the 1970s

By the early 1970s, a weak economy, competition from public institutions, and the forces of social change challenged the survival of New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges. In the 1960s, they had shared in the overall boom in higher education as institutions scrambled to accommodate increasing numbers of students. Many colleges went into debt to build new facilities, start new programs, and hire new faculty members. At small Catholic colleges, the primary sources of income were tuition fees paid by middle-class families and the contributed services of religious, who gave a portion of their salaries back to the institution. As numbers of religious dropped in the late 1960s, colleges were forced to hire more lay faculty and administrators and offer competitive salaries and benefits. At the same time, recognizing the systemic elitism of higher education, colleges tried to attract more students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Colleges could survive only as long as enrollment continued to rise or endowments grew.110

In the early 1970s, however, enrollment dropped overall at Catholic colleges and universities. There were many reasons for this decline. Before Vatican II, the hierarchy had strongly discouraged attendance at non-Catholic colleges. Some Catholic high school guidance counselors refused to write recommendations for students who wanted to attend non-Catholic colleges.111 The theology of the Council, however, emphasized respect for the individual conscience and similarities rather than differences between all Christians. As a result, fewer Catholic students attended Catholic colleges, although the overall number of Catholics in higher education continued to rise.112 Catholic women's colleges were particularly affected. In this era of sexual revolution, single-sex education was less attractive to women students. Many of the premiere Catholic universities in the country, including Notre Dame, Georgetown, and Villanova became coeducational. In New Jersey, Saint Peter's and Seton Hall began to admit women in 1966 and 1968 respectively. Meanwhile, enrollment began to decline at New Jersey's four-year Catholic women's colleges.113

111. Ibid., 23.
112. Ibid., 24-27.
Enrollment at New Jersey Catholic Junior Colleges

**Figure 1**: Enrollment at New Jersey Catholic Junior Colleges


Englewood Cliffs and Tombrock, and to a degree Alphonsus College, had been able to increase enrollment by admitting male students, many of whom were taking the education deferment to avoid being sent to fight the war in Vietnam. After the draft was curtailed and eventually discontinued in 1972-1973, enrollment plummeted by fifty percent at the three colleges\(^{114}\) (see figure). At the same time, these institutions faced severe competition from inexpensive, publicly-funded community colleges, which opened throughout the state during this period. In addition to Bergen Community College in Paramus, founded in 1968, Passaic County Community College opened in Paterson in 1971, while a new public four-year college, Ramapo College of New Jersey in Mahwah (also in Bergen County) was established in that same year. Furthermore, in the late 1960s, New

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Jersey's former state teachers' colleges in Paterson, Newark, and Montclair — all in northeastern New Jersey — became multi-purpose liberal arts institutions.

Alphonsus College, which had never approached its goal of 350 students, was initially most affected by the increased competition. By 1971, the college began to experience financial difficulties and was granted a two million dollar loan from the Baptistine Sisters. The Board of Trustees voted to admit male students and to abandon plans to build a new residence hall, as well as to introduce some more vocationally-oriented majors. The minutes of that meeting note: "The Agreement was that the college should reappraise objectives and broaden them so as to better serve our community."115

In an effort to increase enrollment, the college introduced programs in respiratory therapy and law enforcement, securing the support of local physicians and Bergen County police chiefs, but encountered difficulties in securing state approval for these programs.116 Bergen Community College also offered a law enforcement program, and the state team evaluating the proposed law enforcement program at Alphonsus College questioned why it would duplicate an "excellent" program at a nearby institution. As Academic Dean Bernadette Eggeart, CSJB, stated in her tart rebuttal, "it is difficult to live with a conclusion that other colleges offer 'excellent programs.' We are sure that their programs are excellent . . . . with this type of logic no private college should offer any programs."117 Similarly, Bethany Maak, SMIC, of Tombrock recalled, "It got harder and harder to get programs okayed and the regular meetings between administrators from independent schools and the director of the state's two-year college office were cut off without explanation. Once the county colleges began filling the need we had been filling, the state was not supportive."118

In its evaluation in 1972, the New Jersey Department of Higher Education inspector expressed concern about Alphonsus College's ability to meet the payments of its debt to the sponsoring community, called for a realistic five-year plan, and noted that the college did not have a full-time president — Dr. John J. Flynn, the college's president, held a full-time position as a faculty member at Saint Francis College in

115. Excerpts from Board of Trustees Meeting, November 3, 1971, Archdiocese of Newark/Woodcliff Lake–Alphonsus College, R.G. 6, SHUA.
116. Report to the Board of Trustees, June 28, 1972, Archdiocese of Newark/Woodcliff Lake–Alphonsus College, R.G. 6, SHUA.
117. Sister Bernadette, CSJB to Dr. G.A. Mellander, Director of Independent College Programs, Department of Higher Education, June 22, 1972, Archdiocese of Newark/Woodcliff Lake–Alphonsus College, R.G. 6, SHUA.
The boards and administrators of New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges tried various strategies in order to survive. Studies had demonstrated that junior colleges attracted pragmatic students seeking vocational training. The colleges thus modified their traditional liberal arts curriculum to offer vocational courses, as well as introducing programs for women resuming their education after having children, and evening enrichment course to attract adults in the community. Englewood Cliffs lowered its admissions standards, no longer requiring Scholastic Aptitude Tests or candidates to be in the top two-thirds of their high school graduating class. In 1970, Alphonsus, Englewood Cliffs, Felician, Salesian, Tombrock, and Walsh colleges joined together in the North Jersey Private College Consortium to explore the possibility of coordinating course offerings and sharing resources. In 1971, the Alphonsus College Women's Auxiliary and the Men's Club raised $13,000 from a Christmas party, buffet suppers, and a food concession at a local dog show, which constituted about one-fifth of the college's available balance. Alphonsus, Tombrock, and Englewood Cliffs colleges were at a disadvantage, however, in that as relatively new two-year institutions, they had little endowment or alumni base. Their traditional mission of producing educated wives and mothers was no longer valid in an era where women recognized their right to compete for the same jobs as men. The new vocational courses aimed to attract students were costly to staff and equip, and could not compete with the more diversified offerings at the new community colleges. Furthermore, none were able to achieve accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

119. Report to the Board of Trustees, June 28, 1972, Archdiocese of Newark/Woodcliff Lake–Alphonsus College, R.G. 6, SHUA.  
122. Minutes, North Jersey Private College Consortium Advisory Board, April 28, 1972, "North Jersey Private College Consortium" box, SMICA.  
123. Board of Trustees Agendas, Minutes, Enclosures, Dec. 1971-1972; and Memo to Mother Bernadette, CSJB, from K. Politti, November 3, 1971, Archdiocese of Newark/Woodcliff Lake–Alphonsus College, R.G. 6, SHUA.
By 1973, private colleges in general faced rising operating costs in a weak economy. By 1973, private colleges in general faced rising operating costs in a weak economy.124 Heavily tuition-dependent non-Catholic New Jersey institutions like Fairleigh Dickinson University and Rider College were forced to impose salary freezes and lay-offs.125 In this environment, it was difficult for weaker, less-established institutions to survive. In 1973, the Baptistine Sisters underwrote Alphonsus' operating deficit of $100,000. In January 1974, with enrollment at sixty full-time and sixty part-time students, the new president, Dr. John P. Loftus, announced that the college would close in September.126 Englewood Cliffs College's dynamic founding president Madeleine Crotty, CSJ, became ill with cancer in 1972 and died the following year. The congregation asked Redempta McConnell, CSJ, who had been in the Philippines for twenty-two years, to return to serve as president. As the head of a successful girls' school and women's college in Mindanao, McConnell was apparently shocked by Englewood Cliffs College's financial problems, poor reputation, and unsuccessful quest for Middle States accreditation. She met with representatives of the Middle States Association, who did not recommend pursuing her candidacy because of the college's low enrollment. McConnell did convince the college's Board of Trustees to close the institution in June of 1974. Many of the sisters had moved on to other ministries, such as the new Center for Peace and Justice, which was originally located in the college building. Meanwhile, McConnell approached Victor Yanitelli, SJ, the president of Saint Peter's College, about starting a branch campus in Englewood Cliffs.127 The new campus focused on education for adults and returning women, and continued to provide liberal arts courses for students at the Holy Name Hospital School of Nursing.128 McConnell and librarian Jeanne Tierney, CSJ, both found positions at the branch campus. The Sisters of Saint Joseph of Peace continue to lease the Englewood Cliffs campus to Saint Peter's.

The Board of Trustees of Tombrock College also voted to close in 1974, citing absence of committed religious or lay faculty, little increase in enrollment, and lack of adequate resources.129 The college

127. Restaino, telephone conversation.
129. Miriam Devlin, SMIC to Rose Claire Gonzalez, SMIC and Mrs. Dorothy Cuono,
found a reprieve of sorts a few months later when the board was approached by three technical college administrators who proposed reopening Tombrock as a fully-coeducational, career-oriented science and technology institute. The proposal won grudging approval from the New Jersey Board of Higher Education. "Although the team would pass on the desirability of reopening the college, it concluded that it met criteria . . . . Simply and bluntly stated, the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God want to sponsor a college and are prepared to support it." The new college, however, only attracted twenty-five additional applicants. In June 1976, the Missionary Sisters Provincial Council voted to close the college immediately because of its low enrollment and grave financial situation. As the college's sponsoring body, the council voted to dissolve the Tombrock Board of Trustees, and replaced it with a new board that recommended closing. Former President Rose Claire Gonzalez, SMIC, recalled that the province's desire was to set up a trust fund for retired sisters. The sisters leased and later sold the property to the for-profit Berkeley College.

Conclusion

The demise of New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges was part of an overall decline in private two-year higher education. In the early 1970s, private junior colleges closed throughout the country as students increasingly chose either four-year colleges or the diverse programs and low costs of the new community colleges. The numbers of private two-year colleges steadily dropped from 293 in 1960 to 170 in 1970 to 89 in 1988. Meanwhile, the numbers of public two-year junior colleges increased steadily to over 1000 in 1988.

What can be learned from the fate of New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges?
colleges? What is their historical significance?

Most importantly, New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges made a contribution to the education of many men and women religious. At some point, all provided higher education for priests, sisters, or brothers. In 2010, Assumption College for Sisters remains the only college for women religious in the United States. Catholic junior colleges also contributed to the education of many lay students. For a brief period, these institutions offered an alternative education informed by the Catholic mission, providing a personalized, student-centered environment that helped those not well-prepared intellectually or emotionally for college. As one Tombrock student recalled, "I was undecided about college after high school and Tombrock gave me a chance to find myself and my interest before being exposed to a mass four-year college such as Montclair State, where I finished my college education. I felt I got more personal stimulation and satisfaction from Tombrock than from Montclair State College. I enjoyed Tombrock very much."135

New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges ultimately failed for many reasons, the most significant being competition from public two-year institutions founded in their backyards. New Jersey's geography, while initially providing the impetus for the establishment of private junior colleges by cramming a large number of students into a small area, ultimately led to their failure as other options within easy reach developed. An alternate vision was suggested by a 1970 New Jersey Department of Higher Education report, which sought to incorporate both public and private two-year colleges into an integrated master plan for higher learning in the state.136 This report was part of a national trend for greater coordination of public and private institutions, which led to state support for some private institutions and the introduction of student aid that could be used at both public and private colleges.137 Indeed, in the early 1970s, New Jersey private college administrators were frustrated as they saw the state opening new colleges while existing institutions struggled. A New York Times correspondent noted: "The message is coming through loud and clear now that it is terribly uneconomic for the public sector to provide all these places and force the private colleges to go bankrupt and out of

135. Results of Alumnae Questionnaire, SMICA.
business."

It is not clear, however, if New Jersey's Catholic junior colleges would have survived, in a more favorable economic and political climate. In subsequent years, the numbers of Catholic junior colleges in the nation have continued to decline, and many of those remaining have added four-year programs. These small liberal arts colleges have subsumed the junior colleges' mission of providing a liberal or career-centered education based on Catholic values in an intimate setting.