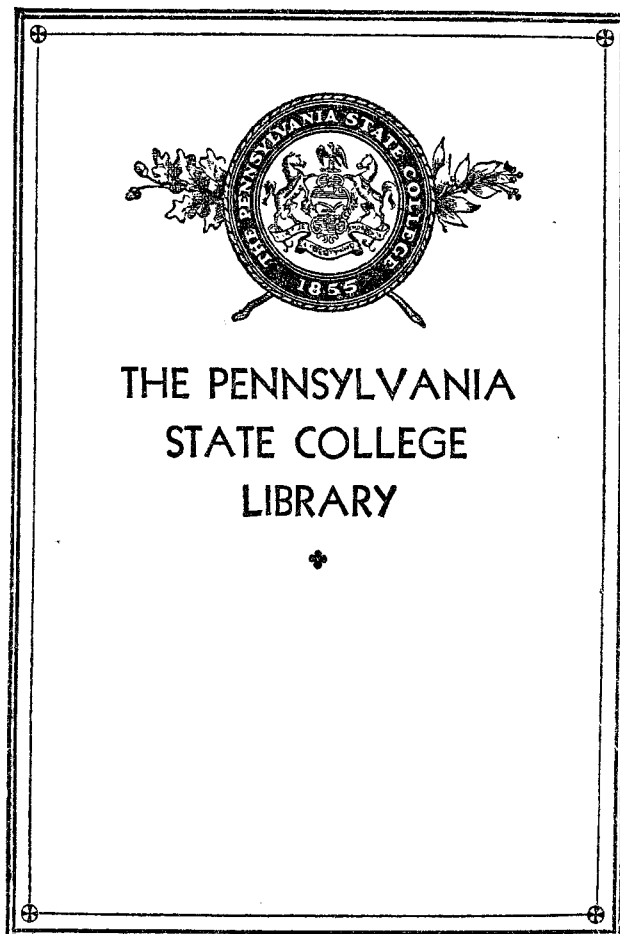


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Stephen Murgas

March 5, 1955

173 N. Mai
Wilkes-Bar



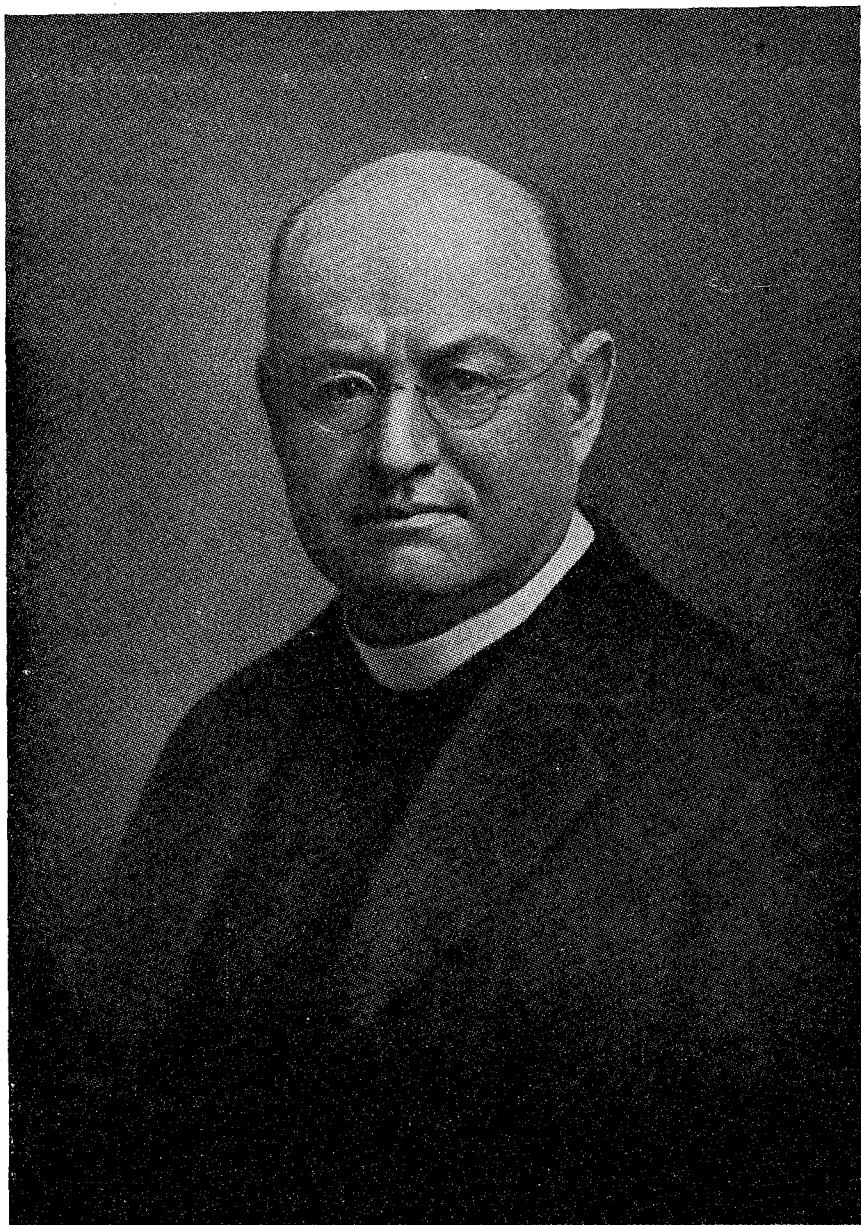
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REV. JOSEPH MURGAS

Priest-Scientist



Rev. Jos. Murgas.

REV.
JOSEPH MURGAS

PRIEST-SCIENTIST

His Musical Wireless Telegraphy
and The First Radio



A Biography
by
STEPHEN J. PALICKAR

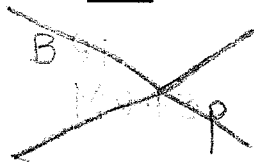
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Cecil L. Anderson
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Dedicated
TO THE
LOVING MEMORY OF MY PARENTS
THE THOUGHT OF WHOM CONTINUES
TO LIGHTEN MY BURDENS,
FILL ME WITH PRECIOUS RECOLLECTIONS,
AND
BRING ME NOBLE DESIRES.

—*Stephen J. Palickar*

354014

INTRODUCTION

I am inexpressibly delighted to introduce this biographical work on Rev. Joseph Murgas who, through the inscrutable will of fate was deprived of his proper place in the scientific annals of history. While he did not win world acclaim as pioneer inventor in the realm of electrical science equal to that enjoyed by Marconi, the success of his experiments in wireless telegraphy and radio nevertheless proved he possessed the ability to do so. It was only the lack of funds and proper support that deterred him.

Still, whatever Murgas did accomplish remains worthy of our esteem and admiration. In addition to his scientific and cultural accomplishments, Father Murgas proved himself an exemplary priest serving as a beacon of harmony which truly exists between Faith and Science.

It is indeed fortunate that Murgas did not remain in Slovakia, the oppressed land of his birth, where his talents would undoubtedly have been smothered or irretrievably lost to the credit of his people.

In the United States where every citizen of our largest as well as smallest racial group is privileged to acknowledge the source of his ancestry, I take pride in pointing toward Joseph Murgas' contribution to the cultural and scientific progress of this country. And in this respect the story of Murgas' life has been long overdue.

Mr. Stephen J. Palickar, author of this splendid biographical volume needs no praise since his writings and researches in the various fields of culture and science aptly demonstrates his ability to carry out the task this book required. There is no better praise for the author than a good book, and in this instance further comment would prove

quite superfluous. Nevertheless I am happy to commend this biography to the reader because it is objective and factual, and while the author makes no outlandish claims for his subject, we are grateful to Almighty God for deigning to bless us with a brilliant genius in the person of Rev. Joseph Murgas.

✠ THEODORE G. KOJIS, O. S. B.

Abbot

St. Andrew's Abbey,
Cleveland, Ohio.
July 4, 1950

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

* * *

SLOVAKIA OF TODAY
(A Lecture at the Philosophy Hall)
Columbia University

SLOVAKIA
FROM HUNGARIAN DESPOTISM
TO ATHEISTIC CZECH COMMUNISM

and other works

P R E F A C E

As a servant in the vineyard of Christ, a humanitarian, and a man of science, Rev. Joseph Murgas' immutable characteristic was his intense love of truth and accuracy. A conspicuous manifestation of this quality in his life is traced to the early days of his priesthood when, as an austere art critic in his native Slovakia, he pointed to the false interpretation of a painting in the Hungarian House of Parliament by a famous Magyar artist who attempted to portray a certain historical event in the life of two nations. The circumstances which followed the daring performance of Father Murgas brought him to America where, as a priest, he continued to spread the truth of the Gospel to his countrymen, a task he was aptly qualified to fulfill because of his sympathetic understanding of the human heart and a firm belief in the immortality of the soul.

His keen intellect and the blessing of his theological training helped in providing him with a sound scientific grounding which not only added to his lore, but also proved beneficial to civilization. In this category his fertile brain enabled him to emerge as a pioneer inventor in the field of wireless telegraphy and radio, and as a result of his work in this realm of science, he gained an aura of glamour which since has been denied him.

The purpose of this book is to re-kindle what smoldering embers remain of Father Murgas' once flaming success in the electrical sphere of human progress, and it is hoped that this well deserved tribute will not only find permanent repose in the annals of history, but will also serve as an enduring monument to his genius.

In addition to his religious, social, artistic, political and naturalistic accomplishments, Father Murgas' creative ability led him to invent a new and faster method of wireless communication known as the "Tone-system" by which,

instead of the "dot" and "dash" spark impulse used in the Morse method, a musical effect arranged in different tones representing each letter of the alphabet was used to dispatch messages by wireless telegraphy.

Rev. Joseph Murgas further delved, and was the first to succeed in transmitting voice sounds by means of wireless which contributed toward making his device the forerunner of present day radio.

In this connection, the whole duty of a biographer, I believe, is to give a faithful account of the facts about his subject and to interpret them as they represent the man himself. Every effort to render a complete record of the life of Rev. Joseph Murgas has been fastidiously carried out, but phases, relationships, and events which were certain to contribute nothing to the moulding of his life work have been omitted or merely outlined. Facts, not vituperations, truth, not flattery is the guiding principle of this biography, the production of which was a difficult task.

Years of fruitless research was spent due to the long interval since the height of Father Murgas' accomplishments, and considerable time was required to verify data of important events in his life.

His birth, for instance, was listed under six different dates, two different months, and two different years. His arrival to America was recorded under four different dates and other features of his career were found in a conglomerated state. Misrepresentations and distortions were frequent all of which necessitated a voluminous amount of correction.

Since Father Murgas left no record of his life, his letters, notes, correspondence, and papers were lost, strayed or stolen to the furthest extent, (an assurance of which was given to me by those near him at the time of his death) my research naturally led me into remote recesses and dark cor-

ners of private scientific libraries. The search through Court archives, patent records, musty and crumbling newspaper files reposing in old newspaper "morgues" for years required painstaking endurance. In addition to this, correspondence was carried on with one hundred individuals and interviews were held with twenty-five others.

Finally, I am deeply indebted to the late Col. Ernest G. Smith, former President and editor of the Wilkes-Barre Times-Leader for the privilege of delving through the back files of his newspaper; for the courtesy of his wise counsel during our interview; for the valuable aid gained through his "Parting Shots" column which he devoted on my behalf; and for his untiring zeal throughout it all.

I likewise owe a debt of esteemed gratitude to Mr. Robert W. Johnson, editor of Wilkes-Barre Record, who, through the means of his editorial column brought response of value from readers and helped in other ways.

Grateful thanks is also due to Mr. Thomas Murphy, editor of The Scranton Times who opened his "Personal and Pertinent" column to help in securing information about Father Murgas and enabled me to locate Mr. Gideon Shadle, Father Murgas' chief telegrapher.

I also wish to acknowledge the generous help rendered by Mr. Frank Brookhouser, Columnist of the Philadelphia Inquirer.

Profound gratitude is also due to Mr. Michael J. Vargovich, President of the First Catholic Slovak Union of the United States of America whose untiring zeal on behalf of culture and science helped admirably in the production of this biography.

September 1950
New York City, N. Y.

Stephen J. Palickar

A complete list of acknowledgments will be found at the end of this volume.

C O N T E N T S

Dedication	v
Introduction	vi
Preface	ix

CHAPTER I

The Secret Of "Aether"	1
Joseph Murgas, His Forebears And Childhood	3
Ordination To The Priesthood	6
Art Criticism And Its Consequences	7
In The Land Of Freedom	11
The Harvest In The Vineyard	17

CHAPTER II

Murgas, His Inspirations And His Paintings	21
Traditional Aspects of Murgas' Work	22
The Priest Portrays His Bishop	25

CHAPTER III

Murgas, As Lepidopterist And Piscatorian	27
King's College Accepts Murgas' Butterflies	29
Murgas, A Distinguished Fisherman	30

CHAPTER IV

Murgas, In The Realm Of Wireless (First Phase)	33
Murgas' Early Experiments	37
Improvements Of "Tone" Method Continued	42

CHAPTER V

Murgas And The Promoters Of His Wireless System	47
Murgas' Antenna Towers, First In America	51
The Universal Aether Telegraph Company	54
Development Of The Murgas System	58
Murgas Demonstrates For President Theodore Roosevelt	61

CHAPTER VI

The Crucial Test Of Murgas' Wireless System (Second Phase)	63
---	----

The Official Test And Public Demonstration	65
Messages Exchanged	68
The Bishop's Little Joke	70
Mr. Gideon W. Shadle. A Tribute	73
The Working Principles Of Murgas' System (A Brief Sketch)	77
Other Murgas Patents In Wireless Telegraphy And Radio	81

CHAPTER VII

Murgas And The First Radio	87
--------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII

Tone Method "Priority" — Law Suits And Litigations	95
Affidavit Of Frank N. Waterman	98
Julius Martin, Recalled. Direct Examination	101
United States District Court	103
Lieutenant-Commander Samuel S. Robison, U. S. N. Direct	103
John Stone Stone — Direct	109
Summary — Defendant's Brief	110

CHAPTER IX

Father Murgas In World War I	115
Murgas And The Czecho-Slovak Republic	117
Murgas' Difficulties And Dashed Hopes	119
The Loss Of A Genius	122

CHAPTER X

Memorabilia	124
Concluding Note	128
Author's Acknowledgments	132
Bibliography	136
Chronology	141
Appendix	144
Index	159

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Rev. Joseph Murgas	<i>Frontispiece</i>
2. Father Murgas' Old Wooden Church . . .	10
3. The Priest Portrays His Bishop . . .	12
4. Bishop M. J. Hoban and Rev. Stephen Furdek Arrive For Celebration	12
5. The Present Sacred Heart Catholic Slovak Church	15
6. Interior Of Present Sacred Heart Slovak Catholic Church	19
7. The Parish Parochial School	20
8. Antenna Towers Of The Transmitting Station — First In America	52
9. Letterhead Of The Universal Aether Telegraph Company	58
10. Promoters and Public Officials Witness Test Of Murgas' System	58
11. Operator Thomas "Tommy" Murphy Receives Messages	58
12. Gideon W. Shadle As Associated Press Telegrapher — Murgas' Assistant	63
13. Principle Patent Drawing Of Murgas' Wireless System	63
14. The Parish Rectory Built By Rev. Joseph Murgas	115
15. The Last Picture Of Rev. Joseph Murgas .	124

CHAPTER I

THE SECRET OF "AETHER"

It was about one thousand years B. C., when philosophers first advanced the theory of a medium in the form of a substance commonly known as "Aether" which, from its very beginning, became a constant theme for discussion and heated debate as to whether or not it was essential to the transmission of energy from one body to another removed by distance. Since that time man applied himself vigorously to the problem of transmitting his ideas quickly through space — beginning with signal fires, flashing light, swift messengers, signal cannons and other methods used until comparatively recent times. It was not, however, until the dawn of the twentieth century that man was able to witness the introduction into the world of science of that most mystifying yet stupendously valuable discovery — wireless telegraphy, from which radio has evolved, and the succeeding years have been filled with progressive activities in the practical application of this marvel. Since that time the electron, X-ray, radioactivity, the quantum theory, the television, and other startling additions to our knowledge of Nature have in turn impressed their wonders upon us.

In this rapidly changing world, where new discoveries and inventions crowd in upon us with lively succession, we are apt to forget or lose sight of the early pioneering work in wireless transmission by means of telegraphy, the very foundation upon which the magnificent structure of radio art has been built.

In 1888 Henrich Hertz, a German, had experimentally proven that electric waves could be transmitted over considerable distance through free ether, and it was the utilization of these "Hertzian waves" which constituted an epoch in the scientific and commercial world and at the same time

opened the door in what seemed to the ordinary senses an impenetrable wall which limited further progress of human ingenuity in the discovery of the hidden lanes and alleys of the body of nature.

Franklin, Morse, and Bell, each in his own time and in his own way succeeded in breaking through that apparently impenetrable wall that hedged itself about the scientific mind and opened vast possibilities for world progress. Other investigators into the invisible realm of nature have unfolded secrets (so-called) and demonstrated the existence of latent capacities hidden behind the wall that separated what we have always styled the Known from the Unknown.

The flashlights of modern mechanical genius are now directed into the Unknown, and the world is being taught wonderful truths and lessons by practical demonstrations concerning the existence and action of mighty agencies which are housed in the bowels of the Universe.

Wireless telegraphy is the natural outgrowth of the electric spark. It is the root whose fibrillae reach into the innermost and uttermost recesses of the invisible. Its medium of travel is the etheric wave, just as in the material world the steel rails of the railroads are the means of transportation of persons, trains, and merchandise.

What Franklin was to electricity, Hertz was to wireless telegraphy. Franklin sought for force in the atmosphere. Hertz sought for force in the outer spaces of the universe. What Stephenson did for the steam engine, Morse did for modern telegraphy. But each were followed by scores and perhaps hundreds of improvers who added the products of their genius, skill, and insight to the general perfecting of facilities for the use of steam and the electric current.

Today, as in the past, new delvers into Nature's secrets are calling to the world to come and see the practical out-

HIS MUSICAL WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY AND THE FIRST RADIO

working of etheric or electric transmission be it wireless telegraphy, radio, or television, and all because of a hidden force which holds the universe together.

The original purpose of wireless telegraphy was to use the so-called Hertzian waves for the ostensible transmission of intelligence. In the past as in the present, the principal underlying wireless telegraphy is what is known as "oscillation." The method is to produce oscillatory electric or etheric waves. To this end, transmitting and receiving points - or stations - had to be established.

However, when Marconi startled the world with the first practical demonstration of his system of wireless in 1895, there were a number of other scientists before and during this event who made wireless the subject of profound study. Amongst them was Rev. Joseph Murgas, a native of Slovakia (a small but ancient country in the heart of Central Europe) who migrated to Wilkes-Barre, Pa., where he succeeded in inventing and perfecting his own method of wireless transmission known as the "Tone system" later established as "The Murgas System of Wireless Telegraphy."

JOSEPH MURGAS, HIS FORBEARS AND CHILDHOOD

The parents of Joseph Murgas were born and grew up together in the same Slovakian village, and while attending a spring festival, the focal point of social activity for all Slovak youngsters, they met and fell in love with each other. Thus were Mary Smida and Jozef Murgas endeared to one another as they set forth with the blessing of the marriage feast of Cana to guide and guard them throughout their course of marital life.

On the 17th day of February, 1864, almost to a day when Clark-Maxwell first demonstrated the electro-magnetic theory of light which proved an important factor in the discovery

and invention of wireless, Joseph Murgas first saw the light of day in the little village of Tajov (Jabrikova), a short distance from the city of Banska Bystrica, Zvolenska County, Slovakia. His parents, of poor peasant stock, realizing their own limited advantages in childhood, began to save while planning for his future.

The village of Tajov, snuggled in a thickly wooded valley had a small brook where little Joseph passed his early life trying for that ever elusive catch, and it was there that he acquired a fascination for the art of fishing to such an extent that in later life he invented a special "reel" to fully satisfy his whim as an angler. Joseph's mother, however, had no interest in her son's proclivities as a fisherman and cared less for them. Instead, she hauled him off to school. Home, church and school — these three institutions lapping and overlapping each other with their influence of parents, teacher and the Slovak parish priest of the village, took turns throughout the first twelve years in moulding a sound mind within a sound body while the boy eagerly applied himself to his studies. At this stage his mother began to chart his course in life and forthwith enrolled him at the Gymnazium, an equivalent to a pre-Academic institution in the city of Banska Bystrica. Though unknown to his mother, his natural impulses yielded to art. Drawing and painting held a fascination for him and made him happy. Tinkering with make-shift and electrical gadgets also grew to interesting proportions with him. Nevertheless, in the judgment of his pious mother, a quality inherent in most Catholic Slovak women, he was wasting his time and the hard-earned money of his father. Though young Joseph was destined for the priesthood, he did not as yet fully realize it. Meanwhile heredity endowed him with a deep religious nature which environment reinforced. However, he remained at the Aca-

HIS MUSICAL WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY AND THE FIRST RADIO

demy of Banska Bystrica until 1882 where he finished his classical course, and at the age of 18, after having decided to study for the priesthood, he entered the "Emericanum" at Bratislava the Capital of Slovakia, where he studied for two years and in the meanwhile continued in the pursuit of "private experiment" of electricity and furthered his study in fine arts. This was followed by a long span of terms spent within the walls of Catholic institutions of higher learning and one can understand how his supremely devoted parents had courage to surrender their beloved son to the care of others "so far away from Tajov."

In 1884 Joseph entered the famous institution of learning at Ostrihom, where, in addition to his theological studies he delved into the mystery of electricity and experimented with telegraphy. By special permission from his superior he set up an attic "laboratory" in the Seminary and divided his time between theology, science, and art.

He fully demonstrated his talent for painting when an immediate superior at the Seminary observed that his work contained artistic qualities and forthwith decided to acquaint the Bishop with them by sending one of Murgas' paintings to His Grace the Rt. Rev. Bishop Bende. The Bishop was so enthused and pleased with the work that he arranged for an art course at the celebrated Academy of Arts in Munich where, through industry and fidelity he gained high rank as an art student.

In 1887, after completing his course of instructions at the Seminary in Ostrihom, Murgas returned for further study to Banska Bystrica where he concluded his third and fourth grades of theology, and since his aims were high and his motives broad, he added to his study a knowledge of French, German, advanced physics and astronomy.

ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

The greatest event in the young life of Joseph Murgas took place on November 10, 1888 when he was ordained to the priesthood in the diocese of Banska Bystrica in his native Slovakia where he became known as a promising cleric who some day would make a place for himself in the world of arts and science. Following his ordination he was assigned as curate at the parish of Dubova, and a short while thereafter was transferred to an assistant pastorate in Horehron, and from there to Klenovic.

During this time Father Murgas' artistic talent not only improved, but continued to manifest itself to wide proportions as indicated by his many beautiful paintings and drawings presented by him to various Slovak churches in the diocese. A mark of distinction was added to his ability as an artist when he presented his bishop in ordinary with a painting from his brush of "Christ before Pilate." This impressed His Grace to such extent that he immediately dispatched Father Murgas to Budapest where he furthered his study in landscape and portrait painting. With several awards to his credit, he was sent from there, in 1889, to the Academy of Art in Munich where he substantiated his talent under the best masters of that center. He became the first student to receive two certificates, one for sketching and one for painting, in the first year of his course. After four years at the German institution where he completed his full course with several awards and honors, he promptly presented His Grace, the Bishop, with a beautiful original of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary as a token of gratitude to his benefactor. After that, his paintings adorned many churches in the country and have elicited encomiums from many critics, among them Hungarians who, as a rule, seemed reluctant to credit Slovak talent with any degree of excellence.

HIS MUSICAL WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY AND THE FIRST RADIO

In the years that followed, Father Murgas continued in the faithful performance of his priestly duties, devoting meanwhile every moment he could spare to painting and electrical experiment. To intensify his study in the latter field, he enrolled as an advanced student at the Electrical College of Vienna. His enthusiasm for study did not stop here. Knowing that God is not only the author of life, of force, of beauty; and the glory of the universe, but also of the growth and progress of nature all around him. Thus the magnanimity and eloquence of God's creations led Father Murgas to a further appreciation of life by taking up the study of systematic biology and morphological botany which we will touch upon in a subsequent chapter.

At this period in Father Murgas' life the spirit of national consciousness also manifested itself to a degree where he could no longer discuss Slovak problems without becoming emotionally disturbed, and, as an ardent patriot it was but natural that he take an opposing stand to the cruel treatment of his people who, at that time, were helpless political victims of the once powerful Hungarian monarchy. Spurred by the imperishable spirit of Slovak patriotism, he acquainted himself, through the study of Slovak history, with the lives of great figures who fought for the national cause during the widely separated periods and with events hallowed by heroic deeds of Slovak martyrs.

ART CRITICISM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

About this time also Father Murgas had proven himself to be an accomplished artist. He painted landscapes and Sacred Subjects, and the products of his brush, despite the envy of Magyar artists, received praise from foremost authorities as examples of his work found their way into many Catholic churches throughout Hungary. Eventually he was

sought out by the Hungarian Government with the request that he pass upon a recently completed painting by Mihaly Munkacsy (1844-1900) of Magyar fame. Probably the greatest impetus given to Father Murgas' qualifications as an art critic was the beauty of his work and the enthusiasm of his Bishop. Murgas was thereupon recommended by the Hungarian Art Academy to render his opinion of a famous painting, the majestic creation of which caused it to be hung in the Hungarian House of Parliament. Father Murgas accepted the invitation but not without some misgiving. The task required courage, stamina, and a reckless disregard for the opinion of those whom he well knew would make it "uncomfortable" for him should he prove unfavorable in his judgment of the Hungarian masterpiece. Ill or well, Murgas decided upon one important principle — that of honesty. An artist himself, he felt he was not only capable of fulfilling a task of honor without offending his fellow artist, but also that he could justify his interpretation of the canvas regardless whether the story it conveyed was true or false. The theme of the picture depicted a scene from the Battle of Bratislava which took place in A. D. 907 when the combined forces of Magyars, Germans, and Bohemians were required to defeat the mighty Slovak-Moravian Empire. Munkacsy however, chose to portray the Magyars in alluring grandeur as the sole conquerors of ancient Slovakia and posed them on their white steeds with the characteristic feather of the Hun cocked in the pelted headgear of ancient savage warriors while ostensibly frightened, though conquered Slovaks were pictured as "prostrating" themselves on the ground in "humble submission" to the Magyars. It was an untrue presentation of the incident to which a most rabid Magyar, if he were honest about it, would not agree.

However, Father Murgas fearlessly arrived at the Parliament Building in Budapest where the national canvas hung

in all its glory. It was a great event in the life of old Hungary. Surrounded by powerful figures, foremost Hungarian Statesmen and Magyar nobility who awaited Murgas' opinion of the famous work, he took his place in their midst but felt very much like "Daniel in the Lion's Den." He did not pretend to know all about art, but he relied upon the predominant characteristic of his artistic honesty; his knowledge of true Slovak and Hungarian history; and upon the basic facts of the event which the artist tended to portray. Gauging the temperament of those standing about him, he retarded a few steps from the canvas to gain a better perspective of the work. Bracing himself, he squared his shoulders and said: "This painting represents a pathetic fallacy of history!" Calling attention to the title (*Honfoglalas*) given to the painting which, when translated from Magyar, means "Occupation of Country," Father Murgas interpreted the monstrous duplicity of Magyar heroism as represented by the artist. He further exposed the historical inaccuracy of the work and denounced it as unworthy of art. He knew that in doing so he played a losing game and Hungarian sentiment would be stacked against him from that day on, but his conscience was clear and his decision remained inexorable.

Within shorter time than he expected, Father Murgas was confronted with insurmountable obstacles when he sought to further his studies in science and religion. He was a "marked man" and there was little or nothing he could do about it. The Bishop who once befriended him and served as his kind benefactor had since passed to his eternal reward while his new superior looked upon him with disfavor. Threatened and intimidated, the strength of his convictions firm as they were, gave him no peace. He could not cope, single handed, with the tyranny of persecution and the powers behind it. Father Murgas wanted to continue in the ideals of his race but his efforts were hampered on every

side by those who hinged mighty consequences to trivial matters committed by Slovaks. He could bear it no longer.

By the Grace of God Father Murgas maintained constant communication with a young Slovak seminarian, Matthew John Jankola, a fellow countryman who was completing his studies for the priesthood on American soil. Matthew, the oldest of five children born to Rosalie (Medvecky) and Matthew Jankola on July 2, 1872 in Budapest although they maintained their home in Trestena, Orava County, Slovakia, came to America December 19, 1893 accompanied by his sister and two brothers. Upon completing his theological studies in this country, Matthew Jankola was ordained to the priesthood and immediately took up the duties as that of pastor among Catholic Slovaks in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, where the harvest was large and the workers few. Since the miraculous wonders of the Lord knows no bounds, Father Jankola succeeded in building the first Slovak Catholic church in Wilkes-Barre and vicinity within less than two years of his pastorate. The church was of frame construction but it served as a nucleus for the Slovaks of the anthracite coal region towards a greater expansion and at the same time encouraged Father Jankola to build more churches in the surrounding territory where the fertility of Slovak settlements awaited his leadership.

Meanwhile, Father Murgas' difficulties in the Slovakian portion of Hungary continued to grow more intolerable and his future was ominous. Upon learning of his predicament, Father Jankola suggested to Murgas that he could serve God to greater advantage by pioneering in America and at the same time gain benefit to himself from the standpoint of art and science. Father Murgas saw a vision of happiness before him for the first time in years. He was happy in the thought that he would be free to pursue the gift of his talents un-



Father Murgas' Old Wooden Church Dedicated by
Bishop O'Hara November 26, 1896.

hampered. He accepted the invitation and immediately set upon his journey to the United States but the thought of his departure from those he loved and particularly the land of his birth affected him deeply. The people of his parish respected and looked upon him as a native product of the finest calibre. They loved him and he returned their love with kindness and understanding. At last the day came, and with veiled feelings he bade farewell to his parents, to his parishioners, and to his friends leaving them in the profound hope that his life beyond the great Atlantic, free from persecution would be fruitful and blessed.

IN THE LAND OF FREEDOM

The journey from Slovakia to the United States was long and arduous but Father Murgas arrived, sound and satisfied exactly on Good Friday, April 6, 1896. He was temporarily assigned by Bishop O'Hara of the Scranton Diocese to a parish in Pittston, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Wilkes-Barre. A few months later he was appointed to a complete charge of the Sacred Heart Catholic Slovak church in Wilkes-Barre replacing as Pastor his dear friend Father Jankola who assumed greater responsibilities at the request of his Bishop. Meanwhile, Father Murgas accepted his new charge with renewed vigor and enthusiasm, devoting himself, to the complete exclusion of his art and scientific endeavors towards finishing the uncompleted wooden frame church originally begun by Father Jankola in September 1895 after organizing the parish. Six months after Father Murgas was given charge of the parish, construction of the church was completed and dedication was made by the Right Reverend Bishop O'Hara on November 26, 1896. Under the careful supervision of Father Murgas the parish prospered and funds were available to build a parochial residence for the pastor in the early part of 1897. In keeping with the practice of

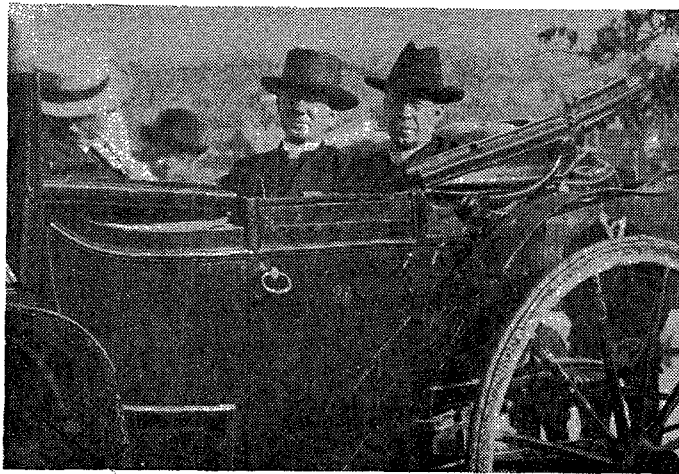
the Roman Catholic Church, Father Murgas undertook to build a parochial school for the youth of the parish. Funds for the project were meager, and although there were but 80 children of eligible age for attendance, the schoolhouse was completed in September 1897. Thus, children of the parishioners were able to receive instructions not only in the fundamentals of their religion, but also in the national, social, economic, and civic sphere of human endeavor.

The next important feature of necessity for the congregation was the need of a church organ and a teacher for the school children. In this stead, Mr. Andrew V. Kozak, perhaps the only talented young man of the immigrant Slovak group whose academic training at the time qualified him to meet the intellectual requirements not only of the parish itself, but of the church as well, was engaged as organist and school teacher on July 10, 1899. Mr. Kozak taught the children both in English and Slovak alternately and remained in this bilingual capacity till January 1, 1909 when the first three American born Sisters of Slovak parentage from the Order of Saints Cyril and Methodius took over the faculty of the school. Mr. Kozak continued as church organist until July 1915 after which he withdrew to become commercial and national leader among the Slovaks in America.

By this time the total debt of the parish grew to \$17,000 a staggering amount for any immigrant group of that period. However, with the conservative spirit of the parishioners and their willingness to make sacrifices for their spiritual well-being, Father Murgas was able to reduce that large sum to a small balance of \$1,600 by no later than September 1899. In less than one month, another \$800 was earmarked toward the remaining debt. Such was the enterprise and cooperation between the pastor and his people. The exigencies of the moment also required a suitable burial location for the needs



"The Priest Portrays His Bishop." The Painting Is That Of The Late Bishop T. C. O'Reilly, Scranton, Pa. Begun by Father Murgas In 1925, It Is Said To Have Been His Last And Far From Being Completed.



Bishop M. J. Hoban Accompanied By Rev. Stephen Furdek (Founder Of The First Catholic Slovak Union) Seated At Right, And Rev. Murgas, Seated At Left, As They Arrive To Attend The "Slovak Day" Inauguration In America.

HIS MUSICAL WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY AND THE FIRST RADIO

of the parish. Consequently ground for the purpose was purchased in the beautiful rural surroundings of Dallas, Pa., a nearby suburb.

At this stage of his progress in America Father Murgas paused to reflect on the manifold blessing conferred upon him and those of his countrymen in their newly adopted country. The boundless opportunities, democratic friendship, and American freedom available to immigrants from all nations served as an inspiration when he founded the now renowned Slovak League of America organized to safeguard the priceless heritage of human freedom denied to his brethren in the "Old Country." With the aid of a few countrymen gathered about him, he formulated the first memorandum of that organization which has since been prized as a Slovak "Magna Charta" of free expression in America and was promptly incorporated into its first resolution of record. Condemning the European government under which the Slovaks lived in thralldom and stressing their profound gratitude to the land they chose for their new home, the memorandum reads in part as follows:

First Memorandum of the Slovak League of America

"Enjoying the blessing of political and civil liberty under the beneficent provisions of the United States Constitution, a blessing freely bestowed upon us by the generosity of the United States of America who admitted us to this land and opened to us the doors of opportunity and allowed us to share the fruits of labor dearly bought by the forefathers of this land who spent their fortunes and gave their lives so that we may pursue our happiness, the inalienable right of every man, far better in this land of our adoption than in the land of our birth;

"We, the citizens and residents of these United States of Slovak birth, who at this moment feel more keenly the plight of our brethren across the Sea and hear the agonizing cries of those millions of our kin still groaning under the oppression of inhuman laws and the tyranny of a selfish, privileged class, and . . .

"Well knowing that the American heart always beats in sympathy with the oppressed nations of the earth and always has been willing to lend a hand to oppressed peoples;

"Be it therefore resolved that the Slovak League of America a federation of Slovak organizations and newspapers in this country, dedicates this, its first Memorandum, to the American People."

Encouraged by the spirit of enthusiasm as illustrated in the extract of the resolution published by the Slovak League of America organized at his suggestion, Father Murgas continued his valuable work amongst the people of his race settled in this country. His virgin parish likewise required constant care and the need for improvement was inevitable, but the frugality of his people helped to sustain every hope he had for their future. While he busied himself with the usual affairs of a parish priest, he was also anxious to resume his scientific experiments particularly in the field of wireless the subject of which is fully dealt with in subsequent chapters.

Meanwhile, Father Murgas devoted considerable time during the next four years (1900 to 1904) towards the general expansion of the First Catholic Slovak Union in the United States of America (Prvá Katolícka Slovenská Jednota v Spojených štátoch Amerických) an organization founded in 1890 by Rev. Stephen Furdek a Slovak pioneer of Catholic activity in America. Father Murgas not only took active



The Present Sacred Heart Catholic Slovak Church Erected During Father Murgas' Pastorate
in Wilkes-Barre.